

Picture a group of hikers standing at the trailhead, gazing at a distant mountain peak.

- The path ahead isn't always clear—there are twists, turns, and maybe even a little fog. But what keeps them moving forward is a shared vision: reaching that summit together.
- Along the way, they encourage each other, share supplies, and sometimes help a friend over a tough spot. The journey isn't just about putting one foot in front of the other; it's about keeping their eyes on the goal and moving forward as one.

In the same way, as a church, God has given us a vision—a picture of where He's leading us.

- We may not know every detail of the path, and there will be challenges along the way. But when we walk together, united by God's vision, we find strength, encouragement, and purpose.
- The journey becomes meaningful, not just because of where we're going, but because of who we're becoming together as we follow God's call.

Today is the last sermon in our Unstoppable Sermon Series

- Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not / cannot prevail against it.
- We believe that God has called Thorsby First Baptist to be a ***people of hope for a world in darkness.***

We want to go back to the book of Nehemiah one more time as we seek to Renew Our Vision

The story of Nehemiah happens as the Nation of Israel was...

- Under the control of King Artaxerxes of Persia
- Jerusalem had been besieged; Solomon's Temple had been destroyed; the walls were broken down by the King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon – Babylonians conquered by Persians.
- These events would have taken place around 450 BC...Nehemiah is the Cup Bearer of this Persian King – gets word about how things are at home...

Remember last week we said...

Nehemiah Confronted the Challenge - Confronted the Brutal Facts

- ***Nehemiah 1:3-4*** - And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in ***great distress and reproach***. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."
- ***Nehemiah 1:4*** - ⁴ So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

- ***Vision always, always, always begins with God-honoring, Christ-Centered, Spirit-empowered prayer***
 - Jesus Prayed fervently and frequently. The Early Church prayed consistently and constantly.
 - If we are going to see God do a mighty work in us and through us for the glory of His Son's name, we must pray fervently!
- Beginning in Jan., we will set aside the 25th of Every Month to Fast and Pray for the Lord to do a great work in us and through us for the glory of Jesus' name.

Persevere with your Plan

As soon as Nehemiah heard the news about the homeland, he began to pray and plan. (4 Months)

- You may remember, he was going about his duties as the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, the king noticed that something was off – Nehemiah, Why are you sad?
- Nehemiah says, King, the situation in my homeland is not good – I want to go back and rebuild it (Nehemiah 2:4)
- ***Nehemiah 2:4*** - Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.
 - ***King Art, says What do you need?***

- ***Nehemiah responds – King, Here’s what I need – Letter to the governors permitting me to pass, and a letter to Asaph keeper of the King’s forest for beams for the gate,***
- ***I love the end of Nehemiah 2:8 “...⁸ and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *pertains* to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy.”*** And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.
- Through the Gentile King Artaxerxes, He provides everything needed to accomplish the task.
- Spiritual Principle – When God calls you to do something, He always supplies.

We have a Vision from the Lord – Bring Hope and Renewal to every person & every place

We have been given a Mission to Accomplish - To equip people to relentlessly pursue God’s Design.

We have a Plan – Living the 5G Life -

- **We Value what Jesus valued**
 - We Value God’s Word – So we help people Abide in Christ,

- We Value People – We help people Connect in Biblical / Meaningful Relationships,
- We Value the Gospel – We train you to share their time, talent and treasure to build up the body to reach others with the Gospel of Christ.
- How do I know if I am living this out?
 - How's Your **God** Time?
 - How's Your **Gather** Time?
 - How's Your **Group** Time?
 - How's Your **Give** Time?
 - How's Your **Go** Time?
- These are handles, if you will to know if you are living out the Values
- This is our Plan and we are sticking to it

Move when you have Momentum

Nehemiah 6:1-9 - Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), ² that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

³ So I sent messengers to them, saying, ***"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down."*** Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

⁴ But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

The scripture we read today you can see how the momentum didn't mean ...

- that there were ***no haters***; the momentum didn't mean that there were ***no obstacles***
- The momentum didn't mean that there were ***no critics*** in fact it's the opposite people were always trying to derail the momentum that Nehemiah had,
- but Nehemiah never stopped!
- Nehemiah refused to press pause! Nehemiah just kept going he persevered with his plan and he finished his work.

At First Baptist, by God's Graces, we have good momentum.

- Now is not the time to rest on our laurels – Sit Back, Relax, Take it Easy, Put things on Cruise Control and be content with the status quo.
- Status Quo never changed the World

- This is the time to persevere with our plan – Obstacles? Sure! Naysayers and haters, absolutely.
- But when you have God's momentum you don't let anything stop you!

We have seen God do amazing things at First Baptist.

- To God Be the Glory, Great Things He has done!
- Over the past 14 years, we have seen God do amazing things.
 - We have grown numerically, financially, but most of all spiritually
 - We have baptized 82 people since May 2021
 - Given over \$1 Million to the ***Above & Beyond Campaign***, while fully funding all ministries as well as fueling missions through our Cooperative Program giving.
 - Because of you giving...
- But there is more work to be done
 - We look at our Country, our State, our Community and we see unrest. We see brokenness. We see the breakdown of the family. We see the generational sin continue to ravage our communities.
 - We have the Hope – We must seize the day – Run into the darkness with the Hope of the Gospel

- We are on a vision is to bring hope and renewal to every person and every place
 - By Spiritually forming believers – By raising up leaders in our homes, communities and churches – by saturating Thorsby and Beyond with the Gospel of Jesus

Focus on the Future

From the very beginning of the story of Nehemiah we see the Focus on the Future

Nehemiah 6:15-16 - So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And it happened, when all our enemies heard *of it*, and all the nations around us saw *these things*, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

- Nehemiah refused to settle for the status quo, Walls in disrepair and city in reproach.
- He rejected the idea that things it's always been this way.
- Nehemiah saw the brokenness, and determined to do something about it.
- The same should be true for us – Although we have seen some great things, there is more work to be done!

By God's Grace, Thorsby First Baptist has been a lighthouse to this community.

- In September, we will celebrate 125 years of community impact
- The Mission remains the same – Love God & Love People as Jesus did!
- We honor the past, but we must focus on the Future
- We stand on the shoulders of the men and women who have served this body.
- We must focus on the Future generations – ***The Best is Yet to Come.***

Paul said, Philippians 3:12-14 - Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

We need to be Focused on the Future

"In the next decade, we see not just a church, but a movement: Christlike disciples, multiplying leaders,

and gospel-saturated communities bringing renewal and hope to every person and place."

We will strive to bring this City alive with the presence of Christ

- Like the early church we want to fill Thorsby with the doctrine of Christ - **Acts 5:28** - And look, you have **filled Jerusalem**.
- Like the early church we want to turn Thorsby upside down for Jesus - **Acts 17:6** - "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.
- Like the early church we want everyone to hear the good news of Jesus - **Acts 19:10** - And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.
- **We hope to see ... "Every man, woman, and child the opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel and be reconciled to God through Christ.**
- In a Statement...We have a vision to ...

Bring Hope and Renewal to every person and every place

How do we do that: Mission: To equip people to relentlessly pursue God's design.

We see a day when our city is alive with the presence of Christ. The streets echo with stories of transformation, as men and women shaped by the Spirit carry the love of Jesus into their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Spiritual formation is no longer an optional ministry track but the lifeblood of our church. Children grow up learning to pray as naturally as they breathe; adults walk with a deep rootedness in Scripture and spiritual practices; families embody the rhythms of grace and generosity that mark the way of Jesus.

From within this culture of formation, leaders continually rise. No longer is leadership confined to a select few — instead, every believer sees themselves as a disciple-maker. Our church will become a sending hub: pastors, planters, missionaries, and everyday kingdom leaders are trained, mentored, and released into God's harvest fields. The Leadership pipelines, which will revolve around our 5G Life, will flow like rivers, multiplying streams of influence into schools, businesses, and nations.

As disciples are formed and leaders multiply, the gospel spreads with unstoppable force. Entire neighborhoods once untouched by the good news now host vibrant communities of faith. Living rooms, coffee shops, and storefronts become worship gatherings; city blocks are renewed as justice and mercy accompany the proclamation of the kingdom. Our vision of **geographic saturation** is realized — no

neighborhood without a witness, no family without access to the hope of Christ.

This is not just a church — it is a movement of Christlike disciples shaping the world for His kingdom.

How do we bring the city alive with the presence of Christ; filling the city with the fragrance of Christ?

- **Spiritual Formation** → Every believer is deeply formed in Christ, living out prayer, Scripture, and obedience daily.
- **Leadership Multiplication** → Leaders, beginning in 5th Grade are continually raised, trained, and sent to multiply disciples and communities locally and globally.
- **Geographic Saturation** → Every neighborhood has access to a vibrant, reproducing gospel community.

1 Year Goals –

- **Increase Engagement in 5G Life**
 - God Time – Measure in D-Groups (4 or more) / Bible Recap
 - Gather Time (Aug. 3: 218 / Aug. 10: 242 – Ave. 230) 25 % increase 287
 - Group Time – 158 Members – Need to track attendance / engagement – 197
 - Give Time – Measure by serving units / giving units (hard decision, Debt is suffocating)
 - Go Time – Gospel Conversation – We will create a culture of Invitation!
- **Abide in Christ – Matthew Starts Today!**
 - We start reading the Gospel of Matthew Together tomorrow!
 - We will study it in our Sunday School Classes, and D-Groups
 - We will begin a new sermon series next Sunday
 - If you are not Abiding in Christ, now's a great time to jump in
- Examine your personal engagement – Where are you? What is your next Step?
 - As we look to the beginning of 2026, stay tuned to ministry launch, new groups, new studies – Deep Discipleship, Bible Recap: D-Group, New Men's Groups

3-5 Year Goals

- **Strengthen Partnerships**
 - Enhance Cooperative Partnerships (CBA, ALSBOM, NAMB, IMB)
 - Initiate Strategic Partnerships (Church Plants/Re-plants, Revitalization, Training in Disciple Making, Partner with 1-3 church plants, and/or Church Revitalization in North Chilton.
- **Leadership Multiplication**
 - Create & Launch a structured leadership development program for emerging leaders –
 - Identify and mentor 25 leaders for key ministry roles and multiplication of both Sunday School & D-Groups.

10 year – Push back lostness by 2%

- The missiological significance of the "2 percent" figure is that it is a widely used, though arbitrary, benchmark for defining an **"unreached people group,"** meaning a group with less than 2% evangelical Christian believers. This statistic serves as a key metric for mission strategy, helping to identify and prioritize groups where the Gospel needs the most access
- 34,000 Live inside 20 minute driving distance – 75% do not attend church regularly = 25,500
- 2% of 25,500 people = 510

We count people because every person counts

We do not want to be the biggest church in the area, but we want to church the area.

How do we reach 510 people – Multiplication not addition



| YEAR | ADDITION | MULTIPLICATION |
|------|----------|----------------|
| 1 | 560 | 2 |
| 2 | 750 | 4 |
| 3 | 1000 | 8 |
| 4 | 1400 | 16 |
| 5 | 1850 | 32 |
| 10 | 3600 | 1024 |
| 11 | 4010 | 2048 |
| 12 | 4500 | 4096 |
| 13 | 4740 | 8192 |
| 14 | 5110 | 16384 |
| 15 | 5470 | 32768 |
| 16 | 5840 | 65536 |

2 Timothy 2:2 - And the things that you have heard from _____ me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Ephesians 3:20-21 – Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Would you Join us –

- **We invite you to join us, help us bring hope and renewal to every person & ever place.**
- **Mission – Would you commit to pursuing God's design for you life**

How do we get there – Next Steps

For Lost – Repent of Sin and Believe in Jesus, call upon His name

For Some – Be Baptized

For Some – Take steps to join TFBC

For Some – Get involved in a Group

For Some – Give Consistently, Cheerfully –

Conclusion:

- I heard a story about two bricklayers working on a building in downtown New York City. Someone asked the first bricklayer what he has doing. The first bricklayer responded, "I'm laying brick."
- Then someone asked the second bricklayer what he was doing. The second bricklayer replied, "I'm building a skyscraper!" So one bricklayer had a job, and the other had a vision. (Etheredge, *The Disciple-Making Leader*, p. 123)
 - When you are teaching that class, ***you are bring hope and renewal to every person in every place***

- When you sing that song...play that instrument...wipe the crumbs off a toddler, change that diaper...when you guard that door, check those children out, so that we can maintain a safe environment for our families...***you are bringing hope and renewal.***
- We must see how their one task accomplishes a greater purpose.

Together, we can bring hope and renewal to Every Person and Every Place, in Thorsby and Beyond.

Bullpen:

If our greatest need would have been...

- **Economic, God would have sent an Economist**
- **Education, God would have sent a Teacher**
- **Physical, God would have sent a Doctor**
- **Man's greatest need is Spiritual, *1 John 4:14* - And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.**

Servers and volunteers must know their task is important. Every greeter creates a warm environment for a first-time guest to hear the gospel. Every baby rocker demonstrates God's love to the most vulnerable. Every offering counter assures the congregation that the church handles God's money with the utmost integrity. Every job matters; every role is a vital part of the whole. Paul speaks to this in 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 when he describes the church as a human body. Not all parts of the body are the same. Some body parts are clearly vital to the body's function, and some aren't as recognizably vital. Yet all are important, and the body suffers if one part is missing. This is true for every church. If servers and volunteers see how they contribute to the whole, they will serve with enthusiasm and joy. (Etheredge, *The Disciple Making Leader*, p. 123)

Communication these Truths:

Things to communicate:

- John Wesley, the great eighteenth-century preacher and founder of Methodism, was famous for saying, "The world is my parish." As he explained in his journal, he felt it was his "duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation."

DL Moody once said, "If I know my own heart today, I would rather die than live as I once did, a nominal Christian and not used by God in building up His kingdom!"