

IMAGINE – Another Step Forward
God’s Master Plan for Ministry
Nehemiah 12 - 13

TWO WEEKS AGO: I reminded all of us of the VISION and MISSION that God has given us as a church family. We offer HOPE to our world by helping people to FIND and FOLLOW Jesus Christ. This must be not only a DECISION that we make, but also an ACTION that we take! **Luke 16:10-15 NLT**

10 “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. **11** And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? **12** And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own? **13** “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.” **14** The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. **15** Then he said to them, “You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.

Stewardship: The responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

Stewardship is primarily a matter of the HEART.

- What is YOUR default mindset about the relationship between God & Money?
- Do you get DEFENSIVE when this subject is brought up in church?

***Stewardship is the recognition of God’s primary ownership of all things.**

- Life, Health, and Wealth all come from God!
- Do you OWN your stuff, or does YOUR STUFF OWN YOU?

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 NIV

17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." **18** But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

- Our BLESSINGS are simply a SIGN of God’s amazing GOODNESS to us!

***Stewardship comes out of GENEROSITY that is fueled by gratitude.**

- Generosity is a JOYFUL ACT.
- Generosity is an EXPRESSION of the NATURE of God.

***Stewardship is a matter of OBEDIENCE.**

- We have to DECIDE that this is how we will live our lives!
- This means that we must PUT OUR FINANCES IN ORDER!

-CONSISTENCY is the KEY! [PUSH PAY]

***Regular Stewardship Training**

-We are not healthy financially in most of our homes.

-We need to LEARN how to MANAGE our money

-Jesus taught more on money than any other subject!

*It is the church's responsibility to offer financial training [From Birth on . . .]

-There is a DIRECT LINK between FINANCES and DISCIPLESHIP!

Stewardship is the PRIMARY RESOURCE of MINISTRY.

***God's Master Plan for Ministry: Tithes AND Offerings Nehemiah 12:43-45**

43 And on that day they offered great sacrifices, **rejoicing** because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away. 44 At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the **contributions, first fruits and tithes**. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites. 45 They performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did also the musicians and gatekeepers, according to the commands of David and his son Solomon.

-Tithes: Consistent giving that undergird ongoing ministry needs:

*Ministry Personnel: Supports paid ministry staff

*Ministry Budgets: Supports curriculum, ministry resources, ongoing costs

*TRAGEDY: DISOBEDIENCE in the area of FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP!

Malachi 3:8 NIV

8 "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "**In tithes AND offerings.**

Nehemiah 13:10-13 NIV

10 I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. 11 So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "**Why is the house of God neglected?**" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. 12 All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil into the storerooms. 13 I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites.

*It is a TRAGEDY when ministry is underfunded due to neglect, selfishness!

-PATTERN in Scripture: **EXODUS 33-35; 2 Chronicles 24**

-Offerings: Special giving that provides for unique needs

*Missional Opportunities [Wells/Mission Trips/Disaster Relief/etc.]

*New Facilities [**The Tabernacle: Exodus 35**]

*Upgrading areas in existing facilities **Haggai 1:2-4 NIV**

2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD's house.' " 3 Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: 4 "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

*What is your MINDSET toward MINISTRY FACILITIES?

-We all BUDGET for, or even procure DEBT for our HOMES.

-Lisa and I have committed to giving an OFFERING for facilities as if it were the SAME as our OWN HOME MORTGAGE!

ANNOUNCE GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE HERNANDO CAMPUS! [Fireworks]

***The BUDGET and the BUILDING**

-Understand the WHY behind the WHAT

***Show pics of building EXTERIOR:** Why glass? Unconventional design?

***Show pic of FOOTPRINT:** Flat, 600 seat? Closed kids area? Huge foyer?

-FLEXIBILITY in facility use

-PHILOSOPHY of facility use BY and FOR our COMMUNITY. [Schools, etc.]

-Understand the FINANCIAL CHALLENGE

*We need SOLID FUNDING for the MINISTRIES that will occur in the bldg.

*This requires that our people give OVER & ABOVE a tithe

-Understand our needs in SOUTHAVEN [We will focus their giving there!]

-Understand the LONG HAUL: \$2 Million in gifts/pledges over next 3 years

***Ministry and Money**

-We made a decision in 2008 to trim budgets

-Student Ministry leaders have been doing "Junking for Jesus" for years now!

-Our ministry budgets are woefully inadequate, but it is time to change that!

-We cannot do that without you! **TITHES AND OFFERINGS!**

*Luke is sharing our FAMILY MINISTRY VISION and our FINANCIAL NEEDS during this season. He will make it clear that the Hernando Campus will carry the LION'S SHARE for that new venture! We have many needs as a multi site that we must meet together. We want to throw a party for SOUTHAVEN, HERNANDO, DESOTO COUNTY, and beyond! Will YOU help us?

Let's Pray.