

REMEMBER

The Mission

Acts 1:8

WELCOME: I want you to know that we had the most wonderful Church Conference last Wednesday night, a great crowd with all four generations well represented!

- The Deacons reported that upon my departure as pastor here in a week and a half, Bro. Rick will become the Executive Pastor, leading the staff, and he, Bro. Mark, and Bro. Jeremy will be preaching on Sundays, and the church gave a unanimous vote of affirmation to this news.
- The Personnel Team recommended that when Karen is gone, Emily Griffin will become the Interim Children's Minister, and then the church elected her unanimously.
- Then the Nominating Team recommended a **Pastor Search Team**, which while ample opportunity was given for members to make their own nominations, instead unanimously elected the six nominated by the Nominating Team. They are
 - **Tim Barnard, Team Leader**
 - **Kathy Chavers**
 - **Alex Mooney**
 - **Emily Skaggs**
 - **Larry Christie**
 - **Michael Crisp**
 - **And Sheila Graham and Bruce Dzadek as Alternates**

I give my great thanks to those three teams for their hard and expeditious work to have all the pieces in place for a smooth transition when Karen and I depart. My special thanks to all three team leaders: Bruce Kuhnel/Deacons, Mark Hayes/Personnel, John Skaggs/Nominating Team

VBS starts this afternoon! Karen and I are excited. We cut our teeth in ministry chomping on VBS cookies and drinking old fashioned kool-aid.

The very first ministry positions to which Karen and I were called, while we were still in college was as bus missionaries for the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. We began just before summer, and in our first planning meeting with three other bus missionaries, the Minister of Education who had the most difficult task of supervising us five college students, said, "Gentlemen and lady, this summer, we are going to do seven Vacation Bible Schools on vacant lots around the city."

He explained the routine, and the next week we got to work. One week, we cut down the weeds on the vacant lot, and put up two big 4x8 sheets of plywood advertising the VBS beginning the next Monday. On Thursday we set up three big tents that made it look like the circus was coming right to their neighborhood.

On Friday and Saturday, the youth of the church joined us, and we went door to door passing out flyers and talking to children and parents about the VBS starting Monday morning. At 8 a.m. on Monday, we college students turned bus missionaries were on site with our Volkswagen Beetles the church owned, and we started picking up kids and bring them to the tents for Vacation Bible School.

We gave out prizes if they brought their friends, and most weeks we would gather between 50 and a hundred children on the vacant lot and did the same kinds of things we still do in VBS, only we didn't have a zip line!

At the end of the week, we found out which children went to church and which ones didn't. On Saturday, we went back to the homes of the children who told us they did not go to church and invited them to ride our church bus Sunday morning to go to Sunday School and Children's Church. Then Sunday, we started a new bus route to pick up the kids every Sunday morning. When school started, we picked them up on Wednesday nights as well, and they ate family dinner in the church dining hall, and then rotated through classes of music, missions, and roller skating in our church gym.

Can you picture Karen and I with fifty kids at our long set of tables in the church Fellowship Hall. We were one great big family! One Wednesday night we had seventy children. The next week, they split our route and Karen had a bus and I had a bus.

That summer we prepared seven lots, pitched those tents seven times, and started seven new bus routes, bringing hundreds of children to study God's Word and learn of Jesus and hear the gospel. We saw dozens of children come to faith in Christ and occasionally a parent. And each one of those glorious salvations began with a Vacation Bible School!

That was the summer of 1971, and Karen and I have been involved in Vacation Bible School every year since then, without missing a one. The one that begins today will be far past number 52, because we have had a lot of years with multiple Vacation Bible Schools!

Folks, let us join our hearts and minds and donate our physical energy to VBS here at St. Andrew this week. There will be children here over these next several days whose hearts God has prepared to respond to the gospel. All we have to do is to faithfully share this Bible message with

them in love through the week, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest. What a privilege to be a part of His work and a part of His plan!

His Plan! That's what I want to talk to you about this morning.

We are remembering.

We Remember THE FOUNDATION – Believing and obeying God's Word

We Remember THE SAVIOR – Who died on the cross for our sins

Today, we **Remember THE MISSION**

What is our mission as believers?

OUR MISSION WAS GOD'S MISSION BEFORE IT WAS OUR MISSION!

- **God created Adam and Eve to live with Him and to rule the earth.**

Genesis 1:28 NKJV Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and **subdue** it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Subdue = subjugate

GOD MADE MANKIND IN HIS OWN IMAGE SO THAT THEY COULD BE A PART OF HIS FAMILY AND SHARE IN HIS RULE.

- **Sin entered the world**

When sin entered the world through the disobedience of Eve and then Adam, the fulfillment of the mission of God was delayed, but not cancelled.

GOD CREATED MAN AND WOMAN TO LIVE WITH HIM AND TO RULE WITH HIM OVER THE EARTH.

God promised He would send a Conqueror through the seed of the woman who would defeat Satan who led Eve into disobeying God.

Ultimately, sin became so pervasive in the human line that God started over with just Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives – just eight people. When those eight stepped off the ark, God told them to multiply and fill the earth and said that all of creation was given into their hands.

Over the next hundred years, men and women multiplied greatly, but they did not obey God and fill the earth. Instead they congregated at the site upon which the future city of Babylon would be built. There they openly defied God and worshipped demons, refusing to spread out over all the earth as the Father commanded.

- **Babel – languages confused, people scattered, ethnic groups formed**

So God confused their language and forced them to spread out, and each group became its own people with their own language, customs, and culture and eventually with their own ethnic distinctions.

EVEN SO, GOD WAS DETERMINED THAT ONE DAY PEOPLE WOULD LIVE WITH HIM AND SHARE HIS RULE OVER THE EARTH.

So, God began again with a pagan named Abraham. He drew Abraham to Himself and told him that He would make a great nation from his descendants, although at the time, Abraham was already old and childless. But God promised Abraham that through his offspring, God would bless every family on the earth. Did you hear that?

- **God told Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed.**

Even though almost everybody alive at that time, other than Abraham, had forsaken the Lord for their own ways and purposes, God's mission still was to have people all over the earth who would live with Him and share in His rule.

- **So from Abraham's descendants God formed the nation of Israel.** The name Israel has a dual meaning.

Israel – One ruled by God.

- **One who rules with God.**

God made a covenant with Israel.

Exodus 19:5–6 NKJV 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Look carefully at this again.

Exodus 19:5–6 NKJV 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; **for all the earth is Mine**. 6 And **you**

shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

- **Why was Israel to be a kingdom of priests?**
- **Why should they represent God to the people surrounding them?**
- **Because “all the earth is Mine,” says the Lord!**
- **Israel’s purpose was to further God’s mission** of having people all over the earth live with Him and rule with Him over the earth.
 - **Israel utterly failed in that purpose.**
 - **God did not abandon His mission.**
- **God sent His Son to do what no man had done or was able to do.**
 - **By His death, Jesus offered every person a way for their sin to be forgiven and be adopted into God’s family to live with Him forever.**
 - **Through the resurrection, Jesus demonstrated His power over death and the devil, and He told believers that they would rule and reign with Him when He returns.**
 - **What Christ has done guarantees that anyone who trusts in Christ will live with God forever and will join Him in His rule over the earth.**
- **Jesus commanded His followers to join Him in fulfilling the Father’s mission.**

John 20:21 NKJV So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

- **Jesus said, “I send you.”**

Matthew 28:18–20 NKJV 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

- **Jesus said, “Make disciples – share gospel and teach.”**

Acts 1:8 NKJV 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.”

- **Jesus said, “Be a witness to Me.”**

Do you see this?

OUR MISSION WAS GOD’S MISSION BEFORE IT WAS OUR MISSION!

- This is my mission in life, even after I retire from full-time ministry, because Jesus gave it to me.
- This is your mission in life, regardless of your vocation, because Jesus gave it to you.
- This is the mission of St. Andrew Baptist Church, because Jesus gave it to us.

My friend, REMEMBER THE MISSION.

If you **REMEMBER THE FOUNDATION – Believing and obeying the Word of God**, you will remember the mission!

If you **REMEMBER THE SAVIOR – How He died on the cross and rose from the dead**, you will remember the mission and be His witness.

REMEMBER THE MISSION – Telling people that Jesus died for their sins and that they can live with Him forever and rule with Him one day over all the earth if they will trust Him as Lord and Master.

St. Andrew Baptist Church

- By believing and obeying the Word of God
- By exalting, worshipping, and obeying the Savior
- You have become an Acts 1:8 church. There are not many Acts 1:8 churches around the world. But you have become one.
 - You share the gospel in our Jerusalem thousands of times through our Center of Hope Ministries every year and see hundreds come to Christ.
 - You have been witnesses in Judea and Samaria, encompassing the United States.

- And you have both shared the gospel and made disciples in many nations that are a part of the Ends of the Earth and have helped local believers start new churches, hundreds of them in the last 16 years.
- **St. Andrew, you have been on mission with God!**
- In a very short while, I will no longer be here to remind you.

My prayer is that you always REMEMBER THE MISSION!