

Now More Than Ever: Our Church – Various Scriptures

Ps 145 (Intro); Last week we talked about the need, Now More Than Ever, to *excel* in giving – giving regularly of our tithes, giving generously over and above our tithes . . . And sometimes giving sacrificially, to the point of doing without something we want or need; And if you missed that message, let me encourage you to go online . . . Or pick up a copy at Books & Things
B/c it's foundational, not only to what I'm going to say this week, but to living and giving God's way in general

Also, if you haven't yet received the 40 Day devotional that we passed out last week – please be sure to get one at the door after the service
I'd like everyone in our church to be working through this in the next few weeks

That said, I want to talk about all this, as it relates very specifically to *our church*
Especially our build-out; Realizing that many of you are new in the last year or two, and aren't likely to give anything at all, and certainly not sacrificially . . .
If you don't know anything about us
If you're not familiar with the work of ministry; Or the generosity and sacrifice of those who've preceded you

So I want to tell you about some of that, starting with our history

Know the history (Ps 145:4)

Recounting the deeds of God is something that's been modeled among his people for centuries; Going at least as far back as 1000BC and King David in Ps 145
Who says in v4 – *One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.*
That's how the goodness and greatness of God is passed on in the family, *and* in the church; With those first on the scene . . .
Recounting the history of what God's done, to those who come after them

- And that history for us, started in the Fall of 2003, when God began to place it on our hearts to plant a church somewhere; I was on staff at HBC-Naperville . . .
And through a series of decisions we moved here the summer of 2004, knowing of two couples who were interested in helping us

That was late August; And by early September, we had assembled a Launch Team of 20 people, and began meeting weekly to plan and pray
Over the next 2 months then, that 20 grew to 50
50 people who were compelled, committed, and contagious – and gave \$80K to get off the ground; Enabling us, on Nov 14th, against all odds, to meet in **Bettendorf HS** . . .
Where 463 people showed up, and we were off

- 7 months later we added a 2nd service, and began looking for a building or land
That's when this property popped up in the Fall of 2005, and we took a *giant* leap of faith the next Spring, to buy it for \$4.7M (**Building Photo**)
A leap of faith, b/c all we had was the \$150K we put down in earnest money
Not knowing if we could even secure financing as a church only a year and a half old
Let alone raise enough money for a down payment, and have some leftover to build it out; But the need was obvious, and the opportunity way too compelling, not to try

And so, by God's grace, in the Spring of '06, with 625 people coming (including kids) . . .
We raised \$1.6M in 6 weeks, and signed on the dotted line (**Sold Photo**)
And then raised another \$300K at the end of the year . . .
And moved in March 18, 2007 (**Photo of First Service**)

- A year after that, as our numbers continued to grow, we added a third service on Sat evening; And later that year, took over the south portion of the building from LaJames
A God-story in and of itself, b/c it enabled us to pay the mortgage at first, using their rent – but occupy the space when we needed it and wanted it
Which we did with minimal cost and few changes, in August of '08 – knowing that someday, Lord willing, we would reconfigure that space, and use it to the utmost*****
Which is what we're trying to do in the next few years with this build-out

That's our bricks and mortar, dollars and cents history – that I want you to know, and appreciate; Especially the sacrifice and generosity of those who've gone before you
But I also want you to know, so that you'll join the story yourself
So that you'll be all in, and join the work

Which is the next thing I want you to know about and *see*

See the work (2 Cor 10:7)

Know the history and see the work
Like Paul says in **2 Cor 10:7** – *Look at what is before your eyes.* See it
In that context, referring to God's work in *himself* . . .
While in this context, I'm referring to God's work in our *church*

You see, knowing what's gone on in the past is one thing
But seeing the work of ministry in the *present*, is another
And it's crucial to getting involved, and giving*****
So I want to take some time and show you some of the work, starting with our . . .

• Attendance

In the last few weeks, we've had about 2350 in our weekend services and CM
Representing about a 9.5% increase in our attendance year-to-year
Which is slightly higher than the *average* for churches like ours, and one aspect of the work God is doing to bring people through the doors; Another, is our . . .

• Giving

As I mentioned last week, we ended the year great
With our giving exceeding our budgeted need, and our spending, below our budgeted costs; Despite some large, unexpected outlays with our facilities and A/V systems

And, over the course of the year (**Chart**), those who gave the most, increased by 34%
Shown on this chart by this blue piece of the pie
That's pretty substantial, and very encouraging

What's not so encouraging, is the number of you who gave nothing at all
That remained the same – 1/3; As did those who gave between \$1 and \$500 – about 1/4
So there's still much room for improvement there, but I'm thankful for the progress . . .
And thankful for those of you who have oriented your heart, and ordered your lives, to give the way you do*****

Next, is our . . .

- **Ministries**

I want you to see the work of ministry, that all of your giving goes to support
And I've **listed** them out here, not to go through them all, but to give you an idea of the
overwhelming number and extent of the ministry that goes on around here

There are 18 different ministries listed there, most of which, represent even *more*
ministries; Like SM, and WM, and CM – all have ministries under them
In fact, **Service Teams** alone represents another 15 ministries – from greeting and
ushering, to security and the medical team

And then there's our **Global Outreach** ministry – representing our connection with 14
global partners, and *their* respective ministries
And then **church plants** with whom we're directly associated – like St. Vincent,
Chattanooga, Mexico City, and Fairfax, VA

And on that note, we have another *very* exciting opportunity, to partner with a group of
village churches and a Bible school, in **Myanmar** – formerly known as Burma
It's not a done deal, it's a closed country, and there are many obstacles
But they're thinking about folding in with us, and we'd be the liaison between them and
the **Fellowship**, HBF; Yet another aspect of our Global Outreach
So pray for that, will you?

On top of that, there's our **Local Outreach** ministry – representing our support and
involvement w/ various *local* organizations
Like YouthHope, and World Relief, and Century Woods

- And then a bit closer to home, in fact *in* the home – is our Orphan Care ministry
Under which, we've just established an **Adoption Fund**
Designed to help families in our church who are adopting – with financial grants, to help
them cover the cost
It's small at this point, only \$10k, so the grants will be small – but it's a start
And we hope to build on it as time goes by, as part of our work of ministry*****

All that, to point out that there's a lot going on around here, and I want you to see it
B/c God's definitely at work
Not only in growing people up in Christ, but drawing them to himself in the first place
Which is seen best in the waters of baptism; And that's the next category . . .

- **Baptisms**

Thus far in our 7 year history, we've baptized 551 people, and it never gets old
Take a look at the most recent ones (**Baptism Video**)

If you haven't been baptized as a believer, whether you received Christ last year, or 10
years ago – get baptized
It's the command of Christ to the church, it's the example of Jesus, and it's the pattern
in the NT – that when you're saved, you get baptized to show it; To proclaim it
To identify yourself as a follower of Jesus Christ

If you need to do that, our next Baptism Service is coming up February 11-12th

But you need to pick up a packet at the Welcome Center, or go online – and start
working through it so you can get it back to us before the deadline

See the work in our attendance, giving, ministries, baptisms, and last . . .

- **Testimonies**

The work of God in people's lives, who are growing in Christ, and overflowing to others
Here's another **video** (Maki's – God @ Work)
From the big picture, to individual lives – God's at work

And it's important to not only see it, but . . .

Catch the vision (Jn 4:35)

Even with all the ministry that's currently going on, and all that *has* gone on – NMTE
we need to catch the vision for more; for what *could* go on
Like Jesus said in **Jn 4:35** – *Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are
white [or ripe] for harvest.*

IOW there are people who are lost, and want to be found; They're ripe for harvest
People who are blind, and want to see; People in bondage, and want out
People in sin, who want to stop; But they lack the truth, and the power, and the
knowledge; It was true then, and it's still true now

And Jesus was like – lift up your eyes and see; Catch the vision
See the need; See the possibilities; See the opportunities*****

If we're going to do all we can to glorify God this side of heaven, and build the church as
a church – every single one of us has to catch the vision
The vision to do more, be more, love more, and reach more
The vision to speed the spread of God's Word, and see it honored among more and more
people

- That's why we're trying to do a build-out – b/c **there's a need**
A need for more *space*; A need for *better* space; A need to reach more *people*; And a
need to disciple them better; We're adding on b/c there's a need

For example, our *CM* area is not even close to being adequate in terms of classroom space
Nor is it very kid-friendly and inviting
John Walters and his team have done a phenomenal job with what they have – but we
need more, and we need better
And if we could do that phase, Phase 3 first, we would; But we can't, b/c our staff is
occupying a large portion of the space we need to renovate

Which is another reason we need to expand our building
Our *office space* is terrible; And I'm not talking about mine; I *have* a good office
But the rest of it – inhibits our interaction as a staff, reduces our efficiency, stifles our
productivity, and threatens our morale; Every single day
We're separated like mice in a maze, divided by make-do configurations, penned in w/
no outside windows, and crammed into spaces meant for half the number of people
In fact, we have so many staff in one particular area, it looks like Occupy Wall Street

We need more and better Children's space; We need more and better office space . . .

And we need more and better *SM* space – space designed with *them* in mind
Like a multi-purpose gym for our JH ministry – outfitted with a portable stage, and appropriate A/V
A place where they can worship, learn, and play – all in the same night
And the same is true of our HS ministry; We need a dedicated room, designed with them in mind – where they can hang out, worship, grow, and love to be
There's a need

- **And there's an opportunity**

We're doing a build-out not only b/c there's a need, but an opportunity to broaden what we currently do, do it better, and do more
Like reaching more kids through our mid-week club program, with a multi-purpose gym
And attracting students and adults with a sports ministry
And being able to disciple more people at one time, with additional classrooms
And expanding our Books & Things table with a *bookstore*
And blessing those who serve on our Worship & Production teams with a *decent* green room; And blessing the next generation with a great facility in general
And who *knows* what else; There's a need, *and* an opportunity

And it's important that you catch the vision, b/c there's also a cost

- **There's a cost**; A \$5.5m cost

And probably more, given what we think is best in Phase 3 (**3-D Drawing**), when we renovate the south end for the Children's and SM
This is different than when we first started, but it's a far better use of the space, and it's going to cost more

First however, comes Phase 2 (**drawing**) on the north end

Which includes 2 stories of classrooms at the front of the building . . .

A multi-purpose gym in the middle, with a kitchen attached . . .

And 2 stories of offices at the back of the building, with a green room attached

All of which you can see *much* better, in these 2 videos

The first is a fly-by on the outside, and goes pretty quick; So watch closely (**Outside**)

That's the outside; And here's the inside, starting at the back (**Inside 3-D**)

We'll have those videos on our website if you want to take another look

- In any case, there's a cost, that we've broken down into **4 Gifts**

Thanksgiving Gift – Nov 2010 – \$250K

Generous Gift – March 2011 - \$1M; So far, about 900k has come in

Sacrificial Gift – March 3-4, 2012 – \$3.5M

And that's going to require gifts of all sizes, but especially *large* gifts from those who can do so

Completion Gift – March 2013 - \$750K; 4 gifts, totally \$5.5M

Can we do it? I don't know; I honestly don't know (**Summary**)

But given our history, and the work that's going on, and the vision for more – the vision to speed the spread of God's Word, and see it honored among more/more people . . .

Given all that, we have to try; NMTE, we have to try

Pray – Lord, help us; You've done so much, with so few in the past . . .

And I trust that you can and will do much more, with so many in the future
Stir our hearts to give generously and sacrificially; Surprise us with gifts we couldn't imagine; Increase our faith; And prepare us for all that's ahead
And now, receive our tithes and offerings as an expression of our worship
Using them for your glory, and the advancement of our church – NMTE