

The Heart Beat of God throughout History:  
An Old Testament Plan for a New Testament Church  
Psalm 71:14-19

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**Introduction:** Today is a day to revisit our mission and core values. We really cannot do this enough. People are joining our church all the time. In addition, we need to recommit to God's plan for our church.

**Text:** 14 But I will hope continually,  
And will praise You yet more and more.  
15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness  
And Your salvation all the day,  
For I do not know *their* limits.  
16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;  
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

17 O God, You have taught me from my youth;  
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

18 Now also when *I am* old and grayheaded,  
**O God, do not forsake me,  
Until I declare Your strength to *this* generation,  
Your power to everyone *who* is to come.**

19 Also Your righteousness, O God, *is* very high,  
You who have done great things;  
O God, who *is* like You?

**Introduction:** On an August evening in 1999 Mindy Padrick pressed her ear to the chest of Roy and listened to her son's heart. No, Roy was not Mindy's son. Rather, Roy was the recipient of Mindy's son's heart. Mindy's son, 21 years old, had died in a tragic accident. Mindy would say, "I just had to listen to my son's heart." This kind of reunion happens over and over again because of organ transplant surgeries. As I think about Mindy's words, I think, "What does God hear when he listens to my heart?" I pray that He could put His ear to my chest and hear the "heartbeat of His Son, Jesus."

Every church has a heartbeat. For some, their heartbeat is size. They just want to be larger or, in some cases, smaller. For some churches, the heartbeat is music. For others, the heartbeat is their own pleasure. (And on and on we could go.) If we want to be God's church, our heartbeat must be His heartbeat—and His heartbeat is for the world to know Him.

Psalm 71 certainly shows David's struggle in his fleeing from Saul. But, in the midst of this plea for God to protect him, we see a wonderful reminder of the heartbeat of God from the voice of David.

Our church has this as its purpose or mission statement: “Know Him and Make Him Known.” All that we do should be scrutinized by this statement. To carry out this mission, I have presented to you four core values. Let’s look at these core values again.

### **Core Value 1: We must preach the same Gospel.**

Here is the foundation of the vision. Salvation is only through Jesus Christ! If this is not true, then there is no reason for the church—no reason to be here this morning.

Now, some people are going to say, “What gives you the right as Christians to say that Jesus is the only way to salvation?”

How do we know that Jesus Christ is as He said, “the way, the truth, and the life?”

#### The Person of Christ

#1 He is fully God.

#2 He is fully man.

*Since Jesus is both Divine and human He is the only one capable of being our Savior.*

2 Corinthians 5:21, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

#### The Problem of Sin

The second thing we need to talk about is the problem of sin. Jesus is the only way to salvation because of the problem of sin. As Isaiah said, as is recorded in Isaiah 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God.” Sin creates a barrier between God and us. This is a barrier that cannot be climbed by church membership, baptism, being good, or anything else. The law could not solve the problem of sin. Sacrifice could not solve the problem of sin. Being good could not solve the problem of sin. The problem of sin could only be solved by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who we already have said was fully God and fully man.

#### The Passion of the Cross

The next thing we need to talk about is the passion of the cross. The truth is this: If there is another way, then we must ask the question “why the cross?” If Christ is just one way among many, then why the cross? Why the painful agony of the cross?

### **Core Value 2: We must declare this message to the next generation.**

*Command of God from the beginning is to reach the next generation.*

The reason that it is imperative to reach the next generation is to recognize that “reaching the next generation” is a God-given command from the beginning. Consider with me a few key texts.

- Deuteronomy 6:7 *And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*
- Joshua 4:21-24 *21 Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' 22 then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; 23 for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, 24 that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."*
- Judges 2:10-11 *10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;*

As we read the Old Testament, the failing of Israel was not that the first generation disobeyed, it was that they failed to pass their faith to the next generation. As has been said many times before me, "We are only one generation away from extinction."

So, we must find ways to reach this new generation.

If we believe in the reality of Heaven and Hell, how could we not be willing to do whatever it takes to make sure we communicate effectively the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

How important is this? Some of you have heard these things before, but I think it is good that we hear them again.

George Barna concluded that, "those between the ages of 5 and 13 have a 32 percent probability [of accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior]; individuals in the 14 to 18 age range have a 4 percent probability; and people between the ages of 19 and death have a 6 percent chance. In other words, we have the greatest window of opportunity for reaching people with the gospel before they reach their teenage years. The chances of seeing their spiritual life change after that point are relatively slim."<sup>1</sup> Parents, you have an obligation to reach your children.

*This generation can be the catalyst for reaching the world.*

As each of us grows older, some sobering realities begin to be evident. One of those sobering realities is that our time is running out to reach the world. The progression of the text in verse 18 is that we take this message to the next generation, then to everyone who is to come. Here is how this text speaks to me. If we are going to reach the world, some of us have to admit that our best chance is to reach the

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<sup>1</sup> George Barna, *Grow Your Church from the Outside In*.

next generation. It will be them not us that reaches the world. If we are going to be faithful in doing our part to reach the world, we must reach the next generation.

**Core Value 3: We must preach this same Gospel to all the nations.**

There is a progression in the communication of the Gospel. That's why our churches must be missionary training centers.

What is it going to take? Compassion and Commitment. We live in the greatest age of missions.

John L. Smith, former head football coach of Michigan State, in 2001 at the age of fifty-three, ran in the running of the bulls in Pamplona, Spain. You probably have seen video of this crazy event on television. The object of this "game" is simply to stay ahead of the bulls. There are no winners, only losers. Even Smith's assistant coaches were asking, "Coach, What are you going to go and do that for? You are crazy!" How did Smith answer? "Well, the video does have bulls running over people. But *this has been on my top 10 list of things to do before I leave earth*. I'm getting old, and I've decided that I've gotten to the point in my life where if I don't do it now, I'm never going to do it. So, I'm doing it!"

I'm not sure Coach Smith has a full set of marbles, but I do like his rationale. I wish more people would have that attitude that if "I'm going to do something, I might as well go ahead and do it now." What about Smith's statement of his list of things to do before leaving earth? That's a pretty good question, isn't it? What would be on that list for you? We ought to be reminded that James said, "You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." (James 4:14) Whatever we believe God has called us to do, we better go ahead and do.

**Core Value 4: Whatever we accomplish must be all for God's glory.**

I don't really want to be a part of anything if God does not receive the glory.

Remember some years ago, musical artists from various forms came together to produce a song called "We are the World" in order to raise money for famine relief. The director was asked, "How did you direct that group of people? How did you get that group so full of themselves, so full of egos, to come together for such a project? The director said, "It was easy really. We made a sign that we placed above the door of entrance into the studio. The sign simply read: "Leave Your Egos at the Door."

I wonder what we could accomplish if it didn't matter who got the glory.