

Vision Sunday: We Arise

Multiple Scriptures

3/21/2026

Scripture

Acts 2:45-47 (NKJV) [45] and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. [46] So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Intro:

Good morning, Grace!

As we've been moving through Acts, we see a progression: The Church waits, the Spirit comes in power, The truth of Jesus, His righteousness, Death, resurrection and reign is boldly proclaimed, thousands are pierced to the heart with conviction, trust the Lord and are baptized, then the local church is born and they continue steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, fellowship breaking of bread, and prayers.

We see a supernatural generosity born in the hearts of the people: They are selling things they valued to help one another, they were loving each other, and as they praised God, verse 47 tells us, "they had favor with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the church those being saved."

IMPORTANT: As you'll quickly see, favor with all the people didn't mean that they were without enemies. It does mean that there was a visible power and love at work that people recognized and affirmed.

Scripture

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV) [16] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Next week, we will see in Chapter 3 that a church that is healthy inwardly will start to minister outwardly. And that's what brings us to our service this morning.

I believe there are seasons in every local church when the Spirit does new work and prepares the people for it. He prepares provision, he sends His Spirit's power, he starts to place burdens on people's hearts, much like Nehemiah's burden for the broken walls of Jerusalem.

Last year, our leadership, pastors, and elders began to pray and dream about what steps of faith God was asking from us and this church in this season.

We discussed additions here at the church, outdoor pavilions, and sanctuary expansions. We discussed the need for stronger discipleship and evangelism. We shared our hearts regarding the gaps in our own city that the church was called to fill.

We knew the call of Jesus, to preach the gospel and make disciples of all people. We know the heart of God, that He uses His church as an extension of His hands, feet, and voice to the world in darkness. We just didn't specifically know what opportunities and strategies would be in front of us.

The Lord gave me Revelation 3:8 to the church in the province of Asia Minor, Philadelphia.

Scripture

Revelation 3:8 (NKJV) [8] "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name."

I've said it before, but my heart read that and desired to be the kind of church that, even with a little strength, would keep His word and not deny His name. I believed that He had promised to set before us an open door.

So let me tell you the punchline, then I'll back up:

Custom

The Vision: an open door With a fully unanimous and excited decision, our leadership team approved the purchase of the old YMCA building in downtown Saint Joe. God has burdened us for our city, and the Y will become the Grace Community Center (new exterior) downtown. This 30,000 square foot (2 entrance images), three-story facility was once considered the heartbeat of Saint Joseph downtown and drew countless people day after day and week after week. There are already people in our church whom God has been placing to help us launch a multifaceted, gospel-centered effort to change the trajectory of families and a city, starting there. Over the next 3-5 years, our plan is to launch several key ministries that will be a part of Grace's DNA: A community event center and worship space for ministries and churches. A daycare that will not only minister to children but also connect broken, struggling families to mentorship, training, and ultimately Jesus and His church family. Community sports programs include basketball, pickleball, and volleyball. Community support for the special needs population. A small coffee shop. A fully functioning food pantry. A Christian biblical counseling center. And, Lord willing, starting the fall of next year, a full CBI (Calvary Bible Institute) campus where we will bring 20-30 students a year from all over the country to serve in Saint Joseph, and be trained in the Word of God for ministry.

I believe Grace, and all of us who make up this church family, have been placed here, as Queen Esther was told in Esther 4:14, "For such a time as this." And I believe it is only the beginning of the vision the Lord gave us a number of years ago about the church becoming the center of the community again, and the people of God walking in their rightful place of changing life for the glory of God.

Scripture

Nehemiah 2:17-18 - Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach... So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work.

Today, I am asking you, church, "Will you rise up and build?" We have seen the good hand of God upon this. What started as a prayerful and faith-filled offer on a building, which was initially declined for a higher offer, turned into God moving hearts, changing circumstances, and us joyfully, but surprisingly, taking ownership of a facility that could be key to changing an entire section of the city god has called us to.

Application

In the days to come, you will hear from our leaders. This vision wouldn't be possible without an amazing team of people who have bent over backward, worked days and nights, and looked with eyes of faith. I simply have the privilege and joy to tell you about it.

Custom

"We are building a center of hope in the heart of our city, so that every person in Saint Joseph has a chance to encounter the living God and the love of His people."

A Center for outreach, youth, and community presence. The church is going to the city, not just waiting for the city to come to us.

Main Point

Point 1

Practical Details

As you can imagine, we've had to work hard to put together a multi-year, multi-phased plan. A large part of that plan is staffing a community center of that magnitude. What we didn't realize at the time was that God, right among our staff, had already been preparing the heart, life, and season of the man who would become the center director.

This initially terrified me until I saw God's undeniable hand on the entire situation. You know Pastor Dan Blakeley from the exceptional children's ministry here at Grace. Dan has a background in Social Work, and we've always seen how sincere and passionate his heart is for the community through the ministry he does in the schools and underserved neighborhoods.

When I initially talked with Dan about this possibility, it was clear that it was unexpected, but at the same time, there was a peace that passes understanding that made it feel like it was the plan the entire time.

Through much prayer, we are excited to announce that Pastor Dan will continue on staff at Grace Calvary Chapel as the new director of the Grace Community Center. And of course, God in His grace had already been preparing the man who would take Dan's place as our new Children's ministry director, Korey Dennis.

More on that in a moment. But before I invite Pastor Dan up to share, I want to honor him. Dan is my friend. He is humble, genuine, creative, diligent, and hardworking. He loves Jesus and has an unwavering love for people. Men like Dan are rare. He's a good and faithful husband and father. And I found out, just this week, that today marks Dan's 20-year anniversary serving at Grace! He deserves our honor and gratitude for His service, and for his continuing service in this new season and role. Let's welcome pastor Dan!

THE CENTER DIRECTOR: Pastor Dan (12-15 min)

Josh introduces Korey Dennis: Pastor Dan (12-15 min):

Went through my pastoral leadership training course. Faithfully serves in children's ministry His wife, Whitney, is a rockstar in our nursery, and he has two precious children, Evie and Beckham. Let's invite Korey to share a few words before we pray for him and his family.

Main Point

Point 2

Dedication and prayer

ELT and pastors come forward to pray for Korey.

Custom

Pastor: Father, we come before You as Your people grateful for Your grace and dependent on Your power. Lord, unless You build the house, we labor in vain. So today, we surrender our plans to You and offer You our hearts. Congregation: We come before You, Lord, in humility and faith. Build Your work among us. Lead us by Your Spirit, and establish what is done for Your glory. Pastor: Thank You for what You have done among us—for the gospel preached, for lives changed, and for the unity You are building in this church. You have set before us an open door, and we choose to walk through it in faith. Congregation: Here we are, Lord—we will rise and build. Strengthen us to walk through the door You have opened. Pastor: Give us a burden for our city. Break our hearts for the lost and hurting. Make us a church that goes—not just waits. Congregation: Send us, Lord, into our city. Make us Your hands and feet. Let Your light shine through us. Pastor: Let this work be filled with Your presence. Not just a building, but a place where people encounter Jesus, experience Your love, and hear the truth of the gospel. Congregation: Let Your presence dwell among us. Use this work to save souls, restore families, and glorify Your name. Pastor: Unify us, Lord. Give us willing hearts, generous hands, and strength for the work ahead. Provide for every need, and keep us faithful to Your Word. Congregation: Make us one, Lord. Give us faith to trust You and obedience to follow You. We will serve You with gladness. Pastor: Strengthen our hands for this good work. Congregation: We arise, by Your Spirit, for such a time as this. All Together: In Jesus' name, Amen.

Closing Song — A unified plea and bold proclamation of moving forward in Christ.

FOLLOW-UP NOTE

What's next: a printout and QR code that pastor Josh announces:

Bookmarks with QR code and a slide with website information: give/volunteer
Second Sunday, April 12 we will host an open house tour and evening of prayer and dedication at the facility. More info to follow. Where to give toward the project. Your prayerful generosity is requested as the Lord leads you. We are amazed at how He's provided, and do not doubt that He will continue to provide for the many financial needs attached to this project. Tonight at 6:00, we will meet here for our annual church business meeting. We will go over more of the financial picture of the church, as well as have a more detailed Q&A with our leaders, and give you an opportunity to hear more.