Luke 12:48 Sunday 8/23/2026

I. Vision Update and Ministry Philosophy

Today, I want to take a Sunday and lay out for you where, based on what God is doing, we are headed. I would call this a vision update. You remember several months ago I laid out, and we have talked about from time to time, so much is happening. If you look around you, God is doing so many things with us. As always, the key will be to try to keep everything in a proper perspective. It is easy to get ourselves lost in everything that God is doing.

The Bible tells us in Luke 12:48:

Luke 12:48

48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

I cannot think of any ministry that is more prevalent to that great principle than what God is doing here. I never personally lose sight of that principle. I understand how it impacts everything that we do and each of us. I also understand that it is my job as your pastor to always keep the right perspective about things, no matter what God is doing and how He is doing it, to keep the balance, and to keep you informed. That is really what this message is about today. When things are moving and God is doing some great things, I want everybody to benefit from it. I want everybody to understand it.

I learned years and years ago that one of the keys to good leadership will be communication—to be able to communicate to people what not only God is doing for you, but what God will do for you and everything that He is doing with us. It is just like when I talked about the needs of building and keeping our church online, keeping that communication open. We are a team. In my mind, we are a very elite team. I look at you probably differently than most pastors look at their people. I think it is probably true. I look at you as a group of people put together from all different walks of life to do a work that God has called us to do. Each one of you, no matter what level you are on, is invaluable to the program of what God wants to do. I have told you before, it is no accident that you are here. It is no accident that God brought us together.

It is a situation where I realize it, and this is probably true of most churches, but I just do not know if they understand it. God is the God of second chances. God is the God of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth chances. No matter where you have been in life, no matter what you have done, when you start to mean business with God, God will get you to the right place to get everything that you need to be able to do what God has called you to do. It is no accident that you are here. By the same token, it is no accident that some people are not here. God has put together one of the most unique groups of people that you are going to find today. The skill level here with our men and women is unbelievable, and it makes my job easier.

I have always had the vision and the plan of getting us as a church, and you as individuals, to where we need to be. Now, for me as your pastor, I stand on the edge, and I know many of you can see it too. We are right there where God is beginning to bring it all together. We have been together now twenty-plus years. We have worked hard in those twenty years building people, building relationships based on the Word of God. Now, we are seeing what God is doing and the maturing of you young men and young ladies and you moms and dads to the point where it is quite incredible.

II. The State of Modern Christianity

Unfortunately, most Baptist churches today are really nothing more than a Sunday morning, Sunday night, and a Wednesday night old folks' home. The pastors are stuck in that mid-sixties, seventies mindset. I know; I grew up in it. Their churches are not growing. They are certainly not going, and they are dying by the years as the congregation, filled with men and their people in their sixties, seventies, and eighties, pass on. They are really good people. The problem is not the people. The problem is there is no leadership. As I have said many, many times, out of the verse in the Bible where there is no vision, the people perish. The problem is not the people; the problem is the pastor—his lack of vision and understanding how you, in the first place, build a church in the midst of a Laodicean mindset that has engulfed Christianity today.

We see this: some pastors, and we all know this and are a witness to this, think the greatest way to reach people is to go interdenominational. Take the word "Baptist" off your church, and they think that that will be the key to building a church today. So they dump the name Baptist, but along with that, they also dump the greatest book the world has ever seen, the Word of God. Now they can build a megachurch, but it is building all the wrong things. Years and years ago, a man told me, and I never forgot this, and boy, if it is not true, it is one of the greatest truths I ever heard. He said, "Just because you get a lot of people together on a Sunday morning does not mean you have a church." I understand that.

Today, instead of staying with the Word of God, they completely compromise with the world system. They do not preach anymore what needs to be preached; now they teach. You see it in the music, which has completely amalgamated itself with the world. There are no standards anymore. There are no morals anymore. Now it is okay for you to social drink or to drink or to do this or to do that. It is just like Revelation chapter 3 told us that this church period, the Laodicean, would be lukewarm. It is not an apostasy, but it is not on fire for God anymore. It is right in that lukewarm middle.

Now, I am a coffee drinker. Most of you are too. But I will tell you right now, when I take a sip of coffee, I want it hot. I do not want it lukewarm. You people out there that like iced coffee, there is something wrong with you. Coffee was made to be drunk hot. The worst thing you can do is lay a cup of coffee down for me, anyhow, go do something else, and twenty minutes later say, "Where is my coffee?" and take a swig of that, and it is lukewarm. That is the way the church is today. You know what God does with the lukewarm church? He says in Revelation 3, he spews it out of his mouth. You know what I do with my coffee? It is spewed out of my mouth. That is the problem with the church today.

You know what the tragedy is? This is a tragedy. The tragedy today is after three or four, maybe five generations of young men and young ladies growing up and coming up in a country where the churches do not preach the Bible, they do not believe the Bible, and now they have changed into all this like a Super Bowl halftime show on Sunday morning with all the dancing bears and all the praise bands and all the stuff that goes on. Elvis Presley would have fit into it today. The tragedy is after three or four or five generations, the young men and young ladies today think that is real Christianity.

I think of the book of Haggai. Haggai was a prophet to the nation of Israel when they were in the mess that they were in, just like Christianity is today. In the book of Haggai, they began to build the temple. The temple was the key aspect of God's relationship with the nation of Israel in a literal building. But the Bible says in the New Testament, our body is that temple. We have to build our body just like they had to build the literal temple, all the right things, all the right way. So now, in the middle of their captivity, they come back and they begin to build this temple. It is a feeble attempt. They have lost the power of God. They have lost the majesty of God. They have lost everything that God was once to them.

Haggai 2:3

3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

They had lost what the true God was doing. They lost the glory of the temple of God and what it meant. That is exactly where we are at today. Now we have raised three or four generations of young men and young ladies who are the cream of the crop. We think that all this goofy, foolish, stupid stuff that is going on in these churches, that that is real Christianity. Their lives, the tragedy, they have never seen the real thing.

III. Our Unique Ministry Approach

Every pastor, every missionary that comes through here, they all ask me the same question, every one of them. They look around at this church, at the young men and the young ladies that fill these pews, and they say, "How do you do it? How do you fill a church with young men and young ladies and singles and young couples with just the Bible? There has got to be a secret. What is your secret?" You can look around you today, and you can see it is so true. But what they do not see is you are not just a bunch of young people, but you are a group trained to hold your own against anybody with that Book.

I would honestly say this: I would put most of you guys and you gals up against any pastor out there when it comes to the Word of God. You know your Bible. You know how to use it. You may be on different levels where some of you are at a level where you really have a command presence in the Word of God, or you may be in that process, but you are something special. Last week, I was walking around out here trying to get all my little stuff done, and a lady pulls me aside and says, "Hey, this little guy here, he came to church this morning, and we have witnessed to him, and he wants to know how to be saved." I did not have to look three feet to grab two guys

to take him in my office to win him to Christ. You know what the beauty of that is? I could have picked out of the next fifty, sixty of you guys and girls to do the job.

Hebrews 5:14

14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The full age here does not mean you have got to be eighty or ninety before you have it. The full age is the age that the Bible in your life has taken such a hold on you by reason of use, and it exercises your senses. My job, once you recognize that God brought you here, once you understand the vision that we have and where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish, my job is to keep exercising those senses. Get you on a good solid ground and footing, and then make you better.

I have been asked for years, "How do you do it? How do you get so many young people?" Because in a world that, and you know this to be true, in a world that young people do not seem to be interested in anything about God. We are living in times of Job chapter 21 and Job chapter 22:15, and it tells you right there that that is the time period in the days of Noah, and we are living in the days of Noah. The young men and the young ladies say, "Who is the Almighty that we should serve You?" That is the world our young generation has come up in.

So now, for the first time in fifty-plus years, I am going to let you in on my secret. I want to show you this morning, based on where we are at, where we are going, the method to my madness of how to get so many young men and young ladies in our own church, probably ninety-five, ninety-six percent, falling in love with the Word of God, the ministry of God, and each other.

Now, let me also say this, you older folks, you who are in your sixties and your seventies, maybe you are eighty—I do not think we have anybody eighty, maybe I will be there in a couple of years and I can put myself in that—I want you to understand, you too are something very special. You are invaluable to the work here, and I want you to see that. You add the level of maturity because you have seen some things in life, you have been through some things in life that even our young kids have not been there yet. In other words, it is an incredible blend. Many of you who are in your sixties now, you started with me forty-five some years ago when you were just a single young person. You are in your sixties now, you were in your twenties then. You met, Jim did, your wife, and I married you way back in the day. Do not show those wedding pictures. They will see those wedding pictures and they see me standing there with you. The good thing about it anymore, things have changed with weddings. It used to be that you wanted your pastor's picture with you, with the wedding, with the bride, and I thank God nobody wants that anymore. But you look back at those, and I have heard them say, "There I am in the middle with a beard and hair." And they will say, "Who is that?" "That is me." So keep your wedding pictures to yourself. No more.

You have been part of my life and part of my ministry for all of those years. Your steadfastness, your faithfulness to the Word of God and to the ministry and to me is unquestionable. Some

others of you have come along over the years. You make up that midline group. You are the foundation of this church, you and the older folks. It takes a blend of everybody. You cannot just have a thousand young people and not have the old guard who kind of hold the glue that hold it all together. But you came into this church. You saw the truth. You wanted the truth, and you do whatever it takes to get the job done. You are definitely something special, and it proves the point today, even though we are in the mess that we are in in Christianity, there are still some men and women out there in their forties and their fifties and their sixties and their seventies that want the truth.

IV. The "Secret" to Building a Bible-Believing Church

Here is how I did it. I mean, really, nothing special about it. It is all found in the patterns and the models in the Bible. It is like our discipleship lesson. I wrote these discipleship lessons in 1977 or 1978, long before most of you were born. We have taken those lessons around the world. We have taken them around the country. There were times when I took teams, and some of you were part of those teams, but we went to churches across this country from one end to the other, north, south, east, and west. We went to every country almost in Europe. We went to Africa. We went to South America. We went everywhere. We went to South America, and we taught pastors and churches how to disciple people. As I have heard this all my life, the pastor would pull me aside and he says, "These discipleship lessons are the greatest thing I have ever saw in my life. I mean, they are unbelievable. They are the greatest thing that could ever happen. It is just, how did you do that?" And I am thinking to myself, "Are you out of your mind?" You know how I started those discipleship lessons as a pastor? I sat down, looked at my people in my church, and said, "If I was them, what would I need to learn to get a good foundation in the Bible?" And I just put back then fifteen lessons together. That is all. It was just a pastor looking at his people and saying, "What do they need?" Nothing special about it.

You see, you know what the problem is today with these big megachurches? I am not fighting it; I am just preaching to you. But you know what the problem is? They reach people, but they do not reach individuals. There is a difference. Reaching the masses without dealing with the individual person in those masses and taking them in and giving them what they need, it is not the ministry. It is all it was. I just looked at my people and I thought, "If I was with them where they are at, when I was with them, what did I need to know to lay a good foundation?" Voila! There it was. Nothing special about it. What is special about it is the people who want it.

So, first of all, when I thought this through, and I thought, you know, I looked at Paul's life. As I watched how he did his ministry, I saw that he was a pattern. I also saw, if you notice now, he is always going after young people. Four mentioned in particular: Aquila and Priscilla was a young couple. They had a church in their home. Paul was into Christ. We all know about Timothy; he was a young man. We all know about Titus; he was a young man. Philemon; he was a young man. Then, as you broaden that study, you will find it was Barnabas. There was Silas. There was John Mark. All young men and young couples that he trained for the ministry. So I saw that. Next I saw was really the key to reaching them. I will say this now, and then I will bump up to it

here in a little bit. Almost every one of you young people that are here this morning, you came just the way that I am going to tell you that I did it.

Now here, after I saw Paul, here is where I took a page out of the devil's playbook. Here is where I learned a great truth. Also, I learned it from Paul. That is, at times, you can use the system against the system. Paul did this. Paul talked about that I am a Christian, but he never gave up being a Roman citizen. Now Rome was the enemy of God and God's people. It mixtures the world. And he yet was a Christian, but he never did. He was not one of these guys, "Oh, I cannot be a Roman citizen anymore. I have got to dump the world. I am getting out of there. I cannot do that." No, he was smart enough to know how to use the system against itself. When you study his ministry, you will find there are times that he takes a stand on the Book, and there are times that he uses Roman citizenship to get the message to the people that he needs to reach. I saw that. I learned a great truth that someday maybe most of you parents will understand and most of you Christians will understand. The greatest tool sometimes you can have is the ability to be able to use the system against itself. Bill back here just put on a thing for the military guys. Unprecedented. All I heard, and I told him this morning, all I heard was when Bill got up in front of those guys, he gave them the truth of God's Word in a scenario that was not part of a church, was not part of the—he used the system against itself. Great lesson to learn. I saw it.

V. Countering the World's Influence on Youth

See, I studied history. I realized you could not separate the Bible from history. Then I saw it. It dawned on me. I saw that everything that the devil did to destroy God's plan down through history started with young people. He would take over a nation or a country through a movement started with young people. I saw how he did this through the universities and the colleges. First in Europe, today all through America. How that through that educational system, he would corrupt the minds and in time radicalize those minds. With the Bible out of the way now for three or four generations, every damnable heresy and philosophy got its roots in the minds of young men and young women through this system.

You talk about liberalism started in the colleges. Socialism started with the young minds in the colleges. Marxism started with the young minds in the colleges. Communism started in the minds of the young couples. Nazism started with the Hindu. Fascism started with Mussolini, with the young people. Liberation theology. You find it today. I heard it just last week. Somebody got up and said, one of these socialist politicians that is going to get elected to this country, got up and said, "Jesus was a radical. He was a radical revolutionist and a rebel against the Roman Empire. And he tried to overthrow the government. So it is okay for us to overthrow the government if we are following Jesus." That is liberation theology. You know where it started? Started in Central America in the schools, in the colleges. Oh, yeah, man.

So all through this country in Berkeley, Yale, Harvard, Boston College, Princeton, all of them from the East Coast to the West Coast. The devil used them to go after the minds of the young men and the young women, brainwash them, radicalize them, capture the minds of the youth, and in time you will capture a nation. Today, the end result woke the transgender crowd. If you are a homosexual or a lesbian and somebody preaches against that, you are racist. When a male athlete

cannot compete with the men and gets his rear end kicked every time he plays basketball or football, he says, "I am a woman," so he can really win over the women. And everybody says, "That is fine." Where did that come from? What has happened? How did these things take hold?

Now, can your kid go to school when they are four or five or six years old, and now in the public school system, a teacher tells them, "I do not think you are really a boy. I think you are a girl. I do not think you are a girl. I think you are really a boy." And you know what? "We will not tell your mom and dad, but you need to think about getting a second." Are you kidding me? Where did that come from? Where did that start?

Today you see this country in time, already see it happening, are going to take a stand against the nation of Israel, God's people. You saw it when the college students, it is always the young people. They were burning Israeli flags. They were intimidating Jews. They were taking over libraries. In this country, they were flying the flag of a mosque. How did that happen? We have had open borders under idiot Biden for four, eight years or whatever it was. It has come to the place where millions and millions of illegal aliens come into this country. There were child molesters, child abusers, human trafficking, I mean the worst scum. They unlocked the insane asylum, sent them to America. Now we are trying to clean it up, and we are racist.

So now you have got politicians in our government, more common. They want to abolish ICE. They want open borders. When they were having all of the problems, they said the problem is not criminals. The problem is we need to get rid of the police. So in these cities that were massively liberal, they began to defund the police. You know what the idiot stick mayor in New York, the last couple of them, you know what they said? "We need to get rid of the police, and we need to replace them with social workers." That instead of going in with guns and batons and tear gas and dogs, they can go in and articulate with them. Well, if you do that, may I suggest an extra supply of body bags? If that is where we are at, how do we get there? The socialists that are going to be elected, they are running right now for this country's highest offices. They want to get rid of the Constitution. They want to get rid of the Senate. They want to get rid of the Congress. They want to get rid of a duly elected president of this country. They want Medicare for everybody, sanctuary cities. And there are politicians in this country. You guys are going 9/11 to go out there and evangelize. Some of our people are going. It will be a great event, but you realize that there are politicians in our government in Washington, D.C. right now that say we deserve as a country what happened to us at 9/11. How did it get there?

You know, can I be honest with you? I understand how they got there, but what really blows my mind in this whole world, how did you get here and not there? God has something for each one of you. Maybe you do not see it. Maybe you do not want to see it. The news outlets, CNN, CBS, ABS, ABCDEFG, they are all against anything that is right. The problem is they take the news that they want to take, repackage it and reshape it, and feed it to these young minds. Now we see the radicalization of our youth. It all has its roots in the young minds that get destroyed through getting rid of the truth and filling the gap, if you allow me to say this, with crap.

You know where it started? Let me put it together for you. You know where it started? We won World War I. We defeated Germany and Japan in World War II. But when it came to Korea, it

was a stalemate. We did not win that. Because by the time we got to 1950, this country now had been sixty years without the Bible. You start to see the erosion and the effect of a country that loses God's Word. Then we came to Vietnam. Korea was no more over three or four years as far as a ceasefire, and then it erupted in Vietnam. This is where you begin to see a country now fifty, sixty years without the Bible, the effect it had on the generations of young minds.

During World War II, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, several days later, Germany declared war on America. This country rallied as it had always rallied when it was attacked. The lines of young men and young ladies enlisting in the services to fight and defend for their country was unparalleled. There were facts of a young man in a small community that wanted to join the fight for his country. They got turned down because of a medical, a committed suicide. That is what it meant back then. It all changed in the sixties. Now we see the anti-war protests. You know where it all started? In the colleges. I was in the Army in 1970, and it had gotten so bad that they were attacking forts, storming the main gates. Up at Kent State University, which is right up the road from where I lived in Ohio, Kent State, was a college. They were burning down buildings. The governor called out the National Guard to protect the campuses and the people and the building. They were just going in and burning them up over the war in Vietnam. So he displayed a National Guard. This is where in 1970, you probably do not even remember it, probably never even knew it, the Kent State Massacre took place. The National Guard were protecting the buildings, and a crowd of people began to throw rocks and attack them. They backed up to a little hill to hold their own, and they kept coming. Back then, if you were in the National Guard of the military and you were out on a thing like that, they gave you real bullets. They do not give you real bullets anymore, and they give you an ugly look. Out of desperation, the National Guard fired into that crowd and killed some kids. That set her off. They wanted to hold those National Guardsmen for murder. The riots intensified. Four killed by the National Guard. People who were exercising their free right as America to burn buildings, attack people, and somebody tried to stop them. Boy, all through the newspapers, all through the news media, it was a murder. It was a massacre. Kent State Massacre.

Now, I was in the Army. We did not look at it that way. We looked at it. National Guard for Kent State, nothing. The young minds of that day burned the American flag, took over college buildings, burned them, disrespected any kind of authority, burned their draft cards, went to Canada. If you were in the military, which I was, and you flew to an airport in your uniform, they would come up and spit on you. They would call you baby killers. The young minds of that day were corrupted and rationalized by the educational system. You know what? Here it comes. Those same men and women grew up to be the leaders of our country today. The Bidens, the Clintons, John Kerry, Obama, all radicalized through that system. They are all liberals today out of that time period. The next three or four generations after that, you see them today. You have got the AOCs in Congress. You have got the squad. You have got men and women now who want to dismantle everything about this country, going after the young minds and in time taking over a country today.

I saw that. I lived through that. More important, I learned from that. I learned how to use the world system to destroy minds, to radicalize minds, to put a system together to let this mind be in you, which is all in Christ Jesus with young people.

1 Timothy 4:12

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.

I just preached that for our kids in camp a couple of months ago, or a month ago.

Ecclesiastes 12:1

1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Do you remember the Book of Ecclesiastes, do you? How Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, he goes through every philosophy and "ology" that man has put together in the last four thousand years to be the devices that will get you around the Word of God that put this country right where it is at. So I saw that. I went after them. I used the system against itself.

I saw how that young men and young ladies were gravitating towards sports. This is forty-plus years ago. So I put basketball teams together in the summer. We play softball. We have volleyball. We had social events. Kevin and Kathy Bond, who you all know, Kevin and Kathy were not even married yet. We put together a little league program that has probably had over eight hundred kids in it that started it early Saturday morning. It went to four o'clock in the afternoon, took up four or five ball fields, and we reached some kids. You know who were the umpires? You know who were the coaches? You know who were the ones that were guiding those young minds by young men and young ladies just like you. I would put basketball teams together. Softball teams together, just like we do here. They would invite their unsaved friends to come in. I would tell these guys, "This is your church. I am giving you twelve people. This is your church." In most sports leagues, they will play sports and try to figure out how to minister. We are going to minister and figure out how to play sports. And we went after them. Just like we do today. We went after them. I knew where the young minds were. And I knew what was going after them. And I thought to myself, "If the devil can do it, I can do it." And I did. You did.

I need an umpire. John Hill. He was not even married to Jan. Years later, he is sorry he got married to Jan. But back then, he was not even married to Jan. He supplied every referee I needed. Gene Geisinger. Yeah, you would not believe this. He was a whale of a basketball player back in the day. Not anymore. But I am not either. But you were not even married then. But you started with me back then. You know what I am saying. Down here in Lee's Summit, you have another church. Brad Nelson pastors that church. He is the pastor. Brad Nelson was one of my boys. He came out of that youth ministry dealing with others. For a while, he went up to New Jersey. He started a church up there with a Mike Pitts vocals guy. That is how you did it. I saw it. I had social events, reaching young minds with the Word of God. One by one. It was not easy. But through the compounding effect of building young lives with the Word of God, with the men and the women God gave me, we got it done.

VI. The Power of Personal Invitation and Discipleship

Do you ever notice here, after I preach, I never give an invitation? Sometimes I will do, sometimes God will come down when I just put the paint off the walls, and He will say, "You need to do this." But in most cases, I do not. That is unheard of. Most churches, Baptist churches, you go to at the end, the pastor starts out by having every head bowed, every eye closed, and he is saying, "Just As I Am" for five or ten stanzas. Nobody comes forward. So then he switches and says, "Let us sing a couple stanzas, 'Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior.'" You go ten or twelve stanzas, nobody comes forward. So he winds up with "Almost Persuaded," and nobody still comes forward. I do not have to do that. You know why? My greatest invitation, or the young men and the young ladies, are sitting in this room this morning. You will invite your friends and bring them to church. They will see a change and a difference in your life. You will bring them to church, you will introduce them around, you will get them into one of our youth things, and my goodness, there are a million of those going on. You know what happened? Bang! They get saved. Then you disciple them. And the compounding effect just keeps going on. You. You. All I do is deliver the goods on Sunday morning. You take it and run with it. You are the greatest invitation that a church could ever have. You just do not do it at the end of the service.

I simply follow the pattern that I found in 2 Kings chapter 4:18-37. It is a great story. Elisha was taken over after Elijah. It is the story of a Shunammite woman. Her son dies. They call for Elisha. I love this story because Elisha does not immediately go. Now, God, He is the prophet. And He is the one God is working through. But when this young boy is dead, He first off tries to send somebody else, and it fails. You know what I learned from that? You cannot send somebody else to do what God has called you to do. So He finally goes. There is that boy laying on the bed, dead, in the doorknob. Then He does one of the most incredible, weird things you ever saw in your life. The guy is dead. He crawls on top of that dead body. Now, who knows what this kid died of? He crawls on this kid's dead body. The Bible says He puts His mouth to His mouth, His hands to His hands, and His eyes to His eyes. You know what happened? The boy came alive. He is a dead boy, a picture of an unsaved person. I learned from that. If I am going to reach dead people, unsaved, then I have got to put my mouth to their mouth. I need to understand why they say the things that they say. My eyes to their eyes. I need to understand how they look at things differently than me, hands to hands. Why they do things that they do. There is the beginning of the key of reaching young people, getting into the world. This is what you do. This is what you do so well.

The people grew. I used everything I knew to give you what you needed to mature. The people grew, the ministry grew, and then, as I saw that, I kicked my job into high gear. I took it to the next level. Obviously, Sunday morning and Thursday night, two key areas. But then we had Discipleship One, we wrote Discipleship Two, Discipleship Three, to bring you up to those levels. I took New Year's Eve, and everybody else was partying and having a great time. Remember those days? We would take four or five hours on a New Year's night, and I would nail and lay out a major piece of that Bible for you. We did child training. I am going to do it again coming up here. Then I brought you through the people ministry. I brought you through the counseling ministry. I thought you brought you to marriage enrichment. Then I never, never,

never did not have my home door open to you for one on one, twenty-four/seven, available to anybody. Never too busy. We had our website, which impacted over two thousand people. I opened up to my people every area of the greatest book the world has ever seen. Through it all, they saw my love for that Book, and it became their love for that Book. I understood how would they ever be excited about the Word of God if they did not see in me the excitement of the Word of God.

Here we are today. It took twenty-plus years to get us where we are at today.

Habakkuk 2:2

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

I laid the vision out. You read it, and now you are running with it. My vision is now our vision. Now God has this last year, if you can see it and understand it, maybe you are so out of it you cannot. But I do not think so. He has taken us to a brand-new level. As the Bible says He did for the church in Philadelphia, He has done what I have prayed and worked to do to build a Philadelphia church, and He has opened to this church an open door to the world.

Our last two years when we had our Bible conferences, I look at them as stepping stone stages. This last year, in my mind, I think was a defining moment for our church. It was a great conference. Mike Veach and Margaret Kame, Miles was here, Chris Myers, Sean and his family, and Kevin and Kathy Bond, Abram, Mark and Patty. I mean, it was just incredible how God brought who and what we needed. Then we saw out of that, Danny took our first team to Costa Rica. That was an entry level for missions for us. But that is where we met Sam and his family. Then we had some, what, twenty-eight kids come up from the Dominican Republic. Then we sent our man, Dylan, down there to their mission school. Next on our agenda, we have got three of our ladies going to Africa. Camp was the greatest camp we have ever had. We already have solidified our connection with the Boston Church and the New York Church. Sam and his family and us are one.

So here we are, August 26, 2026. We stand today looking at what God has for us. Remember, I said this when I started my message: it is no accident that you are here. You may not know that. You may never understand that. You may never figure that out. But I am telling you, God has you here for a reason. God has a plan for each of you. Remember, a failure to plan will always result in a plan failure.

VII. Upcoming Ministry Initiatives

Here is where we are going in the next eight months. You will want to get this down.

1. Sunday, September 13, our team for Africa will leave on the 17th, and we will send them out of our church. I talked to Kevin last week. When they get back, the whole team are going to have a night together where they share the testimonies and the slides that our church can rejoice in, all the things that we do. We have raised, in spite of what all the things we have to pay for to fix, was not going to let that stop. We have raised our $5,000 for the money to send

there because of you. Next Sunday, we will put those thousands of bracelets together to get those ready to go to Africa.

2. Then, right around New Year's again, we are going to have probably the greatest Bible conference to this date we have ever had. But this year, it is going to be a little different. I am still putting all the details together on this, and I have not got it all worked out. We are going to put the Bibles together like we always do. We are going to have the speakers, but the main speakers is going to be Mike Veach and his wife, Margaret. We are going to take, and we are going to split, and we are going to have a conference for the men and a conference for the ladies. Mike is going to speak to the men. Margaret is going to speak to the ladies. We will have fun things we do in the morning. Ladies like to do their thing. Guys do theirs, and then we will come together, and we are really going to build that and work for that. We are going to have a ladies' conference and a men's conference all built around the Word of God while we bring in these other preachers. Also, Mark and Patty are going to be here. Kevin and Kathy, and here is church will be part of that, and Sean and his family. Out of that conference, God will set us up for the next year. He already has. I do not know if you can see this growth. Back when on New Year's Eve, I used to lay out major parts of the Bible, and we would learn them together. Now God uses that same time to give us the direction that we are going to go as the church of the open door.
3. Along with that, you will notice how God has opened up the opportunities for our young men to preach and learn the art of preaching. Steve and Nicole were over at Victory Baptist this morning. There will be another team over there next week. We have the jail ministry. We have the rest home ministry, two of them. Now the Sydney Mission has broadened its opening to us. But the key here is four different opportunities, each one requiring a different set of preaching skills. As Hebrews chapter 5 said, this is where you begin to exercise your senses.

Luke 16:10

10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

God said, "If you are faithful over the little things, you will make your ruler over the big things." And He certainly has.

1 Timothy 4:13

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

Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 4:13, and this is what I saw when I started reaching young men and young ladies. He says, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, exhortation, and a doctrine." Now I have talked about this many, many times: to read the Word of God, to preach the Word of God, and know the Word of God. There is the balance. So you take a young man or a young lady, and you build those three areas in his life through the media by which you have reached him. Building young men who can preach the Word of God and building young ladies who could preach probably better than most guys could. Building those three things in your life.

Now, some of you are really good preachers. I enjoy listening to you. But when it comes to preaching and preachers, here is the key. Here is what you need to understand. Do you know what makes a really good preacher? Not your sermon. Not your delivery. It is not how nervous you are or how unnervous you are. It is not even your style. It is really not even how good you are. What makes a good preacher and separates him from the pack will be one thing: his depth. How deep is the well of water of the Word of God in his life? The depth of being able to draw out of that well all you need to get God's message to God's people. I told you last week, how that guy died of an overdose down in jail. So they threw everybody out. Now they are letting everybody go back in. No Bibles, no sermon notes. All got to be up here and in here. I think that is the greatest thing in the world because you know what that is going to require? That is going to exercise depth.

I have told you a million times that the Bible has a historical application, an inspirational application, and a doctrinal application. Depth is when you are preaching, you will be able to reach down at your well and blend those three together. Give people something. It is not just about a sermon. It is about how deep is the water in your well. You know, you hear it all the time when sports and football, Chiefs or guests, Royals, everybody. When it comes to their players, they have a depth chart, depth chart. That depth chart tells them, "Who can I use in this particular situation to counter what this team always does? I cannot put a rookie in. I cannot put somebody that does not understand it." So they look at their depth chart and they see who has the depth to understand that play. Okay. We are going to go to work on building some depth in you guys and ladies.

I have told you before, and we are almost there. I have told you before, I want you to be able to be dropped into every circumstance, any situation, any time, any place, anywhere, and for you to function and be able to do the job and get the word out and do what God wants you to do. But it is going to take depth. We can get there. Through our ministry, we have turned out some really good men and women who are really solid Christians. But we have also turned out about thirty or forty of you that can really preach the Word of God. The high school, Jared has done a phenomenal job. He has got some really good preachers up there. I have some really good ones here. Now, at this point in our growth, God is going to develop some depth to you guys. You are good, but I am going to make you better.

Now, depth, as I said, will come from exercising your senses in those three areas: reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Reading the Book, preaching the Book, knowing the Book, being able to pull all those things together. I certainly remember this. Not everybody in my ministry has been teachable. Remember back in the day when we all went down to the City Union Mission, and sixty or seventy of us would go? It was the biggest deal we had going back then because we were in the process. One of our guys would preach. We, there was no seat. We filled the whole back wall back there. There would be sixty, said, "Finally we got so many," they said, "You just cannot do that." We were having more people than the drunks. It was some great time. Then we would all go out to eat afterwards. But we had just one guy. And I say this because today most preachers in their preaching are just one-dimensional. They are like ice cream. They are all vanilla. There is only one dimension to them. I want you to be multi-dimensioned. I want you to

be on point wherever you are to read the situation, understand the situation. Adapt to the situation. Be flexible in the situation. Let God use you.

By the way. So we are waiting outside to get in. This guy is drinking a Mountain Dew. Some of you probably remember this story. He is drinking a Mountain Dew, and he lays it on the ledge and goes over here, and he is talking to somebody. One of the homeless guys comes up and grabs the Mountain Dew and starts drinking it. This guy had a heart attack. He was so mad because somebody got his Mountain Dew. He was preaching that night. All he could preach was about somebody stealing his Mountain Dew. I am not kidding you. The greatest witness against him was one of the drunks out there. He says, "Yeah, I came here tonight to do this and preach that, and somebody stole my Mountain Dew." And somebody from the back said, "Maybe he was thirsty." One-dimensional. His focus was one thing, and it was not even the Bible. It was his Mountain Dew. I do not want that for you. You are better than that. You already have everything that you need. We just got to add some depth to it. Depth will be your ability to draw while you are preaching from the depth of your well. Historically, godly, inspiration. And you blend them all together. You are so familiar with the Bible, you can pull from anywhere what you need. You have a sermon outline, you start laying out, and God starts throwing in plays from the bench. You are flexible. You are adaptable. Because you are compatible with the Word of God, you are durable.

This year right now, God has given us the opportunity to make you better. The rest home, the jail. We have nineteen young men who are probably most of them have never preached before. It is okay. Danny and I are going to take you. We are going to train you. We are going to get you ready. We are going to show you how to do it. We are going to give you everything that you need to get you ready to do that. Some are just starting. Some can already preach. We are going to make you better. Each one of these places that God has opened up the door are different in a way you have to deal with them and preach with them. You cannot preach the same way everywhere. You are going to exercise your senses, and we are going to add depth.

4.) But there is one thing coming that really put the depth charts over the top. Out of our missions conference last year, we met again, Mark and Patty. I knew Mark and Patty for forty years, missionaries to the Dominican Republic. He has sports ministries down there. I think he told you, he sat down with me years ago and asked me about how I did it. He is doing it down there the same way we are doing it here, reaching young men and young ladies with sports. Now, this year we are going to have one of the greatest opportunities. Mark has invited us to bring thirty men and young women down to the Dominican Republic for eight or nine days to invest in their sports ministry, soccer, pickleball, basketball, baseball, and to really, really begin to use your talents on that level. But more than that, you young men will preach every church in that area on a Sunday morning. You young ladies will be teaching and laying out the Word of God in orphanages, in schools, with ladies' groups. It is going to be the most evangelistic endeavor that you could ever want to do. Through that, you are going to exercise your senses to the farthest extreme. You will never be the same again, and you are going to build a depth in your life. Nothing will build a depth in your life than having to adjust American culture and preaching to

another culture. Our team in Costa Rica last year was the entry level. Incredible job. Dylan going to the Dominican Republic was our recon mission.

I do not know if you have seen how God has done this, because there is so much going on, you get lost at all. I am telling you, one of our guys, Josh Henderson, married Maria from the Dominican Republic. She came up here and now is part of our church. It was through her that the twenty-some eight kids came up here because they came out of her Christian school. They got here because of what God was doing there and brought them up here. We bonded with them, fell in love with them. They fell in love with us. Half of them want to move back up to Kansas City. Then we had Dylan go down. We have Mark and Patty give us this invitation. Can you not see how God is setting this thing up? Now we are going to hit the ground running with our greatest international ministry endeavor yet. I do not know if I can get thirty, but I want to get as many as I can. Mark particularly asked for young men and young ladies who were sports-minded, who can get in there and do it, and then obviously sprinkle some older ones and have them experience and all of that stuff. God has it all set up for us. This will be the greatest single growth process of your young Christian life. And we start filling the slots today. Jared and the Holy Spirit. High school, I just put HS, high school, and I keep calling the Holy Spirit. Well, he is led by the Holy Spirit, but you know what I am talking about. Anyway, Jared is going to, he is taking some key guys and gals down. He is all over this. This little meeting up here they want afterwards. They got a booth down here in the Blue Springs Festival to sell stuff to raise money. I told him that we will take a team and get some people together. You know where we can really make some money? Everybody is looking for a place to park. We pretend to get some gals out there with big signs, "Support our mission to Costa Rica," Sing Hyle, and you put them out there and $10 donation. We will pack that lot out. See? Smarter than the problem. He is on it. I am telling him. It is an incredible thing.

We are going to build our people around one major trip next year, going to Dominican Republic. This will be a church-wide event. Not everybody will be able to go. I cannot go. But this will be the great principle of 1 Samuel chapter 30:24.

1 Samuel 30:24

24. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

Thirty of you will go. The rest of us will get you ready to go. Stay here, support you, pray for you, and in the jubilee of Christ, we part alike. I will get you ready. I am going to call Greg Kudowski next week. I already talked to Maria, who both speak fluent Spanish. I am going to teach you how to speak through a translator before you get down there. It is different. We are going to work together and get you raise your edge and raise your sharp before you have to go down there. We are going to begin the depth chart. We are going to start with the first one. We are going to start with the first one. We are going to start with the second one. We are going to begin the depth chart of your life that when you come back, it is going to be an incredible time. We are going to develop a depth, putting your skills to a new level.

Now, come back down to earth a minute. We all know the times and the seasons. We all know that we are in the darkest part of New Testament Christianity, and this may be the last chance to reach the world because it may be nighttime right now in the church age, but the morning is coming. So in my mind, where we are at, who we are, what we are doing, and what we know, it is only fitting that we call this trip Operation Daybreak. Us going in right before that eastern sky cracks open and the Lord comes home and takes us home. If you want to go to be a working part of the team, it is the last week of April. The cost is going to be $1,600 or $1,700, exactly what it was about for going down to Costa Rica, and we have plenty of time to get it ready. We will come up with all kinds of things to get it done. I want to form the team up. I want to educate the team. I want to prepare the team. In my vision, a team of cracked young men and young ladies with older ones sprinkled in and out the thirty to make this thing work all the way around. Twenty-plus years of my life. Now you better understand my method of my madness. Twenty years of my life, twenty-plus years of my life, getting ready for this day, getting you ready for this day. And now here we are, Old Path Baptist Church, the church of the open door.

It is coming Thursday night. Everybody will be here except the nursery. Dylan will lay out for all of us what God has done in his life, and we will see what is going on down there and get a better understanding of what we will be doing. You all need to be here.

VIII. The Work of God: One Hand in the Book, One Hand in the Work

I want to leave you with this. You have seen my vision, updated the vision. We will start building that team today. I want the best cracked young men and young ladies and the midline and older people that we can get what a job we can do down there. Here is my final thought. In Nehemiah chapter 4, if you have your Bibles, turn over there. You know from what we do know about the Bible that in the book of Nehemiah, they are rebuilding the city and the temple. Israel is still in the captivity of 606 B.C. I think this is incredible. Israel as a nation is still in the captivity of the world, but God handpicked a remnant to go back after seventy years to begin to start doing it the way it needs to be done. You know how I see that? I see that we are in the Laodicean church period, and Christianity is in its own brand of captivity, but God is taking some churches like Mike's Church, our church, Kevin's Church, and He is bringing us back in the midst of that captivity to do it right. Incredible. I spent a lot of time in these passages because I see all the parallels.

Nehemiah 4:17-18

17. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

18. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

You see, this is what the true work of God and the people of God, this church, this is what you do. This is how you have been built.

- We all share the work.
- We all share the burden of the work.
- We all will carry the load of the work.

But I want you to see one hand on the work and the other hand with the sword, your King James 6 and 11, Authorized Version. You see how it works? My left hand in the work, my right hand in the Book. Your right hand in the work, your left hand in the Book. We are laborers together. My left hand, your right hand, but the Word of God is what holds us together. How we get the work done. We are one body. We are laborers together. No one can do it by themselves. We have to do it together. Cannot do it alone.

Now look at verse 18. "For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me." We are laborers together, one hand in the Book, one hand in the work, waiting for the trumpet to sound. Hence, Operation Daybreak.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You for all You do for us. Thank You for the good men and women of this church, for the young couples, for the midliners, for the older, everybody who just loves the Book, loves You, and wants to be part of a church of an open door in the midst of a Laodicean church period. May You reach out today as I laid out my heart, how we got here, and yet where we want to go, raise up those thirty young men and young ladies, moms and dads that will go do the work that we together as one hand in the Book and one hand in the work, get the job done. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for a sake we ask it. Amen.

Two thirty this afternoon. There is the address on there. You want to be part of this team, come and see me.