

1000 Days of Witness
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Wasilla Bible Church
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Years ago we had a dream, and actually it's something that started this whole process. It even started the Extending Grace campaign. Simple little dream, vision, calling...and that is that someday we would be a thousand people in one place, at one time, praising Jesus with one voice. Prayed about that, sought that...you know what? We just heard what it sounds like. For the first time... [applause from congregation] We had no idea when it would be; we had no idea of how to orchestrate that; we had no idea pursue it. We've just been taking the next step, every step. And we're there today.

So the question is—what's next? Well, I didn't find that out until we just started singing those songs. That just...that just...special.

What's next? Well, I've had people ask me 'Do we go for two thousand?' 'When do we build the next building?' We're not done with this project yet. There's three things that we put together to get on here. One was we had to sell our previous property. We launched into the Extending Grace campaign, which is a great challenge to us. And we have taken out construction loans along the way to make sure we could get here in a timely fashion. And we still have one loan to pay off, and we'll be doing that with our general fund. We need to maintain that and keep pressing forward with that.

But really, instead of two thousand more, or whatever, or even what the next building project is, the question we should be asking, I think, is "What's God's next challenge for us? What's the next mountain? What's the next adventure He has for us?" And there's one that's emerged. It's taken time. In fact, it's something that's taken almost three years to come into focus.

It started to come into focus when we first came into this building, and we began to commit ourselves to be a people who would extend God's grace, once conversation at a time, in this community. It's become finer and finer focused as we studies through the scriptures the past two-and-a-half years, until we're zeroed in and we've got one major adventure we want to put in front of us, another mountain that we wanna go after, another peak we wanna climb because we feel God's calling us to it.

We're simply calling it this, entitling it this way: 1000 Days of Witness. A thousand days of witness...a thousand days, beginning April 5, 2009 and running through December 31, 2011; a thousand days in which, every day, this congregation will arise and enter into the day with a focused desire to give witness to the mystery, the wonder, and the glory of Jesus, in all our varied circumstances and conditions—a thousand days. We're not talking here about a passing impulse. We're not talking here about a motivational moment. We're not talking here about a rally event. We're talking about a thousand days of Spirit-sustained commitment to recognize and to respond to every opportunity He gives for us to tell His story and speak His name, in all our varied circumstances and conditions.

For some of us that may be on the national, even international, scope. And never again will I doubt that after this past fall. For some of us it will never go beyond a private conversation with family and friend. For some of us it'll be a moment of success, it'll be a time of victory. For others of us that witness will be a time of defeat, and darkness, and crisis. Whatever. The sustained commitment to give testimony to the reality of Jesus Christ in all our varied circumstances, in all our varied conditions.

It's nothing new. This is something that is simply an outworking of our desire to extend God's grace. It's simply where that desire ultimately takes us, because we have not fully extended God's grace until we have borne witness, we have given testimony, to the reality of Jesus Christ. This is simply being deliberate and diligent to following through on that.

What will be the result? A thousand days of witness...a thousand days of us simply getting up each day with a Spirit-sustained commitment to speak the reality of Jesus whenever He gives the opportunity. What will be the result? Can't predict. If the book of Acts is any indication, it may be an inrushing of people that would overwhelm us; or it may be a mob outside throwing rocks at us; or it could be both. It's not our responsibility, the results; it's enough for us to simply answer to His call upon us and—I can't say it strongly enough—give voice to His Spirit within us.

I think we're in for an adventure. I think it's going to be a glorious one. In fact, I am strangely settled about it. I really am. At a time when we are facing an historic election, at a time when our economy is in an unprecedented state worldwide, I am totally at peace and settled about what we're called to do and say next. And whatever the political tide may be this week, whatever happens in terms of the turbulence of the economy, nothing changes as to what we're called to be and to do. The agenda does not change. I have a compelling clarity about this. It is simply for us to answer His call and give voice to His Spirit, and tell the story of Jesus and speak His name in all our conditions, in all our circumstances.

As any adventure, any project, I get excited about bein' up there where the view's grand, right on the edge of the venture where the experience is constant. Reality...most of the adventure is like this [shows slide of cross-country skier slogging along]—routine and repeated. The six young men that were on that trip put in 150 miles like this, with 80-pound packs on their back. It's routine, it's repeated. But over the past three years we've learned little steps repeated with our God, little steps taken in faith—it's amazing what He does and where He takes us.

We're gonna prepare this, and we're gonna set it well. We've learned that these past years. And so we're gonna take all the way until April to prepare for this. And then we're gonna launch it, and we know it's just gonna be...it's gonna be the challenge of going through, day by day, a thousand days of what he calls us to. The wonder and the glory is that He'll be with us in it.

We're gonna close with two of those repeated, routine steps of faith. We're gonna take our offering like we do every week. The ushers are gonna come forward, we're gonna pray, and we're gonna continue to take that step of extending God's grace financially. After that offering...the choir will be singing as we take the offering...the men can come forward at this time, by the way, if they'll come forward...after the prayer we're gonna stand and we're gonna pray a song. And it's a song of commitment on our part. It's the closing song of the morning. It's a prayer that God would work in us and through us to build His church. Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven,

We thank You so much for the way You work, astounded at how You're with us. Father, we're excited when we look to the future and what You have for us. Father, our prayer and our petition is as we continue to take the steps of faith You've taught us, that You would guide us in it with diligence, discipline and direction, in such a way that not only will we give witness to the reality of Jesus, but our witness will be heard.

In His name we pray, amen.