

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 27TH, 2023 // VISION

## DIVINE COMMUNICATION

Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (KJV). This verse has been used erroneously to emphasize the importance of having a visionary leader to avoid people wandering aimlessly until death.

- Other translations offer clarity, showing that **we are left to our own demise without God's direct revelation** (the Word).

## WE ARE RELIANT ON THE WORD

John 1:14 tells us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God proved His love for us by sending His Son to die for us (Romans 5:8), and **we are reliant on His sacrifice**.

- Because of our reliance on the Word, **we are dedicated to expository teaching**. This simply means we go verse-by-verse through books of the Bible.

## THE VISION STATEMENT OF GOD

As Jesus ascended back to Heaven, He shared His vision for the Church. Jesus tells us in Matthew 28:19–20 to go and **disciple, baptize, and teach** people to do all the things Jesus has told us to do.

- This sounds simple, but **it takes the entire NT to show us how we're to accomplish these core objectives**.

## COMMUNION, PRAYER, AND QUESTIONS

We end every service with **communion** in order to bring every lesson back to Christ. This is a great time to repent and reflect.

- We offer **prayer** for anyone who may need to confess or ask for spiritual help.
- We always invite people who may not believe yet to **ask a pastor questions** and possibly move forward.

## LIFE GROUPS

### THIS IS WHERE "CHURCH" REALLY HAPPENS

The weekend service isn't designed for intimate interaction and relationships, but **Life Groups** are.

- We believe Life Groups are the best way to grow in our faith. Life Groups are not just what we do but who we are. **We are striving to be a church of Life Groups and not a church with Life Groups**.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

Currently, there are 11 groups (four women's groups, six co-ed groups, and one men's group) that meet every day of the week except Fridays and Sundays.

- We have about **40% participation for regularly attending adults**. In order to grow this number, **we are having a Life Group Interest Social on October 1st**.

## WE WANT TO BE INTENTIONAL WITH GROUPS

We encourage people to be in and lead groups that are intentional about **reaching people, discipling, and multiplying** into more groups.

- If you want to start or attend a group, email [shelbyville@experiencecc.com](mailto:shelbyville@experiencecc.com) so we can help with training and getting people involved.

## SERVING

### SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

We do a lot outside of the church. We currently support over 90 nonprofits, but **we have a lot to do inside the church to serve each other and visitors**.

- If you are not currently serving, we want to encourage you to **attend our Volunteer Interest Meeting on Monday, August 28th**.

## MISSIONS

### OUR STATE

- **Murfreesboro** (2009), **Cannon County** (2017), **Shelbyville** (2021), **Tullahoma** (2022), **M.I.T.**, our **finances, and organization**.

### OUR NATION

- **Hope Church** (Seaford, DE), **City Church** (Albany, NY), **Garden City Church** (Beverly, MA)

### OUR WORLD

- **El Salvador**: ministry to elementary-age kids. **Interest meeting October 15th at 1:00 pm**.
- **Uganda**: Our missionary, Tara Henson, works with street kids, teaches FJ, and trains pastors. **Interest meeting today at 1:00 pm**.
- **Guatemala**: sending people in 2024.
- **Eastern Europe**: EEM
- **Haiti**: Jameson and Shelby Toyo

## BECOMING ACTS 1:8 MISSIONAL

In 2024, **we want mission trips to be more accessible to those called to missions**.

- We are looking to launch domestic missions and will have **two trips to the New England area** (Jerusalem). We will have **one trip to Guatemala** and **two trips to El Salvador** (Judea and Samaria). We are planning **four trips to Uganda**.

## FINANCES

### HOW WE STEWARD YOUR GIVING

#### IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD

A steward is someone who manages another's property or financial affairs, meaning we are managers of God's possessions.

- As good stewards, we remember that we do not own what we have. **We have been entrusted to manage God's property in this life, and one day we will answer for how we handled His property**.

## WHERE IS OUR TREASURE?

Our lives are "like vapor" (James 4:14) compared to eternity, and we are to use our limited time "storing up treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19–24).

- The location of our treasures is key because **our heart follows our treasures** (Matthew 6:21). **If we are content storing up earthly treasures, then our hearts cannot be on heavenly things**.

## TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES:

- 2023 budget: **\$9,800,000**
- Estimated expenses (because our church has grown 42%): **\$10,400,000**
- Projected income: **\$12,100,000**

## CAMPUS BUDGET BREAKDOWN

- Murfreesboro: \$5,947,411 • Cannon County: \$737,477 • Shelbyville: \$400,251 • Tullahoma: \$616,872 • Network (covers needs for all campuses): \$2,105,218
- Full and part-time salaries for all campuses: \$3,422,552 (34%); Average salary for full-time: \$51,510
- Taxes: \$370,498, Health Benefits: \$573,588, M.I.T.: \$278,000, Outside CPA: \$11,696

## GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITIES

- **Outreach and Benevolence: \$2,970,000 (30% of budget)**. This goes to individuals needing help, schools, missionaries, nonprofits, church planting needs if necessary, etc.

## THE EXPERIENCE COMMUNITY SHELBYVILLE

- **Budget:** \$400,251, **Administration:** \$170,671 (salaries and benefits), **Other Admin:** \$17,275 (maintenance, taxes, general admin), **Operating Cost:** \$26,000 (utilities and maintenance), **Ministry Expenses:** \$61,389, **Mortgage:** \$67,440, **Benevolence:** \$57,476, **Projected Giving 2023:** \$285,941
- Budget: **\$400,251**
- Projected Giving: **\$285,941**
- Difference: **\$-114,310**

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

When we compare our giving to other churches in America, we actually are not doing that well. There were 14,000 churches surveyed, and the average giving per person was \$2,262 annually.

- **This campus averages \$1,094**, which puts us at **less than half of the average and as the lowest-giving campus**.

## FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO THE VISION

**I do not know who gives at this church**. Whether one believes tithing is an NT thing or not, it is impossible to argue that Christians should not financially contribute to the mission of the church.

- **If we're going to advance the gospel, it will take not only time and effort but also a financial commitment**.

## WE ARE TRYING TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

**We do not** advertise or use gimmicks to grow. **We will not** waste money on production or meaningless comforts. **We will** strive to be as frugal as possible and to be the most benevolent church we know how to be.

- **We need your help financially to provide space and resources for people to be able to hear the gospel**.

## WE CAN HELP YOU

If finance and budgeting is a problem for you individually, **we want to partner with you and help you to be in a position to steward your money in a healthy and biblical way**.

- We offer **Experience Finance**, which is a free study on the biblical approach to debt and money. At the end of the study, we give you access to **Ramsey+** for free.

## SHARING THE LOAD

### PRAYER AND FASTING

God is blessing our churches! Last week we had over 7,600 at our campuses. We have a heart to plant more churches but lack the resources necessary to fulfill our vision.

- **We must seek God through diligent and intentional times of prayer and fasting for the provision needed to do what He has called us to**.

## REAL AND HONEST COMMUNICATION

**Two of our four campuses are out of space**, and we are actively looking at ways to avoid having to turn people away.

- The thought of someone in need of the truth not being able to come into a place and hear the gospel should bother us. **We are one church, so this is a problem for us all to bear**.
- Our Hospitality team does a great job of welcoming the church and visitors, but **hospitality should transcend a group of volunteers and be part of our culture**.
- **We must all do our part** to avoid clumping, step outside our comfort zone, and engage with those around us because we desire to see the Kingdom grow.
- We are thankful for the partnerships that give us parking for the weekends, but **parking is a problem for us on the weekends, weekdays, and events**.
- Thank you for your willingness to park across the street and walk to the campus. Please **be in prayer about the back lot for sale behind our offices**.
- Our ECCO large group area floods almost every time a flash flood happens. We have been able to remove the standing water and minimize damage each time, but we lack a permanent solution to remedy the situation.
- Please **be in prayer about a cost-conscious solution to this problem and the resources to accomplish it**.

## WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

We have never held a building or fundraising campaign or taken out a loan as a solution.

- This is something we are unwilling to relent on, so **we need to seek God's provision** through prayer and fasting, we need to **trust God with our finances**, and finally, **we need to be obedient** to what He says.

## WHAT NOW?

- **Be present and make church a priority**.
- **Get involved in our discipleship process**.
- **Build your personal relationship with Christ** through praying, listening to God, reading the Word, and obeying what the Bible says.
- **Partner with us through prayer and giving** to grow His Kingdom.