

“It is so easy to think that the church has a lot of different objects – education, building, missions, holding services ... The church exists for no other purpose but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other reason.” C. S. Lewis

I Could Have Had A V8!

I stumbled onto this quote this week. I read it and immediately wished I had the eloquence of C.S. Lewis. He writes in a small paragraph what I was attempting to say in last week’s message. He succinctly writes in 84 words what I stumbled around trying to communicate for roughly ten minutes. But I am so thrilled he wrote these words, and I am equally thankful that God allowed me to unearth them.

This is what I was attempting to say when I was baring my soul before you about not wanting buildings, large staffs and any other bells and whistles that we have all grown so accustomed to within the church.

Have you ever hit yourself in the head and said, “I could have had a V8?” For the younger among us, that is a commercial that was quite popular in the 1980’s. In the commercial people were drinking beverages other than the thick disgusting V8 juice which was being advertised (the *thick disgusting* editorial is mine and was not included in the original commercial). Once these misguided beverage hounds were handed a bottle of V8 juice, or they would find one in the back of the refrigerator they would invariably hit themselves in the head and exclaim, “I could have had a V8.”

Since being led into beginning a new church I have had several, “I could have had a V8” moments. Probably one of the most significant revelations that has come to me is the idea of being the church without anything. You know what I mean? We do not have a building to call our own, no offices, no big staff, no maintenance and upkeep, no slick “show” at our services, etc. What we do have is, The Triune Godhead, the Word of God and each other. I not only think that this is enough, I think it has the makings of becoming an instrument in the hand of God to make a big difference in our community and around the world. You see, C.S. Lewis is right; the only reason we are to exist together is to draw men to Christ and make them little Christs.

Since I said that last Saturday evening, I have had several conversations with folks who have all asked me virtually the same thing, “Aren’t we going to want our own property and building sometime? You probably will need to hire some more staff at some point, right? If we do not have a great facility, will anyone want to come be a part of GCBC?” My answer to most of these thoughts has been, “I do not know.” In other words, maybe we will get a building some day and yes, maybe we will add some bells and whistles. My fear is not so much that we have these accoutrements, but that they *become* us and/or *distract* us.

Hear me, it is my heart’s desire that we become known to each other and in the community as a group of odd people who love more than any other group or organization in this

community (I am pretty sure we have the “odd” part down already ☺). When someone asks about Grace Community Bible Church I hope we are not simply known as that church at such and such address, but rather, that unusual church that really reaches out to the hurting. I am not sure how much time I have left, and frankly, neither do you. As I type I am thinking that perhaps this email might not reach you before Jesus comes to get us. This is why the psalmist writes, *“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”* (Psalm 90:12) The Apostle Paul felt urgency in his life and ministry as well. This is why he writes such exhortations as these, *“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.”* (Rom 13:11) *“Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!”* (Ephesians 5:16, THE MESSAGE) *“Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.”* (Colossians 4:5)

So here is what we should be praying for each other, that we would number our days, make the most of every opportunity and live wisely toward all of those who do not know Jesus. I just do not want to have to say, “I could have had a V8” ever again!

Finally, just for perspective, remember the words of Winston Churchill, *“I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.”*

Give it some thought. I love you.

Tony