

# 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Celebration, the Summit Church // Feb 11–12, 2012

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(Stop. Psalm 115:1) Happy 10<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary, everybody.

- In 1 Samuel 7 God had given Israel a great victory over the attacking Philistine armies. It says, “the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day and gave a great victory” so Samuel (1 Samuel 7:12 says), took a stone and set it up and called it an Ebenezer; which meant, “Up until now God has helped us.” It was to be a reminder to them of the faithfulness of God; that God would work when they believed Him.
- That’s what we are doing today; we’re going to put a big marker in the ground that says, “We remember that God has helped us; this is what He is willing to do when we let Him.”

10 years ago on a Sunday night about this same time of year I stood in front of a group of about 300 faithful members of the Homestead Heights Baptist Church and challenged them to do 2 things:

- to prioritize the mission over their preferences;
- and, to do whatever it took to reach and bless our community.

We laid everything on the table, including name of the church(which is how we became the Summit Church) and even our facility, which is how we got here from North Durham.

We asked people to dream big and then lay it all on the line.

- Our first big God-sized goal was having 1000 people at Easter. That seemed completely undoable.

We also asked people to give: because we knew that in order to make the changes to reach out to people we needed about 60K extra dollars.

That Easter Sunday, we all held our breath... and had 1122 in worship, and we’d taken in over \$80K above budget.

On an occasion like this, I always think first of that original group; those stallions of faith... because their first act of selflessness and faith got us here. Some are no longer with us; some have gone on to be with Jesus. STAND (Many of you are here; many of you are saved, because *they* believed).

They did all that because they believed in this mission.

This past Sunday we baptized 305, more than the size of that original group, on a single weekend.

It makes me laugh because people for years have been telling us we couldn’t do this.

- I remember when we announced 1000... no way!
- **The religion editor** of the Durham paper did an article on us shortly after this first explosion and she asked me what the long-term vision of the church was because, she said, “You can’t keep growing like this.” I said, “Why not?” Churches in Durham never get above 1000. I’ve been in Durham all my life and that’s just how churches are. Flo, we’ve got 7000 here this weekend. BOOM ROASTED
- When we went multi-campus, they told us it wouldn’t work. People won’t do that. One guy told me, “If they do work, you’ll only reach bored Christians from other churches with that approach.”
  - This weekend more people will watch me on video than will hear me live. Our newest campus, the Cary campus, last week had 800 and baptized 47.

- And get this: our campuses last week had a higher percentage baptism rate than our live campus here did, which means they are more effective, evangelistically, than our Brier Creek campus. BOOM: ROASTED.
- I told our NDC that they reminded me of the **bumblebee** that some aeronautical engineer expert guy had proven, scientifically, that a bumblebee is unable to fly (their wing size is too small; body weight too big). Meanwhile the bumblebee, oblivious to the research, went ride ahead and flew.

The Holy Spirit has a way, I've learned, of "signing" certain things He does.

- We did not intentionally plan this past weekend's baptisms to fall right before our 10th anniversary. We certainly had no idea we'd baptize 300 (305). That's just the Holy Spirit's signature.
- **I asked them this week to get me a number of how many people we've sent out to go on missions**—by that, I'm not talking about a short term trip. I'm talking about a year or more assignment. "Little hard to count. Some people don't tell us when they go with a group like Campus Crusade or Pioneers... but our most conservative guess would be 250 international; and 50 in a domestic church plants." I was like, "250 + 50 = 300. Are you kidding me?"
- We didn't plan any of that... **I think God just does stuff like that because He wants us to reflect on what He has done when we believe Him and put what we have in His hands.** These are our 5 loaves and two fishes. He is a God able to save and willing to save. The limitation is never in His compassion or power; the limitation is always only in our willingness to believe, and take a dare, on those things.

In the past 12 months, we have baptized over 900, which is more than 3x the size of that original group. The individual stories I continue to hear from those who make up that 900 make me want to weep. Whole families being baptized together. A newly saved

girl at our church bringing her mother to be baptized. International students bringing friends. Former Mormons. Former Muslims. Ex- and current prisoners (one on Sunday who uses his 2 hour supervised leave to come to our church). Neighbors. Sons, daughters, husbands, and parents.

A month ago we were able to commission another team to go and live among an unreached people group.

- What made that group special is that it consisted of 8 recent college graduates, 7 of whom were saved and baptized at our church. When they came to college here in the Triangle they were not Christians and now have left RDU not only as Christians but missionaries.
- On Thursday night I welcomed onto our staff as full time interns **14 college seniors**; they are committing to raise their own support and be here, on our staff, for 3 years to help us reach college students... here is the thing: all of whom were saved and baptized at our church in the last 4 years. They were going around giving their testimonies and I finally interrupted them and said, "How many of you were saved and baptized here?" Every single one raised their hand. I almost spoke in tongues.
- **Last year we were able to give away, in one year, \$1.7 million to missions.** When we asked for that extra money some people said, "We should give it to missions or pay off the debt." I told them that if we do this, the time will come when we 10x that amount away. In the last year we gave away 30x that original offering. BOOM: ROASTED.
- In our 10 year history we have given away over 8 million.

God really has done exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or imagine.

So, I want us to re-commit ourselves this weekend to two things that characterized that original group. Both of them are in what we now call the "**Gospel prayer**." (BTW, you may not have been able to be a part of that launch 10 years ago, but God has brought you here, now, and you get to be a part this next chapter.)

***“As You have been to me, so I will be to others.”***

I want us to recommit ourselves to doing whatever it takes to reach people locally and globally.

- That means laying it all on the table again. What else needs to change in the years to come? By God’s grace, we will continue to be uncomfortable; to second our personal preferences to the mission.
- And we’re going to continue to give crazy amounts of money away.
  - Read this week that based on a survey of 28 different denominations, the average church gives only **\$.02** of every dollar away to missions;
  - Our percentage last year was about 20%. But even that’s not enough. We’ll continue to give more. We’re serious about **planting 1000 churches**.
  - We will continue to develop ministries to the **HOPUD**. Not because they help us reach our bottom line but because that’s who Jesus came for and who He gave His life to reach.
- ***As You have been to me, so I will be to others.*** This means also that each us needs to, again, joyfully embrace a cross of sacrifice for the salvation of others, just like Jesus embraced one for us.
- In many ways, we are in the same place we were 10 years ago. We’ve got this stuff we feel like God wants us to do, but we don’t have the money in hand to do it.
  - We believe God wants us to improve the video quality experience at our campuses—more people will watch me on video than will hear me live; human that preaches the word
  - We believe God wants us to start a campus in CH
  - We need to expand Brier Creek; develop kids worship facilities
  - N Ral is starting a 3<sup>rd</sup> service this week, and they need some facility attention

- Our SEE is blowing up and we need to construct a facility for them (and by them, I mean us, because they are a part of us and they are giving to all this too)
- Here’s the thing. We believe God wants us to do all this, and we don’t have the money in hand to do any of that.
- **We just finished a capital campaign**, called Believe—where we took in 4 million dollars; and we don’t have another one planned until this Fall; but these are things we believe we need to do right now.
  - You say, “What did you do with all the cap campaign money?—4 million. 800 people this weekend at our Cary campus know; 150 at our SEE know; the 900 at BC South know; 750 at NRal know; and the 305 people that got baptized last week know what we did with that money.
  - BOOM ROASTED.
- **I figured this out...** 300 people gave 80K (\$266/per person); if 6K (1000 deadbeats and freeloaders). If we gave at the same rate, that would be 1.5 million. Which would be enough to do this.
- Summit, could we do that? Not a special fund, just a general increase in giving for the next few months? Not just for you; make sure you give an extra \$266 for your wife and each kid.
- And somebody in here may write a check for \$500,000 or \$1,000,000. If that happens, we’ll just do all this more quickly and launch more campuses. I’ve prayed for 3 of you guys to do something like that.

***“As I pray, I’ll measure Your compassion by the cross and Your power by the resurrection.”***

Summit, I want us boldly to ask for more.

- When we experience great grace, we have a tendency to think that we probably shouldn’t ask for a lot more, because we don’t want to impose upon God. That’s

certainly how we relate to other people--if someone gives you a huge, expensive gift, you don't turn around and ask them for something else.

- But that's not how God works. God's past grace is a promise of future grace. Read this week that David's prayers in the Psalms can be summarized as him reflecting on God's acts in the past, His promises for the future, and asking Him to bring that power into the present.<sup>1</sup>
- We are supposed to taste of the grace He's given us and ask for more, not less.
- Because we are not asking for ourselves (though that is not bad, either), we are asking for the sake of God's great name in the earth and for the sake of lost people.
- Like Solomon, we are asking that God "make us great" for the sake of "this great people."<sup>2</sup>
- **Psalm 2:8**, (In this Psalm the Father, God, is speaking to His Son, Jesus, and He says) *"Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance."*
- ~~Alexander the Great/prayer "Thou art coming to a King, So with thee large petitions bring For his grace and power are such, That none can ever ask too much" John Newton, "Come My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare"~~

So, this weekend, we stop to say "Thank you." **Like the leper who was healed of his leprosy**, we return to thank Him... for our salvation, for the salvation of our children; our friends; for letting us be a part of this movement and this church. For thank Him for one another.

**And we place in the ground an Ebenezer.** "Hitherto the Lord has helped us." And may this Ebenezer be a reminder boldly to ask for more.

(It is a time for us again to presume upon God's grace and ask for even more, for the sake of His great name and the lost.)

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Psalm 86:9. Christopher J.H. Wright, *Mission of God*, 234

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 3:8-9; Psalm 72:1-2

Guys, on a personal level, I'll tell you that I've been here for 10 years. It's been wonderful.

I told you guys I want to, and plan to, spend my whole life here. I want to preach my own funeral sermon at this church, step off the stage, crawl in the casket, shut the lid, and greet Jesus.

- Chris Gaynor will lead the worship at my funeral; he'll be about 120 at that point.
- I figure I can preach here until I'm about 68. I used to not think you could hold an audience's attention for very long when you were that age, but my friend Tim Keller is in his 60's and he's pulling it off.
- So, if that's true, I started at 28, I'm 38 now, I'm going to 68, that means we just finished the first quarter. And so we've got, Lord-willing, 3 more quarters to go.
- And everybody knows Christians do best in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Right, Tebow? That's when Jesus shows up to help Christian teams. BOOM: ROASTED.

Stand, at all of our campuses, and we are going to sing, in unison, as a church, a great old hymn, "COME THOU FOUNT"

Pray... we're not having a long prayer meeting. That's going to be on Monday night, Feb 27, and I want you ALL to be there... but stand now... tell God thank you, and ask Him for more.