

OUR 2021 VISION FOR OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

This Is Us – Part 5: Matthew 25:14-29

Rev. Steve Norman

January 31, 2021

MEMORY VERSE

"Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying."

Romans 12:11-12

FIVE ETERNAL BENEFITS OF SERVING GOD

1. SERVING IS A PURPOSE OF MY LIFE!

Jesus: *If you insist on living for yourself, you'll lose your life. Only those who give away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.* Mark 8:35

2. SERVING MAKES ME MORE LIKE JESUS

Jesus: *"I did not come to earth to be served, but to serve others, and to give my life away as a ransom for many."* Matthew 28:20

3. SERVING IS THE HIGHEST USE OF MY TIME

"Always give yourselves fully to serving the Lord, because you know that your service for the Lord is never wasted." 1 Cor. 15:58

4. SERVING IS THE SECRET GREATNESS

Jesus: *"If you want to become great, you must learn to serve others."* Matthew 20:26

5. MY SERVICE WILL BE REWARDED IN HEAVEN

"Whatever you do, do it cheerfully and give it your best, remembering you're really serving the Lord, and he will REWARD you." Colossians 3:23-24

Jesus promised: *"Anyone who's given up anything to serve in my name will be repaid a hundred times over AND will have life forever."* Mark 10:29

• OUR GOAL: TO IMPROVE OUR SERVE

"Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying." Romans 12:11-12

THE DECADE OF HOPE!

TIME TO DREAM: TRUSTING GOD TO OPEN DOORS

"God, by his mighty power at work within us, is able to do FAR MORE than we would ever dare to ASK or even DREAM - infinitely beyond our HIGHEST PRAYERS, DESIRES, THOUGHTS, or HOPES." Ephesians 3:20 (LB)

Jesus: *"I know all the things you have done (for my church). So now, I have placed before you AN OPEN DOOR that no one can shut!"* Revelation 3:8

FIVE D.O.O.R.S. TO OUR FUTURE

we are going to walk through together as a church family

Paul: *"There is a WIDE-OPEN DOOR for a great work here, and MANY people are responding!"* 1 Corinthians 16:9 (NLT)

DOUBLE EVERYTHING!

- The **number** of people in our ministry
- The **number** opportunities to reach out & connect with others
- The **amount** of resources available

"The word of God was reaching more and more people and the number of disciples increased rapidly." Acts 6:7 (ICB)

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS: MATTHEW 25:14-29

God: *"Come back to me safely, O Prisoners of Hope! Today I declare that I will restore to you a DOUBLE BLESSING!"* Zech. 9:12

OBEY CHRIST'S COMMISSION!

Jesus' Great Commission: *"I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. So, GO and make disciples of ALL the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And teach these new disciples TO DO everything I've commanded you. And be sure of this: that I am with you always, until this age is finished!"* Matthew 28:19-20

John: *"And in heaven I saw a huge crowd, too huge to count! People from everywhere were there – from every nation, EVERY TRIBE, every race, and every language! And they were standing there thanking God in front of the throne of God!"* Rev. 7:9 (MSG)

HOW? Through the Use of Our GIFTS, TALENTS, and ABILITIES

Jesus: "This Gospel WILL be preached in the WHOLE world as a witness to ALL nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14

OUTSHINE THE DARKNESS

What KIND OF PEOPLE does God want us to BE in today's culture?

"Don't let evil defeat you; instead overcome evil by doing good!"
Romans 12:21

"Do everything without complaining or arguing. Then no one can accuse or blame you. Live as God's children without fault, like a breath of fresh air in a polluted and perverted culture. You are to shine like bright stars in a dark world, as you offer the Word that gives Life...until Christ comes back."
Philippians 2:14-16

"I prayed 'O Lord... How long before you save us from the violence around us? Why must I watch all this trouble and wrongdoing around me? Why do you tolerate all this sin and sadness and injustice? People are hurting and destroying each other everywhere. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and get into angry quarrels. The government is paralyzed, laws are twisted, and justice is turned upside down with bribes and tricks. It seems that the wicked outnumber the righteous. Then the Lord replied 'Just look at the nations and be amazed! You will be astounded at what I am about to do! For I am going to do something in your own lifetime that you will have to see to believe!'"
Habakkuk 1:1-5

HOW are we going to prepare people for LIVING in today's culture?

The MIDWEEK STUDIES and SERMON SERIES THEMES

Out-love, out-serve, outdo, out-forgive, out-class, outshine & outlast the world!

Jesus: "You are the Salt of the earth! Be careful not to lose your saltiness! And you are also the Light of the world! So don't hide your light! ...Instead shine out brightly so that people may see the good things you do and end up praising your Father!" Matt. 5:13-16

REVITALIZE PEOPLE

Jesus: "Much is required from those to whom much has been given, and EVEN MORE is required from those to whom EVEN MORE has been given!"
Luke 12:48 (NLT)

Jesus: "I WILL build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it!"
Matthew 16:18

"We are joined together in Christ's Body. By connecting all of the joints and ligaments in his Body, God causes it TO GROW as He WANTS it to GROW!"
Colossians 2:19

HOW? Involve Ourselves with Organizations that Bring HOPE, PURPOSE and RENEWAL to Marginalized & Hurt People

SERVE PEOPLE IN PAIN

"When Jesus looked at the massive crowds, his heart broke. He was moved with DEEP COMPASSION because their pain and problems were so great, and they didn't know what to do or where to go for help. They were HOPELESS AND HELPLESS, like sheep without a shepherd."
Matthew 9:36

UNDERSTAND THE ALPHABET OF PAIN IN TODAY'S WORLD

"If you say to a person in pain, 'God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat,' but you do not give that person whatever they need, your words are worth nothing!" Jam. 2:16 (NCV)

"God comforts us anytime we suffer any kind of trouble. Then, when other people suffer some kind of trouble, we can be there and able to serve them, using the same comfort that we received from God when we were in pain."
2 Corinthians 1:4 (GW)

PARABLE OF 4 KINDS OF SOIL: MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

How does God turn hard soil into soft, receptive soil?

HE SENDS A STORM!

HOW are we going to help people in pain?

SELECT ONE OR TWO ITEMS FROM THE ALPHABET OF PAIN (EX. ANGER, ANXIETY, ETC.) THAT WE, AS A CHURCH, HAVE THE RESOURCES TO USE TO INVOLVE OURSELVES IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Father, You have brought us this far in life for a reason. We have learned much through our journey. We have faced challenges and good times, seasons of plenty and seasons of need. But most of all, we have been blessed by You to be a blessing to others. So now, in 2021, we stand at the edge of our Promised Land, much like the Israelites did after wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

Moving forward from where we are to where You want us to go requires that we take a step forward. Give us the faith in You to move forward. Help us to dream great dreams. Help us to believe that You want to use us. Help us to remember that You said if we give our lives away in service to others in Your name, if we seek first Your Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, then everything else we need will be given to us. Help us to believe that promise. Give us the courage to walk through the doors You will open to our future.

Lord, we know You have used this church body called Crossroads Church in the past to touch lives and reach people with the good news about Jesus. We pray and believe that You have plans to use us in special ways in the upcoming days. Thank you for the doors that lie ahead and opportunities to serve that are waiting for us in 2021. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.