

God at Work
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As I shared with you at the start of the service, we were thinking about, planning, and praying for this new facility over 10 years ago. This has been in the works a long time. But in a way, it took on new life and a new seriousness when we started raising money for this project. For year and years, this building felt only like a dream, it felt only like an idea in our brains, in our prayers, and on our design plans. It got real when we got a price tag; it got real when we discovered that this new facility was going to cost close to \$4.8M. You talk about a dream! It quickly became a fairytale!

I use the word *dream* to describe how for the longest time a new building was so abstract; it was mostly in our minds and in our prayers. We talked about it; we drew little pictures; we imagined “What if?” But *dream* is the wrong word in that this new building has never been a wish; it’s never been about personal or communal aspiration. We didn’t dream about a new building little boys dream about winning the world series or little girls dream about becoming President of the US. No, this building was a calling; it was a step of obedience. I remember very vividly having conversations in board meetings and in church meetings about our calling. Do we believe our lack of space at the old facility was hindering our ability to reach out and minister to more people? Do we believe God has called us to remove those hindrances? Do we believe God is calling us to make great sacrifices so we have more space for people to hear about Jesus in Taylor County? We agreed on this calling together, FBC. Do you remember us saying yes to these questions? That’s why we moved forward; that’s why we took votes and started our *Reaching Beyond* campaign. It was obedience to the call and mission of God in Taylor County.

We had 3 goals for our RB campaign; I want to remind you of them (or if you don’t know them I want to introduce them to you).

- That FBCers would contribute \$3.5M in 36 months.
- That all FBCers would participate together in this campaign and stay united in reaching unsaved people in Taylor County and beyond.
- That the faith of FBCers would grow in God as our provider for this campaign and beyond through his word and sacrificial giving resulting in permanent life-change.

Today, we are going to remind ourselves why we had these goals and celebrate how God has helped us and is still helping us meet these goals.

The first goal was about raising \$3.5M. I remember how we got this goal. We took the estimated cost of the new facility and we subtracted the savings we thought we would have in cash and also the sale of the old facility (that’s when the plan was to actually sell our old church building). That number came to be about \$3.5M. Friends, that number looked enormous; did it look like that to you? How can a church our size raise that kind of money?

We debated hiring a consultant. There are people, companies all across America who specifically work with churches to help them raise money for projects like ours. We were strongly encouraged by many to do this. And there was something really attractive about this plan. We've never done this before; they do this for a living. But as we kept debating and discussing, we had a couple problems. 1) There was a pretty hefty fee; it would cost us a lot of money to hire this kind of help. But more importantly 2) it didn't feel like us; it didn't sit right in our spirit. We thought, "Hasn't God equipped us well enough to look at our FBC brothers and sisters in the eyes and just tell them what we are thinking? Isn't that how families do business? Do we really need to hire someone from out there somewhere to tell us how to communicate, to plan, to inspire our own brothers and sisters in the Lord?" So, we decided to do this ourselves. We obviously prayed and asked for God's help. And we certainly did our own research and asked for advice. But we moved forward on the RB plan together.

And on May 3, the FBC family got together for our Commitment Sunday luncheon; do you remember that? And that afternoon, FBCers pledged about \$2.8M to this project. Friends, to give you some perspective on that amount pledged. Most experts in the church capital campaign world tell churches that they could expect anywhere between 1.5 to 4 times their annual budget towards a campaign. Usually, they say if you hit 2.5 times your annual budget you're doing pretty well. FBC, \$2.8M was over 6 times of our annual operating budget... we blew past the most optimistic projections. I have pastor friends in churches 2 times - some of them 3 times - the size of FBC telling me they don't think they will raise \$2.8M.

Jump to Ephesians 3:20-21 (READ). Do you see how the generous and abundant provision of God is the reason of Paul's worship in this passage? All glory be to Christ Jesus who can abundantly provide more than we could possibly imagine or think! And he did it here, FBC. In a minute, I'm going to show you how he did it, but for now, friends, rejoice that God has provided the money for this new facility. We're moving into a new building that cost \$4.8M pretty much on budget and only borrowing around \$1M setting us up for a sound financial future. Praise the Lord!

Our second goal reads this way: *That all FBCers would participate together in this campaign and stay united in reaching unsaved people in Taylor County and beyond.* Let's turn together to Col. 3. Vs. 15 was a key verse I preached from during our *Reaching Beyond* series back in 2015 and it says, "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body." This peace of Christ that Paul speaks of isn't some internal sense of peace, like having peace that you made the right decision on where to bank or when to take a vacation. The peace of Christ is about living at peace with others. We know that because everything he talks about in this paragraph has to do with living in harmony and unity with others. Look at the preceding verses:

- Vs. 12 - Have compassion and kindness towards each other.
- Vs. 13 - Bear with each other as well as offer each other forgiveness.

- Vs. 14 - We are to put on love for one another and when we do that we'll be ready and capable of offering the kind of compassion, kindness, patience, and forgiveness Paul is commanding.

It's pretty obvious what Paul is concerned with; he wants this church to live at peace together. And if all of those commands weren't quite enough, he says in our key verse (vs. 15) to let the peace of Christ rule your hearts. Let the desire for peace and unity reign supreme in your hearts.

I'm so thankful and glad for how God has worked unity and peace into our church family. I'm so glad that reaching more people for Jesus and maintaining unity around that central cause has been more important than all of us getting our own way. The list of things we all could have fought about is almost endless. But we haven't had fighting over such things; instead, we've had remarkable cooperation and unity. And that only makes sense because of one thing: the peace of Christ has ruled your hearts, FBC. You've said, "Staying united, living harmoniously, reaching out to more people is more important than me getting my way; more important than me being heard; more important than everybody moving at my pace; more important than what I think is best." Friends, that's a miracle. Many, many churches fight over much smaller issues. Even last Sunday with our move, with so many of us bumping into each other and getting in each others way, and with misunderstandings about this or that, we worked together with a common purpose.

The final goal we had was this: *That the faith of FBCers would grow in God as our provider for this campaign and beyond through his word and sacrificial giving resulting in permanent life-change.* There was something really special about this goal to me. As great and miraculous as a new building going up and being funded as it was, and as glorious as our unity has been through this process, I still believed that if we didn't experience a permanent-life change in us through this we'd be missing out on all that God wanted to do with this journey. The goal states that we believed life change would happen through the word and through our sacrificial giving; those were the means by which God was going to change us. So, we taught the Word and we gave.

We won't really know if life change has happened until we get some distances from the project. It is possible that in a year or two we all go back to the same routines and habits we had before the project started. But my hope and prayer is that we won't. And I'm fairly optimistic that many of you will move on from this experience with a new way of trusting God's provision and more of an appetite for sacrifice for his kingdom.

It's been a month or two, but the men and I were talking about money on a Thursday morning at Bible study. And the conversation turned to *Reaching Beyond* and our mutual giving to this work. Friends, I was so encouraged by what I heard. I heard men share how God was using this season of giving to show his power and grace. Some of the men who almost never share started telling each other how giving to *Reaching Beyond* was making an impact in their

families. And as I listened I was reminded of this goal and I thought, "It's working! God's doing it! He's bringing about permanent life change through this project." Lord willing, giving is going to be a more regular discipline in many of our lives. Through giving, we've learned that God provides and that our sacrifices are worth it.

Now, maybe you're sitting there scratching your head thinking, "Well, it hasn't really worked that way for me. I've given, but I haven't experienced anything life-changing." Can I give you some advice: give more and see what happens. One of the things that we learned in 2015 is that God calls us all to give in proportion to what he's given to us. That's why we all give differing amounts; we all have received different amounts from the Lord. And God's plan is that the more he gives us the more we are to give back to him. Here's something I have learned about my own giving: when I give small amounts almost nothing changes in me. \$10 here, \$50 there. Even on a yearly basis \$3000/yr or \$4000/yr doesn't do anything in me because it's not a large sacrifice. I don't have to trust God for anything; I can still keep all my earthly plans. But what happened during *Reaching Beyond*, Korby and I gave more than we had ever given before. We had to change plans; we had to delay projects; we had to say no to things that we were hoping to say yes to. And when we gave like that, things changed.

I'm not saying giving should be reckless or careless; but God does say we are to give by faith and to give sacrificially. We are to give where it does sting a little and where it shows faith. We can give in such a way where it doesn't really look like faith. But when we do, God gives us a front row seat to his miracle-working power. Friends, the greatest miracles during *Reaching Beyond* have not been about bricks and mortar or bank accounts. The greatest miracles have been in human hearts. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ turning sinners into saints and turning casual Christians into devoted followers.

God has been at work. And it's been a sight to behold. And he's not done. Let's keep praying and hoping that we are open to his work in us and through us.

Listen to some of the key dates and events in this journey.

- July 22, 2007 - Semi-annual meeting ~ Building issues were presented and discussed. Work done to this point was described as “preparatory” with future action to take place when needs become more apparent. Notes from the minutes say “relocation might be more beneficial.”
- Aug. 7, 2011 - Semi-annual meeting ~ An addition to the north side of the current building was presented; additional space consisted of additional nursery, bathroom, classroom and admin space. The congregational consensus at this meeting was that the North addition should be abandoned or revised to make additional sanctuary space a priority and that the board should be proactive in the planning for future addition.
- January 26, 2014 - Annual meeting ~ The Design team presented a conceptual design to FBCers for ministry space for the donated property on HWY 13. The Deacons made the following motions
 - Motion 1: Approve the presented floor plan from the Design team as the approximate concept, design and square footage for the future home of FBC
 - Motion 2: Approve moving forward with a fundraising campaign in 2014 for a new FBC church home.
 Vote to take place April 6, 2014... and they passed on that day.
- April 2015 - Lee and Clarice Schield donated their property to the west of Walmart in the City of Medford to FBC. After prayer and consultation with the Halls, the Board recommended to humbly accept this donation so a new facility could be located in the City of Medford.
- May 3, 2015 - Commitment Sunday ~ Approx. 250 FBCers celebrate the opportunity to give to the Reaching Beyond effort. 121 pledges were collected as of May 3 with an amount committed of \$2.7M.

Things to be thankful for

- For mercy, that God called us into this church family through the work of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- For his enduring and faithful love that constantly calls us back home to him and to one another.
- For the opportunity to be a part of his work in Taylor County and beyond.
- For his provision in providing us a ministry space to serve and to be served.
- For the many FBCers, even those who have moved away and aren't here to celebrate this day, who played a part of the long journey that got us to this moment.
- For the property that was donated to us so we could have such wonderful location in town.
- For the Design Team who worked so hard to prayerfully imagine the space we might need that eventually turned in the building we are not occupying.
- For the RB campaign team and volunteers who asked God's help to craft a plan to talk to every FBC family and invite them into the this journey
- For the RB Building team who gave so much to during the construction phase to make sure the vision became a reality on time and on budget, especially Bill Hall who has dedicated so much this past year or so to lead us through this process.
- For the many FBCers who responded to the calls for volunteers; many of them in the areas of their expertise where without their help we would have spent many more dollars on this building.
- For our key contractors like Boson who have served us so capably.
- For God's safety during the project where everyone avoided injury.
- For the Holy Spirit bringing God's truth and presence to us throughout this journey.
- For God the Son, our Savior and Lord, by whom and to whom are all things.
- And for our Father God, to whom all things will be given one day by his Son so that he may be our all in all.