

01/10/10

## **Why are We Here—Where Are We Going—and How Do You Fit In? Planning Our Progress and Joy in the Faith – Philippians 1:21-25**

- each Sunday morning I have the privilege of praying with Pastor Dutton, Doc Smith, and Dave Jones before the first of our three worship services...
- it is a wonderful opportunity to commit the day to the Lord and ask for His help for all the ministries that will be held all around our campus each Lord's day...
- I didn't have that privilege this morning, at least not with Doc Smith, because of his injury and surgery this week...
  - we mentioned a little bit of what occurred during our prayer time this morning, but let me fill in some more of the details of what happened...
  - you remember that it was brutally cold here Monday – somewhere in the neighborhood of 15 degrees...
  - Doc and Leona's mailbox is about 2/10 of a mile from their house and Doc decided to walk out and get the newspaper...the driveway had been cleared and he planned to be careful but thought the walk would be some good exercise...
  - he didn't mention to Leona that he was leaving...he wouldn't be gone that long...
  - the plan went well until he got out to the mailbox...there was an area that hadn't been cleared and even though he tried to be careful, he fell and broke his hip...
  - he knew as soon as he tried to put any weight on it that the hip was broken—the question then became...what to do now...
  - he couldn't walk...it was 15 degrees out...and he was 2/10 of a mile from home...
  - so he did what any 80 year old man would do...he rolled over on his good side, and began slowly dragging himself on the ice back home...
    - he would drag for a while, then rest, pray, and call out for help...
    - at about the halfway point, after being outside for nearly an hour...a neighbor boy saw him and called Leona and got the help he needed...
  - it was interesting to talk to Doc at the hospital...he said that there were times when he wasn't sure he was going to make it, and as a physician he knew what would happen if hypothermia set in...it was tempting to just roll over and go to sleep...as a Christian he knew what the next step in that plan would be, and it's not a bad one...
    - but he also believed for hundreds of reasons that he needed and wanted to try his best to get home or get help if at all possible...
    - he was also very concerned at the hospital about any inconvenience this injury was going to cause the rest of us...
    - we had our annual pastor/deacon's planning retreat yesterday—Doc is our chairman of deacons, so he was concerned about missing the meeting...
    - then there's our upcoming BCTC—Doc is scheduled to speak 15 times, and with an anticipated 1500+ guests coming, Doc wants to be able to fulfill that responsibility...
    - so there's this tension of wanting to go home and be with Christ, but also wanting to continue to love your family and serve your Savior with all of your might...
- if you're familiar with Scripture, you're probably already thinking about a character in God's Word who had an incredibly similar experience...I'd like us to use that passage as a way of kicking off our church's new ministry year this am...
- with that in mind, please open you Bible to Philippians chapter 1...page 154 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you...we're talking this morning about...**Why Are We Here, Where Are We Going, and How Do You Fit In?—Planning Our Progress and Joy in the Faith...**

- for those who are new to our church, we begin each year with a discussion of these three important questions...and we try to gain a better understanding of what we believe God wants us to accomplish as a church in the coming year...
- it's almost like the coach's talk in the locker room...to be sure that we all have our heads in the game...
  - Coach Keady, the long-time basketball coach at Purdue used to use that phrase a lot...
  - he would be bewildered when his players would enter the Big Ten season and go through periods of time in the game where they didn't seem to realize what was at stake...
  - and he would say – how much more important would this have to be?...you're on an athletic scholarship, you're playing in the Big Ten, we're at the height of our season...and your eyes look like 1000 miles away...
    - you're on the court, your body is in the game...but your head is somewhere...
    - we don't want to be like that as a church, ever...because what we're involved in is a whole lot more important than the current basketball season...we are dealing with matters of eternity...
- another way of saying that is – we really want to be a mission-driven church...
- so the answer to the question, why are we here never changes because it rooted in the unchanging truth of Scripture...
- if you have not done so, or done so recently, I would encourage you to carefully read our church family's 5 year strategic plan...[available at the welcome center...]
- inside this document, you'll find our church's mission statement which answers the question of why we're here...
- **The mission of Faith Baptist Church is to glorify God by winning people to Jesus Christ and equipping them to be more faithful disciples.**
  - we take each one of those words and each one of those concepts directly from Scripture...
  - and there are many things that this church never gets involved in because it would not fit into our mission...
    - what does that have to do with glorifying God?, or effective outreach?...faithful equipping/discipleship?
    - if the answer is – nothing – then we don't put any time, resources into it...
    - your pastors/deacons function in some ways as gate-keepers---there are a lot of people and organizations that would like to have access to you that we prevent...because doing so would take our eyes off the mission...
    - on the other hand, there are other things we do tirelessly...because it's central to the mission...
    - we just came through a concentrated period of time of outreach because our culture is especially open to the message of Christ at Christmastime...and so many people around here were flat-out flying...not because it was easy or convenient, but because it was consistent with our mission...
    - it is crucial that everyone understand why we're here...and be committed to/fired up about the privilege of participating in the accomplishment of that purpose...
- then, where are we going?...that's a different question...that requires us as a church family having an understanding of the times...being able to carefully and accurately analyze where we are as a church...our strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats...
  - and where our community is...
  - and then trying to lay out with laser like accuracy – what is the best way to accomplish our mission in the next 12 months...with the least expenditure of resources and the greatest amount of effectiveness...

- if we're "here now"...and we believe God wants us to get "there then"...what are the specific steps to make that happen...
  - that's where this handout in the bulletin comes in...I'll be referring to this all morning to be sure everyone understands the ministry plan our congregation assembled, along with a few bonuses because of more recent developments after our 5 year plan was developed...
  - now, one of the questions I would encourage you to ask is – do those two answers fit together...
    - in other words, is "where we're going" truly consistent with the mission God has given us?...are we staying on track with why we believe God has called us together?...none of us should invest our resources in anything unless that question can be answered in a strongly affirmative way...
- lastly, how do you fit in?...
  - hopefully that will become more apparent as we study this passage together...but here's the short answer...there is an important place for every person on the team...even if you've just started attending our church...
  - Christianity is not a spectator sport...the gym has no bleachers...so if it's my job to be sure we are answering the first two questions properly---ultimately it's your job to be sure you have identified and are acting on the correct answers to the third...how does the Lord want you to fit into what He is doing here?...
- with that in mind, let's read our text...read **Phil. 1:21-26**...
  - if you're in the habit of writing in your Bible, I would encourage you to underline that phrase at the end of verse 25 – "**for your progress and joy in the faith.**"
  - that's what we're doing this morning – we're planning our progress and joy in the faith...
- with the time we have remaining, let's look for **3 characteristics we want to guide us in 2010.**
- I. In 2010, We Want to Organize Our Lives Around Our Savior.**
  - **Phil. 1:21 – For to me, to live is Christ...**
    - if you think the grammar of that verse is a bit unusual, you're right...
    - in the language in which the NT was written, it was possible to use word order to especially emphasize certain concepts...
    - and Paul is saying – I recognize that I have a decision to make – who/what am I going to organize my life around?...how am I going to define my existence?...what is going to direct and guide me every day?...
    - and Paul says – I've made that decision...for to me to live...is Christ...
    - now, it's important for us to recognize that he was not making that comment from a hot-tub...
    - it's not that his circumstances were so rosy that he could sit back and pontificate in some religious-sounding way about something that had not cost him something...
  - A. In Paul's setting.**
    - where was Paul at this point in his life and ministry?...
    - in jail...that's why we refer to the book of Philippians as one of the prison epistles...
    - and, some Christians were actually taking advantage of his imprisonment and criticizing him, and trying to undermine him and there is very little he can do about it...
    - but Paul's not whining about that, or depressed about...he's fired up...there is a significant emphasis on the concept of joy in this book...
    - in part, because of the faithfulness of the men and women in the Philippian church...

- this book is actually a thank you note...the Philippians had taken up a love offering and sent it to Paul to meet his needs...**Philippians 4:18-20 - But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.**
- so sure he was in prison, but he wasn't serving God alone...
- that's why he spoke of their efforts at the beginning of the book as...**Philippians 1:5 - in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.**
- they were jointly serving Christ...and that's what his life was all about...
- that's why he was praying in verses 9-11...**Philippians 1:9-11 - And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**
- he wasn't moping in prison – he was praying in prison...that his friends would be progressing in organizing their lives around their Savior...
- and even with these people opposing him...he could even find reason to rejoice in that...[if time – read 1:12-13]...
  - he wasn't wound up about being in prison or about this opposition because his life was not focused on his comfort or his approval...
  - see, “for to me to live is Christ...”...he was organizing his life around His Savior...
  - and when it comes to what we want 2010 to be all about, that encapsulates it as well as anything else...
- now, how do we specifically plan to get there?...let's not talk about this in some non-descript ethereal way that isn't going to actually get us anywhere...
- B. In our study of the Scripture.**
  - you'll notice in your initiatives under growing stronger, that we are planning to study the book of 1 Corinthians this year...
  - here's the thinking behind that...God has blessed our church numerically in some rather dramatic ways...
  - **show 20 year growth graph...**
  - now, I say this all the time – we are not about numbers – that is not our primary goal...but if we're focused on accomplishing our mission and Jesus was serious about keeping His promise to build His church, we shouldn't be surprised at this...
  - and on the one hand, it's a great blessing, and on the other it's a significant responsibility...
    - so we've chosen the book of 1 Corinthians because it is a book that was written to a church that had a lot of growing to do...
  - and it is a book that is intensely practical, but it is simultaneously very Christ-centered, or gospel centered...so we think it's the perfect book for us to study right now...
  - that's part of what we mean by “taking the next step...” – wherever you are in your spiritual journey, allowing God to use His Word to help you identify and take the next step in your spiritual development...so that at the end of this year, you are organizing your life more around Christ and your growing love for Him that you are right now...
  - now, how do you fit in?...I would encourage you to dig into these studies...

- I would encourage you to begin reading the book of 1 Corinthians so you become very familiar with its message...
- read it from several different versions of the Bible, it might be wise if you have a study Bible to plan to carefully read all the study notes, or read a commentary along with the book....
- Paul was having a similar discussion with his son in the faith Timothy, and he said this...**1 Timothy 4:15 - Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.**
- that's what we want to do...
  - [if time, hit the issue of having your kids on SS – and you in an ABF – talk about studying the great words associated with salvation with Drew – thankful for our SS teachers, and someone like Janice Cody, Drew's personal aide)
- the connection here is that the more you immerse yourself in Scripture, the more likely it is that you are going to want to organize your life around the Person the Scripture is all about...for to me, to live is Christ...

### **C. In our emphasis on prayer.**

- you see in your hand-out that we have identified several specific initiatives to help us as a church family grow in our prayer lives...
- you want to talk to the person whom you really love...
- cf. several things that happened this week – some humorous/some serious – I want to tell Kris...
  - so we are going to give focused attention to this subject in our ABF's...
  - we want all our ministry leaders to do what amounts to a prayer audit...
  - we want to become more involved in TEAMM's monthly prayer meetings (develop)
  - we want to be sure we're bathing these two future ministry construction projects at Purdue and here on our campus in prayer...
- [could develop – this is one of the reasons we delayed the capital campaign by a year – yes it was impacted by the economy, and should have been – but we also see it as an opportunity to shore up the foundation...as we grow in prayer, we can say with Paul – for to me, to live is Christ....]

### **D. Gives an answer to our suffering.**

- please don't forget the later part of that statement...
- **Phil. 1:21 – For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**
- Paul understood that he might lose his life because of his faith...but he wasn't all wound up about that...he knew the next step was a really good one...
- [develop if time – the upcoming article in the paper about some of the elderly ladies in our church and how older women of faith tend to live longer...]
- now, everybody here has a decision to make about this particular cluster of initiatives – are you on board?...and are you willing to take the steps and make the commitments necessary to accomplish this goal?...

## **II. In 2010, We Want to Make Progress in Our Ministry as a Church.**

- now please think carefully about those words at the end of verse 25 – for your progress...in the faith.
- see, what does taking the next step look like for us as a church?...

- because here's the challenge...we have a lot already...because of the faithfulness and sacrifice of many people who have gone before us, and of people who are still part of this church family...by God's grace, we have accomplished a lot...
- most churches don't also have a counseling center, and a Christian school, and a community center, and a seminary, and a faith-based residential treatment center for at-risk girls...maybe it's time to coast...maybe it's time to go into maintenance mode...
- maybe it's time to pat ourselves on the back or rest on our laurels...
- or maybe it's time to carefully and prayerfully identify and take the next steps together...
- a lot of these initiatives are focused on helping us do that this year...let's break them down...

#### **A. In our connections with one another.**

- we recognize that in this busy culture, and with a church our size—we simply have to find newer and better ways to help everyone here feel and be connected...now, ultimately people have to do their part as well...
- but you will notice several plans that revolve around enhanced communication...
- here's what that's all about...
- this is a good point for me to thank you for your generous giving last year...it was quite amazing in light of our economy...
- and yes that allowed to do some special things in foreign missions...it allows us to be sure we continue to maintain our buildings and grounds properly and keep the right amount of contingency funds in place...
- but we were also able to hire a new Director of Electronic Communications and escrow a significant amount of money to upgrade all our websites and move into additional methods of electronic communication...
- the hire was actually a transfer – Brian Nicholson has been working on our tech team and doing a great job – he has taken on this new responsibility and we've hired to Donnie Payne to take over Brian's tech responsibilities...when you put that together with Jonathan Smith and Arvid from a development/marketing perspective...that is a very formidable technology and communications team...

##### **1. For electronic visitors.**

- we recognize that more people than ever visit our church on-line before they ever set foot on our property...
- and we want to offer them something far better than we do right now...
- that could include an electronic tour of our building...
- it could include a short video explanation of how to become a Christian...
- you may have noticed #3 under strengthening others – we want to receive input from our church family about how to do this better...this is part of “taking the next step” in making progress in our ministry as a church...
- this does not mean that we intend to use technology to replace personal contact, but we want use technology effectively to facilitate personal contact...

##### **2. For our church members.**

- I never thought I would ever hear myself say this, but our staff is going to start blogging and tweeting...we understand that is way to stay connected with at least a segment of our church family—and we are going to try to learn how to do that well...
- we also want our new websites to make it easier for you to get the information you want on-line, or to sign up for classes or serving opportunities on-line, to learn more about our missionaries, to share and interact with prayer requests ...we do some of that now, we're going to do a lot more later...

- you can anticipate more facebook pages for more ministry segments...all about connecting people...
- none of this is going to happen overnight---but we intend to invest significant resources into connecting the church family 7 days a week...[you can see that several of these initiatives specifically speak to these issues...we are going to do everything in our power to make progress in these areas of strengthening the foundation of relationships here...]

## **B. In our outreach.**

- [talk about your experience at the community center Monday night...]
- there are a lot of great things happening in community outreach [another reason to thank folks for their generosity...]
- but now we're thinking about – what does the “taking the next step look like” ...

### **1. Continuing to develop our community based outreach ministries**

- you see #1 under meeting needs – the creation of a new community impact committee...I'm thankful that Craig and Sue Svensson have agreed to lead that committee with Pastor Woodall...
- also notice #1 under serving together about reviewing much of what we've started, and also a couple of initiatives about our sports outreaches...all organized around this theme of taking the next step...
- we're thrilled for what's happening – we want to get better...
- this could be one of the “where do you fit in” kinds of discussions – practically every one of these community based outreach ministries could use more help – your gifts may be exactly what is needed to help us make progress...

### **2. Launching our Spreading the Word Capital Campaign.**

- you know that our 5 year plan directed us to consider four possible capital projects in the next 5 years...
- after looking carefully at where we are as a church, we have decided to try to focus on 2 of them right now...[develop the issue of balance...]
- the Lord has already blessed us unbelievably with the possibility of purchasing land on Northwestern Avenue...
- [develop the article on the front page of the paper last week...]

- imagine being in a place where we could have a new student center and biblical counseling center right there...that would be --- taking the next step...that would be, making progress in the faith...and that is within our grasp...
- we also would like to construct a new ministry center at the intersection of 26 and Mercy Way...
  - one of the exciting developments is the number of people who have been trained to provide biblical counseling services to people in need in our community...25 of them now---but we simply do not have enough spaces for them to serve...
  - we'd also like to include a home for our seminary...as well as designing a place where we could have more room for our adult classes, and a possible 4<sup>th</sup> service...
  - those are the 2 projects we're planning to go after...
    - in order to do that, we are going to ask people to make three year financial commitments, starting in 2011 and going through 2013, to constrict those facilities...
    - now you might say – let's get this straight – you ask us to give generously to support the ministries of the church, and you've asked us to give extra to help the church

fulfill its financial desires with these additional special ministries like the school and VOH, etc...and now you want us to consider participating in a three year capital campaign on top of that...

- yes, that's exactly it...because we believe what this text was talking about...
- and because we all understood that when we approved our 5 year plan, it was going to involve a capital campaign...
- now, we don't have all the numbers worked out yet – but it will be similar to what we did when we built the community center...the challenge is that there were some folks from the community who were interested in helping build the community center who will not be as interested in these projects and understandably so...so this can happen, if everybody in that family decides to...take the next step...
  - [talk about what you and Kris are planning to do...]
  - [talk about those who last time said – I'll shoot low on the commitment side...]
  - [talk about the overall math – will need to raise about the same amount as our annual giving over that three year period – in other words, consider doing about 1/3 more than you normally do over that three year period of time and that should get us there...]
  - [hit the issue of when the leaders are making their commitments – it would help us if folks would decide early and communicate with Arvid]

### C. In our ministry to others.

- counseling center note upgrade
- status of my book
- teaching/counseling resources on the web [tell the bike website story]
- VOH training/degrees
- Seminary accreditation
- School – special needs
- BCC

### III. In 2010, We Want to Find Greater Joy in Serving Him

- please don't let any of this sound/feel overwhelming...
- Paul certainly didn't – **Phil. 1:25 - “for your progress and joy in the faith”**
- that's why we're talking about taking the next step, with joy...
- if we are able to do what we just discussed, there should be great joy in the journey...
  - imagine a church family that could honestly say --- our lives are more organized around our Savior – for to me to live is Christ...that will be a happy day...
  - to be able to talk about how our prayer lives have deepened...that will be a day of joy...
  - as we see the church family become better connected...
  - as we improve our outreach...
  - the day we close on the Purdue property...
  - when we come together at the Stewardship Banquet and say – “ouch, we did it...”
    - let's not just do it – but let's enjoy doing it...
    - taking the next step, with joy

