

**IMAGINE – Another Step Forward
Step Outside
Hebrews 13:11-21**

*We are temporarily suspending our study in 1 Corinthians for 3 weeks for a VISION SERIES!

*This is a GOOD DAY for you to be here whether you or a member or not. It is a good chance for you to hear the HEARTBEAT of a church and to know WHY she exists on this earth.

I want to begin this morning's message with a verse that may seem rather self-serving at first. My prayer is that you will understand it and gladly EMBRACE it before this morning is over. **Hebrews 13:17 NLT**

Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

FIRST, I want you to understand that I am not using this verse as some attempt to throw my weight around or to demand anything simply because I am your pastor. The words of Scripture here do not imply or require that of you anyway!

OBEY = Be persuaded to comply, (Allow yourself) to be convinced

DO WHAT THEY SAY = Willingly YIELD to their admonitions, Don't resist; Submit

CHC, you are a JOY to pastor!

*You have been PATIENT with me and allowed me to GROW and make MISTAKES

*You have GIVEN to the ministry and SERVED others above and beyond the call!

-On April 9 (Sunday PM), we will CELEBRATE our servants at a special meal.

-If you serve in any capacity at CHC at all, you should have gotten an invite!

-This will also help PREPARE us for EASTER!

*You have ENDURED much GRIEF in our setbacks and losses over the years.

*You have willingly (for the most part!) accepted great CHANGES for Christ's sake

I feel the WEIGHT of ACCOUNTABILITY to God in my role as your pastor.

*It is my PRIVILEGE to "watch over your souls." [Stay awake, not to slumber]

-I agonize to bring God's Word to you.

-I hurt with you when you hurt.

-I long to provide you with great RESOURCES and practical VISION.

-We have experienced some AMAZING ministry results together!

*He will JUDGE my work as an Under Shepherd

-How well I LISTEN to him.

-How well I LEAD you.

*I do not make decisions lightly (or quickly!)

-I COVET your continual PRAYERS

-I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate your encouragement

Today, I do want to **INFORM** and **CHALLENGE** you with our **NEXT STEPS** as a Church Family.

***I want to REMIND you of our VISION and our MISSION as a Church Family. [WHAT we do, and HOW we do it!]**

Our VISION is to bring hope to our world by helping people FIND and FOLLOW Jesus Christ.

If people ask you why CHC exists, tell them this! We bring hope to people by helping them to find and follow Jesus Christ. We are not ashamed of Christ. We love him, and we want others to know and love him as well. He has changed us, and we want others to SEE those changes that he has brought about in our lives so that they can believe that there is hope for change in their life as well. **The CHURCH is the BODY of Christ, and we are called to put his life in us ON DISPLAY as we grow in our faith. We take what is inside out so that we can bring those who are outside in! That is what we do. That sums up our very reason for existing as a church.**

Our Mission is to Attract Outsiders in, Build Insiders up, and Serve: Inside and Out!

This is the great challenge of the Church. **We must make sure we maintain a beautiful balance between REACHING OUT, GROWING UP, and HELPING OUT!** As a pastor, I must continually reinforce all three aspects of our mission in order to accomplish our vision. I believe deeply in studying and knowing the Scriptures, and I consider teaching our people the Word one of my most important duties as a Pastor. It is also YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to DISCIPLE those that we win to Christ! But I also believe that it is our great responsibility to stay focused on loving and serving those outside of the church so that we can create opportunities for sharing the most important message in the world with them! Since I became pastor here, I have strained to lead us to focus on REACHING PEOPLE who DO NOT GO TO CHURCH. I do not want us to fall into the closed loop of focusing on ATTRACTING PEOPLE who already believe, but on REACHING PEOPLE who do not YET believe. **I want us to be a circle facing OUTWARD. We exist on this earth to follow Christ, to help others FIND him, and then TEACH them how to FOLLOW him as well. Nothing else matters.**

I love the VISION and MISSION that God has given to us at CHC. It inspires me and gives me clarity when life gets crazy. It never changes because it comes straight from the Word of God! I see this no matter where I look in Scripture. God gave me this passage for our message this very morning. **Hebrews 13:11-16 NLT**

11 Under the old system, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, and the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. 12 So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by means of his own blood. 13 So let us go out to him, outside the camp, and bear the disgrace he bore. 14 For this world is not our

permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. 15 Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, **proclaiming our allegiance to his name**. 16 And don't forget to **do good** and to **share with those in need**. These are the sacrifices that please God.

- *Those outside the camp don't even know that there IS a SAVIOR!
- *We go where Jesus went to SERVE them in order to REACH them.
 - This will be UNCOMFORTABLE, RISKY, . . . and REWARDING!
- *This is a TEMPORARY assignment with ETERNAL benefits!
- *Church was NEVER intended to be a comfortable place to wait!! **Therefore . . .**

***I want to ASK you to MAKE SOME CHANGES with me in the coming days.**

- We have some areas of WEAKNESS that I want to shore up.
- We have some OPPORTUNITIES that I want us to seize.
- We have some NEEDS that I want us to meet.

Affirm Staff and Ministry Leadership at CHC

- *God has given us a great team.
- Existing staff
- New Campus Pastor (You will hear from LUKE SAUNDERS in the next 2 weeks.)
- Deacons at CHC [**ORDAINING 4 new deacons today at end of service!**]
- Volunteer Leadership in Kids/Students/Worship/Hospitality/Community Svc.

Multi-Site Strategy (Next moves)

- *We need to ASK GOD where he wants our NEXT multi-site campus to be.
 - I LOVE that so many of you have been asking about that!
- *We have to maintain UNITY as ONE CHURCH in MULTIPLE locations!
 - We are making KEY decisions that will ALIGN our campuses
 - We are striving to create JOINT VENTURES that our members do together

IMAGINE Campaign

- ***We have an EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT to make in the next 2 weeks!**
- *I want to remind you of our Financial Goals
- *I want to challenge you to PRAY about what God would have you GIVE/PLEDGE
- *I want to give you details about the New Building and about changes to our Southaven Campus

Sunday Morning Schedule

- *We need our CORE to give us MORE than just 1 hour! [And LOVE it!]
 - We are staying with 2 services [Is NOT just for CONVENIENCE.]
 - FILL UP at one [CORE: Preferably first service!]
 - POUR OUT at the other [2nd service – Best service for GUESTS.]
 - We need NEW VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP to step up and serve!

Growing Family Ministry [Luke will share about this in coming weeks.]

- *Our MIDDLE SCHOOLERS will soon begin meeting on Sundays at 10:45.

-Starting MAY 7th.

*Our HIGH SCHOOLERS will soon begin meeting on Sunday NIGHTS.

-This may affect your Life Group. Will you ADJUST for their growth?

*ALIGNMENT of CURRICULUM for BIRTH – GRADUATION!

*CLOSING OUR BACK DOOR!

Campus Specific Changes

*Creating a smaller, more intimate ENVIRONMENT by reducing sanctuary size

-Will be consistent with Hernando Bldg. and any new multi-sites

*I will show you some PICS of the new building in the next 2 weeks.

-Southaven is a REGIONAL campus with a STRATEGIC NEIGHBOR FOCUS

*We have been declining for over a year now.

*We have faced many seasons of growth and decline over the years!

*This has to do with CLOSING our BACK DOOR.

HERNANDO – 7th most needed target area for ministry in Mississippi

SOUTHAVEN- 1st most needed target area for ministry in Mississippi

*We are still OVERFLOWING with VISITORS!

*Looking for a MINISTRY PARTNER in Southaven to share facilities and debt

-The VISION involves making our facilities a COMMUNITY TREASURE!

Multi-Ethnic Focus

*We want to be an INDIGENOUS Body! [Reflect the community color around us!]

Luke 14:12-14 NLT The Party

If your life is a party, who is being invited to it? [Check your cell phone!]

If our church is a party, whom should we be inviting to it?

*Continuing to develop relationships across racial boundaries

-Hispanic Translator/Worship songs in Spanish

*Hiring a Black or Hispanic Campus Pastor for Southaven

-We need some beautiful COLOR on our ministry staff!

I KNOW THIS SEEMS LIKE A LOT OF STUFF TO ABSORB TODAY. I want you to ask any questions you need to as we unfold it over and over in these next few weeks, but I plead with you to remember ONE TRUTH. Every church exists in a constantly CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, and if the church does not ADAPT it will DIE!

*Our MESSAGE is UNCHANGING!

*Our METHODS are constantly evolving!

Andy Stanley: Marry the message. Date the model/method.

Let me close by reading the final prayer from our passage in **Hebrews 13:20-21**

20 Now may the God of peace--who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood--
21 may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.