**John 14:1-4 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4And where I go you know, and the way you know.”**

**Hebrews 11:39 – 12:2 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. 1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**Revelation 7:9-10 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”**

Eighty years – so many have come before us, building a faithful foundation, so we might sit this morning and enjoy this fellowship. Faithful souls endured for Christ, setting self aside and taming personal desires for the body of the church. In 20 years, we’ll look back and realize that the faithful souls who endured for Christ, set self aside and tamed personal desires for the body of the church **is us**. We are the church. We are Christ’s Bride. We are Christ’s Body.

This morning, as we stare into the next 20 years, we’re uncertain of many things – some of us will go on to meet the Lord, perhaps the Rapture will take us all away, but we are completely certain of one thing – **the unchanging nature of our God**.

With that as our focus, I challenge us to do five things every day for the next 20 years, because it’s only through daily devotion that great things happen in the Kingdom of God. I challenge the church to Make the Gospel all consuming, Cling to the Bible, Avoid getting comfortable, Engage our community, and Embrace Ministry Opportunities.

Make the Gospel all consuming – When the Gospel consumes the people, it consumes the church. We must learn it, embrace it, and live it. Turn neither to the right nor to the left. Let the Gospel drive every decision, every ministry, and every event. For the Gospel to consume, we must consume the Gospel. We must internalize it and make Jesus our one and only model. A church that is consumed by the Gospel will still be standing 20 years from today because of the foundation it stands upon.

Cling to the Bible – As we strive to make the Gospel all consuming, we must have an inerrant document to guide our every step. I challenge you to make the Bible your first stop of the day – consuming the word, applying the teachings – feed yourself spiritually. The world seeks to make Truth relative, morals flexible, and how we live a matter of choice. We’ll hear how the world is enlightened, but, let me tell you, the world is in darkness. The world loves darkness and hates light. The Bible casts a bright light into the darkness. So many today live in confusion, but Truth is available and it’s found in the Bible. A church clinging to the Bible will still be standing 20 years from now – for it is founded upon the Rock.

Avoid getting comfortable – A comfortable church never changed the world. It’s when we see the desperation of the lost, feel the discomfort of an encroaching world, hear the lies of a Satan soaked society that the church rises up, insists on the Gospel, and leads others to know Jesus as Lord and Savior. Too many long for comfort, but there is no room for comfort in the church. There is urgency in the Gospel! I’m not speaking of cushioned pews or heated rooms. I’m speaking of a church that no longer feels the need to seek the lost. Jesus ate with prostitutes and tax collectors, touched the diseased, walked among the poor. We too must seek those that society shuns and love them as our Savior loves us. A church that never grows comfortable will be here 20 years from today.

Engage our community – Engage it as it is, not as we wish it to be! Families don’t look like they used to, neighbors are different colors, people from different countries… like Durham and Chapel Hill… are moving in. Engage them! Single parent families need Jesus. Drug recovering children need Jesus. When we insist that only the “fixed” and “well” and “known” sit among us, we cry out to our Savior how wrong He was and we fail to impact the very community He placed us in. You see, He placed us here knowing 2019 as well as He knew 1939, and He wants us to engage 2019 so He will find us Faithful and here in 2039.

Finally, embrace new ministry opportunities – The Gospel must never change, the Bible must never change, but ministry changes, music changes, service styles change. Addiction recovery ministry, grief recovery, divorce support, single parent support – night services on Tuesday to reach weekend workers – food pantries for the hungry – clothes drives for those needing what we have hanging in our closets – a Christian school to teach our young… what will this church look like in 20 years? Jesus knows and we must be Faithful to His lead. Do cars look the same as 1939? Do kitchens look the same as 1939? Why then should church look the same? The Gospel has not changed, the Bible has not changed, Christ has not changed, but ministry must change because ministry is the act of seeking to engage the world and lead people from darkness into light. When Jesus looks, He must find us doing the work He needs in 2019, not doing what was needed in 1939. A church embracing new opportunities will be here in 2039.

Make the Gospel all consuming, Cling to the Bible, Avoid getting comfortable, Engage our community, and Embrace new Ministry opportunities – How will Old Lea Bethel Baptist look in 20 years? Only Jesus knows… we must walk by Faith, not by sight as we make our way into the next 20 years.