

The Road 2017 Vision

Ephesians 3:7-11, 20-21

Introduction

Three principles that guide us

For his glory

We just read it – unto him be glory in the Church throughout all generations... God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus is to display his wisdom in the Church.

The Church is a show case designed to display the glory of God.

For his gospel

Good news that changes your life forever? Finding out Carrie was expecting

The gospel is good news that changes your life forever.

What is the gospel?

It's the good news that although we are by nature God's enemies, his love moved him to devise a plan to rescue a people from their sins. At infinite cost to himself, he sent his only son, who he loved, and Jesus willingly went to the cross, bearing the guilt and shame of his people and standing in our place he paid in full the penalty for our sin and the ransom price to set us free. Jesus lived the life that we should have lived and died the death that we should have died, and in so doing has brought us back into fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Do you realize what this means? This means that you, you right there where you are, if you're eyes have been opened to see how hopeless your case is apart from Christ, no matter how good you are, you are desperately ruined if he doesn't rescue you. And you've seen that he is the only hope for your rescue, And you have by grace put your faith in him. Do you realize that God has brought you out of your slavery to sin, put new clothes on you (the royal robe, etc), brought you into his family. And now, when God the Father looks at you he doesn't see your sin, your failures, and your mistakes, he looks at you and he sees what Christ has done and he pronounces over you, "This is my beloved son or daughter, in whom I am well pleased!"

Here at The Road we believe this gospel changes everything. And it shapes and drives everything we do. So just like becoming a parent changes everything. The gospel informs everything that we do.

For his goodness

Ephesians 1:7-8 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Our intuition says that if I devote my life to loving and serving others, then there's not going to be anything left over for me. Aren't you so glad that Jesus didn't look at you that way? But life in Christ empowered by he Holy Spirit means that the more we give of ourselves the more blessed we are.

Three areas of our life together as a Church

Worship

On one hand as a believer every moment of your life, from the big moments to every mundane moment, is to be lived before the face of our God as an act of worship.

And yet there's more to it than just that. God's wisdom is displayed in gathering his people into a body. Our ability to magnify God's glory is multiplied when we do it together instead of alone.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

The very word Church means a group of people who are assembled together. It's an assembly. It's a congregation (congregate).

Since we started gathering here last April on Sunday mornings, I have been so incredibly blessed. I can't wait to get here every Sunday morning. When I see your faces coming through that door, my heart is warmed and I am glad. God doesn't owe us his blessings on our public worship service...

My prayer is that in 2017, our gathering together would become more precious than ever. When we gather for worship, we need to come hungry. We need to come hungry to see and taste God's glory. We need to come thirsty for fellowship with God and his people. I want us to make worship a high priority. How can we do that?

1. We can see what a high priority God places on it.
2. We see how desperate our souls are for it.
3. We come having prepared our hearts for it and expecting God to bless.
4. Pray for our times of worship
5. Invite people

In 2017 we want to continue to make the gospel the focal point of all our worship. If the gospel is true (and it is) then it ought to affect what we sing, how we sing, what we pray for and how we pray and what gets said from this pulpit.

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

* Every issue was viewed through the lens of the gospel.

Community

While I believe that our public worship on Sunday mornings are the highlight of our week together. It's not the only thing we do as a Church. On the one hand we need a powerful meeting every week as we come together. But on the other, if that's all we're doing well, then I don't think we'll be doing well at all as a Church.

We need, continually, to become more and more interconnected in our lives. We will never do a good job at discipleship if we only see each other once a week. There's no way we can only spend an hour and a half a week together and truly grow in Christ the way we're designed. And honestly, every single one of us here, pastors included need more biblical teaching and training than we can possibly get here on a Sun. morning

In order to cultivate "Community" at The Road, one of our main strategies is through Life Groups. I say strategy because we really are attempting to be strategic in this aspect of our discipleship. Meeting in smaller groups in our homes gives us an opportunity to practice practice and receive hospitality. Opening our homes is a tangible way of using the resources God's blessed us with for the kingdom.

It's also very powerful to experience life together with other believers in a different context than a formal worship service. Do you realize what a blessing it is to be able to dive deep into the word of God together, to laugh together, and spend time getting to know one another? You and I regularly need those types of opportunities to come together and pray together for each other for the kinds of things we may not be able to share in front of the whole Church on a Sunday morning.

In addition to Life Groups, in 2017, we'd like to groups of 2 or 3 believers getting together regularly to pray together and hold each other accountable. In my life, there are things that I need to share and I need help with that simply aren't appropriate for another man's wife to hear. One of the basic principles of discipleship that I think we miss is that every single one of us needs to have someone pouring biblical truth into us and we need to be pouring into others as well.

I understand in asking for commitment to things like Life Groups and these other types of meetings is asking a lot. I want to be respectful, I know we all have responsibilities that must be met. But I don't think it's too much for Jesus to ask for us to order all of our other responsibilities around his redemptive purposes. I'm pretty sure every single one of us here are overly involved in things that have no eternal value. Let's let 2017 be the year that we let Heaven know that we are here and we are ready to be sent and used by God.

And do you see what a blessing this stands to be for our children? So much of the American Church is centered around kids programs. And I'm sure that there are great kids programs out there that are doing a good job teaching kids the gospel. And we certainly have a lot of work to do here in regards to our children's ministry. But could you hear me for just a minute? Nothing, and I mean nothing can replace the value of our children being plugged in to the community of a vibrant family of faith.

Imagine this... week in and week out little Johnny watches mom and dad worship with the Church. Week in and week out he sees his parents grow more Christ-like. Do you realize the value in little Johnny witnessing over a couple of decades the Holy Spirit working on his parent and witnessing how much they value Christ's worship. And on top of that, not just little Johnny's parents, but little Johnny himself is a valuable part of the community. Little Johnny is running around the knees and feet of gospel loving believers who love him and will invest in him. And when little Johnny gets to be 15 or 16, you know, that age when the parents seem to become the dumbest people on the planet, little Johnny's got dozens of people from his age on up to his grand parent's age who are intimately connected to his life. And when he goes off to college, and he meets the winsome, intelligent atheists, and his faith gets challenged, he's going to know that one of the reasons he can't just walk away from his faith, is because he'd break the heart of his whole Church. Little Johnny didn't just get shipped off to children's church and youth group to be baby sat and entertained. He was connected, he was an important part of the life of the Church. And if he even thinks about walking away from Christ and his Church, every single one of us is going to be right there, in tears pleading with him not to go.

Mission

We are a missional people because our God is a missional God. If we have seen God's glory, if we have come to see and believe the beauty of the gospel, if we have tasted the goodness of our God, then there's no way we can hoard those blessings to ourselves.

If we truly know Christ and the blessing of his fellowship, then our entire existence should be centered around the worship of Christ and the advance of his kingdom. What percentage of your life is actually centered around Christ? Are you committed to Christ in some aspects of your life but other areas you keep separated off? Have you surrendered all that you are to Christ?

Do you see your family, your job, your relationships, your time, your home, your money all as resources that Christ has given you to invest in his kingdom. In other words, have you come to see that all you have is given to you by God to help you demonstrate that Christ, not your things, is your greatest treasure? And that all you have is used to help others see and glorify him for the treasure that he is?

So if you have a spouse or children, your main job is to help them see Christ more clearly and love and worship him more passionately. Do you have a job? Do you see your job as mainly a way to earn a pay check and supply all the things you need and want? Or do you see your job as a tool that God has given you to help others come to know Christ better?

In 2017 I want to challenge you, and I challenge myself, that we live intentionally to advance Christ's kingdom. What are some ways that you could do that practically.

1. Specifically build relationships with lost people with the goal of sharing Christ with them.
 - a. Invite them out for coffee
 - b. Invite their family for a visit in your home
 - c. Get to know them
2. Invite people to worship with us on Sunday mornings.
 - a. Lost people who need the gospel
 - b. People who think they're saved but have never truly repented and believed the gospel
 - c. People who are truly saved but are nearly starving to death, for lack of a faithful gospel ministry
3. Invite people to our small groups
4. Take steps to grow in your ability to share the gospel with others

We need to start dreaming and praying big around here. I know we're not there yet but I want us to become known, not for how many people we have coming to The Road but for how many people we are sending out.

Missionaries

For

His glory

His gospel

His goodness