

Christ's Plans for the Church

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Date: 29 October 2023

Preacher: Glenn Haugh

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. Happy to get everything turned on, tuned up, and turned on, you know, and all that stuff.

Get ready for this morning. You know, I got another praise. I just praise God that we have, we're a small church, but you know, when you look at the missionaries and the people that we have supported and how many of us have traveled around the United States or have traveled around the world in different places to help with missionaries and do God's work, it's amazing.

And then when you have a morning like this morning when one of our brothers who's going to lead the music sends out a text message saying, you know what, I'm sick, I can't come. We have people who can jump right in there.

We have Gretchen steps in and she leads us and Miss Brenda who seems like if you can show it to her in a music book, she's going to play it. And that's really a blessing for us all to have that and everything.

Well, I hope you guys are, I hope everybody's got them a book and the flickering lamp and have been reading their flickering lamp and everything. And we're doing kind of chapter two and everything.

[1 : 1 4] And if, I'm not going to repeat what's exactly in the book. So don't feel like you, if you want to see kind of like where I was at, then if you haven't read that chapter, go back and be sure to read the chapter and everything.

But, I like stories. So I'm going to start off with a story this morning if you don't mind. It's called The Shepherds. The story goes that once there was a beautiful meadow with lush green grass, an occasional tree for shade, a running stream with calm steel pools, and a small knoll in the middle.

What is a knoll? Why, it's a small hill. One day, some shepherds wanting to pasture a flock, a sheep, came upon the meadow and said it would be a perfect place for a pasture.

They had come to this location because the great shepherd, see the great shepherd told these shepherds to go to a new pasture and raise a new flock. He did not say where the pasture would be located, but they would know it when they saw it.

And they saw it and they knew this was the place that the great shepherd had spoken about. The shepherds set up camp on the edge of the meadow. They hung covers to give shade during the day and tents for the night.

[2 : 3 1] They built a sheepfold to protect the flock at night. Now you may ask, what is a sheepfold? Why, it's a walled structure topped with briars that protect the sheep from thieves and wild animals.

The gate was the sheepfold's only proper entryway, and a guardian usually keeps watch there to keep trespassers from getting in. Soon the shepherds went about gathering sheep.

Every morning the shepherds would gather at the top of the hill and meet the great shepherd for his instructions. They would say, what shall we do today, great shepherd? However, the great shepherd would gently say, tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, tend my sheep.

And that is exactly what they did. They would lead the sheep to various parts of the meadow for them for food. So not the overgrazing area. They'd bring the sheep to steel wool pools of water for them to drink.

They'd tend to the sheep when they were injured or sick. Protect the flock from predators like wolves and bears. And search for those who wandered from the flock and got lost. Then in the evening when the sun would begin to set, the shepherds would place the flock in the sheepfold and then walk to the top of the hill and meet with the great shepherd.

[3 : 45] They would share about their day, ask questions about how to be better shepherds, and just enjoy the time of fellowship with the great shepherd. On occasions of shearing of the sheep, the shepherds would gather all the wool and present it to the great shepherd.

He would acknowledge their work and would return to them a blessing of bounty. On other occasions, the great shepherd would call a shepherd to the top of the hill. And the other shepherds could see a conversation going on.

And the lone shepherd would smile and slowly the two would walk out of sight. This also happened with sheep, especially those sheep that had been sick or had grown old.

The great shepherd would call the sheep to them, who would slowly walk up to the top of the hill and often lay at the great shepherd's feet. And the great shepherd would stoop down, gently lift the sheep, and carry it out of sight.

When they asked where they had gone, the great shepherd would say, My father has a great and glorious pasture where they will never be sick and old. And one day you will get to go to this pasture.

[4 : 52] This always brought a great joy to the shepherds. Sometimes the great shepherd would call a sheep up the hill, and a shepherd would return in his place.

During these evenings, conversations of the knoll, the shepherds would ask about this. And the great shepherd said, Many sheep will mature to a point that they can be a shepherd also, caring for the flock.

And he said this was his desire for all the sheep. Strangely, as time went by, the shepherds began to change. They began to occasionally skipping the morning journey up the hill to get instruction from the great shepherd.

They thought, We know what he's going to say. Tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, and tend my sheep. Then the shepherds began to hang around the camp more. You know, sleep a little bit longer, enjoy an extra cup of coffee, enjoy the warm morning sunlight.

What was the harm? They could see the sheep, and they knew what to do. Everything was fine. Soon they began to forget all about getting their morning instructions from the great shepherd, and even neglected to walk up the hill in the evenings to share about their day.

[6 : 06] The great shepherd was there every morning and every evening, watching and waiting. Sad things began to change. The shepherds began to get fat and lazy from sitting around all the time.

They argued about who should check on the sheep, who should turn, and whose turn was it to watch over the flock. Who would watch the sheep fold at night? Sometimes no one would go out.

They all just sat around the camp. The flock began to dwindle. Sheep began to wander off, going to another flock or just vanishing. Some would be called to the great shepherd because they had become sick and because no one attended to them.

Those who remained were heavy with wool because they had not been sheared. And the wool made them heavy and collect sticks and bugs, and they got dirty and kept them from moving from various locations in the middle.

Finally, the shepherds took note of the change. After blaming each other, they came up with a solution. They would find a new shepherd to come and care for the flock.

[7 : 11] They would provide instructions to this new shepherd. So that's just what they did. The shepherds found a young, energetic shepherd, eager to come to the meadow and tend to the flock. He was excited.

The first morning, the older shepherds woke up to find the young shepherd was gone. They looked up the hill, and there he was getting instructions from the great shepherd. Soon he came bounding down the hill with all excitement to start the day.

When the older shepherds asked, what did the great shepherd say? The young shepherd excitedly said, he said, tend my lambs. Shepherd my sheep. Tend my sheep. The old shepherds just smiled, bobbed their heads in acknowledgement, and sat down by the fire for another cup of coffee.

The young, excited shepherd looked in surprise and said, aren't you going out to the flock with me, to help the flock with me? But the older shepherd said, go ahead. We'll join you in a little while.

So the young shepherd went out, excited to do what the great shepherd had said, hoping the older shepherds would soon come out and join them. But they didn't. Slowly, the flock began to become healthy again.

[8 : 18] The numbers were small, but the sheep were looking a lot better. The young shepherd would lead the flock to various parts of the meadow for them to feed, so not to overgraze an area.

Bring the sheep to the still cool waters for them to drink. Tend the sheep who were injured or sick. Protect the flock from predators like wolves and bears. And search for those that wandered from the flock and got lost.

Each morning, the young shepherd would go up the hill. What shall we do today? And the great shepherd would gently say, tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, tend my sheep.

Then in the evenings, when the sun was beginning to set, the young shepherd would place the flock in the sheepfold and went up the top of the hill to meet with the great shepherd. He would share about his day, ask questions about how to be a better shepherd, and just enjoy the time of fellowship with the great shepherd.

He always encouraged the others to join him. A few of them did. As the flock began to grow, the young shepherd and those who had joined him to help out were getting overworked.

[9 : 19] Since many of the older shepherds did not want to help, they sought other young shepherds to come and join them. This was okay with the older shepherds, because they thought, our meadow, our flock are looking good.

They would speak of what a great idea they had by bringing the young shepherd on and for the flock. Then it happened. One day, the leader of the old shepherds went to relieve himself in the edge of the meadow in the morning.

That kind of happens with all of us. But as he went out to the edge of the woods, he stepped in lampoo. It squished up between his toes, making him slip, and he fell back and landed in more lampoo.

He was beside himself in anger. How could this happen? He called together the other old shepherds. The old shepherds cried out, this is unacceptable.

Lambs are leaving the poo everywhere in the meadow. They're making all kinds of noise, jumping and playing, tearing up the grass. Just look at the flock. Some of the sheep even have spots.

[10 : 23] Some have stripes. And some of them are blemished. This has to stop. Many of the older shepherds, but not all, agreed that things were getting out of hand.

The meadow was not like it used to be. Things were changing, and the older shepherds didn't like it. Soon, a great commotion developed between the older and the newer shepherds. Many of the old shepherds stormed off, saying they would leave and never come back unless things changed back to the way they were.

The young shepherds were lost with what to do. They could not go back to that way because the flock would be harmed. Great commotion even scared some of the flock, and they ran away, never to be seen again.

The young lead shepherd and his fellow shepherds were very sad and hurt by what happened. So each morning, the young shepherd would go up the hill and ask, what shall we do today, great shepherd?

And the great shepherd would gently say, tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, and tend my sheep. Then in the evening, when the sun would begin to set, the shepherds would place the flock in the sheepfold, then walk to the top of the hill, and meet with the great shepherd again.

[11 : 31] They would share about their day, question about how they could be better shepherds, and what to do. The great shepherd told them, stay faithful, trust and obey, and all will be made right.

Sadly, the young lead shepherd was brokenhearted over the loss of the older shepherds, and loss of some of the flock. He felt he had failed and became very depressed.

Finally, one morning, the shepherds got up and prepared to go up the hill, and they noticed that their lead shepherd was gone. They called and looked all over for him, but he was nowhere to be found.

So the young shepherd sadly went up the hill and asked, what shall we do today, great shepherd? We have lost our lead shepherd. The great shepherd gently smiled and said, tend my sheep, lambs, shepherd my sheep, and tend my sheep.

So the young shepherds went out, encouraging each other to do as the great shepherd had said, hoping that the lead shepherd would come back, but he never did. Oh, so slowly the flock began to become healthy again.

[12 : 37] The numbers were small, but the sheep were looking better. The young shepherds would lead the sheep to various parts of the meadow for them to feed, so not to overgraze an area. Bring the sheep to the still-cooled waters, tend to the sheep who were injured or sick, protect the flocks from predators, and search for those who wandered off.

But something was missing. They needed a lead shepherd to guide him. So one evening they asked the great shepherd about getting a lead shepherd. And the great shepherd said, seek with open eyes of the Holy Spirit, and your answer will be revealed.

The shepherds brought on temporary lead shepherds to help them out, to lead them as they searched. Soon they found one of these shepherds kept coming back to assist them.

He was wise and kind, encouraged all the shepherds to do what the great shepherd instructed. Tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, and tend my sheep. One evening when the sun was beginning to set, the shepherds placed the flock in the sheepfold and walked up the hill to meet with the great shepherd.

They told the great shepherd about how encouraging it was to have this lead shepherd with him. The great shepherds smiled, seek, and the Holy Spirit will reveal and answer. And the shepherds knew this was the new lead shepherd.

- [13 : 54] Soon the shepherds with the new lead shepherd were caring for the flock. And every morning, the shepherds would gather at the top of the hill and meet with the great shepherd for instruction. And they would ask, what shall we do today, great shepherd?
- And the great shepherd would gently say, tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, tend my sheep. And that's exactly what the shepherds would do. They would lead the sheep to fresh meadow parts for feeding.
- They would go to the steel pools for drink. They would tend to the sheep that were injured or sick, protect the flock from predators, and search for wandering and lost sheep.
- Then in the evening when the sun would begin to set, the shepherds would place the flock in the sheepfold and they would walk to the top of the hill and meet again with the great shepherd, sharing about their day, asking questions, and just enjoying time with the great shepherd.
- On the occasion of shearing the sheep, the shepherds would gather the wool, present it to the great shepherd, and he would acknowledge their work and would return to them a blessing of bounty.
- [14 : 59] And the great shepherd would say, tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep, and tend my sheep. That's kind of a long story. I know it is. I hope it didn't put you to sleep.
- But, so that's my story. It's the story I remember. This story is based on really actual events. Though they were seen through the eyes of me.
- And it reminds us of things that can happen good and bad. That the Father, after all, loves each of us, good and evil, kind and cruel.
- He causes the sun to rise and shine on the evil and the good alike. And He causes the rain to water the fields of the righteous and the fields of the sinner. Remember, we often know God has a purpose for us.
- But Jesus Christ has plans for His church. Whose church is it? Why, it's Jesus Christ. And He already has a plan. And in Matthew 16, 18, Jesus said, I will build my church.
- [16 : 02] So you know, it's not really up to us to think that we've got to build this church. Jesus is going to build the church. Now, we often have good ideas. Why, sometimes, we even have great ideas.
- But, are they part of His plan? That's where we get in trouble. We want to take our ideas, our plans, and we want God to bless those.
- But that's kind of backwards. I had a friend that worked with me when I worked at the, I worked with a guy named Jimmy at the nuclear plant. And he told me this story.
- He said that when he was working there, we would have to build scaffoldings sometimes when they didn't have regular scaffolders there. And the supervisor said, I need you to build a scaffolding. This is the way I want you to do it.
- Build it. This is exactly how I want you to put it together. Well, Jimmy got looking at that scaffolding. And he said, well, you know what? I can think of a better way to do it. And the supervisor left and he came back.
- [17 : 02] Jimmy got all the stuff and was getting ready to build. And he said, Jimmy, what are you getting ready to do? He said, well, I think I figured out a better way to build that scaffolding. He said, well, no, Jimmy, build it like I told you. Jimmy said, but I think my way.
- He said, well, no, no, Jimmy, you need to build it the way I've instructed you to do it. Jimmy said, but you don't know this is a great idea. This is really going to make things a lot better. He said, well, I'll tell you what, Jimmy, you just build that scaffolding just like you think it is.

And when I come back, I'm going to have you tear it down and get you to rebuild the way I told you to build it in the first place. And you know, that's kind of the way it is with us. You know, there's the problem.

We want God to join us in what we want to do. We are to ask God to reveal His plan to us. And that's what we need to do. We need to know what His plan and we need to ask what His plan is and we need to join Him.

Now, how does this work? Well, what are those? That's right.

[18 : 04] These are a pair of my work gloves. Now, you take these gloves and you say, start hammering gloves. Start doing things together. Well, that's exactly what they're going to do.

They ain't going to do nothing. You know, a pair of gloves are no good until you get a hand in them. And that hand with that glove is the way it's going to work.

Nothing is useless, more useless than a pair of gloves. That is, until you put that hand in there. And that's the same way with us as Christians, born-again Christians. We're kind of, until we have Christ and we accept Jesus Christ and building His church, being part of it, it's useless.

But when the Holy Spirit comes in us, that glove begins to get used again. It can do things and stuff. Now, I like the idea of different kind of gloves because it depends on what kind of gifts that the Lord gives you and everything.

I kind of like to think, I always hope that I'm an old beat-up work glove because that means that Jesus and the Holy Spirit has used me a lot. And so, I don't want to be a dainty, nice little pretty glove that never gets dirty.

[19 : 15] I want something, I hope I'm the one that gets used. Well, as born-again Christians, we have been given the Holy Spirit to indwell in each one of us. And if you've got your Bible, if you want to follow this verse, this is in 1 Corinthians 2, 9-12.

And the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is God. And He knows God's plan. And that's the thing we have to remember when Christ is in us. That when we receive Christ, we have the Holy Spirit in us.

And so, the Holy Spirit, who is God, knows God, knows His plan. So, 1 Corinthians 2, 9-12, it says, But just as it is written, things that no eyes have seen, or ears, or mind imagined, are things God has prepared for those who love Him.

See, we've got to remember, we can't, God sees everything. He knows everything. And we can't imagine what His plan is. But He knows. And the Holy Spirit knows.

And then, continuing on, it says, God has revealed these to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit researches all things, even the deep things of God.

[20 : 25] For who among men knows the things of man except the man's spirit within him? So too, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Now, we have not received the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God.

So, as born-again Christians, we have the Holy Spirit in us. We have that. And He gives us God's plan. We just have to pay attention. We have to see.

See, the Holy Spirit is our God. And into the will of the Father and Christ's plans for His church. The Spirit of God indwells in each one of us.

And so, the plans that God has, those plans are there and we have to count on the Holy Spirit to show us those plans. We have to pay attention. It requires us to keep our spiritual eyes open to see where God is already at work, then to join Him.

[21 : 25] See, God's always working. He's always doing something. He's not waiting on us. He is doing work all the time. We keep our spiritual eyes open and we see that He starts revealing those things. And then we join Him in that.

An example of, an example for Christ's plan for the churches is taking place in Columbia right now. Columbia, South America. We think of the things that are going on there.

Who would have thought that the Holy Spirit and God's plan would take a little church in Moncure, North Carolina and take individuals and take resources from a small group and go down and start spreading His Word and start blessing people down there and to help spread the Word of God.

It's got to be part of God's plan. It's not a plan that man comes up with. God does that. And we joined Him. Now, I remember when all this got started getting talked about.

It wasn't somebody jumped up and said, well, you know what? God wants us to go to Columbia. He wants us to go down there and start teaching English. He wants us to start helping the missionaries there, support them and encourage them and stuff.

[22 : 32] That's not the way it was. People started getting around and we started asking God to show us what He wanted us to do. We started looking. Next thing we thought, oh, you know what? I think the Lord wants us to help in a foreign mission and a mission somewhere else.

And you know what? I think our first thought was, we're going to go to Europe and everything. But then God's plan, the Holy Spirit revealed a possibility of going to South America. And we went down to South America and that's where we stayed for several years, helping out down there and teaching English.

And through that, God has helped us and the missionaries down there be able to reach some of the indigenous people of that country. Christ's church family in Monterey wanted to join God in Christ's plan.

We did not know when, where, or how, but we sought to know Christ's plan. And the Holy Spirit began to reveal that to us and made us part of it.

And we need to remember, God can have more than one assignment for us too. In 1 Corinthians 2, verse 12, it says, Now we have not received the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God.

[23 : 48] See, this Holy Spirit has us doing many things and we need to look for that. And it may not be just one thing. He may have us doing different things in our own community in foreign missions and in different places.

Christ is the head of the church. We need to remember that so much. Not just a symbol. It's not just we put that symbol of Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of the church. And we need to always keep that in mind.

He is serious about building His kingdom. We need to be serious and we need to be intentional. And that word intentional goes a long way, I think, in the Christian life.

Because you know what? When you're intentionally joining Him, you're not feeling like, you're not always feeling good about joining Him. I'm going to be honest with you. A lot of times when I went to South America, I had to pray about it.

Because that didn't seem like a very comfortable thing to me. I like my home. I'm a homebody. I like being home and stuff. But I asked God sometimes, I said, God, I know I need to be out of my comfort zone.

[24 : 48] I need to get out. And He spoke to me and He said, you need to go down there. You've been asked to go. Go. And so I intentionally told myself, I've got to go.

I need to do this. And that's what we need to do. Jesus says, but I have, we don't want to later on have Jesus look at us and say, but I have this against you. And so as we think about this, we think of it as individuals, but as a church body.

We need to remember this. We need to be in prayer and spiritually alert in order to hear His response. This was, this was, this has to be intentional.

This listening, this seeking and watching. We have to intentionally be doing this. We don't just sit around waiting for it. Just thinking, you know, we need to, we need to go find it.

He'll give it to us and everything. And we need to, we need to keep an eye out for that. God will reveal His plan to us step by step as needed. Our problem is we want the whole plan before us.

[25 : 50] We want to know all the details. How much is it going to cost? Where are we going to go? When are we going to get there? When are we going to get to come back? And everything. But we need to follow Him one step at a time. And He will lead us.

You know, if you think about Moses and the different people, when Moses, God called Moses, God told him his purpose. But He didn't tell him all the things He was going to do.

He didn't know about, as far as I know, He didn't know about all the, what's that word I'm looking for? Huh? Plagues.

There we go. Thank you. All the plagues and stuff that were going to happen. But He went and He intentionally did what God told him to do. And God would tell him on each one of the things that's going to happen.

And so, we need to learn to listen to Him. And we have to wait on Him sometimes. We need to look for each step that He wants us to take. Now, again, that doesn't mean just sitting on our hands. Let us not be in ministries or in programs just to acknowledge that we are doing ministries and programs.

[26 : 51] Let us be intentional in each step that He wants us to do. Wait until He shows us what He wants us to do. We need to be attentive in the directions and instructions.

But not, like I said, but not sitting on hands. Let us be sure and recognize where God is at work and then join Him.

Let us not be overwhelmed with the how. Instead, let us allow God to show us how and then to do what He tells us. He will provide our needs.

I think often of our church being a small church. When the first idea of going to Columbia started being talked about and everything, one of the first things we started thinking about was money.

Because, you know, it's kind of costly to take planes to go down there to take care of all this stuff. But God provided and He took care of that and He will provide. And we have seen recently over and over that He provides for Columbia and for different things in our church and in the community.

[27 : 57] His results, not ours, are happening. One way we can see where and how God is at work in us is in us for us simply to share what God is doing in our lives.

This can reveal where He's working at. So sometimes, as brothers and sisters, we need to be sharing what God is doing in our lives. And through that, God will reveal a plan that He might have going on and how we can join Him to be a part of that.

Now, let's just take a look at a few fundamental principles that I want to kind of share with you about this. First, God wants us to seek the kingdom of God. In Matthew 6.33, He says, but seek first His kingdom, His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

See, He's wanting us to strive. Strive for His kingdom. And when it's His righteousness, it means use His way, which is the right way, and have the character of God to do this.

You know, we've, in this church, have strived to do that. I can remember a time in this church, and going a little bit back to my little long story I did at the beginning, I can remember a time when we felt like the Lord was asking us to minister to the young children.

[29 : 09] I don't think hardly anybody in here was here at that time. And so we started, we started doing that. But you know what? We found that a lot of the families that had children, we couldn't get the parents to come and everything.

But you know what? If we put a bus out there, we said, do you want us to come, can we come pick up your children for our evening children's ministry or for Sunday morning? Most of the parents would, yeah, come on and get them and everything.

Now, we couldn't get the parents to come a lot of times, but we could get those kids. I can remember, we had a, we had a, I would call it a sardine van. It's a 15 passenger van where you double the number and put it in there.

And I'm going to say it probably wasn't necessarily safe, but we would go down and we would find we had so many kids, we couldn't sit them all in there. And we couldn't be running trips back and forth, we just didn't have the time.

So we would get kids, put the bigger ones in the seats and the littler ones would kind of stand up in the middle and make sure nobody gets hurt. And we would take them and everything, bring them to the different ministries here. We had a lot of kids.

[30 : 09] I mean, you stop that bus and that 15 passenger van could hold 30 young'uns sometimes. And they'd come piling out. But you know what? The church at the time was very small, smaller in numbers than it is now.

And what was happening was those young'uns come in. They were like, like putting a bunch of kittens or puppies in a room and they were just like everywhere. They were climbing on everything, going under.

They were noisy. They were loud. Our church hadn't had any young'uns in it for a while. And at first, everybody thought, well, this is great. But then when they started noticing they were tracking dirt in on the carpet, they didn't like that.

Or when they were trying to get things together, some of the members didn't like that too because the kids were getting into stuff and we were having to take money, which we didn't seem like we had, but we were taking money to take care of getting materials and stuff like that.

And it was kind of difficult. Because there was some of the shepherds were going and picking up those little lambs and some of the shepherds didn't want to have nothing to do with it and everything. Now, it was tough too.

[31 : 12] I can remember you would think the ones that you would have trouble with would be the big ones. No. I remember standing out there in a van with about 25 kids in there and there was one, she was in kindergarten and she was standing in the door of the van, doors open and she said, you ain't telling me what to do.

You ain't my dad. You can't tell me what to do. And I thought, oh my gosh. And I mean, and it only takes one. It's kind of like, you know, the salt, we eat a flavor. Sometimes that salt can go back the other way.

And she had them rocking that van and I couldn't drive her. So I came in and I thought, I've got her, I've got her milk. I'm going to go get Wally Jenkins. Wally Jenkins, now if you, Wally Jenkins was about 6'3", and he was about 200, almost 300 pounds.

He was a big man. I mean, he looked like pro football. And I said, Wally, come out here. I said, I'm having trouble. He said, what is it, Glenn? I said, I got this young'un and she won't settle down. I said, I need your help.

I said, I can't get him caught me. So we go out there and Wally opens the door and he had this real deep voice, kind of like Martin, a real deep voice. You know, you need to be selling that. That little girl, she stood up in that door again, you ain't my dad.

[32 : 22] You can't tell me what to do. Wally was at a loss what to do. He finally looked at me and said, Glenn, just get him home. Just get him home. And so I'm taking them young'uns down the road and the van's doing this all the way in there.

And I was never so glad to get them out of there. And we talked about it and we had to work around different things. But some of the folks in the church didn't like that because these kids had never been to church.

And they were kind of wild and everything. And it was tough and everything. So the thing we need to always seek, we need to realize we're going to...

I know I was going with all that. Because one of the things I remember of the pastor we had here at the time, he said, I remember somebody was talking about how the young'uns were leaving the best of the word.

And he looked at me and he said, well, you know what? Well, if there's no... I ain't going to say exactly how he said it. But he said, if there ain't no poo in the stables, then you ain't got no animals.

[33 : 19] And I thought, well, that's perfect truth. We're going to have people and young'uns and stuff in here. We're going to have a mess sometimes. It's going to get kind of messy. And so we have to remember that. We can't be a selfish church.

We have to be giving. We need to remember that we have... what we have is not ours, but God's. And He is building His church. Christ is building His church, so we have to be willing to give.

Because you know what? I have found that you can't out-give God. And if God wants something done, He will help it. And we can't be selfish and thinking that we need everything. We need...

Well, we need to do... We need to repaint this before we do any other ministry. Or that wall, that was a problem at one time. You would not believe how much of a problem that wall was at once.

And because... Well, it used to be a pretty wood panel and somebody was going to place it and it didn't happen and it got painted and it just... It was all kinds of stuff. The thing was, we got... Folks were so tied up in the building itself that they forgot about God's plan and His ministry.

[34 : 20] And so we have to remember that we can't do that. We have to be given. We have to understand that God has a plan and everything. So... And the resources that we need are going to be there.

We didn't have those resources for Columbia. We've not had our resources sometimes. We got people going to New York and resources for different things. But God provides those resources. We need to count on Him.

If we feel like this is God's plan for whatever we're going to do, we need to do it because He's going to take care of it. And we need to remember that. Second, we need to let God direct... Whoops. I forgot one thing.

And we can't be a self-centered focus in our church. I wanted to include that too because you know what? If we start focusing on just us, well, you know what?

We presume we just kind of... We forget about everything that's outside these walls. We need to be focused on things outside. We need to remember we need to be helping others. We need to be helping other churches too.

[35 : 16] We need to be working with our sister churches and stuff throughout the area. And being around building this kingdom, which means focusing on helping others. And I think we always need to remember that.

And we need to remember it in a way that we're not... The focus of doing and helping is not like of the world, but in a godly way. Because our purpose when we're helping people is we want to help them, yes, physically and whatever needs them, but we want to introduce them to God.

We want to introduce them to Christ. We want to build His... We want to help Him build His church and everything. And in the past, sometimes we've just had difficulty with that. I will say that this church now though, I just praise God how much we give and how well we're not focused just on ourself and everything.

But we need to be intentional about that and we need to be on guard and remember that He is our source and we'll always get it from Him. We have to be intentional givers. Second, let God direct our steps.

We have to remember to direct our steps. Now let me ask you something. What is this? A map, that's right.

[36 : 23] Have you ever used a map? Map. Okay. Nowadays people have phones. They don't use maps like we used to. My wife always complained that, you know, quit driving and reading the map. And that's what I do.

But I want to tell you, you know what? Sometimes we want to have a triple A map with a line showing exactly where to go and where we're going to be at and how it's going to happen.

God doesn't necessarily do things that way. He's going to put us on a journey. He says, listen, I've got a journey for you to take and you need to go. So he said, now you can take the long map and I'm going to tell you where to go.

You might start out in Moncure. I might have you go up to Greensboro and then from Greensboro you're going to go up into Virginia and he'll kind of direct us as to where he wants us to go.

And in the same way as we're helping and joining God in his plan, we need to think about that that we do things one step at a time that he wants us to do. Now we may not necessarily see each one of those little individual steps but he puts it together for us.

[37 : 22] Proverbs chapter 3 5 through 6 says, trust in the Lord with all your heart. Now when you're trusting in the Lord that means you're having confidence in the Lord.

Do you all got confidence in the Lord? I hope so. Amen. And do not lean on your own understanding. That's our big problem.

If we start leaning on our own understanding that's when we start to get in trouble. So we need to have confidence in the Lord and not lean on our own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him recognizing that means we need to recognize him who he is and what he's doing.

And he will make your path straight. That means he's going to remove the obstacles. If we feel like God if not feel if we know God's at work something and we join him he will remove any of the obstacles are there.

We just got to believe it and we got the act on it. And we just need to remember that. We need God to direct us through the Holy Spirit because we will make a mess of things.

[38 : 28] Often when we try to do it ourselves don't we make a mess of stuff? Amen on that because I do that myself. Isaiah chapter 30 verse 21 he says your ears I like this your ears will hear a word behind you.

In some translations they weigh it says your ears will hear a sweet word. behind you. This is the way. The right path is what he's talking about. Walk in and whenever you turn to the right or the left and so the thing is we need to be listening to the Holy Spirit and that's what we want to do.

We need to listen. Sometimes this comes in a soft whisper and sometimes it just comes in a crashing thunder of a storm and everything. Third we need to give give ourselves away.

I think of how we have times when we thought we had things that were too much for us to do.

We're too small of a church. We can't be giving this to the association. We're just too small. We can't be going to Columbia. That's just too small. And on a personal note I remember I struggled about my giving for a long, long time in my Christian walk and I'll never forget one day I was sharing with a brother and I told I don't know how we got it but I said this is something that's burdened me for a long time and he said Glenn just do what you feel like the Lord wants you to do.

[39 : 57] Give and everything. And for me it was a tithe and I said I just don't know how I'm going to do it. He said trust in the Lord. Challenge the Lord.

Get down on your knees and say Lord I'm going to do this and I'm going to do it because I think this is what you want me to do and that's what I felt like the Lord wanted me to do. I was just too scared. And he said challenge the Lord to do it. Well you know what?

I did. And I can tell you that he is it is amazing that all the times before when I was having trouble meeting my bills and stuff like that I thought I'm just going to barely make it.

I was able to give as I felt the Lord was wanting me to give and I'm still making me to make them bills and I still to this day don't know how it happened. And when I thought I needed something didn't have the savings there the Lord would prosper in some way and give it to us.

And so it's important for us to remember that and that's for me that's something I remember. In Matthew 16 25 he says for whoever wishes to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

[41 : 02] And I think that's important for us because it's not just the idea of giving financially but it's giving of our time our effort our energy being part of it. You cannot have the Holy Spirit in you I don't think and just sit back and not be a part of things.

It just seems like it would eat you up because the Holy Spirit is going to be prompting you. Sometimes I say Lord prompt me and give me a challenge sometimes I feel like if nothing is happening I feel like but be gentle kind of out with it too I always tell them but I want him to get me out of my comfort zone and he does that and even recently I can remember like I said I like to be at home I'm kind of like home body I like being by myself a lot of times but he gets me out sometimes from doing that and I think as a church we have to remember that too.

We have to be willing just to give give ourselves away and be a part of this. You know the old devil loves to lie to us. He says don't obey what God asks until you have the right resources.

Well that's not the way God does things. We think a lot of times that way but God does not do things that way. The world's standards are not God's standards. Is that not true?

Amen? Amen. If Noah decided to build that boat when he was on dry land if he hadn't gone ahead and done what God told him to do you know what?

[42 : 28] He would have drowned because I doubt that he had all that lumber sitting anywhere and he had plans and everything and I don't think I remember he reading anywhere where he said well you know what I don't think we should do it that way I'm going to do it this way.

He obeyed God and God was faithful. Gideon decided I'm going to have to go fight those Minionites 135,000 of them so he got them up an army of 32,000 to go fight them and God said you know what?

We're going to do that. We're going to whoop them but you know what? Only need 300 and so he beat them with just God came in and God led them that way. God sent a shepherd boy to defeat a giant a seasoned warrior just a shepherd boy not a soldier but a single little shepherd boy and then he made one of the most strangest things I've ever heard of in my life.

He sent his son to come to bring salvation to us but he did it not in the way we would think but his son was sacrificed and he gave his life for us that we might have redemption and salvation.

Rarely will we be able to afford to do whatever God asks us to do. I really believe that. I think most of the time rarely we're going to be able to afford it because he wants us to rely on him for his provisions.

[43 : 45] We need to step out on faith and when God speaks we need to obey him immediately. the price of disobedience is worse. This church many years ago just about died and I think it was because of disobedience and everything and God that's my thoughts on it and I don't believe I'm wrong on it and so we need to obey God.

Let us be like Christ in everything we do. In Philippians chapter 2 5 through 11 it says have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus who although he existed in the form of God did not regard himself equally with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself taking the form of a bond servant and being made in the likeness of men being found in the appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death and even death on a cross for this reason also God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name so that the name of Jesus every knee will bow of those who are in heaven and on earth under the earth and then even every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father and we need to be as humble submissive as he was and caring the last principle

I want to kind of give you is the principle of loving one another John 15 12 says and I've always liked this it says this is my command this is from Jesus this is my command that you love one another just as I have loved you not how you love each other but how he loved us and that's the way we are to be we are to love each other just as Christ has loved us that means sacrificial now it's not optional this was a command by Jesus Christ and we need to keep that in mind it's proof that we belong to Christ we love like Christ this church has to prove that they love we need to have that in our as a church body we need to love like Christ in 1 John chapter 2 verse 9 he said the one who says that he is in the light yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now and that's very true I know one of the things that's in the chapter 2 and read the book I think you'll like because there's a lot of little stories in it he tells things that happened in his small church but one of the things

I thought was really struck to me was he told the story of a two brothers in the same church the church was really small not doing well they were going to have a revival well the two brothers were so mad at each other they sat on opposite sides they sang in a choir together but they never did anything together and the tension was felt it was always there the pastor finally asked him before the revival was to come together brought him down just in a separate room under I don't know if y'all have been to church but you got the sanctuary and you got like Sunday school underneath it was like that and he talked to them and he brought it up before them well the two brothers realized what they were doing and they reconciled matter of fact they said it was they reconciled in such a way they were crying so hard that people up in the sanctuary could hear them what went on the revival started in the church they hadn't had that in a long time it started in church and it got so big they had to move to a different building then it got so big they had to move to another one and they said it was actually the beginning of what they called the great Canadian revival and it's amazing to see something like that

God can take something like that and make so much out of all we have to do is to learn to love love one another so we're loving others outside we're helping others but we need to love each other and build up and encourage each other so let us not tolerate unloving attitudes in our midst because the unloving attitude will spread let us care and love no matter what one of the an example I always think of a lot of times is Pastor John one time shared the idea about a broken heart and I always think of a broken heart by God you have to have a broken heart to allow Christ's love to run out of you and that's what we need so let us remember it's easy to leave an organization but it's hard to leave a family so when we have people that seem to wander off let us be intentional about pursuing them let's find out what's going on let's encourage them to be back let us know we're missing and let them know that we want them to be part of the church they may not be doing something particularly at that time but we want them to be part of our family so let us keep that in mind and let us remember that we should keep that in mind all the time 1st Peter chapter 4 verses 7 through 8 it says the end of all things is near therefore be of sound judgment sober spirit for the purpose of a prayer above all keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sin as often as you can use that four letter word love you never know when you're going to get a chance to share it with and demonstrate it in your life so I'm going to leave you with these last little things

[49 : 12] I know I've probably been going over a little bit we need to surrender to Christ's lordship letting him build his kingdom join him we need to we need to place it all on the altar for his purpose we need to come up sometimes publicly you know I was raised in a church where you come to the altar you got something on your heart you feel like there's something you would come to the altar and everything and sometimes we need to do that we can do it in our home we can do it in another place but sometimes showing our what God is doing in our life can demonstrate to others we need to seek and have his heart and his mind intentional about that we need to be intentional about it we need to prepare to do whatever he asks when he does it means we have to be strong and courageous we may not want to do it but we have to be strong and courageous and we have to journey with God leading we have to be ready to be on that great adventure and he's going to show us so

I started out a nice long story but I want to tell you this those shepherds in the story well they still gather together on the top of the hill and they meet with the great shepherd and for instruction they often they say what shall we do great shepherd and the great shepherd always says gently says to him tend my lambs shepherd my sheep and tend my sheep so I want you to keep that in mind um lady come here come here we're going to name this one you broke the boat come on up here see you one later you know what we need a reminder I always think we need a reminder of stuff I threw my gloves out here I threw out I threw out the gospel on me I just want y'all to know that come on these are sheep here

I want you to give everybody one sheep I want you to take care of your sheep and when you put that sheep somewhere that you will remember it this week and remember that you have been called to be a shepherd and you're part of God's church and you're he's built a church and you're a personal part but I want you to be a shepherd and so I'm not just going to tell them I want them to have a sheep take care of the sheep so you two make sure everybody gets a sheep and as they do that I want to ask our our musicians to come up take some of them sheep from her later start giving them over there if you wait on her we'll be taking too long no disrespect Ms. Brooklyn but listen if you have any decisions you need to make today if you feel like you've been wanting the Holy Spirit to challenge you to or that you feel like the Holy Spirit has been telling you something you need to be doing but you're not sure what to do you need to pray well you know what here's the perfect opportunity you can come up here pastor Matt is here he'll pray with you if there's somebody you want to pray with just tap him on his shoulder tap his share on your shoulder and come up here and pray if you feel like that's what the

Lord is leading allow the Holy Spirit to work in life as we sing this invitation song as an opportunity not just for those who don't know the Lord but for us to be a part of God's plan to join in and be part of his plan if y'all stand with us yes there there you