

Proposed Mission 2007

"Reach out and share the unconditional love of Jesus Christ!"

Proposed Vision 2007

"To be a ***Spirited*** (Acts 2), ***Ever-Growing*** (Matthew 28), and ***Christ-centered*** (John 13) community filled with hope!"

Proposed Core Values

- 1. Jesus is life. The rest is details.** Jesus Christ alone is our hope, and the only real and lasting hope for the world (John 14:6). We love him. For this reason, we don't apologize for the gospel or for putting our relationship with him first in our lives (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25). We strive to respond faithfully to the call of Jesus to follow him above all else in this world which so often competes for our time, energy, and attention (Luke 14:15-24).
- 2. All people matter to God; we meet you where you are.** Jesus was sent to reconcile a lost world to God (Luke 15:1-32), and he calls us to do the same. We like unchurched people, and we know what a difference Jesus can make in their lives. For this reason we seek to reach out to those around us and share the unconditional love of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20, John 20:21, 1 Corinthians 9:19-27, ASLC mission statement).
- 3. We worship God, not tradition.** Where tradition helps to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and further the mission of our church, we embrace it. Where tradition becomes a wall between God and his people, we seek to tear it down (John 2:13-22, Matthew 23:13-36, John 9:1-41). While the gospel message of Jesus Christ remains unchanged (Hebrew 13:8), the manner in which it is proclaimed must change for it to be communicated effectively in a changing world (Mark 2:21-22). In our worship and in our ministry, we intentionally offer a wide variety of options from traditional to contemporary and we remain open to new waves of innovation sent to the church by the Holy Spirit of God - all for the sake of Christian mission (Psalm 146-150, Acts 2:1-42).
- 4. Following Jesus is a growing Experience.** Growing in faith is a life-long journey. As modern day disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to move from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity (Phillipians 3:13-14, Ephesians 4:12-14). For this reason we strive to bring people into an ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19). This growth best happens in small groups (Acts 2:42-47). As we grow in faith, we turn our hearts to God, giving of our selves and our resources -- freely and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- 5. We are one body, united in Jesus Christ.** We are a church of individuals, different in many ways, yet called together by God to be one in ministry and mission. As members of the same body, we become more effective when we work in harmony as a unified whole (John 17:20-23). Among us, love for one another is the norm (John 13:34, Romans 13:8), conflicts are resolved according to the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 18:15-17), and we seek to build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11). We rejoice together, and we suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:25-27).

"To be a **Spirited** (Acts 2), **Ever-Growing** (Matthew 28), and **Christ-centered** (John 13) community filled with hope!"

Acts 2 (NLT)

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

⁵ At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

⁷ They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, ⁸ and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! ⁹ Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" ¹² They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.

¹³ But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"

Peter Preaches to the Crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that. ¹⁶ No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'In the last days,' God says,
 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.
 Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
 Your young men will see visions,
 and your old men will dream dreams.
¹⁸ In those days I will pour out my Spirit
 even on my servants—men and women alike—
 and they will prophesy.
¹⁹ And I will cause wonders in the heavens above
 and signs on the earth below—
 blood and fire and clouds of smoke.
²⁰ The sun will become dark,
 and the moon will turn blood red
 before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives.
²¹ But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD
 will be saved.'

²² "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. ²³ But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. ²⁴ But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip. ...

³² "God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. ³³ Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. ...

³⁶ "So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!"

³⁷ Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

³⁸ Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” ⁴⁰ Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”

⁴¹ Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

The Believers Form a Community

⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Matthew 28 (NCV)

The day after the Sabbath day was the first day of the week. At dawn on the first day, Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary went to look at the tomb.

² At that time there was a strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven, went to the tomb, and rolled the stone away from the entrance. Then he sat on the stone. ³ He was shining as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The soldiers guarding the tomb shook with fear because of the angel, and they became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, who has been crucified. ⁶ He is not here. He has risen from the dead as he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. ⁷ And go quickly and tell his followers, ‘Jesus has risen from the dead. He is going into Galilee ahead of you, and you will see him there.’ ” Then the angel said, “Now I have told you.”

⁸ The women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell Jesus’ followers what had happened. ⁹ Suddenly, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings.” The women came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Go and tell my followers to go on to Galilee, and they will see me there.”

The Soldiers Report to the Leaders

¹¹ While the women went to tell Jesus’ followers, some of the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb went into the city to tell the leading priests everything that had happened. ¹² Then the priests met with the elders and made a plan. They paid the soldiers a large amount of money ¹³ and said to them, “Tell the people that Jesus’ followers came during the night and stole the body while you were asleep. ¹⁴ If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and save you from trouble.” ¹⁵ So the soldiers kept the money and did as they were told. And that story is still spread among the people even today.

Jesus Talks to His Followers

¹⁶ The eleven followers went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ On the mountain they saw Jesus and worshiped him, but some of them did not believe it was really Jesus. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All power in heaven and on earth is given to me. ¹⁹ So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, and I will be with you always, even until the end of this age.”

John 13 (NLT)

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So

he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

⁸ "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?" ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

¹⁸ "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' ¹⁹ I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah. ²⁰ I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

²¹ Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

²² The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. ²³ The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. ²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?" ²⁵ So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." ²⁸ None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant.

²⁹ Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. ³⁰ So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

³¹ As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, "The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. ³² And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will soon give glory to the Son. ³³ Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going. ³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

³⁶ Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?"

And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later."

³⁷ "But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you."

³⁸ Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me."

1. Jesus is life. The rest is details. Jesus Christ alone is our hope, and the only real and lasting hope for the world (John 14:6). We love him. For this reason, we don't apologize for the gospel or for putting our relationship with him first in our lives (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25). We strive to respond faithfully to the call of Jesus to follow him above all else in this world which so often competes for our time, energy, and attention (Luke 14:15-24).

John 14:6 (NIV)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Romans 1:16 (NRSV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 (NLT):

¹⁸ The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. ¹⁹ As the Scriptures say,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise
and discard the intelligence of the intelligent."

²⁰ So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. ²¹ Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. ²² It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. ²³ So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense.

²⁴ But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

Luke 14:15-24 (NLT)

¹⁵ Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, "What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet in the Kingdom of God!"

¹⁶ Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. ¹⁷ When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, the banquet is ready.' ¹⁸ But they all began making excuses. One said, 'I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.' ¹⁹ Another said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.' ²⁰ Another said, 'I now have a wife, so I can't come.'

²¹ "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' ²² After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' ²³ So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. ²⁴ For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.' "

2. All people matter to God; we meet you where you are. Jesus was sent to reconcile a lost world to God (Luke 15:1-32), and he calls us to do the same. We like unchurched people, and we know what a difference Jesus can make in their lives. For this reason we seek to reach out to those around us and share the unconditional love of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20, John 20:21, 1 Corinthians 9:19-27, ASLC mission statement).

Luke 15:1-32 (NIV)

Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’ ²⁰So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

²⁵“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

²⁸“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³²But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Matthew 28:19-20 (NCV)

¹⁹ So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, and I will be with you always, even until the end of this age.”

John 20:21 (NRSV)

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

1 Corinthians 9:19-27 (NLT)

¹⁹ Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. ²⁰ When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. ²¹ When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

²² When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. ²³ I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

²⁴ Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! ²⁵ All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. ²⁶ So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. ²⁷ I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

ASLC mission statement

"Reach out and share the unconditional love of Jesus Christ!"

3. We worship God, not tradition. Where tradition helps to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and further the mission of our church, we embrace it. Where tradition becomes a wall between God and his people, we seek to tear it down (John 2:13-22, Matthew 23:13-36, John 9:1-41). While the gospel message of Jesus Christ remains unchanged (Hebrew 13:8), the manner in which it is proclaimed must change for it to be communicated effectively in a changing world (Mark 2:21-22). In our worship and in our ministry, we intentionally offer a wide variety of options from traditional to contemporary and we remain open to new waves of innovation sent to the church by the Holy Spirit of God - all for the sake of Christian mission (Psalm 146-150, Acts 2:1-42)

John 2:13-22 (NLT)

¹³ It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. ¹⁵ Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. ¹⁶ Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

¹⁷ Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."

¹⁸ But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

¹⁹ "All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

²⁰ "What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" ²¹ But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

Matthew 23:13-36 (NCV)

¹³ "How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You close the door for people to enter the kingdom of heaven. You yourselves don't enter, and you stop others who are trying to enter.

¹⁵ "How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You travel across land and sea to find one person who will change to your ways. When you find that person, you make him more fit for hell than you are.

¹⁶ "How terrible for you! You guide the people, but you are blind. You say, 'If people swear by the Temple when they make a promise, that means nothing. But if they swear by the gold that is in the Temple, they must keep that promise.' ¹⁷ You are blind fools! Which is greater: the gold or the Temple that makes that gold holy? ¹⁸ And you say, 'If people swear by the altar when they make a promise, that means nothing. But if they swear by the gift on the altar, they must keep that promise.' ¹⁹ You are blind! Which is greater: the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy? ²⁰ The person who swears by the altar is really using the altar and also everything on the altar. ²¹ And the person who swears by the Temple is really using the Temple and also everything in the Temple. ²² The person who swears by heaven is also using God's throne and the One who sits on that throne.

²³ "How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You give to God one-tenth of everything you earn—even your mint, dill, and cumin. ⁿ But you don't obey the really important teachings of the law—justice, mercy, and being loyal. These are the things you should do, as well as those other things.

²⁴ You guide the people, but you are blind! You are like a person who picks a fly out of a drink and then swallows a camel! ⁿ

ⁿ **mint, dill, and cumin** Small plants grown in gardens and used for spices. Only very religious people would be careful enough to give a tenth of these plants.

ⁿ **You ... camel!** Meaning, "You worry about the smallest mistakes but commit the biggest sin."

²⁵ “How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You wash the outside of your cups and dishes, but inside they are full of things you got by cheating others and by pleasing only yourselves. ²⁶ Pharisees, you are blind! First make the inside of the cup clean, and then the outside of the cup can be truly clean.

²⁷ “How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You are like tombs that are painted white. Outside, those tombs look fine, but inside, they are full of the bones of dead people and all kinds of unclean things. ²⁸ It is the same with you. People look at you and think you are good, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and evil.

²⁹ “How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets, and you show honor to the graves of those who lived good lives. ³⁰ You say, ‘If we had lived during the time of our ancestors, we would not have helped them kill the prophets.’ ³¹ But you give proof that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³² And you will complete the sin that your ancestors started.

³³ “You are snakes! A family of poisonous snakes! How are you going to escape God’s judgment? ³⁴ So I tell you this: I am sending to you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify. Some of them you will beat in your synagogues and chase from town to town. ³⁵ So you will be guilty for the death of all the good people who have been killed on earth—from the murder of that good man Abel to the murder of Zechariahⁿ son of Berakiah, whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar. ³⁶ I tell you the truth, all of these things will happen to you people who are living now.

John 9:1-41 (NCV)

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ²His followers asked him, “Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind—his own sin or his parents’ sin?”

³ Jesus answered, “It is not this man’s sin or his parents’ sin that made him blind. This man was born blind so that God’s power could be shown in him. ⁴ While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶ After Jesus said this, he spit on the ground and made some mud with it and put the mud on the man’s eyes. ⁷ Then he told the man, “Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.” (Siloam means Sent.) So the man went, washed, and came back seeing.

⁸ The neighbors and some people who had earlier seen this man begging said, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?”

⁹ Some said, “He is the one,” but others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

The man himself said, “I am the man.”

¹⁰ They asked, “How did you get your sight?”

¹¹ He answered, “The man named Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

¹² They asked him, “Where is this man?”

“I don’t know,” he answered.

Pharisees Question the Healing

¹³ Then the people took to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ The day Jesus had made mud and healed his eyes was a Sabbath day. ¹⁵ So now the Pharisees asked the man, “How did you get your sight?”

He answered, “He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see.”

¹⁶ So some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man does not keep the Sabbath day, so he is not from God.”

But others said, “A man who is a sinner can’t do miracles like these.” So they could not agree with each other.

¹⁷ They asked the man again, “What do you say about him since it was your eyes he opened?”

The man answered, “He is a prophet.”

ⁿ **Abel ... Zechariah** In the order of the books of the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.

¹⁸ These leaders did not believe that he had been blind and could now see again. So they sent for the man's parents ¹⁹ and asked them, "Is this your son who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

²⁰ His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹ But we don't know how he can now see. We don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself."

²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the elders, who had already decided that anyone who said Jesus was the Christ would be avoided. ²³ That is why his parents said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

²⁴ So for the second time, they called the man who had been blind. They said, "You should give God the glory by telling the truth. We know that this man is a sinner."

²⁵ He answered, "I don't know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see."

²⁶ They asked, "What did he do to you? How did he make you see again?"

²⁷ He answered, "I already told you, and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his followers, too?"

²⁸ Then they insulted him and said, "You are his follower, but we are followers of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

³⁰ The man answered, "This is a very strange thing. You don't know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We all know that God does not listen to sinners, but he listens to anyone who worships and obeys him. ³² Nobody has ever heard of anyone giving sight to a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

³⁴ They answered, "You were born full of sin! Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵ When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, Jesus found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

³⁶ He asked, "Who is the Son of Man, sir, so that I can believe in him?"

³⁷ Jesus said to him, "You have seen him. The Son of Man is the one talking with you."

³⁸ He said, "Lord, I believe!" Then the man worshiped Jesus.

³⁹ Jesus said, "I came into this world so that the world could be judged. I came so that the blind would see and so that those who see will become blind."

⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were nearby heard Jesus say this and asked, "Are you saying we are blind, too?"

⁴¹ Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But since you keep saying you see, your guilt remains."

Hebrew 13:8 (NRSV)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Mark 2:21-22 (NLT)

²¹ "Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

²² "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins."

Psalms 146-150

Acts 2:1-42

(see page 2)

4. Following Jesus is a growing Experience. Growing in faith is a life-long journey. As modern day disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to move from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity (Phillipians 3:13-14, Ephesians 4:12-14). For this reason we strive to bring people into an ever-growing relationship with Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19). This growth best happens in small groups (Acts 2:42-47). As we grow in faith, we turn our hearts to God, giving of our selves and our resources -- freely and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Phillipians 3:13-14 (NIV)

³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:12-14 (NCV)

¹² Christ gave those gifts to prepare God's holy people for the work of serving, to make the body of Christ stronger. ¹³ This work must continue until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge of the Son of God. We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have his perfection.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to fool us. They make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path.

personally, I would go through v16

¹⁵ No! Speaking the truth with love, we will grow up in every way into Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶ The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love.

Matthew 28:19 (NRSV)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)

⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NCV)

Each of you should give as you have decided in your heart to give. You should not be sad when you give, and you should not give because you feel forced to give. God loves the person who gives happily.

5. We are one body, united in Jesus Christ. We are a church of individuals, different in many ways, yet called together by God to be one in ministry and mission. As members of the same body, we become more effective when we work in harmony as a unified whole (John 17:20-23). Among us, love for one another is the norm (John 13:34, Romans 13:8), conflicts are resolved according to the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 18:15-17), and we seek to build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11). We rejoice together, and we suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:25-27).

John 17:20-23 (NLT)

²⁰ “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

²² “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

John 13:34 (NRSV)

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

Romans 13:8 (NCV)

Do not owe people anything, except always owe love to each other, because the person who loves others has obeyed all the law.

Matthew 18:15-17 (NLT)

¹⁵ “If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. ¹⁶ But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

1 Corinthians 12:25-27 (NCV)

²⁵ so our body would not be divided. God wanted the different parts to care the same for each other. ²⁶ If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it. Or if one part of our body is honored, all the other parts share its honor.

²⁷ Together you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of that body.