

Announcements:

1. Women's Coffee talk @ 3pm
2. Painting starts Tuesday
 1. help with chairs
3. New Years Eve 6-9pm
 1. Snack
 2. Drinks
4. Evan-
 1. Saturday: book study, breakfast, Board with Evan
 2. potluck Jan 3
 1. Soup and grilled cheese
 2. Sunday School and AWANA's stay an extra 30 to talk with Evan

Lessons Learned:2020

Psalm 86:11

This has been a long year. It's been a long year of the unknown, chaos, hardship, challenge, ingenuity, change, division, what if's, last minute changes, loss, frustration, and more. But, I will also tell you this: It has been a year of God moving, God loving, God freeing, God preparing, and God teaching. This was supposed to be a year of normal challenges for me, but it ended up being a year of most things being an inconvenience to absolutely upside down. But, one thing has remained. God is the same today, as He was last year, and the previous years, and He will be the same in 2021, as He will be in eternity.

I started out the year with hopes and plans for doing all kinds of things alongside you trying to reach our community. I was hopeful that we could make the name of Glide Baptist known in the community because of our love for God and love for others so that others could experience the same satisfying love we have experienced. And that is what God did, but in a totally different way than I imagined. And as God often does when He is running the show, does it in a much more grand, far reaching way. Solomon in Proverbs 16:9 said it so well, "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps."

The desire was to get our name out in the community so that we could be a safe place. The desire was to be a conduit of God's love. The desire

was for people to feel safety here and peace, to experience hope and joy, feel cared about and valued. The desire was to meet needs. The desire was to see new kids come to AWANA's. The desire was to reach out to more people. We wanted to be used by God, for God, and because of it, see other people experience God. The desire was for us to have practical ways to love God and love others. Psalm 37:4 says, "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Because of unrest and the unknown, we have been a place of normalcy, care, and prayer.

Because of the shutdowns due to COVID and having to make an online presence with our church service for those that couldn't come, we have 50 subscribers to the youtube channel, and anywhere between 30 and 200 views for each church service. That is anywhere from 80-250 people in some way are part of each church service. Some of those viewers are not single people watching, but married couples and families, so the numbers could be higher. Our footprint has widened tremendously and we are reaching many more.

Because of the fire, we were able to meet needs by giving clothes, gift cards, travel trailers, housewares, and more. Glide Baptist became a hub for many early on after the fire started. It became a place to send donations to and it became a place to come get help from. Many that came through were the hurting. Some were nobodies. Some simply needed to know that it will be okay.

Matthew 25:34-40 says,

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

Because of the possibility to give online, people from out of state were able to give immediately to meet some of the fire needs. Another way being forced to having an online presence was used by God. Along with those donations and the donations given here in person, we have been able to help people in tremendous ways.

Because of students being forced to do distance learning, we were able to serve 9 families and shower them with healthy discipline, help with school work which will effect them for the future, love them, give them human interaction, and give them something to look forward too throughout the day. All the things that kids miss when doing school at home on Zoom. Not too mention helping the parents by giving them some peace of mind as they were at work. One kid asked for a Bible. Some others came to AWANA's with sibling.

Let me read those two verses again:

Proverbs 16:9 "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps."

Psalms 37:4 "Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."

I want us to all hear, all those things I just mentioned would not have happened if we weren't willing to follow where God was taking us. It meant sacrificing free time, being tired, and putting off getting stuff done for ourselves. For me, it meant learning new skills, being stretched thin, and trusting God through those times of tiredness and unknown. But, it was worth it. And I believe wholeheartedly that God is not done. There is more work to be done, but the door has been opened. When God's people are faithful and willing, God moves.

One of the things learned this year is to **be willing to go wherever God leads**. It isn't always easy, but God does great things and moves in bigger ways than expected when we are willing.

None of this year caught God by surprise. God is faithful. God is trustworthy. I do believe this year was a year that brought tears and sadness in God's heart because of all the division and anger and destruction due to the riots that seemingly started because of George Floyd's death and the polarizing of a nation due to the election. But, I very

much believe it brought joy and excitement to God, also! You didn't hear much about this on the news, but there was a mini revival in Minneapolis shortly after the riots from George Floyd's death. People came to know the Lord and people were being baptized in the street. In many of the cities across the nation where riots occurred there were mini revivals. People came together in the name of Jesus for prayer, singing, and reading of scripture. People received Jesus as their savior. God was restoring lives in the midst of sheer chaos. God was using that sheer chaos, unrest, and division to reveal our great need for Him.

God is trustworthy, so we can have hope that in the end, it works out. God is trustworthy, so we can have hope that God will use what is going on around us for our good and the good of others. God is trustworthy, so we can choose hope.

God is faithful so we can choose joy. We can choose to be thankful, because He is still pouring out blessings upon us, and He is still at work in the midst of chaos. God is faithful to bring intense moments of joy because He promises that joy comes in the morning, and it does. We will go through hard times, we will experience pain. But, God promises for those that seek Him and trust Him, He will bring peace.

As Paul says, in Philippians 4:4-9,

“Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

This has been a year of unsettledness, challenge, tiredness, learning, surrendering, failure...and a reminder that **God is faithful.**

If I were to say there were times I didn't feel like being considerate of others and instead wanted what was easy for me, I would be lying. If I were to say there were times I was not anxious, I would be lying. If I were to say there were times I did not feel overwhelmed, I would be lying. If I were to say that I never got consumed with the frustration that this year brought, I would be lying. But, when I chose joy in the Lord and to bring things to Him in prayer, it was amazing the attitude change in my heart. It was amazing the renewed strength that filled my mind and my bones. It was amazing to have eyes opened and see the great things God was doing.

When I chose to rejoice in what God was doing instead of what I was losing or missing out on, peace settled in my heart. It matters what we fix our thoughts on. I didn't ignore that it was hard. I acknowledged what was lost. I acknowledged the fears that came with it all. But, when I chose not to dwell upon those things and instead dwell upon "what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable." and chose to "Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise," and seek to put "into practice all you learned" that was from God, I saw God at work. I was able to see the God of peace with me. I experienced His presence with me. I was able to experience the peace of God, that peace that reassures me that it will be ok, because He is a God that is trustworthy.

We have heard many times this year to trust science and our government leaders and our medical community. But, within all three of those are conflicting ideas and reports. Which ones do you believe? The news media gives us the news, but is it truthful or manipulated or partial? What do we believe? So how do we know what to do? Who do we trust? So many things in this world are not trustworthy, but our God is. He is unchanging. He is faithful. He doesn't manufacture the story. He gives us the truth, because in Him is only the truth. So what are we to do? Be really good at doing the little things that God requires and give Him room to work out the big things. Be responsible for only what you can be responsible for. As Paul said, "put into practice what you have learned."

There are so many things competing for our time, attention, thinking, and allegiance. And then you add to it the chaos of all the reports that say one thing and all the reports that say the opposite, our hearts are divided, our thinking is confused, and our actions one minute feel productive, the next

futile. We are people that need healthy human interaction and touch, but there is just something wrong with how all this is being dealt with and it is having a toll upon the mental health of people. We are not meant to live in fear and chaos. So what do we do? Love God and love others. Keep it simple. Focus on doing those two things and do them well. Leave the rest to God to work out. As you do life, as you make decisions, as you choose to wear a mask or not, as you zoom or not, as you work or not, do all that you do heartily as for the Lord and not for man. Do it in such a way as to bring attention to God's mercy, justice, love, and truth.

The third thing God is teaching me this year is to have an **undivided heart**.

Be undivided in your heart as to whom you are serving and why. Be undivided in your heart as to what you are going to make known and reveal to others. What do I mean by being undivided in your heart? Fix your thoughts upon the things of God and worship Him and get your mind away from futile thoughts. What are futile thoughts? Thoughts that suppresses the truth. Thoughts that draws us away from the truth. Thoughts that are morally corrupt or inept.

How do we refute futile thoughts? Fix your thoughts upon what is godly. Ingest and digest scripture. As we are told in Joshua 1:8, 'meditate upon it'. Romans 1:21 infers we need to honor God. Romans 12:2 says, "Don't copy the behaviors and customs of the world, but let God [through His word and the Holy Spirit] transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." Futile thoughts move us away from God and thoughts about godly things move us towards God and help us to glorify God.

Is that TV show pushing you towards futile thinking or godly thinking? Is the music you listen to pushing you towards futile thinking or godly thinking? Does the book you are reading, the news article, the Facebook group your a part of, the friend group you give right to influence you push you towards futile thinking or godly thinking?

What is God teaching you this year? Are you looking for it? Are you willing to see it even? Is your heart divided so you are having a hard time seeing what God is teaching you?

David's prayer in Psalm 86 is very pertinent to our situation today. He speaks of God's faithfulness, His greatness, it acknowledges our need for

Him, and how He responds. But verses 11-13 are very practical, speak of the direction our heart needs to go, and what our response must be.

Psalm 86:11-13 “Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor You. With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God. I will give glory to your name forever, for your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of [everlasting] death.”

May our hearts be open, pliable, teachable, and ready to receive what God is teaching us.

“Teach me your ways”—gain knowledge

“that I may live according to your truth”—putting into practice the things we have learned

“Grant me purity of heart”—also translated an ‘undivided heart’. God works in us. God transforms us through His word and the work of His Spirit in us.

“So that I may honor You”—bring glory to God, a glory that is seen through our lives and reveals God. They see Jesus in us and they experience Jesus through us.