

1Message Notes November 22th, 2020

Vision Sunday

(Psalm 1:1-3; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 15:1-8)

- **Two Images: True North & Deep Roots**

- It's Vision Sunday! I am really excited for this time in our church: in many ways, the themes we've been focusing on over the past few months really tie into our vision and culminate today.
 - This past year, as you know, we launched into a new vision for our community that we describe as, "Thriving in Christ." And to start today I want to share two powerful images. The first image has to do with a compass; the second image has to do with Roots.
- Bob Goff, author of *Love Does* and *Everybody Always*, has a story from when he was a young man: he and his friends decided they wanted to do a major sailing trip from Long Beach, California, all the way to *Hawaii*—about 2,500 miles of sailing.
 - As he prepared for this trip, he learned a crucial lesson about *navigation* that would determine the success or failure of his expedition.
 - What many of us probably don't know—unless we're Scouts or sailors—and what Bob didn't know at the time, is that there is a difference between *true north* and *magnetic north*. True North is based on the North Pole, which is a fixed position. Magnetic North, on the other hand, is based on the earth's magnetic field, and shifts based on where you're located on the planet.
 - Over a short distance, the difference between true north and magnetic north isn't that great—you might be off your location by a few inches. But over long distances, the difference becomes greater and greater. Think about following a straight line: if you're just a couple degrees off for a hundred feet, the differences is miniscule. But the farther you go, the greater the difference becomes—travel for a hundred miles, a thousand miles, and you're way off. On a 2,500 mile trip, you would *completely miss the Islands*.
 - If you're using a compass, which operates by the earth's magnetic fields, you need to know how to adjust and read that compass for true north: if not, you could totally miss your destination.
- Here's the thing: all of us have a compass. All of us have this internal needle that points us to something greater, towards morality, towards dreams and goals, towards what we see as "good." But there are countless "magnetic" pulls—both internal and external—that can skew us away from True North. You know what happens when you take a compass and interfere with the natural magnetic field—you can make the needle spin all around.
 - Some people live their entire lives with the needle constantly bouncing and spinning.
 - Some people try so hard to find True North, but by the smallest of degrees they get disoriented, and over the years find themselves somewhere they never thought they would be.
 - We need a point of reference, we need guide, we need tools to be able to regularly recalibrate and reorient our lives to True North—or we'll eventually suffer the devastating consequences of living life a couple degrees off multiplied by thousands of miles...
 - So, where do you find your True North? What vision, what truth, what hope guides your life?
- Psalm 1 talks about the life that is immersed in the ways of God: "*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.*"
 - If I asked you to picture a tree, what is the first image that comes to mind? I bet we picture a lot of different trees—some might be thinking of your favorite climbing tree growing up, a tree in your yard, a Christmas tree, whatever. But when we think of a tree, probably no-one's first thought was the part of the tree that's *underground*. Did anyone envision *the root system*?
 - Most of us just think about what's above ground. But the hidden root system can be every bit as large as the visible tree itself. The root system is just as much a part of the tree and one of its most critical features for *thriving*.

- If you go on a walk through the woods, you'll often see a few trees that have been leveled by a storm; sometimes you can see the huge root system that pulled up a big crater of dirt with it. I was talking about this with a mentor of mine who lives in Florida, and he said he was taking a walk in his neighborhood recently when he came across a massive tree that had been blown over in one of their tropical storms. It had been down for some time, *but its leaves were still green and it was still growing*. This organism had been through *trauma*, life had blown it *sideways*—but it was still alive and growing. Because its roots were *deep and strong*.
- Some of you, at some point in your life—perhaps quite recently—have been *knocked sideways* by something you didn't see coming. And you thought you were done for, but somehow, you kept going: you found out that your roots were deep enough to survive and over time, to heal.
- The most important stuff, for better and for worse, *starts on the inside*—where no one else sees. If we want to *thrive* through the many shifting seasons of this life, we need to focus on cultivating *good soil and deep roots*.
- **Thriving in Christ**
 - Rich Villodas of New Life Fellowship in New York recently made this observation: *“If Jesus spent 8 hours a day, every day, for 3 years with his disciples, he would have spent over 8,000 hours with them. And after all that time, they still had major gaps! 1 hour a week on Sunday isn't enough to change people. We need a life that abides in him, with the support of others.”*
 - We do not exist as a church to grow an audience, to grow an organization, to grow attendance. We exist as a church to grow *people*, to grow *disciples of Jesus*. And to do that, we've got to help each other develop *deep roots and good soil*.
 - If you've been with us for a little while, I hope by now you've know Mission and our Vision here at Trinity. Our mission comes right from Jesus' the Great Commission in Matthew 28: *Making disciples of Jesus for the transformation of our community and the world*. We exist to help people become *growing* disciples who *make* other disciples of Jesus, and bring transformation into their world by the way they live. That's what all Churches exist for, it just depends on your wording.
 - Our vision is how we think about living out that mission based on the unique context and season we're in. We define our vision as *Thriving in Christ*.
 - And over this year we've talked about this *a lot*. I've preached about it, I try to mention it every Sunday, we've written about it, we've made videos about it, we've got t-shirts! But I know that all that can sometimes still just seem like a bunch of talk. We want this vision to be more than just a bunch of words on a page for you. We want to help you make *Thriving in Christ your lifestyle*. Otherwise, the “vision statement” is useless.
 - So, this is as simply as I can think to explain it. Please listen carefully. This is what Thriving in Christ means:
 - In John 15:5 and 8, Jesus said, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you abide in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing...This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit...”*
 - If you understand what Jesus is saying here, you understand, “Thriving in Christ.”
 - It's not an hour a week in church. It's not merely a religious observance. *It's a lifestyle of living in relationship with God—a relationship that transforms your life*, your day to day, waking, sleeping, everyday life. Gradually, step by step by step. Because that compass principle about the small degrees can apply the opposite way: if keep you aligning and resetting your course by the slightest degrees, it can seem like very small progress at first, but over thousands of miles of life the difference can be *immense*. It's like Eugene Peterson said, “Discipleship is a long obedience in the same direction.” It's that daily, step by step journey, where you keep trudging along, and all of the sudden, you look back and see how far you've come.
 - Thriving in Christ means we want to help everyone grow in a lifestyle of John 15: where you *abide* in Christ and *bear* much fruit.
 - “Thriving” is not just a cool churchy catchphrase or a naïve optimism: thriving is *God's will for your life*. You were made for abundant life, you were made to flourish, you were made to thrive. We've gotten off track, we've gotten lost, we've gotten broken, we've rebelled—and so we need

salvation (which means healing and forgiveness). But the purpose of that salvation is to *restore your life*. This happens when we live in *union* with God—when we abide in Christ.

- Do you know the best definition I've ever heard of "Spiritual Maturity?" It's so simple: spiritual maturity is our capacity to receive and give God's love.
 - It's the same for plants: as a tree matures and flourishes, it's growing the capacity to take in nourishment and produce fruit. That's what this vision is about, that's what John 15 is saying, that's what this "5 to Thrive" is for: this is all to help you expand your capacity to receive God's love and give it away.
- **5 to Thrive**
 - But we need to make it practical and simple. So, I'm sharing something with you today called "5 to Thrive." These are 5 simple, attainable core practices in your life that if you implement, will help you become a growing disciple of Jesus who makes disciples of Jesus. These 5 habits over time will help you day-to-day, week-to-week, live in union with God—abiding in Christ—so you can thrive.
 - Some of you may realize that you've already been doing these 5 things for the most part and you are deeply connected with God and His mission, you just need to reflect on where there needs to be some pruning or where you need to take those roots even deeper.
 - Some of you will find that 3 of these habits are strong and really well rooted, but that you need to be challenged to start or deepen 1 or 2 others.
 - Some of you might be just getting started in your journey of discipleship and all of this is going to be new. Or maybe, you've been doing one thing and only one thing your whole life—just going to church—and nothing else, and your long overdue to take this from an hour a week to a *lifestyle* and a *relationship*.
 - Whatever the case, what matters is that you're *starting somewhere*, and you're asking God and asking others *to help you grow*. These 5 things aren't exhaustive and they aren't completely fixed—you could add other things to the list that help you, you could think of some different practices to grow in discipleship, but we think these are core practices and that all of us need as Christians for a foundation to grow. So, here are the "5 to Thrive," it's this simple. I'm going to hit them really quick today, and next week we're going to take the message to unpack them deeper. You can look at the diagram and you can hold out your hand and count these 5 things.
 - 1) Pray & Read: Spend time with God in Prayer and Scripture every day. 2) Worship: gather with other Christians weekly to worship together. 3) Fellowship: meet regularly with other Christians who will encourage you in your discipleship. 4) Give & Serve: develop a lifestyle of generosity and service—both inside and outside the church; recognize that you are a steward of the time, talents and treasures God has given you. 5) Invite: share your faith—invite people to church, invite them to small group, invite them to pray, invite them to share their story with you, invite them to the loving community of God—basically, just keep your radar up constantly for how you can extend God's invitation of thriving in Christ to others.
- **2021 Commitment**
 - These are the 5 things. And if you think about it, it's not *that* hard to implement these things into your life: it's really a question of whether or not you're leaving enough *margin* in your life to focus on the most important things, whether or not you're able to integrate this into your daily life, and whether or not you really want to commit.
 - I'm asking you today, as we look ahead towards another likely very *interesting* year in 2021: will you take this 2021 commitment? Will you commit to grow in these 5 to Thrive—whatever that might look like for you—and will you commit to pray about your stewardship to seek how God is calling you to give in 2021?
 - If you're hungry for more, if you want to grow, if you want to have good soil and deep roots, take these home, reflect and pray on it, and in the next few weeks bring it back to make your commitment. Let's pray!



5 To THRIVE

"I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. IF YOU ABIDE IN ME AND I IN YOU, YOU WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT; APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING." (JOHN 15:5)

Thriving in Christ means we want everyone to grow in a lifestyle of John 15: *abiding* in Christ and *bearing* much fruit. Sounds nice. But *how*? Committing to these 5 core practices will help you *abide* in Christ each day.

- 1) **Pray & Read:** Spend time with God in Prayer & Scripture every day.
- 2) **Worship:** Gather with other believers to worship each week.
- 3) **Fellowship:** Meet with Christians who'll encourage you regularly.
- 4) **Give & Serve:** Commit your time, talents, and treasures to God.
- 5) **Invite:** Extend God's invitation of thriving in Christ to others.

Learn more about ways you can implement these 5 habits into your life at <https://tumc-danville-pa.faihlifesites.com/thrive>

TRINITY 2021 CHURCH COMMITMENT

This year, I want to grow.



◇ I commit to growing these 5 practices in my life to thrive in 2021: *Pray & Read, Worship, Fellowship, Give & Serve, and Invite.*

GIVE

- ◇ I commit to pray about my 2021 finances & stewardship
- ◇ I feel called to step towards tithing (less than 10% of income), step into tithing (10%), or step above tithing (above 10%)
- ◇ I want to support the Building Fund goal with at least \$1 per week

COMMITMENT CARD

Return this card with your name on the back to the Church Office so we can post it on our Thrive Tree this December!