

New Year 2023
A Year of Prayer

I. Intro

A. State of the Church:

1. Growing: numerically and financially
 - a) Provided much needed space for meeting
 - b) A plan that took a long time to accomplish, but the hard part is done, now to continue raising the money to pay for it.
2. Challenges:
 - a) Community outreach
 - b) Leadership training
 - c) Committed involvement
3. Proper response to culture and conviction

B. Illustration: Canaries in a coal mine

1. A canary in a coal mine was a fragile little bird that would be the first indication of something bad happening in the mine.
2. Their fragile little lungs could not handle methane and other killer gasses that could fill a mine.
3. When the canaries were singing, the mine was safe, but as the canaries stopped singing, and died, it was an indication of much deeper issues.
4. Think about this in regards to society:
 - a) Redefining marriage (now self marriage): Canary in a coal mine
 - b) a less than sacred view of life in the elderly or the unborn: Canary in a coal mine
 - c) Terrorism: Canary in a coal mine
 - d) The breakdown of the family unit: Canary in a coal mine
5. If you were a miner, how would you respond to a dead canary?
 - a) Make fun of the canary for its weak lungs?
 - b) yell at the canary to stop being dead?
 - c) post about the dead canary on social media?
 - d) Get angry that the canary died?
 - e) or maybe...realize the mine is full of poison gas and sound the alarm

C. We face a lot of challenges, and the church is in the middle of it.

1. We have the mission God has placed before us, we should serve with excellence in that
2. We should be content in that
3. We should BE the Church, not an angry bunch of people longing for the way things used to be.
4. Lets recognize, our world is showing signs of sin sickness, we should be further motivated to bring them the remedy.

D. We will not accomplish this mission without prayer!

II. Text

A. Romans 12:1-2: Do not be conformed, but be transformed

B. 1 Thess 2:8: Serve with the church so that we become dear to one another, but this is not just the church.

III. Points: We MUST be intentional

A. For the church:

1. On mission
 - a) Our calling is the same: make disciples (make disciples, not excuses)
 - b) Our method must remain the same: stay flexible. If we do not remain flexible, especially at North Park, we will stop being effective.
 - c) Our mission is practical:
 - (1) We have a community to reach

- (2) We have a new building to pay for
 - (3) We have a growing congregation that needs more leaders and servants.
 - 2. On relationship: 1 Thess 2:8
 - a) the question is: What can we do?
 - b) We can intentionally focus on relationships with other believers.
 - c) Intentionally get to know...and serve with others in the church.
 - d) A good place to start is to connect to a small group
 - (1) small groups are intended for much larger purposes than just Bible Study, but also fellowship.
 - (2) I CAN'T CONNECT YOU TO OTHERS...But a small group/ SUNDAY SCHOOL/MENS GROUP/WOMENS GROUP/LIFE GROUP
 - 3. On discipleship
 - a) **My vision is to provide you with every possible growth opportunity available to the people of God.**
 - b) I pray that we give everyone professing belief in Christ an opportunity to grow and prosper in their faith.
 - c) But this does not happen by accident, it takes intentionality
 - 4. Prayer for the church
 - B. For the family:
 - 1. On mission
 - a) These truths are not limited to the brick and mortar of the church building: we are on mission in our homes as well.
 - b) Your home must be as intentional about accomplishing the mission of Christ as you expect the church to be.
 - (1) read a devotional together
 - (2) Do a mission project together
 - (3) Let your children see you GIVE to the cause of Christ, both financially and with time.
 - 2. On relationship
 - a) **A family that selflessly serves Jesus together, develops a relationship that is deeper and growing.**
 - b) The family is under attack...build a defense with the word of God
 - 3. On discipleship:
 - a) The church provides opportunities for education
 - b) The family then commits to being involved...or you miss out.
 - 4. Prayer for the Family
 - C. For the individual:
 - 1. **On mission:**
 - a) **Each of us is on mission wherever we find ourselves.**
 - b) **Our mission is not someone else's responsibility**
 - 2. On relationship
 - a) **Our relationship with Christ is not someone else's responsibility**
 - b) WE are blessed with the Holy Spirit for a reason
 - 3. On discipleship
 - a) Make up your mind to commit to personal discipleship and growth
 - b) Ask for GOD to restore joy in ministry and service
 - 4. Prayer for Individual revival.
- IV. Close