

MOVING TOWARD MATURITY

Better

TEXT: Heb.6:9-14

INTRODUCTION: One year ago today we gathered in this place for another special day. We called it “One Awesome Day” for it was the day on which we would break ground for the two new buildings God had put upon our heart to build for His glory.

That day itself was the culmination of a mighty move of the Spirit of God among us. In January of 2008, confident of the leading of the Lord in my own life, I challenged St. Andrew Baptist Church with the words of Isaiah to “stretch out the curtains of your dwellings” in order to provide more and better space for people of all ages to come to know the Lord and become His disciples.

In less than 9 months, you elected a team from among us to determine what needed to be built, how, and at what cost; unanimously approved their recommendation, and said with one voice responding to the moving of God in your own hearts “Now is the time.” We said, “Now is God’s time for us to build.”

In all honesty, there were things around us that seemed to indicate that now was not the time. The economy was disintegrating; the stock market was plummeting; uncertainty was looming. But we were convinced that God was saying to us, “Now is the time,” and we chose to believe God rather than men.

For the next five weeks we got on our knees before the Lord and said, “God what do You want to do through me to bring the vision You have given us to reality?” And God answered us one by one. With no committees and no fund raising organization, just time in prayer and in His Word, the Lord led His people to commit \$2.2 million to go with the \$250,000 already on hand. Before the end of that same year, the church authorized the Building Team to move forward.

The slowest part of the project came next, getting things ready for the permitting process and getting the necessary go aheads from all the government agencies. Now when God moves things through a government agency, you really know He is at work! And He was. By the end of April 2009, our permits were in hand, so on the first Sunday of May last year, we celebrated together “One Awesome Day!”

But “One Awesome Day” was not just about a ritualistic breaking of ground for a construction project. “One Awesome Day” was about building the Kingdom of God which is not made of bricks and mortar, but of souls. So, do you remember what we did on that day?

Each of us took a wooden stake and wrote names upon it of people near and far we wanted to see saved.

Because we were saying that our concern is not about physical buildings but about lives and souls and eternity.

So we carried our stakes, young and old together, and circled around a portion of the construction site.

And one by one, we began to drive our stakes into the ground.

Each of us a distinctive member of the Body of Christ.

Yet united by the Holy Spirit as a part of the Family of Faith.

The driving of each stake was our statement: "Lord, we build these buildings for the saving of souls, for the discipling of believers, and for the work of Your Kingdom for all eternity."

And then we dedicated it all to our Great God and to our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now those stakes are buried under the sidewalk at the southwest corner of the Preschool Building.

May every time that our feet walk on these sidewalks, not just that one at the corner, but all the sidewalks on this campus may we remember those names to pray for them and to continue to seek their eternal salvation.

And as we remember those stakes buried there may it remind us of our Savior who died and was buried but who rose again from the dead.

And may we remember that He told us to walk, to go, and make disciples of all the people. He told us to go and be His witness in our own Jerusalem, and Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

That is what we did a year ago on "One Awesome Day."

Now we have called today "Oh Happy Day" because we celebrate the completion of the second of our two buildings. We dedicated our new Student Center 3 months ago and today we dedicate our Children and Preschool Building.

Whenever I come to one of these watershed moments in life, I always want to ask the Lord, "God what is the word that You have for me today? We have journeyed together through the valley and up to the peak, and now we stand at one of the pinnacles of life and look at the landscape beyond. And standing here Lord, I want to thank You for bringing me to this place, and I want to recall Your greatness and Your majesty that orchestrated all of the events of my life, of our lives, to bring us here. But Lord, I also

want to say, What now? What do You want to say? What word do You have for me? What word do You have for us?"

And at the moment, God has us in the Book of Hebrews. We have just finished chapter 5 and begun chapter 6 with the first 8 verses. And frankly God's word to us through those two passages has been a word of strong rebuke and of stern warning. The Lord rebuked all believers who have been content to be saved but to remain in the cradle of their Christianity. He admonished us to grow in the Word, in discipleship, in service, and in witness. And then the Lord warned us as believers not to remain in sin in our daily walk, thinking that we could substitute remorse for repentance and that God would be content to hear our cries of "I'm sorry, Lord" while we yet continued in our sin. He warned us of chastening as with fire those who claim the name of the Savior but who profane Him as the Lord by their lifestyle.

So what comes next? What word does God have for us on a day in which we celebrate His goodness and a day which we have called "Oh, Happy Day?"

Well after the two severe passages that precede it, you might be surprised at the tone of the very next verse. And I have not orchestrated the timing here. In fact, I could not because we had little control over when we would be at this point of dedication, and I am just preaching straight through the book of Hebrews. So it is God who brings us to this point, and I am confident that this is His Word for us today as we mark both a completion and a beginning. So let us be attentive. Let us open ear and mind and heart and receive the word God has chosen to speak to us.

Hebrews 6:9-14 ⁹ But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. ¹⁰ For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹² that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. ¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, "*Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.*"

God's word to us St. Andrew Baptist Church from this passage of Scripture is simple but profound. I would summarize it in a single word: better.

I. BETTER THINGS

Hebrews 6:9a But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you...

A. Better than what?

1. **Better than remaining babes in Christ.**
2. **Better than living an unfruitful spiritual life.**
3. **Better than the chastisement of God upon an unrepentant heart.**

B. What is better? – Things that accompany salvation.

Hebrews 6:9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, ...

So what accompanies salvation?

1. Believers of all ages growing in the Lord by studying His Word.

That is what new buildings are for.

new Student Center

now a new Children/Preschool Building

and since the children have moved, we can do some painting and remodeling ourselves in the lower floor of B building for adults to enlarge our Bible study groups.

2. Believers walking with the Lord as disciples.**3. Believers serving the Lord.****4. Believers being witnesses of Christ to family, friends, and neighbors.****5. Believers being witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the End of the Earth.**

God knows these things are our goals.

Hebrews 6:10 For God *is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

That is why He has worked so wondrously to cause these buildings to be constructed in the midst of an economic recession. Folks, God has done a miracle here, and let us be sure of the reason why. He has not done it merely for our comfort nor our pleasure. He has not done it as a monument to Himself for He needs none and certainly not as a monument to any of us. He has given us these buildings as a means by which we might have the better things, these things that accompany salvation.

Having reminded us that He is confident of better things for us, he tells us about a

II. BETTER WAY

Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

A. Diligence - earnest care, done with a sense of urgency

1. Jesus is coming soon.
2. We do not know what a day will bring.

Hebrews 6:12a that you do not become sluggish, ...

B. Do not become sluggish - dull, slothful, lazy – passive

1. These words are too commonly characteristic of Christians.
2. Not you, not now!
3. But do not become that way.
4. Let us never rest on our laurels or tire of the tasks given us by God.
5. We cannot say, the building is done so now I can sit back and rest.
6. No, the building is done so it is time to get started with the real work of reaching and ministering to people in the name of Christ!

Hebrews 6:12b ...but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

C. Imitate – follow the example of the heroes of the faith.

I cannot hardly wait until we arrive in our study of Hebrews at chapter 11, the Heroes of the Faith. I would jump right over to there if there wasn't so much good stuff between chapters 6 and 11, so we will get there in God's good time.

But my friend let me say based on God's better way for us that God is going to raise up among us Abrahams and Sarahs – who believe the promises of God in spite of impossible odds.

God will give us Noahs – who will deliver the warning of God while everyone else is thinking the world will go on and on forever.

God will raise up in our midst men and women like Moses who will choose to suffer affliction for God rather than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin for a season.

We will see Joshuas capture territory for Christ that once was the domain of the evil one.

And Gideons who will tear down the icons of the world to give honor to God.

And Davids and Daniels and Pauls and Timothy's and Mary Magdalenes who will be faithful unto death and then receive the crown of life and reign with Him forever who sits upon His glorious throne!

Friend, God's way for SABC is not the same ole way folks are doing church all over this country. God has a better way!

And God has a

III. BETTER PROMISE

Heb. 6:13-14 ¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, "*Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.*"

- A. My dear brother and sister in Christ, **if we will receive the better things that God has for us**, giving ourselves to

- 1. Studying His Word**
 - 2. Walking with the Lord as disciples**
 - 3. Serving the Lord**
 - 4. Being witnesses of Christ to family, friends, and neighbors**
 - 5. Being witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the End of the Earth**
- B. And if we will walk the better way**
- 1. Be diligent – live our lives with urgency**
 - 2. Do not become sluggish – lazy, passive**
 - 3. Imitate – follow the examples of the heroes of the faith.**

We will receive the better promise:

“Surely I will bless and multiply you.”

Invitation: Church member, will you receive the better things and commit to walk the better way?

Lost friend, will you come to Christ that the better things and better way will be offered to you as well?

Unchurched Christian, will you join us in walking the better way with our Lord?