

VISION 1:8

Vision Jerusalem

TEXT: Acts 1:8, Isa. 54:2-5, Mt 28:19-20

INTRODUCTION: There are watershed moments in every person's life.

- My first was when I trusted Christ as an 8 year old boy. Eternity changed for me.
- My second was when I met Karen in high school and determined I wanted to marry that girl. Apart from the Lord, she is the best thing that ever happened in my life.
- The third was when I was called to preach. My whole life direction changed, and for the better.
- Another watershed time for me was when God rescued me from the dungeons of liberalism and brought me to a conviction of the perfection and inerrancy of His Word.
- The most recent time was about 9 years ago when God broke my heart over a lost world and opened my eyes to His Acts 1:8 strategy for proclaiming the gospel to the nations.

Churches have watershed moments also.

Since I have only been your pastor for five years, I do not know about all the watershed times in St. Andrew's history, but God has already given us some together.

One of those came in January, 2008 when I shared with you the "Directions" God had put upon my heart for St. Andrew Baptist Church. In fact, you could say that this message I bring to you today is a sequel to that sermon 3 years and eight months ago. The "Directions" message was based upon

Isaiah 54:2-5 ² "Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes.

³ For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.

⁴ Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.

⁵ For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.”

Since I know that most of you memorize everything I tell you, I will not repeat the whole sermon this morning. I do, however, think it is important to help you recall one thing I shared with you. I told you

“GOD WANTS TO GROW THE HOME BASE OF SABC IN ORDER TO EXPAND OUR ACTS 1:8 IMPACT IN PANAMA CITY AND AROUND THE WORLD.”

In explanation of that statement, I said to you...

“We need to enlarge our facilities to allow us the space to reach, teach, and minister.”

- 1. We must move both our preschoolers and teenagers into permanent space.**
- 2. We must provide more space for our children.**
- 3. We must have additional room to start new units for adults.**
- 4. “On Sunday night, Feb. 24, I will bring a proposal in a Special Church Conference that our church form a Special Building Ministry Team to bring back to the church a recommendation concerning the specifics of what we need to build in order to provide the necessary facilities to do what God has called this church to do and then to lead the church in constructing those facilities for the glory of God and for the accomplishment of His Kingdom’s purposes for and through St. Andrew Baptist Church.”**

And do you remember what happened? Before the year was over, **the Building Team** was not only elected, but **they brought their recommendation back that we simultaneously build a Student Center** for our youth **and a Kid Zone Building** for our preschoolers and children.

Without a dissenting vote, this church said “YES” to what we sensed God was leading us to do. We began a series of prayer meetings, and we opened our Bibles to consider the Word of God, and then while the world around us was literally falling apart economically, we made bold commitments to give to the Lord what He told us He would provide as we said together, **“Now is the time!”**

Before we poured the first concrete footing, we committed those buildings to the Lord for the salvation of souls and the making of disciples by writing the names of lost friends and family members on stakes and driving them into the ground with prayers.

Nine months after that “One Awesome Day,” the Student Center was complete. Three months after that we moved into the Kid Zone. Already people whose names were on those stakes we put into the ground have been saved and are serving the Lord here at St. Andrew Baptist Church and many others with them. Our God is an awesome God!

Now I am almost finished with this review of the past, but really, all I have shared with you to this moment was in preparation for one more statement that God put upon my heart the day we began this whole journey:

“God wants to enlarge the base camp so that more may go on expedition, carrying the gospel throughout our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria, and the End of the Earth.”

Folks, we have said all along that God was not leading us to build any monuments. God did not work in might and power for the sake of brick and mortar. God so loved the world, people, that He gave His one and only Son. Jesus said, “Go and make disciples.” He promised the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to be His witnesses in our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria and the End of the Earth.

And so, my friend, today, I want to begin to share with you the next part of the vision God has put upon my heart for His dear people called St. Andrew Baptist Church. I call it VISION 1:8, and it is going to take me about two and one half hours to share it with you. The good news for you is that I am only going to share about the first 25 minutes of that vision with you today, and the rest I am going to spread over the next three weeks.

Obviously VISION 1:8 is based upon Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The first part of this vision is **VISION JERUSALEM**. While doing missions and evangelism, we must never stop at home; but we must always start at home. Therefore as we consider how the Lord would have us develop the local part of the Acts 1:8 strategy, we begin with our Jerusalem, Bay County. Folks, I am convinced that

I. GOD WANTS TO EXPAND OUR JERUSALEM MINISTRIES OF CARING FOR PEOPLE AND EVANGELIZING THEM BY ADDING MINISTRIES THAT WILL HELP THEM BECOME DISCIPLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A. We will continue to feed, clothe, counsel, provide medical care, and pregnancy care, and in fact expand those ministries as God enables because Jesus said,

...inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'
Matthew 25:40

B. We will continue to share the gospel with everyone who will willingly listen as we minister to their other needs because the Lord says,

... how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? ... Romans 10:14

C. But Jesus also commanded us,

Go therefore and **make disciples** ...Matthew 28:19

1. Making disciples is not new in our Jerusalem Ministries.

- a. There are people present this morning who came to Christ through the Medical Center, Benevolence Center, or the Sheltering Tree, and who have been discipled and grown and are now walking faithfully with the Lord and ministering to others.
- b. But there are not many who have been thus discipled.
- c. **I believe God wants us to disciple more.**
 - 1) Now I understand that not everybody who comes through one of our helping ministries wants to become a follower of the Lord Jesus.
 - 2) Not everyone who needs help wants the help that would lead to permanent change.
 - 3) But some people do.
 - 4) **Some people come to us at a point in their lives when God is working on them, and they are finally ready for real change.**
The problem is they don't know how, and they desperately need someone who will help.
 - 5) **God wants us to be that help.** God wants us to come along side those individuals that really want change in their lives and to
 - a) **Lead them to faith in Christ.**

- b) **Teach them, encourage them, and help them start living God's way concerning**
 - **Finances**
 - **Employment**
 - **Marriage**
 - **Parenting**
 - **Substance abuse**
- c) **For some we need to find a way to help them with temporary employment until they are able to get permanent jobs.**
- d) **In other words, when God brings us a person who is willing to trust the Lord Jesus and allow Him to totally transform his or her life,**
 - **we need to be there for them,**
 - **helping them in the transformation,**
 - **in every way that God enables us to do.**

We need to become the Center of Hope for the hopeless.

II. THE EXPANSION OF OUR JERUSALEM MINISTRIES WILL REQUIRE THAT WE PROVIDE LARGER AND BETTER FACILITIES FOR THOSE MINISTRIES.

- A. **Our five little houses have served us well, but they are not adequate for the future or for this expanded charge.**
 - 1. **The Medical Clinic needs more examination rooms, a private patient screening area, a larger pharmacy, and offices where the Patient Assistance Program can be done.**
 - 2. **The Benevolence Center needs more counseling rooms, an area in which food can be unloaded efficiently and handled without backbreaking effort. They need storage for when food is in good supply to be held for days of shortage. They need to be able to display clothing more openly and need areas to sort and places to store things that are seasonal.**
 - 3. **The Sheltering Tree ministers best in a house setting, but they need a bigger house. And they need a place on site where they can store baby furniture and household items to help young mothers and struggling families.**
- B. **And if we are going to disciple people in things like finances, parenting and substance abuse, we have to have places large enough to have some classes where we can teach and minister.**

Folks, in short,

- C. If we are to become the Center of Hope for the hopeless, then we need a Center of Hope Building in which we can minister to our Jerusalem.**
- 1. We need a building into which we can move our Benevolence and Medical Ministries that meets the needs of those ministries and allows for expansion.**
 - 2. Then we can move the Sheltering Tree into the much newer and larger house now occupied by the Medical Ministry that has outgrown it.**
- D. How can we do this?**
- 1. In December, we complete our capital stewardship commitments to Now Is the Time.**
 - 2. We have already said that we will start another capital stewardship campaign to finish paying for the Student Center and the Kid Zone. (By the way, by the grace of God, we will owe less at the completion of our Now Is the Time Campaign than we projected.)**
 - 3. Next month, at our quarterly business conference, I will propose to the church that as we begin the follow-up campaign to pay for those buildings, that we also provide through that campaign the money necessary for the building and equipping of the St. Andrew Baptist Church Center of Hope.**

Now let me tell you something on a personal level. What I have shared with you thus far today is the outflow of my praying and considering these matters for the last five plus years, from the very first days of becoming your pastor. The Lord and I have discussed a lot of things, and I have considered a lot of possibilities. What I have shared with you is what I am convinced the Lord has spoken to me.

However, even after careful thought and diligent prayer, you always wonder, am I hearing the Lord correctly. Is this the right way to go?

Three weeks ago, long after I had already scheduled to bring this series of messages to you and explain what I believed to be the vision from the Lord of how we should further develop our Acts 1:8 strategy, I was sitting in my office preparing one of the sermons on Daniel. A friend called and asked if he could drop by. I said sure.

In a short while he sat down in my office and said to me in essence, "Bro. Mike, a group of donors is in the process of purchasing the three buildings across the street from the Benevolence Center and Medical Clinic. When they have a contract for the purchase finalized, they are going to assign that contract to the church and donate the money to buy that property."

That contract has been signed, and in less than 50 days, St. Andrew Baptist Church will own that extensive piece of valuable property that will provide nearly 10,000 sq. ft. of space for the Benevolence and Medical Ministries, about 3,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space complete with roll up doors, and an additional building that can be used for discipleship or other purposes as we desire. All of it comes with concrete parking all around.

We will of course need to do considerable remodeling to be able to use the buildings for our purposes and make it look like it is an integral part of our church campus. But the cost of that will be hundreds of thousands of dollars less than if we were building a new building from scratch.

To God be the glory. Great things He has done!

Now let me tell you one more thing about this, or do you want me to wait until next week? I believe that the gift of this property, so perfect for our purposes, is more than just a tremendous saving of money and more than just moving our timeline forward by two or more years. I believe that

III. THE GIFT OF THIS PROPERTY IS CONFIRMATION THAT THIS IS GOD'S WILL AND DIRECTION FOR ST. ANDREW BAPTIST CHURCH.

CONCLUSION: And that my friends is the short version of VISION JERUSALEM, the first part of VISION 1:8.