



# *Exceedingly Abundant*



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Now to **Him** who is able to do  
**far more abundantly** than  
all that we ask or think,  
according to the power at  
work **within us**, to **Him** be  
glory in the church and in  
Christ Jesus **throughout all**  
**generations**, forever and  
ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21



Throughout the process of creating this resource, our focus has been on God's faithfulness. From the scriptures and theme to design and layout, every detail serves as a reminder of the wondrous works of our faithful God, both in history and to us. Consider the story of God's covenant with Abraham and the picture it provides for us of God's **abundant goodness** and grace.

*And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Genesis 15:5*

God is not bound by our limitations. Just as He used creation to display His lavish promises to Abraham, we hope the resource you hold in your hands reminds you of the many ways God has **exceeded your expectations** all the days of your life. May you and your family experience joy and peace as you recount God's faithfulness in your life and in the life of Bethel Bible Church.





# Letter from Ross Strader

Senior Pastor

*It was May 30, 1982, when 37 people* entered the People's Bank Building in Downtown Tyler with a hopeful and energetic commitment to make Christ known in this community and around the world by the clear and practical teaching of God's Word.

That was the morning that Bethel Bible Church began the journey that can only be described as *far more abundantly than they could possibly imagine*.

That is the way the Apostle Paul describes it when he prays for the Ephesian church at the end of chapter 3.

*"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."* (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Here are a few other ways we see that phrase translated:

*"... exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (KJV)*

*"...immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (NIV)*

*"... infinitely more than we might ask or think" (NLT)*

*"... far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!" (MSG)*

Since that Sunday morning 40 years ago, this church has gathered every week (that's over 2000 Sundays!) to exalt Jesus, love others, and hear from God's Word. I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful for the handful of families that took the risk to follow the leading of the Spirit to plant this church. I'm thankful for the generations of elders, deacons,

and ministry leaders that have served this church all these years.

Now here we are in 2022, on the threshold of *the next 40 years of Bethel Bible Church*. We are in a different place than we were in 1982. We are in a different place than we were eight years ago when we launched the multi-site strategy. We're now meeting as one church in five locations around East Texas, invested in our communities like never before. I find myself thankful, excited, and full of hope for the *exceedingly more than we can possibly imagine* that God has planned for this church in the decades ahead.

Each of us has traveled a journey that has led us to this point in Bethel's history. God has moved in our lives and continues to ordain our steps. And in this time and for this season, He has knit us together - brothers and sisters in Christ - to bring glory to His name in East Texas as Bethel Bible Church.

So here is what I'm asking: Will you join me in praying for these next 40 years of Bethel? Will you ask Him how He wants to use you as we prepare for what's ahead?

We've been blessed to watch God do more than we planned and provide more than we expected. And He is continuing to lead us by faith as we follow Him into the next 40 years. I'm thankful for God's grace and sovereignty. And I'm thankful for the days to come and all we will get to experience of the *exceedingly more* that He has planned... together!

With Joy!



May 30, 1982

Bethel Bible Church meets for its first Sunday service in the Downtown People's Bank Building.

September 1982

First Elder Board is elected and Bethel Bible Church moves to the Women's Building on Broadway due to increasing numbers.

1983

Bethel Missions Committee is established and early missionary teams are supported.

April 1984

Bethel Bible Church has exceeded capacity at the Women's Building, and the Jewish Synagogue at 1014 W Houston is purchased for \$160,000.

1986

23 acres is purchased at the current South Campus for a prospective building.

May 1991

Land at the current South Campus is fully paid for.

October 6, 1996

Bethel moves to the current South Campus for its permanent location.



October 2001

The Education Building is complete at the South Campus.

September 11, 2011

Arbor Bible Fellowship merges with Bethel Bible Church to create our Downtown Campus.

August 10, 2014

Bethel Whitehouse Launched

September 2014

Bethel Downtown's first Sunday in their current location as owners.

September 2014

The Foundry Coffeehouse Launched

January 2018

Tapestry Counseling Launched

January 2019

Bethel Hope Launched

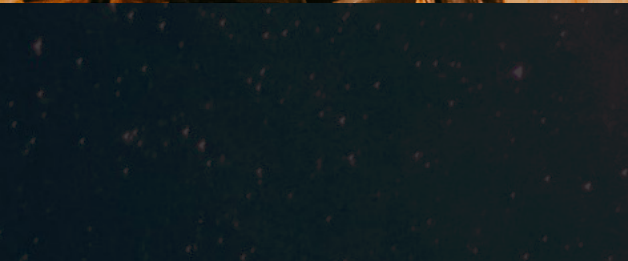
January 2020

Bethel Henderson Launched

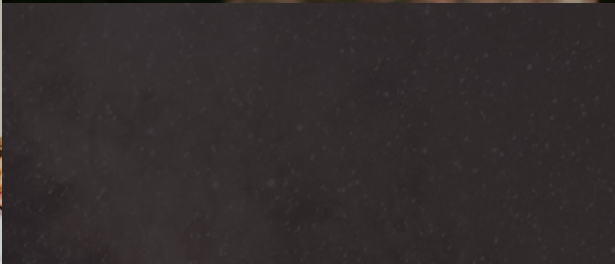
So much has changed globally in the last two years, and that includes our little corner of the world. For Tyler and its surrounding area, this change has meant exponential growth. From December 2020 to December 2021, Tyler experienced the fastest job growth in Texas at 8.3%. That's 8,800 jobs - and all of those jobs mean people. And in the next five to six years, East Texas is projected to grow at a rate that is unprecedented.

We want to be ready! Bethel wants to be ready to receive the people who come to this area and give them a place to know and worship Jesus.











# Five Campuses *celebrating one* **Mission**

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*CURRENTLY:*

*76* Small Groups

*542* Serve Team  
Members



# *Over the Last Five Years*



95

Baptisms

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526

New  
Members

25

Mission  
Trips





# Our ✦ Vision

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*Exceedingly Abundant is a two-year initiative to commit and invest our time, talent, and resources to grow God's kingdom in East Texas and around the world. Whether you are starting your generosity journey, regularly giving, or committing to serve, we know God will do abundantly more to continue building His kingdom.*

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## *Building Leaders*

Bethel is committed to equipping men and women to identify and use the gifts God has given to influence and encourage others. God has always **exceeded our expectations** of who He would raise up as leaders at Bethel and in our world. We know the next generation of leaders are among us, and we want to continue growing leaders at Bethel so that His Kingdom and His glory increase until He returns.



## *Growing Communities*

God's Word tells us we are created for community. We want to create opportunities for people to be known and to know others. God expanded our community of Life Groups, worship services, and ministry opportunities from a small group of 19 to a body of over 1,200. We believe God will **abundantly multiply** our communities to advance the gospel in our city and our world.



## *Living Generously*

We long to be marked as people who give their lives away—living for the benefit of others rather than ourselves. God has accomplished **more than we could have imagined** over the last 40 years – evidence that He is not bound by our limits. At Bethel, living generously isn't just about financial giving. We want to selflessly invest our time, talents, and resources in one another and demonstrate the **exceeding abundance** of God to the world.











For this reason I bow my knees before  
the **Father**, from whom **every family**  
in heaven and on earth is named, that  
**according to the riches of His glory** he  
may grant you to be **strengthened** with  
power through **His Spirit** in your inner  
being...



so that **Christ** may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being **rooted and grounded in love**, may have **strength** to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to **know the love of Christ** that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the **fullness of God**.

*Ephesians 3:14-19*



# \$6 Million

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We anticipate that God will provide **above and beyond** through His people to accomplish His purposes. Our desire is that through these funds, His name is proclaimed and glorified throughout Bethel Bible Church and around the world. The funds gathered from the *Exceedingly Abundant Initiative* will be used for:

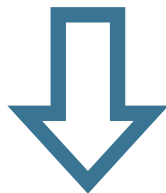
## *Expansion & Growth*



- Purchase of 19,000 square-foot building and one acre of land (located at 155 Elm St). The property would be used for additional classroom space with undeveloped land to be used for a future worship center.
- Construction of a 3,400 square-foot outdoor pavilion that will extend to the south of the Education Building at the South Campus. This space will be used for fellowship and student ministry.
- Opportunity to create more permanent options for leased campuses.

## *Debt Reduction*

- Pay off remaining debt at the Hope Campus.
- Reduce total debt by half.
- Accelerate the retirement of remaining debt.



## *Missions*

- Building a new Primary School in Sierra Leone.
- Constructing a new church in Sierra Leone.



# Next Steps

## 1 *Pray Specifically*

Ask God to show you specifically and personally how He wants you and your family to follow His vision for Bethel's future.

## 2 *Commit Fully*

Our goal is 100% participation from our church family. We can't all give in the same way, but we can all give something. Open your heart to whatever God asks from you. Trust and step out in faith.

## 3 *Give Generously*

Ask God to show you what generosity looks like in your life. What is He asking you to give? *This is more than a financial gift.* You can generously give your *time, talents, and resources.*

## 4 *Cheer Loudly*

Own the *Exceedingly Abundant Vision*. Become an ambassador in your spheres of influence. Join a Life Group, commit to growing in Christ, and invest in serving.



# FAQs

## *What are you asking me to do?*

Bethel Bible Church is committed to following where God leads. We know that obeying the Lord grows our faith. We are asking everyone who is part of Bethel to make an investment that expands and accelerates their current level of giving.

As you seek the Lord for direction, pray about your commitment and involvement at Bethel, then fill out the commitment card (located at each campus or online) and turn it in by **August 28**. As you pray, thank God for His faithfulness and goodness to and through Bethel over the last 40 years.

## *How can I give?*

There are many creative ways to give at Bethel:

- Commit unexpected cash
- Increase your giving with increased income
- Give from your stored resources (collections, inheritance, savings, etc)
- Redirect present expenditures as they are freed up
- Rearrange priorities
- Invest your extra time
- Donate appreciated assets (investment securities, real estate, etc)

You can also give by placing your offering in the offering boxes located in the lobby at your campus, by mail, online at [bethelbible.com/give](http://bethelbible.com/give), or through Text 2 Give (text the word GIVE to 903-437-4437).

*If mailing your offering, please mail your check donation to 17121 US Hwy 69 S, Tyler, TX 75703. Please list your campus in the memo line or note with your donation.*

## *What if we exceed our goal?*

If we exceed our goal, the Campus Pastors and Trustee Elders will prayerfully decide how to use the additional resources to reduce our debt.

## *What if we don't meet our goal?*

We believe God will provide the resources we need to accomplish this vision together! If we are unable to achieve the goal, the Campus Pastors and Trustee Elders will prayerfully decide how to adjust our plans and priorities.



# Sermon Notes: August 7

## Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

## Exodus 16:35

The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

## Deuteronomy 2:7

For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.



# Family Devotional

## *Ephesians 3:14-21; Exodus 16:35; Deuteronomy 2:7*

People have always used their imaginations to make “something out of nothing” – from the printing press and microwave popcorn to space shuttles and smart phones. Art and music come from our imaginations too. Maybe you love to paint or play an instrument. Or maybe you are working on a great idea that would make life better or just more fun!

As big and wild as our minds can dream, we have limits. We don't know how to make cars fly, chocolate can't be turned into a vegetable, and no one has cured the common cold. But God? The Bible says nothing is impossible for Him. (Job 42:2; Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26)

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3 is just seven verses, but the language is some of the most thrilling in all the Bible. Paul uses words like “power,” “riches,” “strength,” and “fullness” as he prays; he wants God to do glorious work in His Church! And one string of words seems to sing above the rest: far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

A long time ago, a preacher said, “Expect great things from a great God.” The Bible is full of stories about God's “great things,” and Israel's time in the wilderness is one of them. In Exodus 16, Moses records how God fed His people for 40 years. But rather than providing through hunting or fishing or even UberEats, God did something no one had ever heard of or thought of before.

God sent bread from heaven. Every day. It looked like frost and it tasted like honey (Ex. 16:14, 31). And all the Israelites had to do was gather enough for the day's need and wait for Him to supply it again the next morning.

You and I are forgetful. But Exodus 16:35 tells us God never missed a day of providing for His people. For 40 years, until they entered the Promised Land, God fed Israel with “the bread of angels.” (Ps. 78:24-25) God's faithfulness through the special way He provided each day offered constant evidence of His abundant love for them.

The Bible tells us Moses led more than 2 million men, women, and children through the middle of the desert for four decades (Numbers 1:44-46). And nobody ever needed a doctor (Ex. 23:25-26), nobody ever needed new clothes or shoes (Deut. 29:5), nobody ever got lost (Ex. 13:21). In fact, Deuteronomy 2:7 says, “These forty years the Lord your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.”

We are stingy with our faith. Our minds struggle to imagine that God can, much less wants, to bless us. But what if we decided to live like we believe it – as though God was in fact the “far more abundant” God that He says He is? Scripture proves not only that God is able, but that He longs to lavish His abundant and limitless grace, mercy, and goodness over us, His children.



# *Family Devotional*

1. Do you pray with Ephesians 3:21-22 in mind? Why or why not? How should the truth that God will do beyond what we ask or think affect how we pray?

2. God provides in ordinary and in miraculous ways for His children. Share a time that you experienced God's provision in your life. How did that deepen your relationship with Him?

3. What are you experiencing now that you think is too great – or too small – for God to provide for or care about? How do Paul's prayer and the reminders of God's specific care for Israel encourage your faith?

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## *Prayer Points*

- Ask and confess to God where you struggle with unbelief. Then ask Him to give you the faith to believe He is who He says He is!
- Read Ephesians 3:14-21 out loud. Commit to praying this for your family and for our church this week. Then share with someone how you see God answer this prayer – far more abundantly than you ask or think!
- Pray God will work through the Exceedingly Abundant initiative and beyond to provide the needed resources (spiritual and financial) to continue building His kingdom.



# Sermon Notes: August 14

## Deuteronomy 8

"The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. 2 And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. 3 And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word[a] that comes from the mouth of the Lord. 4 Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. 6 So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. 7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, 9 a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 10 And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

11 "Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, 12 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, 13 and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, 15 who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, 16 who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. 17 Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18 You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 19 And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. 20 Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.







# Family Devotional

## Deuteronomy 8

Do you know what it means to be dependent?

When you're a baby, you're dependent on your parents to change your diapers and feed you when you're hungry. When you're learning to ride a bike, you're dependent on training wheels to keep you from falling. When you sit down, you're dependent on the chair to hold you so you won't end up on the floor!

In Deuteronomy 8, the children of Israel were about to receive what they'd waited for their whole lives – “a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:17). God knew this day would come, and to prepare them, He'd spent the last 40 years teaching them to be dependent only on Him.

As they entered the Promised Land – the fulfillment of a promise God made to Israel long ago – God wanted them to continue to trust in Him. Because while the gifts that God gives are good, we can let them distract us from what really matters.

Have you ever gotten an amazing birthday or Christmas present and were so excited about it that you forgot to thank the person who gave it to you? God knows that's easy for us to do, just like it was for the children of Israel.

In verses 7-10, Moses lists the incredible gifts Israel would receive once they entered the Promised Land. Then Moses tells the people God knows that once they settle into their daily routines, they will forget where all that goodness came from. Sometimes we do that too.

Psalms 121 helps us by teaching us what to do – and not do – with the good gifts God gives.

“I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my help come from?”

My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.” (Ps. 121:1-2)

In verse 1, the psalmist is saying, “I see the hills, and they are full of a lot of wonderful things... is that where my help comes from?” The unwritten answer between verse 1 and verse 2 is *no*. Look higher. Your true help, verse 2 says, is above and beyond the hills.

We live in a time of abundance; we almost always have everything we need and want. Like Israel, God has given us many wonderful gifts. But as good as gifts can be, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us answer an important question: do I depend more upon the creation or the Creator? The mountains that were made or the One who can move them?

God wants us to spend our lives learning to depend on Him, the Maker of the hills, flowers and trees, of our friends, family and food, and everything good thing in life. It is easy set our eyes and hearts on what we have, but we can enjoy it more – and even give it away – when we live completely dependent on God, the Giver of every perfect gift.



# *Family Devotional*

1. Israel spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness, learning to trust and follow God. Why do you think we go through hard times in our lives? What have you learned about God in those hard times? What have you learned about yourself? What would you say to encourage someone you know who is going through a hard time?

2. How can having everything you need (and even want!) keep you from trusting God? What can you do to enjoy God's material and physical blessings while also remaining totally dependent on Him?

3. How did Moses say Israel's time in the wilderness prepared them for the Promised Land (Deut. 8:2-3)? How have your trials prepared you for abundance?

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## *Prayer Points*

- Ask and confess to God where you may not be relying on Him. Ask Him to give you the strength and grace to rely on Him for every need, big and small. Thank Him for being a trustworthy God.
- As a family, share with each other memories of God's generosity and goodness in the past. Then thank and praise Him together.
- Pray Bethel Bible Church will continually rely on the Lord to supply our needs. Ask God to give our Pastors, Elders, Deacons, and Staff the grace to depend on Him as they lead our church.

# Sermon Notes: August 21

## Deuteronomy 29

These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb.

2 And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, 3 the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. 4 But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. 5 I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet. 6 You have not eaten bread, and you have not drunk wine or strong drink, that you may know that I am the Lord your God. 7 And when you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to battle, but we defeated them. 8 We took their land and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites. 9 Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

10 "You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, 11 your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, 12 so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is making with you today, 13 that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14 It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, 15 but with whoever is standing here with us today before the Lord our God, and with whoever is not here with us today.

16 "You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed. 17 And you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them. 18 Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, 19 one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.

20 The Lord will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. 21 And the Lord will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. 22 And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the Lord has made it sick— 23 the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and wrath— 24 all the nations will say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?' 25 Then people will say, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, 26 and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them. 27 Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, 28 and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.'

29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.





# *Family Devotional*

## *Deuteronomy 29*

When the first week of August arrives, we know that summer vacation is coming to an end. Endings come often in life, and sometimes they can make us feel sad, like when a family vacation or friendship or even a job ends. But these endings usually signify a beginning as well. When fifth grade ends, we know middle school is coming; high school begins after middle school ends. Single life ends with marriage, but a lifetime partnership begins.

The Bible gives many examples of God ending one season to usher in the next important step in the life of His people. Abraham ends his time in Ur to start following God. David ends shepherding to become King. Jesus' life on earth must end so we can begin our lives as reconciled children of God, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Endings often bring questions about the unknown, which is why the Bible shows God gathering His people to remind, celebrate, instruct, and prepare. We do this too: graduation parties celebrate past achievements and provide gifts for the next season. Weddings celebrate a man and woman starting life together with presents to fill their new home. At these occasions parents and friends often give advice about how to best move into the new beginning successfully.

Deuteronomy 29 is one such special occasion. Through Moses, God is preparing His people to end their time in the wilderness and begin their time in the Promised Land. The chapters before restated the laws and the covenant that would be established with this new generation of God's people. Then in verse 2, "...Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: 'You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and the wonders.'" In verses 5-9, Moses is gathering God's people to remind them of all God has done for them.

God ends this reminder by saying that remembering

the covenant – or promises – of God is the way to prosper or be successful (v. 9). Verses 10-15 tell us that God is with ALL the people – from the leaders to fathers to women, children, servants, and anyone living within their camps. This section ends with an extraordinary message in verse 15 that God even includes "...those who stand here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not with here today." That's US! Any who claim Jesus as their Savior are included in this message.

The rest of chapter 29 is a warning about straying from God's Word or following an unbeliever. Any stubbornness we allow to grow in our hearts through life's changing seasons can cause trouble for us and minimize the glory of God. God then gives this gathering of Israelites a wonderful promise that we can claim as well: "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."(v. 29)

As we experience endings that bring new beginnings, may we remember that God knows far and away more than we can know about every season of our lives. And being the abundantly gracious God that He is, He has given us knowledge and even community to experience the exceedingly hope-filled future He has planned for each of His children!



# *Family Devotional*

1. Think of a time you had an ending. What do you miss about that time? What did you learn from it?
  
2. What advice would you give to someone who is starting something you just finished?
  
3. Can you think of other times in the Bible when God, or Jesus, gathers people to celebrate, learn, or prepare for the future?
  
4. What did you learn about God from reading Deuteronomy 29? Name some of His characteristics or attributes.

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## *Prayer Points*

- Ask God to reveal any hidden anxiety in your life. Give these worries to Him and thank Him for being more than able to provide for whatever we need. Ask Him to remind you to surrender your worries to Him each time they come to mind.
  
- Pray God will reveal where you can give generously of your time, talent, and resources.
  
- As you surrender your anxiety or fear, pray you will be confident in who God is and that you will be bold in your faith!

# Sermon Notes: August 28

## Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place  
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You return man to dust  
and say, "Return, O children of man!"

For a thousand years in your sight  
are but as yesterday when it is past,  
or as a watch in the night.

You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like  
a dream,

like grass that is renewed in the morning;  
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are brought to an end by your anger;  
by your wrath we are dismayed.

You have set our iniquities before you,  
our secret sins in the light of your presence.

For all our days pass away under your wrath;  
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

The years of our life are seventy,  
or even by reason of strength eighty;  
yet their span is but toil and trouble;  
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger,  
and your wrath according to the fear of you?

So teach us to number our days  
that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Return, O Lord! How long?

Have pity on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have  
afflicted us,

and for as many years as we have seen evil.

Let your work be shown to your servants,  
and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and establish the work of our hands upon us;  
yes, establish the work of our hands!





# Family Devotional

## Psalm 90

This past summer, our family drove to the beach in Florida. We filled up our vehicle with gas, downloaded movies and podcasts, packed special snacks, and then we started driving. And driving.... and driving. Five states and twelve hours later, we reached our destination, legs restless and eyes glazed over. It felt like we had been in the car forever.

In fact, our trip was just 663 miles. On the wall-sized world map in our house, we had gone only two inches. Assuming there were interstates that ran through the ocean, we would have to make that trip over 37 times to drive all the way around the world! As far as Florida can seem from Texas when I'm cooped up in a car all day, when I think about the rest of the world, our trip feels small.

In Psalm 90, Moses writes a prayer that reminds us how God is so much bigger than even this immense world we live in. Verse 2 says, "Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting you are God." God is eternal—He has always been, and He always will be! Moses adds in verse 4, "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or like a watch in the night." In contrast, another Psalmist says that our lives are like a breath (Ps. 144:4). Take a deep breath—a looong one—in and out. How long did it take? Three seconds? Maybe five? Compared to all of history, our lives go by that quickly.

How should we respond to this knowledge? Sadness? Anxiety? By no means! Rather, Moses prays, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (v. 12). When we "number our days," we acknowledge that our time here is not forever, and that leads us to a valuable gift—wisdom! We see how big God and His world are, and we realize how small the things are that we spend so much time and effort on.

A concept called "the tyranny of the urgent" describes the feeling of constantly being pulled between what feels important and what is important. The urgent things are the things that tend to be the loudest in our lives, and so become the things we give attention to. While these things aren't necessarily bad, they can end up taking up so much of our time that we neglect the important things—relationships, our spiritual life, our health. "Numbering our days" and acknowledging that we don't have unlimited time helps us step back and focus on what really matters. We have a choice—we can spend our time on things that will last or on things that won't.

Moses ends his prayer with this: "May the kindness of the Lord our God be upon us; and confirm for us the work of our hands; yes, confirm the work of our hands" (v. 17). Another way to say "confirm" is "give permanence to." Moses is asking God to take the efforts of the Israelites and to make them count, to make them last.

Even our best intentions are worthless if God is not involved in our work. May we make this our constant prayer as we discern how God would have us spend the time and resources He has entrusted to us.



# Family Devotional

1. What are the urgent things you are constantly responding to? Will these things matter eternally?

2. In 20 years, what will you look back and be glad you spent your resources (time, mental energy, money) on? What do you think you will say matters at the end of your life? Is this the same as or different from what Scripture tell us will last?

3. How can you make space in your life to prioritize the important and not just the urgent?

4. Read Psalm 44:3. What does this psalm say did NOT lead to their success? Who is responsible for their success and why? Pray together that God would teach you to number your days. Ask Him to give you wisdom about how to spend the resources He has entrusted you with and that He would make your work count for eternity.

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## *Prayer Points*

- Ask God to show you where you may be working in your own strength or where you are leaving Him out in your life. Confess, with thanksgiving, your daily need for Him. Ask Him to help you rest in His goodness and love.
- Pray God will give the leaders at Bethel His vision for our future. Pray we will walk in wisdom as we seek His will.
- Ask God to show each of us where we may not be prioritizing His kingdom, and ask Him to give us the desire and strength to remove any hindrances to His work

