"A New Name" 6/27/10 9 & 10:45 am
Series, *"What's in a Name?"*

FBC History - Part 2

Last week we gave a brief sketch of the first 50 years of FBC, Modesto.

We saw two primary characteristics: 1) a consistent focus on expanding the Kingdom of God in Modesto, and 2) perseverance through spiritual, emotional and economic challenges.

In 1967 an amazing new era in the life of FBC began. But that year didn't begin very well.

The annual report, written at the end of 1967, included these words: "At the beginning of the year, our church was disheartened by the aftermath of a congregational division over personnel. The departure of our Minister of Christian Education in mid-1966 was followed by the resignation of our pastor early in 1967."

FBC was a disheartened, divided congregation. There were several leaders, however, who were unwilling to quit or accept the current situation.

After a thorough search for a new pastor whose philosophy of ministry focused on evangelism and discipleship, Pastor Bill Yaeger was called to be the pastor of FBC, Modesto. He began in August of 1967.

In his 24-year tenure as senior pastor, the church grew in average weekly worship service attendance from 200 to 2,237 in 1991.

Surrounding himself with capable fellow-pastors (as many as 24 in the 1980's) and hundreds of committed leaders, FBC became known around the nation and world as a church where God was powerfully at work. Pastor Bill Yaeger was an unusually gifted leader. A leader of leaders, an equipper of fellow pastors. He was greatly supported with the quiet strength of his wife, Barbara.

Some of the extraordinary accomplishments of this time included:

- The first full-time youth pastor in the county, Bill Stewart. Under his leadership, thousands of students were led to Christ and discipled. Many youth interns were sent out into vocational ministry and are still serving today.

- Under the umbrella of Pastor Yaeger's leadership,

Peter Johansen established small Home Bible Study groups where thousands of people gathered weekly for prayer, Bible study, sharing of their lives, outreach and the application of God's word to their lives.

- Peter also pioneered Visitation Evangelism classes where thousands were equipped to share their personal testimony and present the Gospel as a way of life, while personally visiting church visitors.

- Across all areas of ministry, hundreds of leaders were trained, including 103 who were deployed into full-time Christian ministry in the US, and in several countries around the world including:

Singapore
Australia
New Zealand
England
Canada
India (Ian and Colleen Robertson)

- The "Institute of Church Imperatives," a conference to equip ministry leaders was the brain-child of Loyal Friesen. It began in October of 1971 due to the number of pastors who were calling FBC, wanting to learn church growth and management principles. The Institute continued for 18 years. Over that time 47 ICIs were conducted, training more than 9,000 pastors and key laymen from the USA and around the world.

- Music and drama ministries flourished under the writing and direction of Lin Sexton, Bill Yaeger's daughter. Tens of thousands of people were exposed to the Gospel through these presentations.

- Bud LaCore was instrumental in the development and expansion of church properties and facilities, including the Worship Center, the Family Life Pavilion, The Point and the Children's Ark. He also worked hard to keep the church in good financial standing: all bills paid in full and on time.

- Ron Blanc was Pastor Yaeger's preaching partner for 17 years. Their differing styles and gifts complemented one another and greatly encouraged and equipped the congregation.

- Beyond all these accomplishments are the number of people who turned to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We'd now like to have you participate in the telling of our congregation's history, from today back to the earliest point of anyone who is here this morning.

"Stand Up"

1. Stand up if you found faith in Christ through the ministry of this church.

2. Stand up if you have been a student in Student Ministries at this church.

3. Stand up if you've taught or helped in Sunday School here.

4. Stand up if you've sung in youth or adult choirs here.

5. Stand up if you've been in a small group Bible study of some kind here.

6. Stand up if you've participated in evangelism training and outreach of some kind.

7. Stand up if you've worked in Kid Country here.

8. Stand up if you've served in Monday Night Church.

9. Stand up if you've been part of the *Edge* or the *Family Room*.

10. Stand up if you've been in a play or musical.

11. Stand up if you've been to Camp Chinquapin.

12. Stand up if you've served as a volunteer in any area.

13. Stand up if you've been on a missions trip as part of our World Outreach ministry.

14. Stand up if you have served as a leader in any capacity.

15. Stand up if more than one generation of your family is or has been part of this church.

16. Now, I'd like you to think for a moment, how long have you been a part of this church? Take a second and figure the number of years.

Now, stand up if you've been part of this church for 0-5 years... 6-10 years... 11-20 years... 21-30 years... 31-40 years... 41-50 years... 51-60 years... and this is our last one: *more than 60 years!*

LET'S GIVE GOD A CLAP OFFERING FOR ALL HE'S DONE IN OUR LIVES AS A CHURCH FAMILY!

What we have done the past few weeks in recounting our history is something like what God did in Hebrews 11; as He recounted the faith and perseverance of the family of faith prior to Jesus' coming.

And, then, with that history given, He challenges us ...

READ Hebrews 12:1-2a **"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**
2 **Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith ..."**

INTRODUCTION

This morning we will share with you what the pastors and deacons are recommending as the new name for this congregation. This name was recommended by several in the church family, and selected by the pastors and deacons. It is a name rich in meaning that clearly expresses our heritage, mission and calling.

I'd like to reveal the new name one word at a time ... not for the sake of suspense ... but to enable us to understand its meaning step-by-step, word-by-word.

So, within the next 20 minutes or so, you will know the name. Please stay with me each step of the way, to grasp its significance.
OPEN to Colossians 1 (**PAGE** 1831)

As a church, we are called to ...

1. The CROSS of Jesus Christ

The cross is the most recognized symbol for Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. This is true anywhere you go; anywhere in the world where the faith has taken root.

This is not new nor is it some passing fad.

Although in the first century a cross instilled fear and loathing in the hearts of common people, for those who believed in God's purpose for the death of Jesus, it soon became the central symbol of the faith.

In Matthew 20:18-19, Jesus told His disciples of His coming sacrifice: **"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death**
19 **and will turn Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and *crucified*. On the third day He will be raised to life!"**

This idea was so foreign to them, so strange, that they could not grasp it.

But, after Jesus' resurrection, after He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, after He sent the Holy Spirit to fill their lives and enlighten their understanding, they preached and penned words that the Spirit inspired. Words that clearly explained the significance of the cross of Jesus Christ:

A. Through the cross of Jesus, we have been reconciled with God:

READ Colossians 1:19-20 **"For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him** (Jesus)**,**
20 **and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on Earth or things in Heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross."**

READ Colossians 2:13-15 **"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,**
14 **having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross.**
15 **And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."**

Through faith in Jesus, by believing that He died for our sins on the cross, and that He was raised to life again, we have peace with God. He forgives our sins and adopts us into His family. We become His children.

Romans 8:1 **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

A. Through the cross of Jesus, we have been reconciled with God

And as powerful as that is, and as complete as it may sound, there is more.

B. The cross of Jesus calls us to become like Jesus Himself

Matthew 16:24-25 **"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.**
25 **For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it.'"**

When the disciples heard Jesus speak these words, there was a clear picture in their minds.

"If anyone would follow Me, he must deny himself, <u>he must die to his own plans and desires for his life</u>, and <u>follow Me</u>."

To **"take up"** one's **"cross"** was to die. The cross was a means of death. We are called to die to ourselves and live for Jesus, just as Jesus died to Himself and lived for the will of His Father.

<u>The cross is the call to become like Jesus Himself</u>:

Philippians 2:5-8 **"<u>Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus</u>:**
6 **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be *held on to*,**
7 **but *emptied Himself*, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.**
8 **And being found in appearance as a man, <u>He humbled Himself</u> and <u>became obedient to death – even death on a cross</u>!"**

"<u>Your</u> attitude should be <u>the same</u> as that of <u>Christ Jesus</u>... <u>He humbled Himself</u> and <u>became obedient to death</u> – <u>even death on a cross</u>!"

<u>The cross is the call to become like Jesus</u>!

Galatians 5:24 **"<u>Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature</u> with its passions and desires."**

1 Peter 2:24 **"<u>He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree</u>** [the cross]**, <u>*so that*</u> <u>we might die to sins and live for righteousness</u>..."** [i.e., *become like Jesus*]

Galatians 2:20 **"<u>I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me</u>. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."**

The cross is a call for all who have believed the message that the cross has reconciled us with God, to now take up their own crosses and become like Jesus Himself.

And with this understanding, The Cross of Jesus Christ is the central point of the Christian life.

As a church, we are called to ... **The CROSS of Jesus Christ**

As a church, we are called to ...

2. POINT to the Cross

When we enter a relationship with God through faith in Jesus, we become His witnesses, His Ambassadors, representing Jesus and pointing people to Him.

*We **point** people to the cross because the cross of Jesus makes a profound **point***: Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is God's only provision for people's sin. There is no other way! Only through Jesus can people be forgiven and enter into a relationship with God.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 **"But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,**
24 **but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."**

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 **"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel - not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.**
18 **For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."**

We point people to the cross of Jesus because Jesus Himself is the point of life!

As a church, we are called to ... POINT to the Cross

As a church, we are called to ...

3. Community

We are a community *within* a community.
We are a community of followers of Jesus living within a community that desperately needs to hear the message of the cross of Jesus ... and to experience that message when they experience us ... when we gather here on Sundays and through the week, and out where we live most of our lives.

*We are called and commanded by our Lord Jesus to live in authentic Christian **community** for the sake of the **community** in which we live*. Jesus said:

> John 13:34-35 **"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.**
> 35 ***By this*** **all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."**

The night before Jesus died He prayed for His disciples. And, then, surprisingly, amazingly, He prayed for you and me:

> John 17:20-21, 23 **"My prayer is not for them alone** *[His disciples]***. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message,**
> 21 **that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.**
>
> 23 **... May they be brought to complete unity *to let the world know* that you sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me."**

For the sake of our community and of our world, we must take up our crosses to die to ourselves so that we can love one another.

Without authentic Christian community, the world will not hear an authentic message. They will only hear one more message that promises to make life different, but doesn't deliver.

Our lives together authenticate the message we proclaim.

As a church, we are called to ... Community
As a church, we are called to be the ...

4. Church

The word "church" in the days of the Jesus meant an ***assembly***, ***a gathering*** **of people** *called to a purpose*. Sometimes it was a political gathering, sometimes religious.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, **"I will build My church."**

"I will build My assembly. I will build the gathering of My people."

The **church** is ***a gathering*** *of people who follow Jesus*.

- Jesus is the One for Whom we gather.

- He is the One Who rescued us from sin and death and mere human existence.

- We have been called out of the world to follow Him, to become like Him, and to be His people.

- We have been gathered together by Jesus Himself to glorify the Father, to serve Him and one another, to gather refreshment and strength and equipping to carry the message about Jesus to the world, and to live that message in the world.

We are Jesus' church.

CONCLUSION

We were Jesus' church when we began in December of 1902 as First Baptist Church, Modesto, and we are Jesus' church today.

We are Jesus' church this morning as I present this new name, and we will be Jesus' church next week when I believe, based on the overwhelming response to date, we will agree to re-name ourselves *"CrossPoint Community Church."*

And as those who went before us consistently proclaimed the cross of Jesus, so shall we. As those before us pointed to Jesus, so shall we.

As those before us took up their crosses to follow Jesus, by God's grace, so shall we!

CONCLUSION

Next week the pastors and deacons will ask you to affirm the selection of this name in the form of a vote.

The vote is affirming that you believe this name is a name that honors God and reflects what we are to be about as His church.

"Father in Heaven, thank You for the meaning of names, and for this new name. I open my life to Jesus. I believe He died for my sins and was raised life again. Please help me to live the life of Jesus with fellow believers and this community! In Jesus' name, Amen."