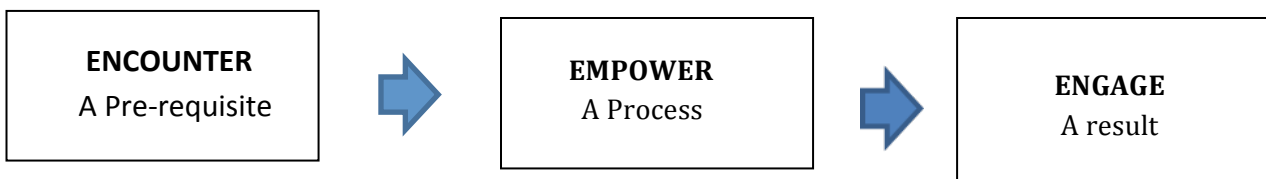


Topic: Building a Culture of Empowerment by Mr Rufus Chan, 19 Feb 2017

Text: Matthew 28:16-20, *The Great Commission*

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."



1. ENCOUNTER

- Our identity is formed when we encounter God.
- An encounter with God is a pre-requisite for empowerment.
- The disciples were shaped by their encounters with Jesus and were empowered to receive and carry out the Great Commission.
- Similarly, the apostle Paul had an encounter with God on the road to Damascus. He received a new identity (Saul → Paul) and turned from being a violent blasphemer to a missionary (Eg. Phil 3:7-9a "sake of Christ", "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"). "Knowing Christ" is emphasized 160 times in the Epistles.

2. EMPOWER

- Empowerment is the authority of power given to someone to do something
- Empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident (through Christ).
- Both definitions of empowerment feature in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) to fulfil the commandment to make disciples.

a) Who empowers us?

- i. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- ii. The church – Leaders should delegate responsibilities to the rest of the flock for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.
- iii. Situations that God may use to place a burden in our hearts

b) WHO do we empower?

- i. The poor and the foreigners amidst us: Levi 23:22 → the gleaning process provided opportunities for productive work for those who might otherwise have to resort to degrading work/ be exploited. An example of such an initiative in our local context

is dignity kitchen which provides hawker training for the poor and disabled to earn a living (taught to fish rather than being given a fish)

- ii. The next generation (youth and children): The installation of Sunday school teachers during the service is an example of how we empower teachers to empower the young.
 - iii. Each other: We are instructed to do so (ref 1Thess 5:11). This could take the form of mentoring (Paul to Titus – Titus 1:5-9)
- c) **HOW** do we empower? Through the model of Jesus, we learnt that...
- i) He spent time teaching: The timing of empowerment is important. ***A time of equipping should precede and go hand in hand with empowerment.***
 - ii) He let them fail: Examples – Mark 9:17-18; 28-29 and Peter’s denial of Jesus. However we should not give up on people when they fail (as Jesus forgave and restored Peter)
 - iii) He mentored them: The word “meno” appears in the NT 118 times and refers to an enduring relationship. Jesus used it to express the “steadfast relationship he had with his disciples”. Mentoring is about being available to walk with someone through a season of their life. The relationship needs to be filled with grace and trust to ask questions and provide honest feedback
 - iv) He provided a vision: Jesus assured his disciples He had given them the power before commissioning them.
 - v) He delegated: God wants to get us involved/take ownership but knows we cannot do it alone (See example of Moses in Exo 18:18 “you cannot handle it alone”)

3. ENGAGE

- Empowerment must result in engagement and transformation

Concluding Thoughts

- Our response to being called to ministry should not be “aiya kena arrow”. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit and need not fear our inadequacy. God doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called. **We should reflect on our culture/mindset towards service.**
- Empowerment is an eternal investment to bear “fruit that will last” (John 15:16)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the word “empowered” mean to you?
2. What has Jesus given us His authority for?
3. How is God’s empowerment similar or different from humanistic empowerment? What is God’s empowerment for?
4. Discuss this statement “God helps those who help themselves”. Is it true? Is it right?
5. What are some ways you can move away from the attitude “kena arrowed” when you are entrusted with an assignment?