

# Forward March: Risk-taking

## Part 1 – Hebrews 11:6 – 16

### I. Intro

A. **Illustration:** Sherlock Holmes and Watson were camping one night. In the middle of the night Sherlock Holmes awoke and looked up at the stars. He asked, "Watson, what do you see". Woken from his sleep Watson looked up and said "stars". Yes, but what do these stars tell you. Watson said "Cosmologically they tell me that we are part of a large universe – that we are one of billions and billions of planets. Theologically they tell me that we have a great God who made all of it. Meteorologically they tell me that the sky is clear and we will have good weather tomorrow. Temporally they tell me that it is the middle of the night and we should be sleeping! Sherlock, what do they tell you." "Well," he replied, "they tell me that someone has stolen our tent".

i. It's all about perspective

B. End of another year, and the beginning of a new one; Wednesday nights – Genesis, which mean *beginnings*, seen that God is all about new beginnings

C. Last Sunday PM, new year resolutions; specifically, new year resolutions for our church

D. Today, entering a new year, talk about new beginnings; **Question:** What would we like to see the Lord do in our church in 2019?

E. **READ Hebrews 11:6 – 16**

F. Right off – to please God you first have to put complete faith, trust in, Him; to put complete faith, trust in Him you have to truly believe in Him; faith and belief go hand-in-hand

G. **REFER v. 6**

H. Writer of Hebrews gives examples of those in scripture who put complete faith, trust in God: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah; Later in chapter Joseph, Moses, all Israelites, Rahab, more are mentioned

I. Our vision statement which resulted from a lot of prayer and thought, but also reliance on faith:

*The vision at First Baptist Church of Mount Vernon is a continual commitment to:*

i. *Growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ through worship and fellowship; through the teaching of the inerrant, infallible Holy Word of God; through discipleship and disciple-making; and through equipping members for the work of ministry. Ezra 7:10; Romans 12:1; 2 Timothy 2:15, 4:5*

ii. *Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the preaching of God's Holy Word; and through local, state, national, and worldwide outreach and mission efforts. Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8*

iii. *To be a living testimony of God's love to all persons in word and deed. Mark 12:28 – 31; 1 John 3:11*

iv. *To honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in our personal lives, in all the ministries of the church, and to be faithful stewards of God's provisions and blessings He has entrusted to us. Deuteronomy 6:4 – 6; Matthew 5:16; Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 4:10*

- J. Discuss 3 types of churches, and as we look at these different types think about our own church – particularly in the area of taking risk and walking by faith

## II. **1** – Undertaking Church

- A. Church that dwells in the past – it continues to rely on, operate based on past
- B. Virtually no change occurs at all, nothing new is ever tried, comfortable with everything staying just as its always been; be your non risk-takers
- C. Problems this type of church encounters are people with no motivation, very comfortable in the type of church they are and the type of church they've always been; whole attitude is “if it's not broke, don't fix it”, but even if it does become broke they don't want to fix it, they would just hope it would fix itself
- D. Illustration: When Mao Zedong was the leader of China there was great persecution of the Christians. Mao wanted to eliminate Christianity. First, he arrested the Christians and then spread them all over the country thinking that then they could not meet together so the church would die. Second, he wanted to punish them so he gave them the worst jobs possible – garbage collectors and grave diggers. However, in spreading out the Christians he planted Christianity through the entire nation. In making Christians garbage collectors he gave them access to every home in the country and in making them grave diggers he placed them in situations where they could share their hope with people who were grieving.
- i. Quote: *Poor eyes limit your sight; poor vision limits your success*
- ii. Mao had a vision – to eliminate Christianity, but failed to see the resolve and commitment of Christians – failed to see how dispersing Christians would just spread the message of Christ more
- E. A church that lives in the past has no vision – no foresight, it's all about hindsight and a great lack of faith that make them fearful of taking any kind of risk
- F. We can learn from the past, but we don't need to live there

## III. **2** – Caretaking Church

- A. Church that lives in the present – taking it day by day; type of church is a reactive church instead of a proactive one; instead of no vision, they're a church with very limited vision because they don't want to be too risky;

this type of church might say, *We're a church of faith, but faith within reason*; this church would be ok taking baby steps of faith but not giant steps (**Question**: What does this say about this church's trust in the Lord?); very little risk-taking involved

- B. Church continues to “put out fires” instead of taking measures to prevent fires from happening in the future; always dealing with issues, problems
- C. So consumed with issues and problems they can't begin to think about future direction – always in maintenance mode
- D. **Illustration**: Story of a pig ate his fill of acorns under an oak tree and then started to root around the tree. A crow remarked, "You should not do this. If you lay bare the roots, the tree will wither and die." "Let it die," said the pig. "Who cares as long as there are acorns?"
- E. That's caretaking church – just concerned about here and now, and resources needed right here, right now
- F. The main problem with this type of church is that it's walking by sight, not by faith
- G. We as individuals, and as church, need to have a greater vision for God's plan, purposes for us; if we think God can only work in the present, we're putting limits on God; don't need to focus completely on God's current plan, we need to seek faithfully God's greater plan
- H. Chuck Swindoll quote: *Vision encompasses vast vistas outside the realm of the predictable, the safe, the expected*

#### IV. **3** – Risk-taking Church

- A. Church that learns from past, lives and functions in the present, but has a vision for the future – but the key is always looking forward
- B. Long-time, most beloved pastors this church has had in its almost 120 year history, Bro. Jack Fernandez, had two phrases he would use often –
  - 1) “The best is yet to be”; 2) Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) <sup>18</sup> Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: ... - Proverbs 29:18 (ESV)
  - <sup>18</sup> Where there is no ... vision the people cast off restraint, „. (meaning there is no direction and people do their own thing which means there is no unity of the body
- C. Risk-taking church loves to see how God is moving and their motivation and excitement comes from the expectation that God is working among them and through them

#### V. Close

- A. Undertaking church holding onto the past because fearful of any change because they want to stay comfortable right where they've always been
- B. Caretaking church just living in the present – they function with blinders on (like a racehorse), not concerned about the past or the future

- ~~C. **Illustration:** Jonas Salk attempted 200 unsuccessful vaccines for polio before he came up with one that worked. Somebody asked him one time, "How did it feel to fail 200 times trying to invent a vaccine for polio?" This was his response: "I never failed 200 times at anything in my life. My family taught me never to use that word. I simply discovered 200 ways how not to make a vaccine for polio."~~
- ~~D. By faith, Noah built an ark and trusted God's plan and purpose for the future flood; after the flood trusted God's plan and purpose for future repopulating the world~~
- ~~E. By faith, Abraham left his homeland and went to a foreign land because he trusted God's plan and purpose for making him the Father of many nations in the future~~
- F. **Question:** How would you categorize Jesus – undertaking, caretaking, or risk-taking? **ANS:** Risk-taking
  - i. A man who would entrust to 11 men which included poor fishermen, hated tax collectors, weak and frightened men to spread the Gospel message of salvation all over the world – that man would definitely be a risk-taker – that was Jesus
- G. **Quote:** *A vision without a task is a dream – a task without a vision is drudgery – vision and task together is hope*
- H. **Question:** Personally, what would your vision for this church be for 2019 and beyond?