

## Sermon Summary

So we wrapped up the "Love Big" yesterday by talking about how to carry these core love relationships into our future (both individually and as a church).

An overview of how the Bible tells us to approach the future led to four basic takeaways:



1. The future will be a result of where we invest in the present (Galatians 6.7-9). St. Paul uses an agricultural metaphor to tell us that we get to decide where we plant, and what we'll harvest. The things of God (or the Spirit) yield heavenly or divine life; the things devoid of God, or humanity acting without God, yield only decay and rot. As the organizational adage goes, "Where the attention goes, the energy flows."

2. The future won't be what we've planned. To arrive where God wants you requires course correction (Prov. 16.9; 19.21). So on one hand, God holds the future, waits for us in it, & directs us toward it. But on the other hand, that may not be where we're currently aiming. We can tell our own spiritual stories by listing all the times we made a plan that God had to redirect. It'll be no different as a congregation - we need to expect that how we currently put the "Love Big" relationships into practice will be altered down the road. As St. Ignatius of Loyola put it, "Sometimes, God makes better choices for us than we could ever all the times make for ourselves."

3. The future is easy to miss, if we're fixated on present hardship or a past that cannot be replicated (Isaiah 43.18-19). Context is key in understanding these verses - the "former things" they are told to forget are their 70 years in captivity in Babylon, and also their previous kingdom in the Promised Land from which they were removed. These things in the past, however hard or cherished, have the capacity to blind us to the "new thing" God is doing for us. So we need to expect that on occasion we'll be asked to lay down that which served its purpose for its time or which stretched and troubled us so that we can move ahead into what's next.

4. The future will be comprised of what we ask, what we seek, and where we knock in the present. And it will be far better than we ourselves can imagine (Matt. 7.7-10). Asking, seeking, and knocking are each distinctive actions: to ask is to question and to pray, to seek is to pursue and learn over time, and to knock is to see and take the opportunity right in front of you. We shape our future by each of these - what we ask, what we pray about, what we pursue and search for over a period of time, and where doors we try to open will define us down the road. This is as true in our individual Christian lives as it will be for KirkWood as it seeks to be a "Love Big" church.

To sum it up, remember the wise words of Peter Drucker, the leading organizational leader and writer from the late 20th-century: "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

## **This Week and Your/Our Future**

1. Keep that short list of related but different verbs from Matthew 7 close at hand this week: think, pray, or journal about what questions you need to be asking in your life right now, what you need to be praying about on a regular basis, what you need to seek by investing time and energy over the next few weeks or more, and on what "doors" (opportunities) you need to be knocking.

2. Read Isaiah 43.18-19 every other day this week so that its crucial message sinks in and takes root: [Isaiah 43.18-19 NRSVA](#)

3. Here are three pieces about how to approach an unknown future, from a leading church consultant named Susan Beaumont. Though she's writing about congregations, her insights are equally applicable to an individual Christian life too:

[The Future Doesn't Exist Yet](#)

[Overwhelm: Not a Problem to be Solved](#)

[The Good Old Days and Other Works of Fiction](#)

4. For those who appreciate a good poem, here are two exquisite ones on the future:

[The Future by Matthew Arnold](#)

[A Short Analysis of Emily Dickinson's 'The Future never spoke'](#)