Proverbs 29:17-18 Sunday 7/26/2026

I. The Value of Our Youth and the Church's Foundation

Now today, as you well know, we stand on the beginning of one of the most important days that we have in our church family. The church is built around three key days. The missions Bible conference would be one of them, camp would be another one, and my birthday is the third one. No, I am just kidding; there are really only two, and they are about six months apart. That gives us a chance to really build a balance in things.

Today, we go to camp with our kids. To me as your pastor, our kids are one of the most valuable assets that we have. I have been in the ministry a long time, and most pastors, when they look at the kids that are teenagers or maybe the Timothy kids who are in those Bible explorer groups, they just see a bunch of kids.

I grew up in the era of the bus ministry, where churches, so they could have a great attendance on Sunday, would have twenty, thirty, or forty buses that would go to the inner city, pick up kids, and bring them to church. There was never any importance placed on those kids. The guys who ran the bus ministry cared for them, but everything rises and falls from the top. Those kids were just brought in, counted, and corralled. Because there was nothing for them, they caused so many problems.

One of the funniest times that I can remember was on a Sunday morning service. We had a plaque in our church that had the names of all the young men who had given their life in World War II, Vietnam, Korea, and those places. I will never forget walking down the hall, and there was this little bus kid who was just looking at it. I walked up, put my arm around him, and said, "Hey, how are you doing, buddy?" He said, "Good." He asked, "What's this?" I said, "Oh, that is the names of all the young men who died in the service." He looked at me and said, "The morning service or the evening service?"

They were just kids. Nobody cared about them. Nobody tried to make an impact in their life. They were just a number that you counted.

I see our kids as the future of our church. I have been your pastor now for over twenty years. In that time, I have watched how God has not only developed this church, but every one of you. God's hand in our work and our ministry here is so evident, not just in all that we try to do, but in the lives of the people that we have. There is not a missionary or a pastor who comes through here that we do not have contact with who does not say the same thing. They all talk about the great love and the outpouring of the people of this church. God has something special for us, and it is you who makes it that special.

Some of you have been with me all of those twenty years. We started way back in the day, over twenty years ago, in my kitchen with just fourteen or sixteen people. Pastor Whalen, who is home with the Lord now, preached that Sunday morning and commissioned our church. Some of you have been with me for forty years. We have been together all of those years.

From the beginning until now, I have believed that you build a church simply by building people. I have never been interested in building buildings. I have never even looked for a church building. God always just dropped in my lap what we needed when we needed it. I always believed that to build a church, you have to build people: parents, mothers and fathers, single young men, single young ladies, families as a unit, and certainly their kids. For me, the key is investment in their lives with the Word of God.

You hear me talk a lot about when a person starts to make bad choices in their life, how sin takes on a compounding effect where one sin leads to another. That is most certainly true. But it works both ways. In building a church, there is also a compounding effect: building people to build other people. It is a process that you bring into people's lives.

II. The Biblical Blueprint for Developing Young Believers

The wisest man who ever lived, in my estimation, in the New Testament was the Apostle Paul. He was given the revelation of the church in those twelve or thirteen years that he is absent in the book of Acts. I know he was in Arabia at Mount Sinai for at least three years, and during that time, God opened up and revealed truth to him.

It has always been interesting to me that when Moses got the revelation from God about the nation of Israel, he was on Mount Sinai facing the burning bush. I guarantee you when Paul was in Arabia, where Sinai is, he was on that exact same spot. Just like God revealed to Moses the plan for the Old Testament, God revealed to Paul the plan for the New Testament. He had insight and wisdom into every aspect of the churches and ministry, probably unlike any other man in the Bible.

When he got into dealing with Timothy, Timothy was one of his young men. In your Bible, you have three young men mentioned specifically by name. There are hundreds of them, I am sure, but three are mentioned by name: Timothy, Philemon, and Titus. Those are three young men whom Paul won to Christ in his ministry, mentored, and who went on to pastor New Testament churches.

When Paul wrote to young Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12-13, he laid out a profound pattern.

1 Timothy 4:12-13

12. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

I want you to understand today, as we are getting ready to go to camp, these are the six areas that you develop in a young person's life. This is our goal: to teach them this next week, as we do on a weekly basis, how to be an example of the believer.

- Six Areas of Development:

1. That is giving them the Bible, the pure Word of God, the volume of the book. It is giving them an absolute standard by which they can judge everything in life, go to, and find the right answers.
2. We use the word "conversation" differently today than they did when the Bible was written. The Bible uses the word "conversation" based on the doctrine: as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The word "conversation" does not just mean what you say; in the Bible, it means your lifestyle, because your lifestyle is based on what is in your heart and what comes out of your mouth. It is an incredible concept, and we try to teach them in conversation.
3. Charity is giving to others unconditionally, with no selfish motive behind it. It is the backbone of what a ministry should be: giving to other people.
4. That is your ability to worship God. The Bible says in John 4:24:

John 4:24

24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

5. That is learning how to trust the Lord Jesus Christ, developing that relationship of faith. In fact, the Bible says in Hebrews 11:6:

Hebrews 11:6

6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

6. This is keeping yourself from being corrupted by the world, staying away from all of the things that the world has so that you can have a pure life in your walk with the Lord.

Camp will be a key part of that investment in their lives next week.

Once we get those six things working in our lives, Paul tells Timothy about the final phase of the Christian life. These three things will carry them through the rest of their lives. He says in verse 13: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." These three things are the end product of putting those six things into your life:

➢ The Three Disciplines of the Mature Believer:

- Reading the Word of God.
- Preaching, putting out the Word of God. It has to get inward first before it can get outward.
- Knowing the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16 says:

2 Timothy 3:16

16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Doctrine is the first and most important thing in learning, reading, and putting out your Bible. It is an incredible concept that we have built here throughout the years.

III. The Structure and Team Behind Youth Camp

We have a host of young couples and singles who will be with Danny and Jared to make our camp a success. They all have been trained up in this church.

We have a group of counselors who are going to be working with all of the kids, being responsible for their spiritual well-being, and guiding and dealing with them throughout that week.

We have our kitchen staff, which is probably the hardest job at camp. They are up at 5:30 in the morning and go all day long. It is always the area where I try to give them as much slack as I can because I know they are under a lot of pressure to keep the food line moving, but they are a vital part.

Then we have our medical team. We are probably the only camp in the country that has a full-fledged doctor who goes to camp with us, Dr. Rob. Your kids are in good hands with him.

Then we have our grunt team. The grunt team sets up everything for Danny. They will be over there as soon as church is over setting up the obstacle course. They will be setting up all of the things that have to be done throughout the week, and they are vital.

Then we have the craft team. I call them our crafty people. They are the ones who take the kids and help them do all the projects they do. One of the things we are going to have this year is a table set up where we are making bracelets for the African church over there. The kids can take their time and make them for the African people. We are going to do six thousand total. We won't get that all done this week, but churches are going to combine together and get it done.

Then you have our chuck wagon, the concession stand. They make sure the kids have enough sugar so that they do not sleep at night. They are vitally important. This is my favorite place, especially since Danny always gets me a box of those fruit bars so I can have one before I go to bed.

Then we have the speakers themselves. Danny is going to do the main thrust of the preaching, and Kevin Bond is going to be speaking in the morning. I am really excited about that.

We had a meeting Friday night with all of the workers, putting all the last-minute things together. I told them at the end, "To whom much is given, much is required." I tell you right now that everybody has to be at the top of their game. If you are in the kitchen, when you are supposed to be there, you be there; do not show up an hour late. If you are in the concession stand, you be there. If you are with the crafts, be there. Everybody has to be at the top of their game.

The reason for that is every job is vital. Every job is a spoke on a wheel to make this thing roll toward the overall camp. We are a complete and cohesive team that works together, and every single worker, without exception, came through a training program here. It was only four or five years ago that some of the counselors and some of the people who are working and are really solid in our ministries here were campers themselves. That is where God got a hold of their hearts.

It is not just that God gets a hold of the hearts of the kids; He will get a hold of the hearts of everybody on the staff who works in everything we do. Every one of them came out of this system.

Some of you have been with us from the very first camp program. All of you go back to—this sounds goofy—Old McDonald's Farm. Do you remember those days? Old McDonald's Farm was a camp; it was actually an RV park. It used to be an amusement park right outside of St. Joseph. Rick Johnson and I were getting ready to take a team up to one of the churches, and we were looking for places to stay. We just happened to see this place and drove in. It was a beautiful place.

The guy who owned it was named Dave Cathcart, an Australian guy. We explained to him what we wanted to do, and he was thrilled. For the next twelve to fifteen years, we had our Bible conferences up there with some of the greatest speakers. Right now, they have redone it, and it is just an RV place where people put their campers.

Nobody understands the lives of the men and women who surrendered for ministry at that camp through the preaching of the Word of God. Those were some incredible times. Old Dave Cathcart, who was lost, used to tell me, "The thing I love about you guys is my house is sitting over here, and I can hear you guys singing all the way over at my place." We raised the roof up there. Many years ago, some of you were there and were a part of that. God did a work in your life there, and now you are doing that work in the lives of others today. It is an incredible thing.

IV. The Pastor's Vision: Strategy and Communication

When it comes to any church, the key to its success will be just one area that the pastor has to take complete responsibility for. He cannot put this off on somebody else.

I am a big believer in delegation. I learned early on in ministry that one of the keys to success was building people around you who do things better than you do. Most pastors think that nobody can do things better than they can, and that is a fallacy. I learned that you build people around you who do things better than you do, and then you work together as a team.

But there is one area that the pastor cannot delegate to someone else. It is found in Proverbs 29:18. I would like you to turn to it, if you would, for a moment. If a pastor does not do this, then in time, the church moves into a chaotic state of confusion where you might have a lot of moving parts, but nothing is really hooked up.

Proverbs 29:18

18. Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

All churches need to start with the vision that the pastor has for his people.

Let us pray. Father, help us today. We thank You and praise You for all the people who are gathered together here to work and to make this camp a success for these kids, and for the investment that we are willing to make into their lives as a church. Help us, Father, to be found faithful in doing it. It is going to be long, it is going to be hard, and it is going to be hot. But

Lord, help these kids, these counselors, this kitchen staff, the grunt team, and everyone else to rise to the level of commitment that is required to get the job done. Bless this message. Bless the parents who are here and the kids who are here. As we go forward this next week, may this be the thing that we hold up to You, giving You the honor, the glory, and the praise. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

I heard a long time ago that there are two kinds of churches: there are churches that are a workforGod, and then there are churches that are a workofGod. The difference between the two simply comes down to the pastor's job with the vision that he has. It is much more comprehensive than just having a vision in the way we typically use that term.

When you talk about a biblical vision that the pastor must have, there are four areas that need to be addressed when he does his preaching, teaching, and general pastoral duties of leading God's people.

➢ The Four Areas of Pastoral Vision:

7. He must not just have a vision for his church, but he needs to understand how he is going to accomplish it. He needs a laid-out, thought-out strategy over the next ten to twenty years of how he is going to get his church where it needs to be. He may see the end, but how is he going to do it? Seeing it is one thing; being able to execute it is something else.

When I think about this church and when we started with fourteen or fifteen people, a promise that has always been important to me is found in Romans 4:17, where it deals with Abraham. Abraham was given a vision by God all the way back in Genesis chapter 15. Even though he made mistakes, was not always on point, and did some foolish things, he never lost sight of that vision. In the book of Romans, long after his death, God referred back to Abraham, his relationship with Him, and the vision He had for the nation of Israel.

Romans 4:17

17. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

He was able to see the nation of Israel in that ragtag group of people who came out of Egypt. As your pastor, way back over twenty years ago in my kitchen, I saw with those fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen people what we have today. I had a plan to get here. I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew how I was going to get it done. It took some time—it always does—but you begin to see how, like Abraham, the pastor must have the ability to measure his church's growth.

How do you measure spiritual growth? Do you look at it and say, "Well, we have two hundred people now, and we only had sixteen"? That is not a measure of spiritual growth; that is a measure of numerics. How does a pastor, within his vision, look and see if his church is growing? What are the telltale signs that you look for? It is just that simple.

Of course, he has to have a laid-out, thought-out strategy. Like camp, he builds his church into an organized team. That is what we have done for this next week. We have probably two hundred people coming to camp. Some of them are counselors, and over one hundred and twenty are kids.

The entire key is an organizational structure that keeps everything in an orderly fashion, or else it descends into utter confusion and chaos. I have been in camps that have done exactly that.

Camp next week is a great model. What we do there is what the pastor, through his vision, does as he builds a church into an organized team. In time, it takes on the shape of a work that isofGod, not just a workforGod.

8. The second aspect of his vision is that he must be able to communicate it to his people. If he does not completely understand how he is going to do it and have it clear in his own brain, his church is never going to get it, and they are never going to grow. You will continue to sit in utter confusion. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 14:33:

1 Corinthians 14:33

33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

There must be a clear plan.

The ministry of pastoring a church is an art form. Preaching is an art form. Today, we do not have preachers who look at preaching and understand it in that format. That is because most guys do not preach anymore; they just teach. I am not fighting this, and while I do not do it, I do not have a problem with guys who do. They will pull down their screen, put up a little five-point or six-point outline, and point to it. That is not my style. I was born before they had those digital presentations, so I never got into it.

But you cannot paint a picture with just slides. I told you last week how J. Frank Norris preached for a week, seven days, every night on hell. A man who was there said that when Norris was done, you could feel the heat. What did he do? He painted a picture. We do not paint pictures today. A pastor needs to be able to take the Bible and paint a picture for his people so that everyone, through his message, sees it—whether it is heaven, hell, or whatever the topic is. That is the art form of preaching that is lost today.

Pastoring itself is an art form that is lost today. Great artists painted pictures, but those pictures always had a message. When you saw the painting, you got the message. The problem today is that there is no artistic form in pastoring a church. Most pastors are like kindergartners who never got past finger painting; there is no message. Or, if you are in the neo-evangelical crowd, it is like modern art: you take paint, throw it on the canvas, stand back, and try to figure out what it looks like.

No, pastoring is the pastor communicating to his people the picture of the vision that God has given him. If he does not do that, there will be confusion. The pastor, with the Word of God, paints a picture for his people of the plan and the vision for what the church is called to do.

V. Writing and Making the Vision Plain

You are told how to communicate the vision in the book of Habakkuk. Let us turn over there. It is a minor prophet in the Old Testament, right after you get past Daniel.

In Habakkuk chapter 2, while you are turning there, let me give you some context. Habakkuk was a prophet, and Israel at this stage had completely lost the vision that God had for them. They were completely messed up. Like a lot of churches today, they had no clue why they existed anymore. They had lost their purpose, their passion, and certainly their perspective.

So God sent them the prophet Habakkuk to make the vision fresh to them so they could get back online. Habakkuk made it clear, plain, and understandable. Look at Habakkuk 2:2-3:

Habakkuk 2:2-3

2. And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

3. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

There are four things in here regarding how the pastor communicates the vision.

From the very beginning, I told you what my vision was. With my understanding of church history, of God's movement, of the devil's movement down through the ages, and seeing the apostasy that came in through the seven periods of church history, I told you from the get-go that my overall vision was to build a Philadelphian church.

The Philadelphian church represents the greatest period in church history: the most fruitful, the one that kept the book in the midst of a Laodicean church period that has completely destroyed the book. You find that contrast in Revelation chapter 3. The Philadelphian church was the church of the open door, while the Laodicean church is the church of the closed door.

From the very beginning, I showed you that my vision, based on my understanding of God's history in the Bible and churches, was to build a Philadelphian church in a Laodicean church age. In the midst of churches with closed doors, God has given us an open door, and He certainly has. That church was based on the key of David. The Bible says that the key of David is what God used to open that door to take it to the ends of the earth. The key of David is the King James Bible you have on your lap this morning. We are building a church out of the confusion and chaos of Laodicea, centered around a clear, understandable vision.

Last week's message was an anchor point. I do not think I have ever been more humbled than I was after my message last week, and I did not plan it this way. I preached on the three men who held the line, how we hold the line, and I gave you an understandable perception of who we are, where we came from, why we are the church that we are, why we believe the things we believe, and why we are so focused on what we are doing.

I must have received forty emails from pastors and people out there whom I did not even know followed us or watched us. It moved me to such a degree to realize there are people out there who are right where we are. We just had never connected before. These men and women gained so much from that message and said, "Bob, we are right where you are. We believe the same thing." I could not believe it. We are building a church around a clear vision.

Then he says in verse 2: "Write the vision." I understood how to do that. You write the vision not by writing someone a letter, but by building yourself into the people God has given you through your personal investment in them. You are not down here, and you are not up here—same mud, same blood, one person at a time, building Bible doctrine into the lives of God's people.

I jokingly told you Thursday night during our study of Daniel—I said chapter 2, but it was actually Daniel chapter 4—about the "watcher." I told you that I am a watcher, and I made a reference to history when we were talking about the Muslims and the Catholics. I have been a watcher of ministry all my life. That is who I am.

Growing up in the ministry, I watched everything and everyone. I studied every ministry and learned everything I could. I asked questions of guys because I wanted to find out where they were and why they did what they did. Many times, these were guys whose teachings I did not even believe, but I wanted to learn from them. I learned from the guys who did it right, and I also learned from the guys who did not do what was right. I learned what will work and what will not work. You have to write the vision.

The second thing he says is: "make it plain upon tables." I take these tables two ways. First, the spiritual side: the tables of your heart, as in Proverbs chapter 3. Second, the physical tables: when we sit down at Bible study. For years and years, we sat down at tables and learned. We did this on Sunday mornings, Thursday nights, and through our question-and-answer sessions, our special classes, the Bible Institute, the people's ministry, Discipleship 1, Discipleship 2, Discipleship 3, and our New Year's Eve sessions where we would spend four or five hours knocking out a major piece of the Bible.

The Bible says in Proverbs 3:3:

Proverbs 3:3

3. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

Mercy and truth are the two keys when you put the vision together. You must have truth, but you also must have mercy for the people you are dealing with.

The third thing he says in verse 2 is that when the people see the vision through your preaching, teaching, and commitment, they will pick it up and run with it. As you catch my vision and my heart for the Word of God, you begin to run with it. As the old saying goes, after twenty-plus years of learning and laying out the vision, our church is up and running.

One of the greatest characteristics of God is that He is always an orderly God. There is an order to everything He does. He does not do things by the seat of His pants, out of anger, or out of raw emotion. He has an orderly process based on His own principles by which He executes His ministry, and a pastor must follow that same pattern.

Someone might say, "Well, to me, it looks like confusion and chaos." Well, when you get your own church, you can have your own brand of chaos. How can you see my vision? We did not get

to where we are because we are confused. Maybe you did, but the bottom line is that you must have order. Any church must operate in an orderly fashion, or else it will be organized confusion.

The fourth thing, in verse 3, is that the vision is for a future time, an appointed time in God's timing. You do not build a church overnight. While you are doing the first three things, in time, God will build it and bring it to pass. You must be patient. You must know that the vision will come.

My job is not to force you to see the vision. My job is to create an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit of God can allow you to see my vision and where we are going. Some people catch it, and some do not. That is just how it works. But at the end of the day, you will find people who are committed to doing what God wants them to do. I could give you a list of churches across this country today that fit into this category, and ten years from now, they will be exactly where they are right now because the vision must start from the top down.

VI. The Dual Vision: Pastors and Parents

Let me switch gears here. I gave you all of that to simply say this: our children next week are the key part of my vision. They are a vital part of what I see in this church. A pastor's vision for his church that does not include the future of his church through the kids and future leadership—without a bona fide plan to get there—is not much of a vision. The typical Baptist churches of Laodicea have no vision, and the people perish. God's people deserve better than that.

The key is that you must build inwardly first, and then you build outwardly. This church has a solid core base of leaders. As I said, I talked to the young counselors and to all the staff on Thursday night during our final meeting. Next week, you are going to have to operate within the vision that this church has, and it is going to be an incredible time.

When we talk about a vision, this is where you, the parents, come in. I want you to look back at Proverbs chapter 29. Let everyone turn back to it. I read verse 18 to start my text, which is what most pastors preach. But I want to show you the real context behind a vision. Yes, the church and the pastor need to have a vision, but there is more to it than that. Here is where the parallel comes in.

Proverbs 29:17-18

17. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

18. Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Do you see that connection? Not only does the pastor need to have a vision for his people in his church, but the parent needs to have a vision for the child. The only way God can do what He needs to do in the lives of our children is through a dual vision: my vision for your child to be a future leader of this church, and your vision for your child to be a future leader in your family. You must follow the exact same four areas that I just listed for a pastor and his church.

Over the years, as a watcher, I have seen what works and what does not work. I have watched parents—and they are not bad people, it is just human nature—always look for the easiest way to

deal with their kids. Let me be very honest with you: there is no easy way to deal with your child. There is no fast track.

I watched the Christian school movement that started in the sixties and seventies, where churches started their own schools. Because I am a watcher, I saw why many of those Christian schools failed. They were not founded on the right principles to begin with. They taught young pastors to build a church by starting a school, holding services, and screaming about how wicked the public school system is. They would say, "We are going to start a Christian school to make sure our kids succeed, and if you leave your kids in public school, the devil is going to get them." They scared the people into joining the Christian school, but then required them to attend their church to keep their kids in the school.

That is how they were taught. Do not kid me; I sat through the curriculum. Parents got the idea that if you send your kids to a Christian school, when they walk through the front door, there is a big sign saying the devil cannot enter. The Christian school movement failed because that is not the vision.

After the Christian school movement came the homeschooling movement. I am telling you, there is no fast track to fixing and training up your children. It comes down to vision. Many parents will do everything else except sit down with their child, talk about the vision, show them mom and dad's vision, let them see mom and dad's commitment to that vision in the local church, and then train them.

Three or four times a year, we as a leadership team have a "come to Jesus" meeting about where we are and where we are going. Every parent ought to have an updated vision meeting with their family to keep things fresh. The reason so many parents cannot keep it fresh is because they are not living it themselves. They think that sending their kids to a Christian school or doing this or that will guarantee success.

I have told you this from the day I stepped into this pulpit: when it comes to your kids, you do not isolate them from the world; you insulate them from the world. If you put them in a bubble and they graduate, is there a Christian job waiting for them? Is there a Christian world they are going to step into? No, they are going to run smack into a brick wall of unsaved people. Parents should have been insulating them instead of isolating them. You cannot isolate them. What are you going to do, put them in a bubble? However big your bubble is, the devil has a pin big enough to burst it.

You must have a vision for your family, just like I must have a vision for this church. The same things I gave you that I started with are what you must do. I have seen parents try to put everything in their world in place just to get around the hard work of sitting down, establishing a vision, communicating it, and keeping it fresh. Nothing will take the place of that. Nothing, nothing, nothing.

You too must write the vision to them and make it plain upon the tables. When they see your vision in your life, in your church, and your commitment to it, then the vision is for a future time. You lay it out when they are six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen,

and it is fulfilled when they are eighteen, nineteen, and twenty. Where there is no vision, the people perish.

VII. Preparing for the Spiritual Squeeze and Victory

Every year at camp, we get the kids ready. Our people work hard at instilling in their young hearts and lives a vision for what God has for them for the rest of their lives. I guarantee you that next week, almost to a person—though there are always one or two holdouts—a revival will take place in their young hearts.

But every year, I see some parents who have no vision for their kids. This is one of the most frustrating things about ministry: parents who simply do not care. Just as the vision a mother and father have will infect their kids and insulate them, so will the indifference of a parent's lack of vision infect them. When it comes down to it, where there is no vision, the people perish. That is true in any church and in any family.

My vision for your child and all that this church will do is vast. We will probably spend forty thousand dollars on camp this year. We spare no expense; that is how much I think of your kids. Four or five of us have credit cards that we use to buy supplies, and every year those credit cards get maxed out. Danny has to call the company and send them twenty or thirty thousand dollars just to get the limit back up so we can keep buying what we need.

If you were to see the amount of resources we put in—yet we only charge your kids one hundred dollars to go to camp. I guarantee you it costs a lot more than that. Every kid is going to get to go. We even took kids this morning who wanted to go, even though the deadline was last January. No kid is left behind.

Just as the pastor must be the leader of the vision for his church, the parent—specifically the father—must be the leader of the vision within the family. I know there are families where mothers have no husbands because the husband bailed out or whatever the case may be. I have seen those women step up and do a dual job, and I have more respect for a person like that than almost anyone else on the planet.

Every year, I see kids come out of camp ready to go, ready to run, and three weeks later, they go right back to their old life because there is no vision at home.

When I used to preach at camp, I would do this wherever I went: we would get the kids all ready and fired up, and on the last night, I would get them ready to go back and charge hell with a squirt gun. They were ready to rock and roll and go to town. But I would tell them, "Tonight is your last night at camp. Tomorrow morning, you are going to pack up your stuff and head home. I want you to know that all God did for you this week, all the things He challenged your heart with, and all the ways you responded—right now, we are ready to run. But when you drive out that gate tomorrow morning, the world, the flesh, and the devil are waiting for you."

But do you know what I really think many times? I am a watcher, and I have watched this for too many years. Do not try to tell me otherwise; I have been watching this since some of you were still in diapers. I wouldn't say this to the kids, but I am thinking it: in many of those cases, what

is waiting for them outside that gate that is going to put them right back where they were is their parents, because the parents have no vision. It is a terrible thing. It really is.

Our theme this year isKing of Hearts. I worried about that when I first heard it because I thought maybe we were starting a poker ministry, but it stands for the Lord Jesus Christ being King over your heart. That will be the theme: God sitting as King on the throne of your heart. But it will never work for the kids if God is not sitting on the throne of the parents' hearts. That is where it starts.

While we are away for the next four days, God will be dealing with their hearts. My prayer is that you as parents will be ready to meet them on Thursday on equal spiritual ground. Over the next four days, you need to do whatever you need to do to prepare your own heart so that when they hit the ground, you are there for them and you have a vision for them.

I can have all the vision in the world for them, but I am not their parent. I am the pastor of this church, so I can direct you in the vision, but I cannot raise your children. This is my church by the grace of God, and your family is your church by the grace of God. Just as I need to have a vision, you need to have a vision.

Next week, we need your prayers. Thousands of hours have been invested by so many people to make this camp a success. I cannot tell you how many people have worked countless hours over the last month to get this ready.

It is going to be hot next week. The heat index is probably going to be one hundred and two degrees. We must pray. We have taken all kinds of contingency plans for the heat and will work around it, but it is still a factor.

Another thing to pray about is injuries. We have been very fortunate. We have Dr. Rob with us, and last year he saved people a lot of money. He took out two kids' appendixes right there on the kitchen table. Thank you, Rob! I might get mine taken out this week if you do not mind.

The workers put in some very long hours. The cooks start at five o'clock in the morning and go until late at night. The grunt team, the concession stand workers, the craft people, the medical team, and the counselors get hardly any rest at all. They are locked in a dorm with fifteen kids in their group who do not want to go to sleep at night.

The leaders—Danny, Jared, and Kevin—bear the weight of leadership on their shoulders. Everything rises and falls on leadership. Of course, the speakers, Kevin and Danny, are working together to produce a positive attitude and atmosphere so God can work through that camp and touch the lives of these kids.

This is going to be a little different camp this year, and I will be very honest: I hope everyone does not just stereotype this camp based on the last one. We are going to have probably more unsaved kids this year than we have ever had before. We have a lot of kids coming from the outside who are not aware of how our church structure operates, and that can pose some challenges. You need to be heads-up on that.

You need to realize that as the week goes on, the weather gets hot, attitudes can change, the Holy Spirit of God starts moving, and kids start having problems that manifest themselves. You have to deal with that. That is what camp is: it is a squeezing process where, for four or five days, God squeezes these kids to get out the imperfections. When those things come out, someone has to be there to minister to them. It is going to be a varied process of reaching your kids, who are going to be the next level of leadership in this church.

The vision is for an appointed time. We give it to them now, and then God orchestrates it in their lives through you, the parent, and through us in our ministries. It will not tarry; it will come.

I want to thank you for your faithful support. I know most of you from out of town who brought your kids to camp watch us online and are a part of our ministry here, and I truly appreciate that. We have well over a thousand people who follow this church on a regular basis, and I know you are a part of that. I hear from you from time to time. Just like last week, hearing from forty-some guys—I could not believe it. God is doing some great things here.

But He is doing those great things not because of me, but because of you. It is because years ago, through an orderly, structured plan of vision, we decided together that we were going to build a Philadelphian church in a Laodicean church period. We decided that we were going to be a church of the open door, a church with the key of David. God has blessed it tremendously and mightily. We must keep the vision alive.

You are the best people any pastor could ever want. The goodness of what God is doing simply comes down to the vision God gave us that we are on board with. Next week, everyone is going to have to do their part. Parents, you are going to have to do your part. You are going to have to get ready for some kids who are going to come back different. Do not let them find the same parents when they return that they left on Sunday night. Let God make a difference in your life. Let this message make a difference in your life.

I will help you. You are all good parents, but sometimes you just need some help in understanding the importance of training up your children. I will help you do that; we will be here for you. You are the best people any pastor could ever hope to have, and we are all in the same foxhole together. As I said when I preached a couple of weeks ago: same mud, same blood, we are in it together.

Pray for us next week. We are going to dismiss early today because there is a lot of work that needs to be done. When you get to camp, if you are working on this crew, that crew, or the other crew, you are not going to be able to spend all night staying up and talking with your buddies. You are going to have to get to bed so you can get up and do your job. God is going to give us a great victory.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You for the host of kids at camp and for the people here this morning. We ask Your blessings upon this next week. Keep us safe and watch over us. Give us some victories, Lord, for You. I thank You for the parents who are here. May this message help them to be better and to be understanding of the vision that needs to be on their part so that it coincides with the vision on our part, and together

we will train up a child in the way he should go. We love You and thank You. Give us a good rest of the day as we get settled in, get going, and get our first day up and running. We will be careful to give You the honor, the glory, and the praise. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.