



Church Jumpstart:

A 10-Week Journey Towards Reviving Our Church

Session 10: Look Ahead

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness...” – Isaiah 43:19

Back in Session 1, we identified these purposes for this class:

1. To pursue a season of personal **growth** and **revival** in my walk with Christ.
2. To commit to doing my part to help my church return to **health** and **fruitfulness**.



3. To learn the stages of the **lifecycles** of believers and churches. And to learn to recognize the **thought**-patterns and **habits** that lead to spiritual decline.

“Organizations, including churches, can get stuck in any season...That’s why it’s important to determine what season the organization is in. Then we can interrupt it...Without the interruption, the church will remain stuck, and the natural pull will be toward decline and death. Without interruption, death is inevitable.” ~ Tony Morgan

4. To seek God to discern a fresh **mission** and **vision** for my life and for First Baptist. My life is best-lived when I learn to live **prayerfully** and **strategically**.
5. To affirm that as I grow, the church will grow; as the church grows, the Kingdom of God around me will grow; and as the Kingdom of God grows, new **disciples** will be won to Christ.

“Churches that survive and move on to the next season of growth have one thing in common: they want to reach more people for Jesus.” ~ Tony Morgan

Here's The Path To Spiritual Awakening We Studied:

1. Look **up**. *Unless we begin our journey by seeking the Lord in a fresh way, we will fail.*
2. Look **back**. *By remembering how God blessed us in the past, we can draw new inspiration for the future. We can also learn lessons of what NOT to do.*
3. Look **around** us. *By looking around us at our community, and asking God to help us see things through his eyes, we'll see the difference the gospel can make.*
4. Look **within** us. *By examining how God has "SHAPED" us, we can learn how we can make a difference.*
5. Look **ahead**. *Now we're better equipped to think strategically in planning the future.*

In Session 2, we Looked Up, and attempted to fall in love with Jesus again. We saw that several things motivated the Lord:

Connect the following to their best definition:

<i>Mission</i>	<i>What the church is to become</i>
<i>Vision</i>	<i>Day-to-Day methods for carrying out the strategy</i>
<i>Core Values</i>	<i>The specific plan of what the church will do</i>
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Why the church exists</i>
<i>Systems</i>	<i>Description of the Leadership Culture</i>

We saw that Jesus went about his work with each of these in mind.

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." ~ Luke 19:10

This represents Jesus' sense of his **mission**.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world."

Matthew 24:14

This represents Jesus' sense of his **vision**.

"The Twelve Jesus sent out with the following instruction: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons...Do not take along any gold...Take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic...' ~ Matthew 10:5-10

This represents Jesus' sense of his **strategy**.

“But [the Samaritans] did not receive [Jesus]...When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of.”
Luke 9:51-55

This represents Jesus’ sense of his **core values**.

“And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.” ~ Luke 22:30 / “Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor.” ~ John 13:29

This represents Jesus’ sense of his **system**.

For a church to be healthy, each of these things must be in its spiritual DNA, so deeply that every member of the church knows them and attempts to live them out. But it begins with recovering our sense of mission, our understanding of why we exist as a church.

So during this time together, we agreed on our new mission as a church:

Empower and Encourage our Community with the Love of Christ.

In Sessions 3-5, we Looked Back, and discussed the following:

The differences between an outward-focused vs. an inward-focused church. What are they?

Outward-Focused

Inward-Focused

And we listened to two different sets of voices from our past, from the 1980s and 1990s, who diagnosed many of the same problems we are facing today.

The papers we read agree with Tony Morgan, who identified 5 KEY CHARACTERISTICS of churches that are stuck (pp.161-163).

1. They lack a focused, compelling vision for the future.
2. They don't have a clear discipleship path.
3. They have an inward focus.
4. They are complex.
5. They don't have strong leadership.

Pastor Michael Adam offered the following action steps back in *1993!!*

- “There must be an assessment by the pastoral staff, current leadership and the church to decide whether we really want to grow.”
- “If the church agrees to the need to grow, there must be a shift of leadership and power from the laity to the pastor.”
- “Under the direction of the pastor, and with the help of the staff and people, there needs to be a clearly thought out philosophy of ministry, membership, evangelism, discipleship and church growth.”
- “Consistent and regular prayer must be scheduled and undertaken to seek the Lord for revival in the church and the community.”
- “Spiritual gift instruments [i.e. assessments] should be given to as many in the church as possible.”
- “The laity must be mobilized for ministry by taking over ministries that they find themselves gifted in or starting new ones that do not exist already. Discipleship, small group leading, and ministry training should abound.”
- “After this starting point, the leadership of the church is only responsibility would be to assess needs in the church and community, develop new ministries, train leaders for these ministries, see that these ministries have the proper materials and support to accomplish their task and assess their success or failure...The church should consider reducing the number of people on boards and in offices. There are too many Chiefs and not enough Indians.”

*What do the
righteous have
to do for evil to
take over?*

Answer:

In Sessions 6-7, we Looked Around us and asked the Lord to help us see our community through his eyes.

We looked at the life of Nehemiah and discerned 10 steps God ordains for transforming our community. What are some of them?

We also took a prayer walk. And surveyed some demographic research about Taft. What were some things we learned?

Which led us to Sessions 8 and 9 where we Looked Within us, to see how God has SHAPED us to serve him.

How can a healthy church make a difference in a town like Taft?

How can I make a difference in my community? How does knowing my SHAPE – and the FULL Member concept – motivate me toward serving Christ.

What's left? Now it's time to Look Ahead...and asked the Lord to grant us a new vision for our church. And a new strategy for how to bring that vision to pass.

Tony Morgan's "Greatest Hits" On 'Vision'

Mission: defines the primary purpose for the church. Typically, in twelve words or less, I help the church develop a mantra that answers the why question. Why do we exist?

Vision: paints a picture of where the church is going in the future. I like to develop that vision for three to five years out. I also like to make the vision specific and measurable.

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Without specifics, you can't paint the picture of the future. Without that clear picture, it's impossible to rally people to the cause. The vision needs to be refreshed every few years or so.

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Let me offer these suggestions for how you might go about renewing the vision:

1. Don't go at it alone. Involve a dozen or so strategically minded leaders in the process.
2. Don't try to develop a vision with the entire congregation having a voice. You can't survey your way to vision. God's leaders should develop the vision for God's church.
3. Once you have the building blocks of the vision in place, engage other leaders, both staff and lay leaders, in developing the action plan.
4. Once the leadership team believes the change has been communicated, it should be communicated again and again. The person at the lowest level of leadership should have an understanding of the change that is taking place.

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Fear is often louder than reality...Vision needs to be big enough that it can't be accomplished in your own effort, but realistic enough that it could happen through a move of God.

*So what visions has God implanted in your heart and mind for the future of FBC? And your role in it? As our second century of existence dawns, what **good** can be done in Jesus' name through you and me?*

Look ahead...and write down what you see: