

Sharing My Vision and My Thoughts about Moving into Calvary's Future

Text: Joshua 1:6-9

Reviewing the process

Good morning, Calvary. At our Sunday morning service this past week and in an email to our church members last week, Pastor Steve spoke about the transitions that are happening in our world, in his life, and in our church. For more than a year, Pastor Steve has sensed the Lord calling him to embrace a prophetic ministry aimed at building strong churches and strong believers. The Lord has put an urgency within his heart to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

In order to focus fully on this task, Pastor Steve is going to step down as senior pastor here at Calvary. Pastor Steve and I have been discussing and praying into this transition for more than a year. In January we put together what we call the Future Casting Task Force. This task force is made up of our ministry staff, elders, and three deacon representatives.

We have been praying and working toward two main objectives:

1. To release and support Pastor Steve so that he fully surrenders to God's call to serve as a prophetic voice awakening the church and calling her to her destiny as the Bride of Christ.
2. To take intentional steps in order for us at Calvary to live into our inheritance, to step into our promised land (promises, prophetic words, and purposes of the Lord for Calvary), and to possess our inheritance (God's part and our part).
3. Note: We want to be clear in saying it again-- Pastor Steve is not leaving Calvary Community Church. Rather, he is changing roles.

Reviewing our changing roles

To accomplish these two goals, the Task Force sought the Lord and came to the conviction that Pastor Steve needed to move into a new role, and that I was to step into the senior pastor role here at Calvary.

At this time, Pastor Steve's new role at Calvary is being referred to as "Prophetic Elder." While that might change, it gives us a working title that helps to identify his calling.

Along the way, we have shared our process and convictions with the deacons and the ministry leaders. They have affirmed this journey.

Last Sunday, Pastor Steve shared about our process and convictions regarding our transitions with you, the church family. He shared about his calling and his new role.

Today, I have been asked to share with you my vision and my thoughts about where I see us heading as a congregation.

Making the Starting Point Clear

I think we need to be crystal clear about **why we are here: The Why.**

1. To release and support Pastor Steve so that he can do what the Lord has put in him to do.
2. To take intentional steps in order for us at Calvary to live into our inheritance, to step into our promised land (promises, prophetic words, and purposes of the Lord for Calvary), and to possess our inheritance (God's part and our part).

Sharing about My Calling

1. **Journal entry: take on the mantle of Joshua 2'26'92**
 - a. *Context: I was spending time with the Lord, and had just asked to see the Lord and to hear his voice. (On Wednesday, February 26, before Peter Wagner spoke on Saturday, February 29.)*
 - b. *Impression which came during my prayer time*
 - i. *I thought the following impression came to me from the Lord: **"Take on the mantle of Joshua, because it will happen at Calvary."***
 - c. *Implications which I wrote down that day:*
 - i. *This experience reconfirms that God's voice or way of speaking to me is with impressions.*
 - ii. *Sometimes, I fail to discern it is God because he uses my own inner voice and inner pictures.*
 - iii. *More and more, I am growing in confidence that these impressions are really from God.*
 - iv. *For some reason, Joshua chapter 1 came to mind. Spending time with walking beside Steve, like Joshua would with Moses, also came to mind.*
 - d. *Reading Joshua 1. What is the mantle of Joshua?*
 - i. *What is the mantle of Joshua, as recorded in Joshua 1?*
 - (1) *"You will lead these people (the Israelites) to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them" (Joshua 1:6).*
 - (2) *The mantle seems to be leadership, to lead the people of God to the experiential fulfillment of the promises God has made.*

- ii. God is looking for a generation of people who will take him at his word and possess the land which he has promised.
 - (1) Forty years before, the people of Israel stood before the Jordan River. That generation had a chance to enter into the promised land. Some of them even went into the land and brought back first-fruits of that which God promised. But, they failed to mix the promises of God with faith (see Hebrews 3:12 ff). "To whom much is given, much is required." Their fear and unwillingness cost a generation forty years of wandering in the wilderness.
 - (2) In Joshua's day, a new generation stood on the banks of the Jordan River. It was their chance to fulfill the promises of God.

- e. *The following implication came to my mind as I read verse six:*
 - i. *I will lead out in possessing the promises which God has made to Steve and others— future?*
 - ii. *CBC is actually anointed to [help] lead the church in Houston into possessing the promises about Houston which God has made.*
 - iii. Calvary, God is looking for a people who will take him at his word and take possession of the land which he has promised to them. God is looking for a people who will take the lead. We have wandered in the wilderness, are facing a "Jordan River," and need to go in and possess what God has promised.

- f. *Responsibilities or important things [prerequisites] required [to fulfill in order] to carry out the mantle:*

NOTE: To be chosen for leadership is not a position of exaltation but of servanthood and sacrifice. The people of Israel were God's chosen people. Rather than making them simply a recipient of blessing, such choosing carries incredible responsibility.

- i. *Be strong and courageous, because God chooses who will help complete what he has started (Joshua 1:6). Our courage and strength are rooted in the promises and provision of God.*
- ii. *Be careful to obey the Word (of God as recorded in Bible and word through our Moses = Steve), refusing to be distracted, and you will have success (Joshua 1:7-8).*
 - (1) The law which Moses gave was not a legal code. Rather, it was all about intimacy with God, about knowing God. Moses told the people to love God with every fiber of their being. Joshua was told to meditate day and night on the book of the law; not the legal code, but on the law of love and intimacy with the Lord.

- (2) *And what is the word of Moses / Steve [our leaders (especially Pastor Steve)]? It is intimacy with God; loving the Lord our God with every part of our being. The Lord is telling us to meditate day and night on the book of the law; not the legal code, but on the law of love and intimacy with the Lord.*
- iii. *Do not yield to fear or discouragement, for God has promised his presence to us (Joshua 1:9). His word is our confidence: "Have I not commanded you?" (Or, have I not spoken to you?)*
- (1) God's presence and present word are what engender faith in us.
- (2) *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by what? The message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).*
- (3) *We can have strength and courage because:*
- (a) *God will fulfill his promises to our forefathers.*
- (b) *God will bless those people who are consumed with the law of intimacy and love.*
- (c) *God will provide his presence, not just his provisions, to us wherever we go. That includes places of victory like Jericho, or places of defeat like Ai.*
- g. **A dream of confirmation 2/27/92**
- i. On Wednesday night, I asked the Lord to speak to me and confirm this word in a dream.
- ii. That night (Feb. 27, '92) I dreamed that John Foster, Tammy, and I were helping Paul Cain as he spoke to a gathering of people in a large city in the downtown area.
- iii. **As he spoke, he began to prophesy. Paul said that the word of the Lord for the moment was this: Take on the mantle of Joshua.**
- iv. I was very excited about what he said. After he finished speaking, I told Paul that I had a similar word. I tried to reflect to him that I thought it meant something about leadership, but I was unsure as to the timing.
- v. Unfortunately, Paul got into a car with a friend as he was answering my questions. He was in a hurry to do some other things. And the radio, which was set to a Christian radio station, was so loud that I could not hear Paul's responses. Then, Paul and his friend drove off.
- vi. I was excited that the word I received was confirmed. But I still knew very little about the accuracy of my interpretation or application.
- h. **Paul Cain, Houston Leadership Conference, Joshua word 4'23'92**
- i. Paul Cain was ministering at the Houston Leadership Conference. He called out Jeff and Tammy. Here is transcript of what Paul said:
- ii. Jeff

- (1) Aggressiveness in you, could discern this in the natural. There is an aggressive spirit in you... but let me say what this means.
- (2) The Holy Spirit has baptized that natural drive with the supernatural.
- (3) You are not going to be able to see past the Joshua Generation. **The Lord told me Joshua means something very special to you.**
- (4) The HS has made Joshua your hero: Joshua and Caleb.
- (5) The Lord is going to give you the anointing to communicate your convictions about this army and about what Joshua 1 and the vision for possessing the land and for taking the land for God and Christ really means.
- (6) The Lord will continue to anoint and stabilize this aggression of the HS.
- (7) See you both (Tammy and Jeff) moving in this.

2. **Journal entry: Joshua Generation Encounter at Prayerquake 2016 1'14'16**

- a. Thursday morning
 - i. Context: Notes taken from Global Prayerquake 2016
 - ii. Thursday, 8:30am, just outside Port Harcourt, Nigeria, 1-14-16
- b. The sermon that morning was about the place of obedience and sacrifice in the season of the horseman
 - i. *If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? (Jeremiah 12:5).*
 - ii. Main point: God will use anyone willing and available.
 - iii. *1 Samuel 15: 22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*
 - iv. It is not painful if you sacrifice, but don't have your heart engaged.
 - v. It is a sacrifice when you lay down your dreams and hopes. When obedience costs much.
 - vi. Some people obey, but they don't lay it down willingly.
 - vii. To ride the horses, we must live according to the law of Liberty.
 - viii. Obey God's word and stop disobeying scripture. If you disobey one command, it becomes easier to disobey other commands.
- c. **Journal entry:** Interesting. **It just hit me. The speaker is talking about the season of the horsemen. But the Lord is speaking to me about my journey and this season for my life and Calvary.**
 - i. **Prophetic time table. I am here at Gilgal.** (That is the name of Rev. Mosy Madugba's International Conference Center.)
 - (1) **It is the place of memorial, sanctification, circumcision of heart, recovery, and launching to take the promised land.**
 - (2) Timing: wow! I am here, as one to whom God has spoken to from the life and book of Joshua. It is not a coincidence that I am here and we are talking about transition for Steve and me.

- ii. Confirmation: this conference is a divine appointment of confirmation. Wow!
 - (1) Confirming the transformation from Moses to Joshua, from Steve to Jeff.
 - (2) Confirming that God will give his vision and strategy for taking the land. Do not be afraid. Do not fear.
 - (3) Confirming that we will possess our inheritance. Listen well. Obey well.
- iii. **I feel like I am living into a prophetic word from years ago, a word confirmed 24 years ago, a word which awaited its appointed time. The Joshua generation is part of my calling.**

Sharing about My Vision

1. **What opportunities lie before CCC?**
 - a. **Here are three things people are looking for, and Calvary, we offer ways to meet these needs:**
 - i. Encounter / experience
 - ii. Transformation / change
 - iii. Belonging / connection
 - b. **What our culture needs is who we are as a congregation:**
 - i. **Helping people connect with the Lord:** intimacy, awareness, reflection; spiritual formation (without falling into ditches)
 - ii. **Helping people grow in experiencing true Christian community:** authentic relationships (open, honest); transparency; caring for and being cared for. The world is hungry for real connection. Much of this generation's efforts at genuine community are shallow.
 - iii. **Helping people extend the kingdom of God** (shalom; wholeness): people need a vision of what the Lord is doing; people need encouragement to partner with the Lord in their sectors and spheres of responsibility; people need skills for getting into action; people need to be invited to radical obedience to the Lord that makes a difference; people need to develop skills and effective practices for missional living (dialogue; dealing with anxiety; etc.); scope: in all the sectors of society
 - c. **Our vision has captured my heart and life. I love our vision of intimacy, community, and kingdom.**
 - i. I believe that our vision is actually a mental model of transformation. The Lord uses all three parts of our vision as a way to transform our lives.
 - ii. I have been learning and practicing skills and concepts that take our vision to new levels of intentionality.

- iii. We need to continue to find ways to express our DNA as a congregation.
 - (1) Like the 60/60 model: helping us to live in the discipline of awareness
 - (2) Like the kingdom application: *How can I pray for you?* This is an expression of our DNA in sharing the heart of God in the midst of community and hearing God.
 - (3) Like the Prayer Room: it is an expression of our DNA and calling to worship and intercession.

Here is what we know:

1. **Vision is both clear and hazy.**
 - a. We see clearly where we are to go and what we are to do.
 - b. And, getting there is not so clear cut, because there are lots of unknowns. But, the Lord knows the way and he is a great leader.
2. **Change is messy.**
 - a. We are building the bridge as we go. So, there is a lot of learning.
 - b. The Lord is shaking everything that can be shaken so that he can give us his unshakable kingdom (Hebrews 12:25-28). That is messy.
3. **People process change differently.**
 - a. Some people love change. "Bring it on," they say.
 - b. For other people, any type of change is difficult. As one person recently said, "This sounds right. But, I just hate change. Period."
 - c. Change can stir up our emotions. We can feel sad or grieved or loss. And, such emotions are normal.
4. We know that we have a long history together, and with the Lord's help we can make this transition and change.
5. We know that people will have questions. That is good.
6. We know that some things won't change (vision, values). And, we know some things will change (leadership style, preaching schedule, etc.).
7. We don't know the details of what it looks like to partner with Pastor Steve in his new calling. And, we know Calvary has a significant part to play.

Here are our next steps:

1. We will have a **Town Hall** meeting on Wednesday, May 17, from 7:00 to 8:30, in the Prayer Room at Calvary.
 - a. This will be a time of questions and answers concerning this transition and its implications for the life of Calvary.
 - b. **We want to encourage you to come to that meeting.**
 - c. In addition to addressing questions, we will share additional information about the transition. You are welcome to email your questions to us ahead of the Town Hall meeting.
 - d. Send your questions to email@calvaryhouston.com.
 - e. Kid Care is available that night.
2. Following our bylaws, we are required to take a **vote of church members** (age 16 and older) concerning the change of a senior pastor.
 - a. This vote will occur on Sunday morning, June 4.
3. After the results of our vote, **our next steps will be two-fold:** (Some of these events are not yet calendared but will occur soon.)
 - a. We will have a time of receiving, affirming, and commissioning Steve into his prophetic office and work.
 - b. We will publically celebrate Pastor Steve and Sehoys 33 years of ministry, teaching, and serving at Calvary.