

GRAND OPENING 9/7/25

The Lord is generous! He keeps the promises He makes!

Gateway was formed years ago THIS month: the first Sunday in September 2003 was our initial service! Here we are, *22 years later on the SAME Sunday* at the Grand Opening of our OWN home, church, and property! This is no coincidence, it's the Hand of the Lord! I didn't make the connection until I was literally writing this sermon yesterday—it wasn't planned by us this way!

Last week I shared that when the Hebrew people were finally settled into their own land, they went from being **wanderers to Israelites:** which translates to “Sons/Princes of God.”

Kids have an inheritance from their father, and as the kids of the Lord, God was sharing what was His: the land of Israel and all its blessings. The earthly Kingdom of Israel was the physical and imperfect copy of God's Heavenly Kingdom, with Jerusalem at its center.

What they didn't know at the time was that the Lord had **prepared a Heavenly “New” Jerusalem** that the earthly one was designed after. A holy and celestial city where Jesus would live with His people forever and ever.

Just like the ancient Israelites, **Gateway Fellowship has stopped wandering after 22 years** and we've settled into our permanent home. I thank all of you for showing up today to celebrate with us!

Today we dedicate this land to God and His Kingdom!

- We consecrate this building for praise, worship, prayer, the reading of the Word, and the preaching of His Gospel!
- This has been a long time coming and God has brought His promise to harvest!

This might be the end of one part of the journey, but **the Lord is already starting us on the next.** As soon as our Building Permit is approved, we'll be breaking ground on a new 50' x 80' Sanctuary that will seat many more people than now. Not only has the Lord given us a home but He wants it to be bigger! He wants more people to gather together to worship Him! He wants all of us who know Jesus as Savior to be Lights in this world!

We still have lots of work to do on this building and property, and the Lord will be with us for every step. After our new addition we'll remodel the rest of the building, have a kid's playground, and more!

God isn't dead, He's risen, ascended to heaven, and coming back soon!

The Church isn't dead, but she's alive and being purified by Christ even as we speak! Ephesians 5 tells us that Jesus the Groom is preparing His Bride, the Church, by bathing us in His Word and making our wedding garments spotless and without wrinkle.

The unbelieving world would say that churches are dying out, but the Lord says in His eternal Word the Bible that on this Rock, Who is Jesus, **He built His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us!**

That famous statement by Him wasn't defense it was offense.

It shows the Church assaulting the gates of Hell and not the other way around! It shows that the gates WON'T hold against the assault, but will fall and be invaded.

What does said invasion look like? Not like earthly warfare, but heavenly.

Every time we preach the Gospel and someone receives Jesus as their Lord, one more person is Saved!

- One more human being is cleansed by the Blood of Jesus, sealed with the Holy Spirit, and given everlasting life. For any who come to Him, He will not cast out!
- For all who receive Him, they will become the sons and daughters of God!

Guys, **humanity has a problem...a real big one.** We're born separated from God and in sin. If something isn't done about that, if someone doesn't come and Save us, we'll *drown in our sins.*

I want you to imagine that you were aboard the Titanic. A ship built by the pride of men and called by its creators "unsinkable." We all know that on its maiden voyage she hit the iceberg and began to take on water.

We're on the Titanic right now, folks. Humanity has pridefully built a spiritual ship where we rely on ourselves.

- We think we're righteous just because we haven't robbed a bank or murdered someone.
- We think we're good people because we're generous or we serve others.

I'm here today to tell you all that is bunk! Deception! It's just as deluded as the engineers who designed and the contractors who built the "unsinkable" Titanic. All it took was one iceberg to undo years of planning, construction, and lots of money.

The iceberg that the ship of humanity has hit is sin. It's poked a big hole in our hull, we're taking on water, and the ship is listing.

It's time to grab a lifejacket and head for the lifeboats.

Our lifejacket and our lifeboat have a name: Jesus Christ.

Jesus was (and is) God in Heaven, sitting on His throne, ruling and reigning over all of creation. *He looked down and saw the sinking ship*, the mess we had gotten ourselves into, and He acted.

Sometimes people ask me **why God doesn't just come down from Heaven to rescue us** and I have some great news...some Gospel: He did. 2000 years ago He came here as a man to fulfill prophecies spoken in the Old Testament.

The Law of God was demanding: it required absolute perfection and here's our problem: **we can't do it.**

No matter how hard we try and steer ourselves in the right direction, no matter how well we plan, no matter how well we think we built the ship, we always seem to hit an iceberg.

The good news is that our Lord Jesus Christ ***WAS able to navigate through His Father's many commandments w/o hitting ice.*** He was the perfect Son, having earned righteousness and therefore meeting the demands of the Old Covenant.

Being pure and without sin, He willingly went to the Cross and died in our place.

Let me give another **example I shamelessly stole off the internet.** Imagine the son or daughter of a powerful king is caught committing a crime punishable by death.

The King is in an impossible quandary!

- He loves his child and wants to see him or her spared.
- But if he pardons his kid, he'll be seen as unjust and playing favorites.
- If he condemns his kid to death, he's being just but also lacks compassion and mercy.
- What is he to do?

So this is what happens: **on the day of punishment, his child is brought in chains** and tied to a post where he'll be whipped until he's dead. Just as the executioner steps forward, the king shouts "halt!" The king then steps down and leans over his son protectively, wrapping his arms around him from behind...and tells the executioner to proceed. In other words, the king—who is innocent—takes the punishment on behalf of his guilty child—who is guilty. ***Love and justice are served at the same time.***

Ladies and gentlemen, the King is Jesus and you and I are the kid brought before the executioner for our crime.

Let's go back to the Titanic. When the ship begins to list and groan is when everyone on board realizes its sinking.

- You rush to grab a lifejacket but there are none.
- You run over to the lifeboat but they're all full.

You offer everything you have to change positions with anyone on the lifeboat: all your money, jewelry, the deed to your house, the title to your car... **but all that is worthless in the face of certain death.**

Suddenly a man in the lifeboat with a lifejacket on stands up and offers his to you. Do you take it?

The same man then says he'll exchange places with you: he'll get back on the sinking ship and let you take his place on the lifeboat. He refuses your offers of money, etc. Would you do it?

The man offering His lifejacket and place on the boat is Jesus.

He's willing to die so that you and I will live.

Before He picked up His cross, Jesus was tied to a post and struck 39 times with a horrible whip call the Roman Cat of 9 tails for a crime He didn't commit.

After He carried His cross up Calvary Hill, He was crucified, He bled out, and died...in our place.

[Isa 53:1-12 ESV] 1 Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

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