

"On Mission: Here and Now"

INTRODUCTION – Summary of the Events of (John 20), Reading (Verses 27-31) as the HEART and PURPOSE of the **Resurrection Miracle**. Do You Really Believe? Are You **Sharing Your Faith** with Others?

As your Pastor, I have spent much time in **Prayer** and Strategic Planning for the **Future** of First Baptist Church, Pecos, Texas. Inside your Bulletin, you should find an **Insert** with Color Pictures on both sides, including **Scriptures, Symbols, and Statements** that I have been working on and re-writing for several months. Hopefully, you will take it Home with you and Study it Very Closely again and again. This **Document** represents only the Early Stages of Dreaming and Vision Casting, in Time alone with God. I am asking You to **Join with Me in Prayer**, because this Document is **Broad and General**. However, I believe that if You will PRAY and **Genuinely Make Yourself Available to be Used by God**, then He will Bring to Your Hearts and Minds the **Specifics** that we Need to have God's Plans for this Church and **Our Unique Calling, "Right Here and Right Now,"** for this Church in this Community.

Way back in October and November, I preached a two part message entitled **“What’s New on the Horizon?”** from (Acts 11). This is a passage where God repeatedly gives a clear vision and command to Peter that requires him to break outside of his normal thought patterns to adjust his actions to God’s greater plan for the advancement of the gospel to new people groups through cross-cultural evangelism. Peter’s first response is an absolute **NO!** However, as we read, we watch Peter have to make a decision to step out on faith, in obedience to God, or stubbornly insist that his old traditions are superior to God’s fresh revelations. Fortunately, for all of us Gentiles, **Peter finally does God’s will and stretches far beyond his comfort zone to share the gospel with a Gentile** that God has already prepared ahead of time to be ready for the opportunity to place their faith in Jesus Christ.

We are at just such a **Divine Appointment** and opportunity for Hearing God’s Voice and Seeing His Hand at Work in Our Lives as we **Come Together** to Reach Beyond the Settled Traditions of the Past and Reach Out to every type of Worker related to the **Energy Industry** and All of our Friends and Neighbors in the **Hispanic Community**, for the express purpose of Sharing the Gospel with those that may be different than us by their Job or Ethnicity, but **All Need**

Salvation and Discipleship. Together, let's Look Around Us and Step Out on Faith to Move far Beyond the Normal Ruts and Routines that often Limit our Influence. **God has called us to be Salt and Light, witnesses of the gospel, to All People in this City and beyond.** We are His chosen vessels, as evangelical Christians, to spread the Good News of the Gospel with Everyone from new oil and gas field workers to the ever growing Hispanic population that we are blessed to have in our community.

When you look at that colorful Venn Diagram, with a **Cross** in the Center and a **Heart** around it, I hope you will begin to see each of those Four Overlapping Circles as "**Four Fishing Holes**" where God has given this Church a Unique and Distinctive Calling to be "**Fishers of Men,**" for His Kingdom and His Glory!

On each of the Four Corners, you will find a **Candle** lit in the Darkness, a **Broken Chain** that indicates Jesus' Mission and Ours to set the Captives Free, an **Oil Rig** in Texas that indicates an important dimension of this community, and a **Bible** representing the Eternal Principles for Evangelism and Discipleship that are found in God's Holy Word.

On the Back, you will find a Three Pronged Statement, in Broad and General Outline of **Our**

Unique and Distinctive Calling for "Right Here and Right Now," as we seek to be **On Mission Together**, in this Church and Throughout this Community. Pictures above and below give **Visual Reminders** of the Words of Jesus Himself to Fish for Souls and **Pray to the Lord of the Harvest** that He will Send Workers into His Field. Please understand that this is **Not one Preacher's Personal Opinions**. It is a Clear and Practical **Application** of God's Holy Word to this Church and Community Setting, "**On Mission: Here and Now.**" What we Don't Have Yet are many of the **Specific Ministries** that God Himself will **Lay on Your Individual Hearts** to further help us to **Penetrate** the Darkness of Sin here in Pecos, **Partner** together with Community Leaders and other Churches, to form a Larger Team that **Produces** Mature and Missional Disciples that Multiply here in Pecos, by God's Grace and for His Glory!

Today, on **Resurrection Sunday**, we are using the Theme for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North America, "**On Mission: Here and Now.**" I am so Grateful for this Message, because I am Convinced that God gave it to me, specifically for Today.

The Stories of **Abraham** and **Jonah** both make Unique References to the Resurrection and give a clear **Missionary Mandate** out of the Old Testament.

I. ABRAHAM – “On Being a Blessing”

(Genesis 12, 15, and 22; Romans 3:21-4:5;
Hebrews 11:8-19)

1. “**Step Out!**”
2. “**Fear Not!**”
3. “**Look Up!**”
4. “**Count the Stars!**”
5. “**Demonstrate Faith through Obedience!**”
6. “**Expect a Miracle!**”
7. “**Leave a Legacy!**”

II. JONAH – “Running For God, Not From Him”

(Book of Jonah; Matthew 12:38-41, 16:4 and 21,
28:16-20; Acts 1:8)

1. BEWARE of **Judging** the Sins of **Other Groups and Ethnicities** instead of Obeying the **Specific Assignments** of God.
2. BE SURE to **Listen to God’s Word** for the Purpose of **Developing** a Heart that is Filled with **MERCY**, a Mind that is Focused on

MISSIONS, and Feet that are Willing to **MOVE** Outside of their Comfort Zones to Join God in **Spreading His Message**, for His Glory, to **Every People Group**, Not Just a Select Few.

3. BE ALARMED Whenever You Find Yourself **More Concerned** about Your Personal Luxuries than **Other People's** Eternal Destinies.
4. BE COMMITTED to **Cross-Cultural Evangelism** between the Resurrection and the Rapture.

CONCLUSION – **Twelve Churches** were here recently for a One Day Conference on “**Breaking Down Barriers and Building Bridges to Reach the Hispanic Community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**” That Sunday morning, Jesse Rincones J.D., Executive Director for the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, preached a sermon here in our sanctuary from the book of Acts, entitled “**Around the World and Even Across the Street.**”

That evening is when those 12 Churches Assembled together in our Fellowship Hall for a **Mexican Style Fiesta Buffet** and listened to a Cross-Cultural Missions

Seminar entitled, "**Better Understanding Our Hispanic Friends and Neighbors.**" Mr. Rincones is both an experienced pastor and a licensed attorney at law. People from several churches thanked us for the fine meal and information packed presentation on Different Effective Strategies for Reaching 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Generation Hispanics. Twelve Churches Crossed Cultural, Linguistic, and Denominational Boundaries to Unite in a Prayer-Filled Desire to Work Together in whatever ways possible to Reach this Region in Obedience to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to "Make Disciples of All Nationalities." As the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions so clearly states, We are to be "**On Mission: Here and Now.**"

The Symbols of Easter are not just a **CROSS** and an **EMPTY TOMB**, but also a **FISH HOOK**. At the Beginning of Jesus' Ministry when He was Calling His **Twelve Apostles**, Jesus clearly stated to at least four of them, "Follow Me, and I will make you Fishers of Men." **Immediately**, these men left their Nets, Boat, and Father to Follow Jesus and Fish for Human Souls (Matthew 4:18-22). I ask you, What Sacrifices are you willing to make Immediately to **Follow Jesus and Fish for Men?** At the End of Jesus' Earthly Ministry, He gave what is commonly referred to as **The**

Great Commission in which He tells those same Followers and others with them to “Go therefore and **Make Disciples** of all Nations (literally, **all Ethnicities**), in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” then Assures Them that He will be **With Them**, (and Us), in this Sacred Task, **until the “End of the Ages,”** when He Splits the Heavens and Appears Again in the Sky. At the beginning of the book of Acts, Luke describes one of the final conversations that Jesus had with His Core Group, before Ascending into Heaven. Too often like Us, Jesus’ followers have their focus on the wrong things, asking the wrong questions, and making plans to “be prepared” for the wrong things. But, in (Acts 1:8), **Jesus Refocuses their Attention (and Ours) Back Onto His Kingdom Agenda** and Our Present Assigned Task that He will Hold All of Us Accountable for when we look into His Face. Jesus told those men and women, “**but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**”

In like manner, we are to start Right Here where we are Right Now and **Spread the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ** with our friends, relatives,

and neighbors in Pecos and On Out in **Rippling Concentric Circles of Concern to Every Group in Every Place Wherever We Go, "On Mission: Here and Now."**

As we Prepare for **How to Do** the Right Things in the Right Ways, we should be reminded of "**the Sons of Issacar**, men who understood the times, with **Knowledge** of what Israel should Do" (I Chronicles 12:32). I am **Praying for Men** to Rise Up to the Challenge Who Know well both their **Bible** and their **City**, so that Together we can **Act Obediently to God and His Word** and **Do** what God would have us to Do. In the Days Ahead, we should All Listen for God's Voice and Follow His Leadership. **He will give You Awesome Ministries that I have never even considered.** Hopefully, you will Listen and Act on the ones that God has already laid on my heart too.

In (Esther 4:14), Mordecai is famous for His statement, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position in this Kingdom for such a time as this?"

If we Remain Silent, God will Definitely Raise Up Someone Else to Fulfill the Great Commission

in this City, Relief and Deliverance will Come to the Lost in Pecos from Anyone who is willing to Faithfully Share the Gospel, but someday our doors may close if we say **NO to God's voice, Right Here and Right Now. Just Maybe, **if this Church will get on her Knees and then up on her feet to GO, then she will also GROW**, by God's GRACE and for His GLORY. Isn't it possible that each one of us in this Church and several other Churches too have been placed here in Pecos **Right Here and Right Now**, for the Present Opportunity that God has given us to **Do Cross-Cultural Ministry and Missions**, making the Oil Field and the Gas Field our Mission Fields, while simultaneously Reaching Out in Love and with God's Word to the Greater Hispanic Community?**

FINAL CHALLENGE – Before our Hymn of Invitation, My **Final Challenge and Encouragement** Today comes to You from (Philippians 1:3-6) which states, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of You, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of **Your Participation in the Gospel** from the first day until now. For I am CONFIDENT of this very thing, that He who began a good work in You will perfect it (or bring it to full completion) until the day of Christ Jesus.

The people who are longtime members of this congregation know that this church has suffered setbacks. However, I am CONFIDENT that **If** we will say **Yes** to God, in being “On Mission: Here and Now,” that **God Himself will see to it that the Work He began in this church will be Fully Accomplished, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, until Jesus Returns!**

1. I am Grateful for the Strong and Rich **Heritage** of this church’s PAST.

2. I am Thankful for the **Resources, Leadership, Giving, and Ministries** of this church right now, Today, in the PRESENT.

3. But I also have Hope and a biblical CONFIDENCE that **If we will say YES, Today, to be “Partners in Sharing the Gospel,”** On Mission: Right Here and Right Now, then this same church will not shrink, or close its doors some day and die. Instead, **just as surely as Jesus Rose Up Out of the Grave**, this church Can Experience a “Glorious and Bright Future” too, that God has prepared beforehand for Our TOMORROW.

Yes, the Symbols of Easter are not just a **CROSS** and an **EMPTY TOMB**, but also a **FISHING HOOK**, So that we might be “Partners in the Gospel,” fishing for

Human Souls, obeying Jesus' words "**Follow Me, and I will make you Fishers of Men.**" Today, I need some Deacons and Youth to Help Me Pass Out to You a Gift and Reminder of our Central Task, "Until Jesus Returns." Nobody is being asked to Walk an Aisle, but Please Say "Yes" to the Great Commandments and the Great Commission by Taking this Fish Hook as a Reminder to Love God and Neighbor, Share the Gospel, and Make Disciples, On Mission: Here and Now! (Give fish hooks to deacons and youth.)

As Mike and Bill lead the Hymn of Invitation, I need **Deacons**, Youth, and Maybe Some Other Helpers to Pass Out these Fish Hooks before we conclude this **Resurrection Sunday Morning Service.**

For Anyone Here Today who may be Lost without Christ, Let Me make Sure You Hear the Gospel and Have an Opportunity to Pray and Receive Jesus and be Saved. (See **Pictures** on other Insert.)

I **Invite** You to do Two Things Today, **Get Saved** by Jesus and **Go Fishing** for Jesus, "Until He Returns!" Join Us in being "**On Mission: Here and Now!**"