



VISION SUNDAY 2020

Five Things to Look Forward to in 2020

Introduction:

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church: in Nigeria and the Fulani evangelists who bring the gospel to tribesmen at great risk.

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Pastor Rob Murphy and New Song Church in Lake Elsinore.

Closing prayer

If there is anyone who can face the future, it is the Christian. Likewise, if there is anyone who can face his or her past, it is the Christian.

1 Samuel 7:12 says, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

Charles Spurgeon points out that so far the Lord has helped us “through poverty, through wealth, through sickness, through health, at home, abroad, on the land, on the sea, in honor, in dishonor, in perplexity, in joy, in trial,

in triumph, in prayer, in temptation.” Thus far the Lord has helped us.

Therefore, He will help us, because we also look forward, not letting the past trouble or define us. Continuing with Spurgeon’s thought: We can expect “more trials, more joys, more temptations, more triumphs, more prayers, more answers, more toils, more strength, more fights, more victories, etc.”

If there was ever anyone who was troubled by his past and troubled by his past on a daily

basis it was the former slave ship captain John Newton who later became a pastor.

John Newton's notes for his sermon in Olney Church for his New Year's Day sermon show that he developed a theme for his sermon of 1773 based upon this diary entry: "O Lord, accept my praise for all that is past. Enable me to trust thee for all that is to come."

Though he had remorse over his past daily, it did not affect his hope for the future. Thankfully, because he went on to pastor

William Wilberforce who went on to push for the abolition of the slave trade in the United Kingdom. There was a point when Wilberforce wanted to retire from parliament and give up his fight, but Newton urged him and encouraged him to continue on.

“O Lord, accept my praise for all that is past. Enable me to trust thee for all that is to come.”

What a fitting prayer for the ending of one year and the beginning of the next. We too

want to praise the Lord for all that is past and entrust to Him all that is to come.

Newton did something else to reinforce this theme for his New Year Day's sermon, he composed a little hymn called "Amazing Grace."

The author of a recent biography of John Newton writes: *"Amazing Grace" is the most sung, most recorded, and most loved hymn in the world. No other song, spiritual or secular, comes close to it in terms of numbers of*

recordings (over three thousand in the United States alone), frequency of performances (it is publicly sung at least ten million times a year), international popularity across six continents, or cultural longevity (247 years old and still going strong). Every day it touches hearts across the planet in a huge variety of emotional situations that have ranged from occasions of national mourning to celebrations of personal happiness.

It was a song written to celebrate God's grace for the past year and to trust Him for future grace in the New Year.

Because the gospel is about grace. And that's the first thing you can look forward to in 2020 as today we cover five things you can look forward to in 2020 here at Center Church, the first being:

1. More Gospel (More of the Most Important)

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

In the estimation of the leadership of this church, the summary of a biblically based church is that it is gospel-centered, prayer-saturated and mission-minded... or a church

should be focused on the gospel, prayer and mission.

Acts 2:42

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Another way of putting this is REAL. LOVE. NOW. You'll be hearing that summary a lot this next year. REAL. LOVE. NOW.

Real — we want to be real, honest with ourselves, each other and with God, because the gospel is about truth.

Love — we want to love people right where they're at, not demanding that they change or clean up their act first.

Now — we want people to learn to love and serve God now. “Apply what you're learning. Do it today. Don't delay.”

Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God.

God's amazing grace is what gives us the freedom to move forward every day. No setback is too much to overcome.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;

Newton began his sermon for the New Year with this verse:

1 Chronicles 17:16-17

¹⁶ Then King David went in and sat before the Lord (prayer) and said, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? (grace) ¹⁷ And this was a small thing in your eyes, O God. You have also spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come, and have shown me future generations, O Lord God! (mission)

The amazing grace of the gospel is layered into every single page of the Bible. So, the

second thing you can look forward to in 2020 is:

2. More Bible (Year of the Flutter)

Because it is through the message of this book that we are continually challenged to stand in the grace of the gospel and nothing else.

In answer to a prayer in 2016 when I asked the Lord, “What’s next for us? What do You want us to do?” — God brought to my mind:

Psalm 119:105

**¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.**

- Pew Bibles
- Congregational Bible Reading Plan
- Center Groups

Good Bible study should lead us to several things — first the gospel. Second, the God of the gospel. This means we can also expect More Prayer in 2020. Third, if we're believing the gospel and engaging the God of the gospel, then we'll be acting on what God says. In other words, we will apply the teachings of the Bible to our lives. So, the third thing we can look forward to in 2020:

3. More Application (Teaching that Touches Your Heart to Change Your Life)

Here are the subjects we'll be covering in 2020 to apply the Bible to our lives.

- *My Favorite Verse*
- *1 Peter: How to Live Now* | How to live out true spirituality | How to Interact with Culture | How to Live with Government |

How to Live in Marriage | How to Live in Suffering | How to Live with Yourself

- *One Prayer: 1 Kings 8:22-65*
- *Nehemiah: Building the Kingdom*
- *The Reliability of the New Testament*
- *Majesty: Behold Your God*

Everything is connected, so believing the gospel leads us to the God of the gospel, which leads us to prayer and application and application leads us to outreach.

4. More Outreach (Four Event Sundays Throughout the Year)

- “Come and see!”
- Orphan Sunday
- Christmas Eve
- Easter
- TBA

Finally, none of this is for our sake alone. Nothing can be accomplished alone. So, the final thing to look forward to in 2020 is:

5. More Connection (Year of the Partnership)

- Why membership?
- Because it's biblical.

1 Corinthians 12:12-20

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized

**into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free
—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.**

**¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one
member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say,
“Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to
the body,” that would not make it any less a
part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say,
“Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to
the body,” that would not make it any less a
part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an
eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If
the whole body were an ear, where would be
the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God**

arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

- **Because it fights the consumeristic mindset.**
- **Because it fosters greater commitment (it's covenantal).**
- **Which fosters leadership development**

1 Peter 5:5-6

5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for

**“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”**

6 So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.