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Title: Week 1 - Name, Vision, Discipleship Pathway 1 (Gospel)

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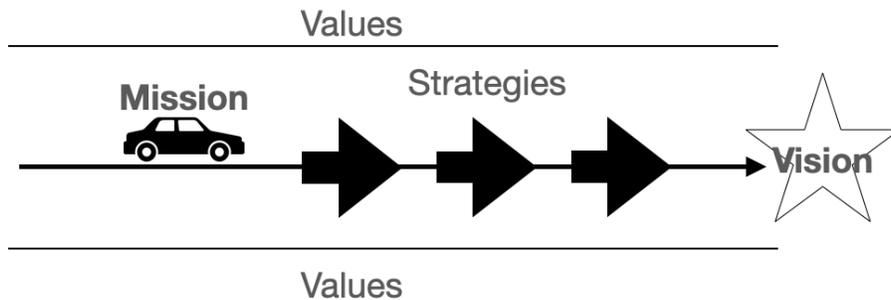
Intro Story - Waiting on church planting...and the value

- Well, it is such a joy to be here and have the privilege to lead this church and this Core Team
 - Its not lost on us - how weighty that is...that you've trusted yourself and your family to us and this vision
 - So by the grace of God - all we can say is we promise to give our best to the Lord and to you
- Well, throughout I'll try to share bits and pieces of our life story and journey - in general I think I'm pretty open about my life...the ups and downs
 - But I'll start here with this...some of you might know, but Marilyn and I, as you heard came to faith in high school - and early on in Chicago amongst the Indian church community we used to have these prayer meetings, dreaming meetings called "2G"
 - And there was a lot of hope that there'd be a 2G church planted
 - * And Marilyn and I - sometime in our early 20s felt the Lord may be calling us to church plant
 - Marilyn even had this dream or vision - of her husband preaching at this church... that before we were married...so, hopefully that was me
 - But, I turn 40 this year - that's like almost 20 years later!
 - * What in the world have we been doing...WAITING for that long?
 - Most people typically say church planting is a young man's game
 - Now, part of it could be - maybe we should have taken a risk sooner and jumped in - and maybe that's temperament and also the culture around us didn't encourage us to do it
 - But, obviously we know God is sovereign - believe His timing is perfect
 - * And as I look back...through almost 20 years of waiting...there was a lot God had to do inside of me...had to do in our marriage...a lot I had to learn about ministry...and there was some suffering we needed to endure
 - And I look back - at least for me...if my 25 or even 30 year old self church planted - I'd be feel bad for my family and that church
 - Now I'm not saying - hey I think I'm amazing right now
 - BUT...I do think...these 20 or so years were not wasted - I needed time to prepare and to grow
 - And honestly - we see that pattern OFTEN in Scripture - God gives a vision, but the fulfillment of that vision is later
 - Abraham given the promise of descendants at age 75...has a child at 100... 25 years of waiting
 - Joseph has a dream at age 17...about 40 years old when Jacob arrives to Egypt...23 years of waiting
 - Moses has a dream to deliver Israel at age 40...is then exiled to the desert until he is 80...so 40 years of waiting in the desert

- David was anointed king as a teenager...only starts to rule at age 30...about 15 years of waiting
- Jesus...only at age 30...does he begin his public ministry
- So that encourages me - God doesn't microwave his plans or his people...but marinates them...until they're truly ready
- And so I share that - not just to share about myself...but to share a principle for this Core Team and this church
 - That for us to make a deep and lasting impact - we don't want to be a church that's microwaved, but one that is marinated
 - And that's why we're gathering like this...and going a little slower
 - * Now, some of you - like things to be slow...maybe TOO SLOW
 - Its like your marinating and overcooking and never get out of the crock pot!
 - If that's you...stop listening...just joking
 - * And for some of us and maybe majority of us - we just don't like things taking time
 - And trust me...I feel like that - I don't LOVE to wait - my natural temperament is to say, lets go and do it now! Why wait?
 - But, I hope we'd trust that there's a lot of wisdom in learning to build this ship called Joy of All Nations
 - * To build it well...with strong and solid foundations
 - * Because we want to be a church that impacts wide and long
 - Perimeter has a saying about discipleship that works well here - "Think big, start small, and go deep"
- So, that's what this Fall is about - we want to marinate, not microwave the Biblical convictions and theology and vision and mission and values and structures and strategies of Joy of All Nations
 - And so hopefully the DNA of this church...gets deep into the marrow our bones here
 - * And so then starting in January...its not one person planting a church...we're ALL planting this church, Amen?

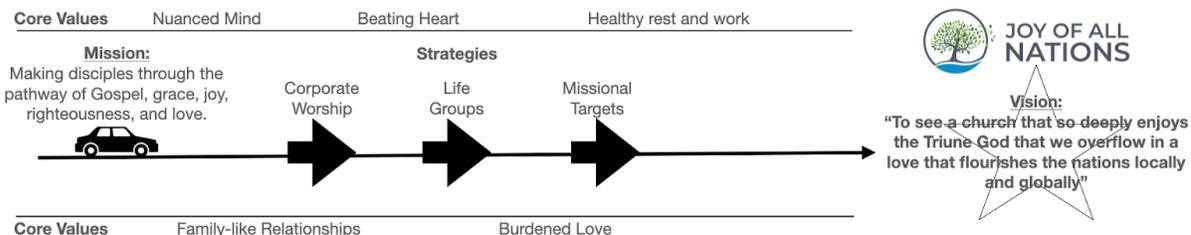
II. Understanding "Vision, Mission, Values, Strategies"

- OK, so this week, we'll get into the topic of our name, vision, mission, values
- But let me start by giving what I think is a helpful visual to understand these terms
 - These ideas really more come from the business world - but there's helpful wisdom that organizations and churches can use
 - Now some of you are business people and lead your own organizations - so probably you can do this better than I can even
 - * But I've been doing my Doctorate of Ministry in Pastoral Leadership - and one of my courses was on strategic planning...and WOW that was SO HELPFUL
 - Because before things like vision and mission - they just felt like fluff words
 - * Like things companies and churches have and say...but realistically...they're pretty useless - its just fluff
- But this diagram helped - and I hope this helps you



- * Vision - is describing our desired destination...5 years, 10 years, forever. Answers where or why?...why are we planting this church? To reach this vision
 - Meaning 20 years from now...we get a snapshot of JOAN...we hope what we and others will see is..."a church that..."
- * Mission - the main engine that gets us there...its answering...OK if we want to achieve this vision...what do we need to do MAINLY at our core...to get there? Its the what question...what is JOAN supposed to be doing?
 - Mission..."to make disciples..."
- * Values
 - Are like our guardrails...it answers how? - Well, what's our value system? Because we don't just accomplish this vision by any means possible? No, the end doesn't justify the means.
 - So we can think of values as guardrails, but they're also like personality - we have a corporate personality
 - When someone walks into JOAN they say...oh your church's personality is like...this
 - Some churches or corporations - tough, honest, hardworking, fun
 - Our church values (now some of this might be shaped later) - Nuanced thinking, beating heart, healthy work and rest, family-like relationships, and burdened love
 - We'll talk about this more at a later week - but for example...if healthy work and rest is a value at our church
 - It means...we'll accomplish this vision with this mission as our engine - BUT...we won't be trying to violate our value and either be lazy or overworked...we'll work hard at being balanced
- * Now Mission - obviously is really high level
 - If that's all we do say or do - we won't accomplish anything
 - So we have to turn our mission into strategy that gets executed - Life Groups, Corporate Prayer, Corporate Worship, Missional Targets
- ◉ And so this picture...describes what we'll be doing the rest of the Fall
 - * Vision, Mission, Values, Strategies

III. Joy of All Nations - Vision, Name, and Mission



- **Vision:** *“To see a church that so deeply enjoys the Triune God that we overflow in a love that flourishes the nations locally and globally”*
 - OK, so let me try to break this down
 - * First of all...its written with a future orientation...our vision, our purpose, our why...is “to see this”
 - * Then, “so deeply enjoy the Triune God”
 - OK, but here’s the practical piece of this part of our vision
 - 20 years from now...we want people to walk in the room and say...Goodness, this church...is deeply, profoundly...in love with...delights in God
 - And at the ROOT of everything we do - corporate worship, life groups, even our evangelism - we are putting on display the BEAUTY of God, the BEAUTY of the Gospel
 - We want people enthralled with God in Christ
 - * Next, *“that we overflow in a love that flourishes the nations locally and globally”*
 - So...that enjoyment can’t stay private...it necessarily overflows publicly
 - And in some ways you see the connection with enjoyment of God and glorifying God
 - Joy in God does glorify God...but it is more or less a matter of the individual heart
 - But glorifying God is SO MUCH MORE than individuals...God’s glory is to fill the entire earth
 - And specifically - we want to get specific with nations - locally and globally
 - We recognize the nations are here...not just out there
 - So that means we are pursuing actively the nations around us
 - What about the word “flourishes” - why that?
 - Well lets say what other we COULD HAVE used...could have said we “reach the nations”
 - And that’s not bad...I just think its not as comprehensive
 - Because “reach” typically means - individual conversion...which AMEN...we need that and that is of FIRST and highest priority
 - But, our hope is not just to reach nations, but to flourish them...that ALL the blessings of the rule of Christ to be present...in families, in the marketplace, in the society

- A phrase I have come across which I think is helpful and we'll use internally is to say we want "All of Christ for all of life"

- **Name: *Joy of All Nations***

- So this name really is a summary of our vision you can say
 - * God...the Gospel...Jesus is our Joy
 - * And from that joy...we can't contain it...it overflows to all nations
- But what's up with our logo?
 - * Why a tree? Why this water? Why are leaves floating away even?
- Well...I'm glad you asked
 - * Because that relates to our Mission
 - Mission - is the engine of the car that will drive us to our destination of our vision

- **Mission: *Making disciples through the pathway of Gospel, grace, joy, righteousness, and love.***



- So, describing mission here...its really now getting into the DNA of our church
 - * It hopefully answers this question...how does Christian life work? How does spiritual formation work?
- I could have kept our mission simple and said, our mission is to "make disciples"
 - * But...personally in my own journey with Christ and ministry...I've come to very specific convictions of HOW a disciple is formed and made...and I want this to actually to flow through everything we do as a church
- So I call this the "Flourishing Tree Discipleship Pathway" - and its largely off of Psalm 1 - but really its off of the entire story of the Bible in another sense too
 - * Psalm 1 says - "He is like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season"
 - And I think that is such a wonderful image of how Christian life works
 - * And the 5 movements are Gospel, grace, joy, righteousness, and love
 - And in the picture -
 - 1. Grace is the stream of water - something outside the tree is sustaining it with life and growth...our growth is of grace, not of ourselves ultimately, but of God...His grace
 - 2. Joy is the sap in the tree - it says his DELIGHT is in the law of the Lord... there's holy joy in the heart that comes from knowing Christ
 - 3. Righteousness is the tree itself - in Isaiah we are called oaks of righteousness...our holy joy produces a holiness and godliness of life
 - 4. Love is the fruit of the tree...the sap overflows through branches into fruit that can be eat by others to give them life sacrificially

- * And so...ALL OF THAT SOUNDS WONDERFUL...but it is not truly Christian yet...
 - apart from the Gospel
 - And so the Gospel is really first...its the foundation
 - Because the reality is...none of us in this life - even in Christ will be fully fruitful trees...we're often weak, fruitless, diseased
 - But, what's our foundational hope and strength?
 - Its that there's another tree
 - The most important tree we'll sing about and rejoice about in our church is NOT the tree we are becoming
 - But we'll sing about the tree of the cross
 - *Galatians 3:13 - Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”*
 - On the cross - Jesus took our curse...our sin...our flailing attempts at being a fruitful tree
 - And he instead gave us His righteousness - His perfectly beautiful, large, fruitful, alive tree of life...and he reckoned it and accounted it as if it was ours
- * And so flourishing disciples CANNOT be made...without first living in the soil of the Gospel
- And so, we're going to go through each of these movements in our discipleship pathway one by one - but this week, all we'll have time for is Gospel

Discipleship Pathway: 1. Gospel

Gospel-centrality - not just the ABCs, but the A-Z of Christian life

- Now when we hear the word Gospel - generally-speaking we know that it means Good News and usually we relate it to believing the Gospel for initial salvation
 - And yes and amen - we believe that and need to believe that
- But, something that has been recovered and become more mainstream maybe the last 15 years or so has been the idea of Gospel-centrality
 - **The Gospel is not just the ABCs of Christian life...but its the A-Z**
- And I think what that means more technically is that the Gospel, the Good News is not just about Jesus saving me and giving me entrance into heaven securely
 - But its the recovery of the doctrine of justification by faith alone which actually has HUGE implications for Christian living...on this side of heaven
- And the reason Gospel-centrality or justification by faith is so needed is
 - Once you become a Christian - its not that we stop sinning...no we all sin in profound ways

Generally two types of Christians:

- 1. Discouraged Christians (“younger” brother)
- 2. Proud Christians (“older” brother)
- * 1. Discouraged Christians (“younger” brother)
 - Come to Jesus...and the expectation is - wow, I'm saved, I'm a new creation, I'm on fire

- And so, I'll never struggle with that sin again...but you realize you still do
 - Or, you start working, get married, go through trials...and other sins emerge that cripple you with guilt and shame
 - And you start to become a disillusioned, discouraged Christian
 - And that might be some of us here right now
 - You're here and you're thinking - goodness sakes I'm a fraud...I shouldn't even be here
 - If they really knew what I was like...Pastor Tony would absolutely ask me to leave
- * 2. Proud Christians ("older" brother)
- Come to Jesus...your life is changed, you are saved, a new creation
 - You aren't falling into immorality
 - You're disciplined in doing your QTs
 - And you are living for Jesus...you are serving Jesus...going on missions trips... maybe even gone into ministry
 - And inside there's a part of you that feels like - dang, you know, I'm pretty good
 - And...you look across the room at church and wonder...man, what's wrong with that guy? He's gotta get it together
 - But here's the thing - we're still sinners...our sins are just more sanitary looking than the one who is falling outwardly
 - Our sin might not be different vices - but we're like the Pharisees
 - We love getting praise, getting honored, being cherished, being obeyed by other people, accomplishing goals
 - And so, outwardly we're clean, but inwardly we're full of ugliness and pride
 - And so the sins are moreso:
 - Pride - you love getting praise...you crave it and live for it...and the worst part is we use God to get it
 - We don't find God beautiful, we find him useful
 - And negatively, when living for God doesn't get you the praise or recognition you desire
 - You get angry - at God or other people
 - You get jealous of others who are ahead of you
 - You get sad when life isn't going the way you expected...especially when you followed all the rules all your life
 - Q: Anyone know who that sounds like?
 - Remember what the older son said in the parable to his father, ***Luke 15:29-30 - 29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'***

- You see - the real ugly heart of a proud Christian comes out - when all their rule following ended up not getting them what they wanted...and they lash out at God
- * And in that moment you realize - the discouraged Christian and the proud Christian... the younger son and the older son
 - Both are awful and ugly sinners...even as Christians
- And so one of the things I hope you'll experience if you come to JOAN long enough is this...you'll be confronted with your sin
 - * And you might be like - what in the world? - I thought this was the JOY of All Nations
 - You're making me feel bad
 - You're making me feel awful about myself
- Well, here's the thing - until you and I see our awful sinfulness
 - * We won't taste and embrace the joy of the Gospel
 - * Because Jesus said, "I didn't come for the healthy...I came for (?)...the sick. I didn't come for the righteous, but I came for (?)...for sinners"
 - * We won't be needy for Jesus, needy for a Savior
 - Until we come to terms with our sin - and not just the sin of my 17 year old self... but the sin in my life right now
 - * John Owen says this, "Grace is not sweet if sin is not bitter"
- And so, what is His grace towards us?
 - * The Gospel, specifically justification tells us this
 - Christ knows the worst about us...our past, our present sins, our future sins
 - He knows the worst about us and yet He still says...I love you
 - He knows the worst about us...and yet the Father looks at us as if we are AS RIGHTEOUS and AS PERFECT as Jesus Christ
 - And just as He said to Jesus He says, "You are my beloved son, my beloved daughter...and with you I am well pleased"
 - You please me, you make me happy, you make me glad
 - * Brothers and sisters - that's the Gospel
 - Though we're sinful STILL and will be until we die
 - We are loved and approved and cherished as if we've never sinned before
- You see when the worst about you is known...and love is still given...there's no longer any reason to fear or be ashamed or hide
- So let me talk about if the Gospel is the soil of how we make disciples in Joy of All Nations - what are some ways that would show up at our church?
 - 1. Lord's Table weekly
 - * Our plan is every Lord's Day - we want to partake the Lord's Table together. And part of the reason for that is every week we want to be reminded of the Gospel. No matter how failed, weak you are...a Table is set before you regardless of your performance... a reminder of forgiveness and grace and love
 - 2. Humility

- * The Gospel should make us humble people - remember especially the Proud Christians - are brought to the conviction like Paul - I'm the worst of sinners...and my only boast is in the cross. There's no place for self-righteous pride and looking down on others.
- 3. Vulnerability
 - * The Gospel makes us vulnerable - it makes us able to confess our sins to one another in our discipleship groups so we can be healed. The worst can be known about us and we have a community that says...hey I'm a sinner too...there's no reason to fear or hide
- 4. Security
 - * The Gospel makes us secure - I love what John Newton says, "I am great sinner, but Jesus is a great Savior." We are absolutely secure in Christ. When you fall - the farthest place we can fall is the rock solid foundation of your justification in Jesus Christ. We want to be a place where we speak the Gospel to one another in church, in Life Groups and say...brother, sister...your on the rock...you can get back up.
- 5. Loving - "Friends of sinners"
 - * Anyone that walks into our church, enters our homes through our Life Groups - can be from any background, any struggle - and we'd welcome them and love them as Christ has welcomed us
 - Now that doesn't mean we'd condone sin or be unwise
 - * But, I love what the Gospel says about Jesus - they accused him of being a "friend of sinners"
 - What a great accusation - I pray Joy of All Nations is slandered in such a beautiful way
 - * When we're a people rooted deeply in the Gospel - it makes a people who can be friends of sinners...and God by His grace...will help them become friends of Jesus

Conclusion

- There's a story of Pastor – Tony Campolo – ministering in a city where he visited a café to eat and realize it was a place where many we'll call them "women of the night" frequented
- And yet as he was there, he felt God's heart for these broken, outcast women and so he organized a birthday party for one of the women, Agnus, whom he overheard saying that she had never had a birthday party or cake in her life
- And so many of Agnus' friends came and they surprised her and sang "Happy Birthday" and Pastor Tony Campolo prayed for Agnus who wept because of this love she experienced for the first time in her life
- And one of the restaurant workers seeing this, realized Tony Campolo was a pastor and asked him, "Hey I didn't know you were a pastor...what kind of pastor are you? And what kind of church to you go to?"
- And Pastor Tony Campolo said, "I go to the kind of church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30 in the morning"
 - And the worker said quickly, "I'd want to be part of a church like that"
- And our hope is that people would look at us, look at JOAN and feel compelled to say as well, "I'd want to be part of a church like that."

- Let's pray