

Finding Your Way Back (Part 2) / Harvest Update – Is 33:16

It's quite a privilege to praise the One from whom all blessings flow

And it's those blessings I want to talk about, first by finishing the message from last weekend, and then with a Harvest Update – Is 33:13-16

Based on the example of the Israelites in this passage (**Part 1 – Recap**), and God's words to them – we talked last week about how to find your way back to God

How to find your way back if you've been wandering in the desert of sin, or coasting on the road of complacency

A situation in which every single one of us finds ourselves from time to time; Some for a short time, others for a lifetime

But praise God, he offers a way back; And tells us how with 5 main principles

Reconsider God's work – both in the word, and the world . . .

Acknowledge God's power – to do whatever he wants in order to turn your heart

Observe God's effect – especially his effect on those in sin

Fear God's wrath – his wrath toward sin

And then last, **live God's way** – by cleaning up your act (**slide**), hating sinful gain, refusing to play favorites, condoning no violence, and entertaining no sin

That was last week, and that's how you find your back to God when you've wandered and need to repent; And if you do, you'll . . .

Reap God's blessing (v16)

That's the 2nd part of all this; And the best part; If you bear fruit in keeping with repentance, you'll reap God's blessing

V16 is very clear about that; Regarding the one who lives God's way, it says . . .

He will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure. That's a blessing

And it comes in 3 forms; The first of which is favor; Live God's way and you'll reap . . .

• His blessing of favor

Favor, b/c the *heights* in those days, the tops of hills, were considered a place of privilege

And if you lived there, you were not only considered more fortunate than most, but enjoyed special favor

And though the tops of hills may not carry the same meaning in *our* day, the blessing of God for those who live his way, does

If you live his way, you'll reap the blessing of his favor; Sometimes in the form of influence, sometimes impact, sometimes recognition, and always joy

It shouldn't be your goal, and it may not come immediately, but it *will* come

And you may have to walk through the valleys in order to *reach* the heights . . .

But if you humble yourself to live God's way, reach them you will – the blessing of God's favor will be yours; As will . . .

• His blessing of protection

Or as v16 says it – *his place of defense* [referring to the person who lives for the Lord] *will be the fortresses of rocks*; IOW he will be well protected and well secure

One of the best visuals of which is the 4th c. BC temple fortress called Petra (**Photo**)
That's a place of defense whose fortress is the rocks like the verse says

And a picture of the protection and security that's yours when you live God's way

Protection and security many times over, b/c your place of defense will be the *fortress-es* of rocks; It will be security *upon* security, protection upon protection*****

Does that mean your life will be without hardship? No; But it does mean you don't have to worry about the outcome

It doesn't mean you'll never suffer, but it does mean you'll never do so *alone*

It doesn't mean you'll never have any concerns, but it does mean u never have to worry

It doesn't mean you'll never be killed, but it does mean your *soul* will never die

In which case we're blessed with a divine protection and security, that's better than any rock fortress we could ever imagine

And then 3rd, if you live God's way, you'll reap . . .

• His blessing of provision

V16c – *his bread* [the one living for the Lord] *will be given him; his water will be sure*

IOW God will bless us with all we need

Which may not be everything *we* think we need; And certainly not everything *we want*

But it will definitely cover everything *he* knows we need

And you never have to worry about it – your *water will be sure*

Always there, and always available – according to his riches in glory (Phil 4:19)

If you live God's way, you'll not only reap the blessing of his provision, but the confidence that it will never end

➤ And here's the thing, the same is true of our church; **1 Cor 12:12** says . . .

For just as the body is one [the physical body] *and has many members* [many parts], *and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.* So it is with the body of Christ

It's comprised of many members, that are connected as *one* by God's Spirit, and therefore experience the blessings of God's *provision* as one

IOW to the extent that we live God's way as a *church*, we reap the blessings of God's *provision* as a church; His blessings of favor, and protection, and provision*****

And I want to encourage you with some of the ways we've been experiencing that recently, with a **Harvest Update**

I can't cover everything, which is a blessing in and of itself, but I do want to cover a lot

So this is going to come fast and furious, starting with our . . .

• West Davenport Campus

Led by Jeremy Hickman, our Campus Pastor, and we're really pleased with the progress thus far; 6 months in; Meeting at Williams Intermediate school on Division (**Photo**)

Running about 190 during the summer

But most encouraging is the ministry and *outreach*

Like our Student Ministries on Sunday evening at the school (**Photo**)

And the intramural program that the school is letting us run just beforehand

As well as the STAARS tutoring program that we initiated at the end of the school year, which helps kids who are at risk of failing*****

And that's in addition to **9 Small Groups; 43 in Women's Ministry** . . .

7 Children Dedicated recently; And **15 Baptisms**; That's the blessing of God's favor

- **Build-out**

In fact, it's the blessing of God's provision as well

Which you can well see is coming together (**Photo**); And there's more on our website
So that by next Spring, we'll have an additional 29k sq. ft. to use for ministry (**Layout**)
Including 2 stories of classroom space, a kitchen, bathrooms, multi-purpose gym, 2
stories of office space, and a green room/breakroom
All of which is phase 2 of a 3-phase plan (**Overview**)

The last part is to renovate the south end to expand and improve our facilities for CM/SM

- Unfortunately, it's not free, and as you can see in your bulletin (**slide**), we're \$600K short of our goal at this point
Phase 2 Goal = \$4.75M
Amount Received = \$4.14M
Shortfall = \$610K

But we decided to move ahead, b/c we have that amount in savings, and can cover the shortfall, if it doesn't come in by the time the project is complete; That's the good part

- The downside, is that we were saving that money, the \$600K, to offset the cost of Phase 3 (**Phase 3 = \$1.5M**) – which is going to be around \$1.5M
So our hope was to save about half that by the time we got there, and minimize the amount we'd have to raise
But having used most of the savings for Phase 2, we're not sure what that means for the timeline of Phase 3; So we're trusting the Lord for clarity on that as time goes by****

In the meantime, we can praise God for the blessing of his provision; B/c \$4.7M thus far, is no small feat; And the building is going up

3rd, I want to highlight our . . .

- **Ministries**

There's a ridiculous amount of ministry and discipleship going on around here, that's yet another example of God's favor; And it's flat out overwhelming; Starting with our . . .

Weekly Attendance – 50-100 higher than this time last year

With a summertime attendance ~**2100 – 420 Kids & 1700 Adults** across both campuses
519 Members; Overseen by 5 Elders and 5 Deacons
Supported by **29 FT Staff; 15 PT; 7 Interns** this summer

And that staff leads a massive amount of ministry and discipleship; Starting w/ . . .

- **Children's Ministries** – **Grady Adkins**
Did you know they offer **14 classes each service**?
Requiring **180 volunteers each weekend**
And **370 volunteers each month**

And this summer at **Camp** – **48 4-5th Graders**; 5 decisions for Christ
VBS – **350 kids**; 32% increase over last year; Supported by 200 leaders

And for the first time ever, we offered a **Creation Week** – **70 3-5th Graders**; With a plan to expand that significantly over the next few years
That's the blessing of God's favor

- **Student Ministries** – **Garth Glenn & Jeremy Hickman**

They meet every Wednesday night at 6:30; With pre-summer numbers of . . .

JH – 170 Students; 40 Leaders

HS – 130 Students; 35 Leaders

WinterJam (Feb) – **387 Students; 92 Leaders**, 100 volunteers, 40 host homes

Rock the Lot (May) – **500+ Students and Leaders**

HS Summer Camp (June) – **140 Students; 33 Leaders**

JH Summer Camp (last week) – **139 Students; 39 Leaders**; 20 decisions for Christ

HS Outreach Trip (last week) – **Guatemala; 13 Students; 5 Leaders**

JH Outreach Trip (early July) – **Kansas City; 21 Students; 4 Leaders**

- **Women's Ministries** – **Evie Gardner**

Bible Studies – **347 Women**

Summer Surge – **249**; And a crazy amount of care, prayer, and counsel

Men's Ministry – **John Cochran**

Bible Studies – **180 Men**

Summer Studies – **75 Men**

And back in March John spear-headed the **Love & Respect Conference** – **1482**

From 126 churches and 11 states; The impact of which continues

Small Groups – **Douglas Humphrey**

51 Groups; 723 people; College Group (summer) – **15 Students** each week; 35 total

- **Worship Team** – **Austin Tullos; Seth Slay**

60+ Band Members; Who lead worship in **4 Weekend Services; 2 Student Ministry Nights**; And **1 Alive & Free Meeting** every single week

And then various other events as they come up

Including a **Night of Worship** – **Friday, Sept 6th**

Opening for Newsboys in October

Hosting the **Vertical Church Band** this Fall, w/ Matt Maher/Meredith Andrews

In addition to all that, we're working on a **New Album** for next year

And constantly looking for new band members – especially drummers right now

Production Team – **Mark Zuiderveen**

Between the 2 campuses, the Production Team consists of **60+ Volunteers**

And it's called Production, b/c they're the ones that produce or facilitate, our worship and teaching

And not just in here; This team **Supports All Ministries**; *Throughout* the church, and throughout the week

If it has a switch, wire, cord, bulb, screen, computer, mic, or speaker – they're on it

- **Congregational Care** – **Kip Hamby**; Who oversaw . . .
35 Couples – **Marriage Mentors**

24 Couples – Marriage Enrichment Class

30 People – Finances Class

50 People – Biblical Soul Care – for corrective counseling and discipleship

Kip also acts as the liaison and point person for the Deacons, to distribute our Compassion Fund; And thus far this year . . .

40 Households Received Financial Assistance – totaling \$12K

On top of all that, Kip counsels 3-5 new people or couples each week, and makes 1-3 hospital visits; Another example of God's blessing

Discipleship Ministries – Bob Brueggen

School of Ministry – 23 Students; 3 Classes; Some working towards certificates, and others toward accredited degrees in Ministry and Theology

In addition to that, are our Discipleship Classes, like the . . .

Pre-Marital Class – 17 Couples in 2 different classes this past year

➤ **Outreach Ministries – Doug Rowland; Gary Pena**

In addition to preparing the short-term trips I've already mentioned, we also sent a group of 5 to Turkey (**Turkey Team – 5**) to help one of our Global Partners

Sent **1100lbs of Clothing** to St. Vincent

Packed **6000 Meals** for Children in Monmouth – something we do in partnership with a local church there

And we're going to do that again this Fall with **50K meals** – calling it Feed The City

Adoption Fund – \$5000 Disbursed to help several families in our church adopt

Century Woods Soccer Camp (June) – 40 Kids

Century Woods BBQ (June) – 400 People

New Local Partner – 180 Zone, a post-prison ministry

Papua New Guinea NT Dedication – October

Support 15 Global Partners

Contribute to **Harvest Bible Fellowship** to plant more churches

Oversee 8 HBC's; And **Lead 9 More** in our Mid-West region; That's God's favor

➤ And did you know that in the midst of all that, and b/c of all that, we baptized 112 people this past ministry year? That's **714 Baptisms** in 8 ½ years?

And I love this Register note from a grandmother who was here to see her adult grandson get baptized last month; She writes . . .

"I am so thankful that my grandson found a church that tells the old, old story. Christ go with you and your church." (**Summary**); Amen; And we're going to keep telling it

That's our ministries; And for each one, there's that much again, and more

Despite the fact that we've had some bumps in the road recently with our staff

But we continue to fulfill our ministries, we continue to live God's way, and we continue to move ahead

And God continues to bless the work of our hands with his favor, and protection, and *provision*

Which brings us to our last highlight, and that's our . . .

- **Giving**

3 Things I want to hear on this

Our **Giving vs Last Year – Better**

Our **Giving vs Need – Behind**

Our **Giving vs Spending – Good**

Compared to our giving (**highlight**) at this point last year, we're doing better

Per *person* giving is a little higher, and our average offering is higher by about \$2K each week; That's encouraging

So thank you; And God bless you for your faithfulness; Especially through thick/thin

➤ That said (**highlight**), our giving vs our *need*, is behind; B/c there's more and more going on

Y-T-D Need – \$2,377,800

Y-T-D Received – \$2,268,764

Shortfall – \$109,036

Now, that's not abnormal in the summer; And we usually catch up in the 3rd and 4th quarters; But it's a little steeper hill to climb this year . . .

Due to a higher budgeted need; Especially in the 4th quarter

So that's a bit of a concern*****

➤ The good part (**highlight**), is that we're spending less than what's coming in – our giving vs spending is *good*

Unexpected costs are pretty low right now, and we've been able to defer some ministry expenses; That's good, and that's our giving (**Summary**)

All of which I hope encourages you and spurs you on to keep living God's way, so as to reap his blessings both in your *own* life, and in the life of our church

Prayer – We praise you God, from whom all blessings flow; Including the blessings of favor, protection, and provision

And we give now *tithes and offerings* – to further your work, and reap your blessings, even more