

Something To Be Amazed About – Hab 1:5

God is good, isn't he? Can't believe this day is here

Strange combination of feelings – numb with excitement, nervous with butterflies

Totally in awe; Completely overwhelmed – all at same time

Feel like I'm just starting to understand the Psalms of praise – *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his steadfast love endures forever* (Ps 136)

Thankful for all the people he used to bring this about (bulletin insert)

Harry Coin, Chad Irwin (American Bank and Trust); Doug Pasma (Goss/Pasma Arch's)

Bryan Zarn, Steve Daxon, Chris Rolling (Russell Construction); Many sub-contractors

Bruce Smith (AVL consultant with Church Solutions)

Thank you all, for all you've done

Going through my nostalgia file this week – reflecting on how far we've come

Ran across a schematic drawing for our sound set-up dated Oct 10, 2004 (Launch Tm)

Just to give you an idea of how far we've come –

Schematic of our audio system *now*; **Schematic** *then*

We've come a long way

Seems that everywhere you look in our church, there's something to be amazed about

That should come as no surprise – that's how God works

Hab 1:5 – Israelites were struggling; Hab cried out to God (2); God answers (5)

Look among the nations and see, wonder and be astounded . . .

While we're not struggling, God has obviously continued to do an amazing work

You need look no further than the subsequent pages of the NT with the life of Christ and early church to see it

This morning, we have to look no further than these 4 walls to wonder and be astounded

To see the unbelievable work that God has done, and continues to do

There's literally something to be amazed about around every corner

But it's . . .

Not the beauty of our building, but the wonder of God's presence (Mt 18:20)

Yes, this is a beautiful place; Worship Center – phenomenal

The architectural design – so cool; CM – kid-friendly/fun; The Café – warm/inviting

But that's not what makes this place so amazing

Ultimate Electronics had a very cool design as well, but they weren't that amazing

The most amazing part is the wonder of God's *presence*

The people of Solomon's day (300 years before Hab) knew it well – they couldn't miss it

2 Chron 7:1-3 says (read) . . . They couldn't miss the wonder of God's presence

Though nobody expects God to do that here and now, his presence is every bit as real and awesome, as it was there and then

Where [even] two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them (Mt 18:20)

I think we qualify; Can be assured of his presence

It's been our prayer from the start of our church, that when someone walks in, they can't miss the wonder God's presence

Whether a visitor or regular attender, I hope that's true this morning as well . . .

Because when everything else is stripped away –

God's presence is the *only* thing, that distinguishes us from any other club or org.

When the Israelites were leaving Mt Sinai in Ex 33, Moses said –

“God, if you don't go with us, there's nothing to distinguish us from any other nation on the face of the earth”

“If you don't go with us, I don't even want to go”

Same is true of our church – if God's not present, I don't even want to open the doors

I'm not interested in a bless-me club where we pat each other on the back each week, then go our separate ways

I'm interested in a church where God is present, we're amazed, and our hearts are knit together as one

When that happens – *that's* something to be amazed about

Not the beauty of our building, but the wonder of God's presence

Not the size of our crowd, but the passion of our praise (James 5:13)

A lot of people are coming; More and more; Faster and faster

That's all well and good, but what's amazing is that . . .

More and more people are coming who are more and more passionate about their praise

Who take seriously **James 5:13** – *Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.*

We're passionate about praising God, not because we have to, but because we're happy

We can't help it

Any time you love someone; treasure them; adore them – you're happy

And praising them is your delight; It's what you want to do; You can't help it

That's why people write love letters and gush all over the page – praising their lover is their delight

That's why the Psalms are filled with passionate praise

They're written *by* people and *for* people who love and treasure God

But if God is not your highest love, praise will never be your passion, and worship will always be a duty

That's exactly where some of you are

Because God is an *option* for you; Because he's a convenient *add-on* to your life . . .

Praise and worship is a duty, not a delight; A drudgery, not a passion

- You're like the husband who comes home one evening, and decides to praise his wife for anything and everything he can think of

[By the way – any resemblance to real people or events is purely intentional]

Great meal, looks great, great mom, wife, clean house, her beauty, etc

After kids go to bed, she says – not sure what you've done wrong, but I sure do appreciate your praise

He says – it's no big deal; I have to, it's my *duty* (don't try that at home)

Does he love her like he should? Does he treasure her? No

If he did, his praise would be his *passion*, not his duty

Passionate praise is the joyful overflow of delight in God

Joyful overflow of a sold-out love for him

Overwhelming desire to express gratitude for who he is and what he's done

That's passionate praise – that's something to be amazed about

Not the size of our crowd, but the passion of our praise

Not the beauty of our building, but the wonder of God's presence

Not the success of our effort, but the miracle of God's provision (1 Chron 29:16-17)

We've worked hard, no doubt – invested a lot of time, effort, and money in this place

We've seized opp's and given sacrificially

But great effort never guarantees success in and of itself

The only thing that guarantees success is the miracle of God's provision

Without it, the work of our hands, the sacrifice of our giving, and the process of our planning would all be for naught

Lots of churches work hard and give sacrificially and don't have anything like this to show for it

It's not our effort that makes the difference and brings success

It's the miracle of God's provision – that's something to be amazed about

- Many of you know the *miracles* of God's provision in starting our church – many don't
Moved here summer of 2004 – 2 couples came with us from HBC-Glen Ellyn
Knew of 2 couples here who were interested in planting a church
Before ever arrived, 3 committed to come on staff for *free* – miracle of God's prov.

Through a “chance” meeting on the street, first PwtP was born July 25th, 2004

Eventually formed a Launch Team that met in living room the first Thursday of Sept
20 people showed up – compelled, committed, contagious – miracle of God's prov.

Had no money – my salary paid for first 9 months by HBF

Over 2 months, Launch Team grew from 20 to 50

Gave 80k to purchase worship equip and pay an AA – miracle . . .

Nov 14th we were allowed to meet in HS when didn't seem possible – miracle . . .

7 months later we added a 2nd service; Began looking for a building or land

When this property popped up

Raised 1.6m in 6 short weeks; Secured remaining financing

Closed on it May 15th when it wasn't even for sale

10 months later here we are – that's a miracle of God's provision

That doesn't even touch the hundreds and hundreds of changed lives

Our entire church is a miracle of God's provision

Only he could have brought so many people together, in so short a time, to accomplish so much, with so little

That's something to be amazed about

To keep a proper perspective, chose **1 Chron 29:16** to remind us that it's *all* God

After the Israelites gave so much to build their first temple, David prayed –

O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.

All that we have given – time, talent, effort, treasure – came from God; and is still his

It's not the success of our effort or the sacrifice of our giving that's so amazing

It's the miracle of God's provision – be amazed at that

Not the eloquence of our words, but the power of God's message (Rom 1:16)

Not about great signage, glossy brochures, well-written prose, smooth preaching

It's about the power of the message

Read 1 Cor 2:1-5 – the power to change your life and mine, forever

If you're going to be amazed, be amazed not at the eloquence of our words, but the power of God's message . . .

He became flesh; Lived a perfect life

Died for your sins – a perfect sacrifice

Taking your place so you don't have to face the death of eternal separation from God

Rose again for your life – proving that his sacrifice was sufficient to forgive sins

Guaranteeing your life *with* him, now and forever

That's the message; No wonder Paul said . . .

I am not ashamed of the gospel [message, good news], *for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes* (**Rom 1:16**)

It's the power that God uses to save those who believe

Save them from the consequences of their sin; From an eternity apart from God

Salvation is not yours just because Christ died and rose again – historical fact

It's yours because you *believe* that when he died, he died for *you*

And rose again for *your* life

It's a belief of the heart that says . . .

I trust Jesus

I trust him to save me from my sins

I trust him to keep me by his side now and forever

I trust him with my life, no matter what

I'm sorry for my sins

God, I'm sorry for grieving you

I'm sorry for offending you

I'm sorry for living my way, and not yours

I commit

I commit to live your way, not mine

I commit to make you look good in my life

I commit to do whatever you want me to do

Do you believe? I long for some of you to get it

You might be thinking – “I'm already a Christian”

But are you a follower of Christ?

Labels are cheap – I don't care what label you have; Neither does God

What I care about is whether you're a child of God, adopted into his family by virtue of your faith in Jesus Christ and the repentance of your sin?

Your religion doesn't save you

Your church affiliation doesn't save you; Belief in the traditions of man

Adherence to religious rules; Good works or good life doesn't save you

Eph 2:8-9 – [It's] *by grace you* [are] saved, *through faith* [belief/trust in who Jesus is].

And this [saving] *is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works*

Do you believe?

Maybe you're thinking – "I hear what you're saying, but I don't think I'm that bad"

"I don't think I need all this" – think again; Bible says . . .

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)

There is none righteous, no not one (Rom 3:10)

Your sin separates you from (Is 59:2)

The wages [consequences] *of sin is death* (Rom 6:23)

The death of separation from God in the eternal torment of hell (no second chances)

Also says the *gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 6:23)

If your heart is pounding with the power of that message

Urge you to *believe* – that when Jesus died, he died for you, in your place

Confess your sins in genuine repentance – "God I'm sorry and I'm done"

Trust him to save you – now and forever

Commit to living his way – for the rest of your life

Make this the day of your salvation

Don't just be amazed at the power of God's message in others

Embrace it and be amazed at his power in *your* life

Prayer of salvation

God, I believe your message, that you . . .

Died for my sins

Taking my place so I can be saved from the death of eternal separation from you

Rose again so that I could live with you forever, starting right now

I'm sorry for my sins – please forgive me; I'm done living my way

Come into my life – I trust you to save me and keep me forever

I commit to live for you – no matter what

If prayed to receive Christ – raise your hand; wait to acknowledge

Pray for you; Rejoice w/ you

Pray

Bless and protect each one; Carry them; Knit them together with us

You have *so* carried us

We certainly have something to be amazed about

Bask in your grace and goodness

Sing 2 songs

Some of you may want to come and kneel

Thank God for all this – miracle of his provision, the wonder of his presence

For those who accepted Christ – you too may want to come forward

Get on your knees before God and solidify the commitment you just made

If you'd like to talk or pray *with* someone, just find me

That said, I think more praise awaits him in this place

Let's stand and offer it with the passion he deserves

Close

If you gave your life to Christ this morning

Or you're not quite there but want to know more . . .

Pick up New Believers Packet – up front, Welcome Center, ushers

Tell someone – the one who invited you; another believer; me/elders

As you read your Bible and pray, you'll find that you have much to be amazed about

There's life after March 18th – same place, same times next week

Starting an Easter series – *3 Days that Changed the World*

Last few chapters of Luke