

“Say Yes: It’s Bigger Than Me”
2 Corinthians 1:18-22 (NIV)
February 4, 2018
Rev. Dave Baldrige
Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orlS3yZr95A> (Andy Griffith Show, The Manhunt)

Something Big. Real Big. Big Big. Big ain’t the word for it! Direct from God special for us. Something Big. What I’m talking about is that you are anointed by God to Say Yes to something bigger than me and you. God has put His spirit in our hearts---for something Big.

²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Now that opening clip from The Andy Griffith Show is show that you may not be familiar with. In fact, this was from the 2nd episode of the First Season back in 1960. I grew up watching reruns and well, just watched this episode the other day.

What is Big is that God’s seal is on us, He has anointed us. We are His. That’s big!!! But what is Big Big is that we have the privilege to Say Yes and make a difference in the world for Him.

Oh, but it gets a bit confusing. The writer of Corinthians, Paul, says: **¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.”**

The promises of God through Jesus were a YES in Christ.

Sometimes we say “yes” and “no.” Next week the sermon is “Saying No to Say Yes.” You see sometimes we have to say no to others things to say Yes to God.

Today, Say Yes to God. It’s Bigger than me. Say out loud right now, “It’s Bigger than me!” What’s bigger than me! The privilege, opportunity to say yes about serving God. You see it’s not about me; it is about serving God, allowing God to use me. Wanting to serve Him for Kingdom purposes.

Many of you said “Yes” today and brought a can of soup (**Soup-er Bowl image**). Why even our students at Westlake Christian School, Said Yes and brought a can of Soup in (**pictures??**). These cans of soup will go to FEAST our local food pantry that was actually started by Palm Harbor United Methodist Church many years ago. It is now its own ministry and mission.

Now we did “Soup-er Bowl” because today of course is Super Bowl. Now I found this picture I wanted to share. You can take it as a sign from God, or can take it as simply something funny. (**church sign about Eagles/Patriots**).

Super Bowl, Souper Bowl. Now let me make sure you hear me clearly especially during this Say Yes Campaign. I don't normally quote myself. Hold it, if I'm speaking now does that mean I'm quoting myself. Oh well. Let me repeat what I said in the message last week and continue to add some context.

Last week I said, "I'm talking about serving right here on this campus. The ministries on this campus provide the foundation for the heart and missions around our community, county, and world. Jesus said "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth." Mission, ministry, witness begins at your home area. It begins right here. We want to foster a ministry mind and heart that we begin serving right here at this site."

Now that does not mean we serve at church to the exclusion of missions to county, state, nation and world. In the first couple of years I was here a staff-team member came to me saying that a person had come to her and said, "Since when did we become such a mission church." DUH---always. It is in our DNA. John Wesley the founder of Methodism said, "The world is our Parish." The mission of each United Methodist Church is to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." And the Great Commission in the Bible says, "Go make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19) We will always lift up missions here...it is who the church is.

PHUMC has literally given thousands of dollars each year to reach beyond these walls to love on our communities, counties and world. Thank you for the Pasco County Homeless ministry headed by Don and Jenny Lewis. See them to be involved. Thank you, Student Ministries, Soldiers for Christ for the serving of the homeless. The Peanut Butter and Jelly Marathon that feeds so many. Metropolitan Ministries, and thankful for the thousands of shoeboxes we send through Operation Christmas Child that go around the world. And of course, the Student Ministries trips to Belize and Immokalee. And today as was demonstrated by donations to FEAST. These are just *some* of the direct mission involvement.

But I have a Pastoral dilemma. If we were not doing what I just mentioned---going beyond these walls...can you guess what a sermon series I might feel led to give? Yes, a sermon series on we need to be go beyond these walls. And yes, you will continue to hear me emphasize that. But here is the dilemma. I'll be perhaps a bit blunt---just to let you know the concern. We have people very willing to serve beyond the walls, but we have difficulty getting ushers, children's workers, parking lot greeters, and people to serve with a mission right here at PHUMC.

PHUMC has and shows the spiritual gifts of compassion and mercy. Probably the most active in missions both world wide and local than any church I've served.

Our vision is to Gather God's people for worship. Grow disciples of Jesus Christ and Go serve the community and the world. Serve the community and the world. It is a both and. The community we are a part of is right here at 1551 Belcher Road and its members.

The rub comes in to be honest in that some of these positions here at the church are really not to glamorous. But the kingdom impact is huge.

The first church I was pastor of had not had a Vacation Bible School for years. I brought this up at a Trustee Meeting. A dear elderly faithful follower who was on Trustees pulled out his wallet and said, "How much you need, I'll donate." You know that was so precious, that was great...but what the church needed were people to serve to be able to have a Vacation Bible School.

You will find an Insert in your bulletin. Hospitality Team (image) We had a lot of response to being Greeters. Praise the Lord!!! But look at the other areas.

Now greeters have a big impact because they are greeting those who come. People of all ages. But they often are not the first ones' people meet. Guess who is---Parking Team. Now I'm not sure that any Said Yes to that team. It's a sacrifice. It's not a glorified position. But did you know it is often the first impression people get when drive on campus. It takes sacrifice. Serve on being on the parking team at one service and then attend the other. Sit one serve one. It's bigger than me and you.... it's a kingdom thing.

HISkidz Children's Ministry (image) Lots of opportunities to serve. It doesn't have to be every week. Do some time of rotational system---or twice a month, once a month. Serve at once service sit for worship the other service.

Student Ministries (image) Why who couldn't provide a snack supper maybe once a month. Get some Pizza.... doesn't have to be filet mignon. Of course, if it were....

Music and Arts (image) We'll never have to many in the various choirs. Oh, and the Audio/Video Ministry Team.... shout out to the great job week in and week out that they do!!!! Now with 3 services we need more volunteers. How about attend the 9:30 service, volunteer to help with audio/visual at the 11:05? Or worship at 8:05 serve at 9:30 Sit one serve one.

Sunday Worship (image) Do you know we pick people up for church in our buses? Why the church will even pay for your CDL license. And note on there Sanctuary Prep team. Different teams come in every Saturday to make sure here in the sanctuary that books are in place, prayer cards in pews, etc. It doesn't just poof happen. Sanctuary prep teams please stand. Behind the scenes making a big difference.

Service Teams (image) Church office volunteers. We need you. We'll train you. Not that many times a year we do a mile of Belcher Road Clean up. Turn out is often very low. Serve---many of these areas are not on Sunday morning.

Ministry Support Teams (image) Small group leaders.... you'll be trained.

Grab a card fill it out. Put it in the Said Yes bucket. **(image)** And also this week there are Team leaders in the Multi-Purpose Room down the hall from the lobby to your right to answer any questions. Say Yes and even run out to the Say Yes Board or the Multi-Purpose Room (just don't knock anyone over.) "God, I'm running for Your heart I'm running for Your heart Till I am a soul on fire) (THIRD DAY) SAY YES!!!!

Part of my sermon preparation for this message was reading a book by James A. Harnish, Jim who was long time pastor of Hyde Park United Methodist Church in Tampa. Jim is now retired. We've known each other for many years. He wrote a book last year called Make a Difference, Following Your Passion and Finding Your Place to Serve (Abingdon 2017)

In that book he says this: "The world doesn't need any more slumbering saints, but the world is desperately in need of ordinary people---like you---who hear the sound of a trumpet that awakens them to the challenge and opportunity of being a part of God's extraordinary word of transformation in this world." Page 36)

I'll blame the phrase "slumbering saints" on Jim!

What we are about in ministry and mission on this campus is Big. Bigger than you and me! It's God-sized big. It's about making a kingdom difference. Barney Fife said, "Something Big. Real Big. Big Big."

Albert Schweitzer said, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Assistant Children's Director, Nan Robins gave me a copy of a devotion she read. It had a great verse and she gave it to me weeks ago as it connected to the Say Yes series.

Here's the verse: **Numbers 16:9 New English Translation (NET Bible) ⁹ Does it seem too small a thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel to bring you near to himself, to perform the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the community to minister to them?**

Who is being addressed here is the Levites...the priests of Israel. Friends in 1 Peter 2 (vs. 5, 9) it talks about the "priesthood of all believers." So, we can apply this verse to us. Does it seem a small thing to you to serve. Oh, friends it is an honor. It's bigger than you and me.

How awesome that you get to do something to express your love for God? A Privilege to serve Jesus. Service of the tabernacle of the Lord. Stand before the community to minister to them. Where what community...the church...to serve Him, and to minister to the people of the church.

Oh, we are good with excuses. I'm too busy. I'm not good with kids. I don't know the Bible well enough. I really don't want to. I believe there is something for everyone to check on one of those Say Yes Cards.

Where are you serving???? The author of this devotion that Nan gave me says it is a **Him, Him, Them. Seek God (Him), Serve God (Him) Serve others (Them)**

Oh, it's no small thing when you serve God in any capacity. It's Big. Big, big. Real big.

In book, Jim Harnish says: “In a world that is intoxicated with bigness, we can easily be tempted to think that the little things we do make no difference. But in God’s economy, everything matters and every action either contributes to, or gets in the way of God’s kingdom becoming a reality in human history. What you do with your one, wild and precious life really makes a difference!” (page 142)

Be a part of something bigger than you. Make a difference with people’s lives. Say YES!

Jesus prayed and said “not my will, but your will be done.” He said Yes! That Yes made a difference in my life. He was crucified, dead, buried, resurrected and will coming back again for me.

The greatest yes is what Jesus did.

(Holy Communion)