

Please note: These are my sermon notes so they are not edited for grammar or spelling and don't always represent full thoughts.



I am very excited about this series which is actually surprising to me. It's a surprise because one of the main purposes of this series is to talk about money. We need to raise money to do the remodeling on the New Building so that we can move into our own space. I hate talking about money. I mostly hate asking for money. In my experience with Church, it too often comes off feeling manipulative and if I'm honest, it's a topic that doesn't only seem manipulative but has actually been abused and left people feeling taken advantage of.

This is especially meaningful to me because one of the reasons that we planted Open Table was to create a community that was inviting to everyone, especially those who have been beat up by church. So we knew that we would be reaching out to people who had heard one too many offering messages and OTCC was hoping to do church in a way that over-churched people would be invited to support without feeling pressured to do so.

And this is exactly what has made this series so fun for me. As the elders of the church discussed our building we all decided that we needed to invite everyone to help support the rehab. As I prayed about how to do that, I felt like I really needed to share the vision of the church with everyone so that we could be 100% up front about who we are and what we're doing as we invite you to give to that cause. Except that part of that vision was to create an environment where we didn't pressure people to give money.

You feel the tension? In order to ask for money I felt like I had to share the vision, part of which was to not ask for money! Yeah, as soon I found myself locked in to that paradox, I was hooked. I knew immediately that this series would be a blast.

So this series is going to be considerably different than most of the studies that we've done in the past. Believe it or not, I don't really plan out most of our studies ahead of time. I dive into them with you and we just study through them together. But this series comes prepackaged. It's a four week series that I have already laid out and outlined we are building up to a special Service on January 27th where I'm going to ask you to obey God by giving or pledging whatever God lays on your heart over the next month.

And our president for this comes from Exodus 35

Exo 35:4 Then Moses said to the whole community of Israel, "This is what the LORD has commanded:

Exo 35:5 Take a sacred offering for the LORD. Let those with generous hearts present the following gifts to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze;

Exo 35:6 blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth;

Exo 35:7 tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather; acacia wood;

Exo 35:8 olive oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant incense;

Exo 35:9 onyx stones, and other gemstones to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece.

Exo 35:10 "Come, all of you who are gifted craftsmen.

Construct everything that the LORD has commanded:

Exo 35:11 the Tabernacle and its sacred tent, its covering, clasps, frames, crossbars, posts, and bases;

Exo 35:12 the Ark and its carrying poles; the Ark's cover—the place of atonement; the inner curtain to shield the Ark;

Exo 35:13 the table, its carrying poles, and all its utensils; the Bread of the Presence;

Exo 35:14 for light, the lampstand, its accessories, the lamp cups, and the olive oil for lighting;

Exo 35:15 the incense altar and its carrying poles; the anointing oil and fragrant incense; the curtain for the entrance of the Tabernacle;

Exo 35:16 the altar of burnt offering; the bronze grating of the altar and its carrying poles and utensils; the washbasin with its stand;

Exo 35:17 the curtains for the walls of the courtyard; the posts and their bases; the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard;

Exo 35:18 the tent pegs of the Tabernacle and courtyard and their ropes;

Exo 35:19 the beautifully stitched garments for the priests to wear while ministering in the Holy Place—the sacred garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to wear as they minister as priests."

Exo 35:20 So the whole community of Israel left Moses and returned to their tents.

Exo 35:21 All whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved came and brought their sacred offerings to the LORD. They brought all the materials needed for the Tabernacle, for the performance of its rituals, and for the sacred garments.

Exo 35:22 Both men and women came, all whose hearts were willing. They brought to the LORD their offerings of gold—brooches, earrings, rings from their fingers, and necklaces. They presented gold objects of every kind as a special offering to the LORD.

Exo 35:23 All those who owned the following items willingly brought them: blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth; and tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather.

Exo 35:24 And all who had silver and bronze objects gave them as a sacred offering to the LORD. And those who had acacia wood brought it for use in the project.

Exo 35:25 All the women who were skilled in sewing and spinning prepared blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen cloth.

Exo 35:26 All the women who were willing used their skills to spin the goat hair into yarn.

Exo 35:27 The leaders brought onyx stones and the special gemstones to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece.

Exo 35:28 They also brought spices and olive oil for the light, the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense.

Exo 35:29 So the people of Israel—every man and woman who was eager to help in the work the LORD had given them through Moses—brought their gifts and gave them freely to the LORD.

Exo 36:1 "The LORD has gifted Bezalel, Oholiab, and the other skilled craftsmen with wisdom and ability to perform any task involved in building the sanctuary. Let them construct and furnish the Tabernacle, just as the LORD has commanded."

Exo 36:2 So Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and all the others who were specially gifted by the LORD and were eager to get to work.

Exo 36:3 Moses gave them the materials donated by the people of Israel as sacred offerings for the completion of the sanctuary. But the people continued to bring additional gifts each morning.

Exo 36:4 Finally the craftsmen who were working on the sanctuary left their work.

Exo 36:5 They went to Moses and reported, "The people have given more than enough materials to complete the job the LORD has commanded us to do!"

Exo 36:6 So Moses gave the command, and this message was sent throughout the camp: "Men and women, don't prepare any more gifts for the sanctuary. We have enough!" So the people stopped bringing their sacred offerings.

Exo 36:7 Their contributions were more than enough to complete the whole project.

So the Parallel is obvious, you have God's people and you have a building project that required money. So Moses called on the people to give and they all gave and it was more than enough.

But there's another aspect of this story that I really want to bring into our study over the next month because it brings the irony into the narrative. See, the people of Israel were living in the wilderness when this offering was taken. They were in barren land. They weren't in a season of planting and harvesting and rolling in abundance. In fact, God was literally hand feeding them every day.

The Israelites woke up every morning to manna laying on the ground. They would collect a days worth each morning and two days worth on Friday so they didn't have to collect on the Sabbath. When they grew bored of three meals a day of manna, God sent flock of quail each evening so

thick that the people could literally grab them out of the air and cook them for dinner. When they would camp too far from water, God would send it flowing from rocks to provide for the people's needs.

And this is the irony. God is literally dropping provision from heaven to care for His people. He's God. He is provision. He is abundance. He is literally all they need. But, when it comes time to provide for the place of worship, God doesn't drop the provision from the sky like He did the manna. He made it rain flour and quail and turned rocks into drinking fountains, He obviously could have made it rain gold and silver and cloth and dye and everything else needed to build the tabernacle. So the irony is that God provides for the people and calls on the people to provide for the Tabernacle.

So as I studied this passage in light of us being in the middle of building our Tabernacle, I realized that this story is about much more than just raising money. This is about the relationship between God and His people. It's about provision, but it's about more than that. It's about the reciprocal relationship of Provision. God gives and we give. I want this dynamic in our month.

So here's what I want to do. Over the next three weeks I'm going to unpack our Vision, I'm going to invite you to buy into that vision but mostly I'm going to ask you to spend the month praying and asking God what your part in our Vision is supposed to be. Like the people of Israel providing for the Tabernacle, we are going to bring whatever God asks us to bring. But that's not the only thing I want this to be about. Because that's only half of the story. I want this to also be about Manna.

So starting tonight, I want each of us to come up with Manna. What do you need? What provision does your family need? What are you asking God for. And this isn't a Ferrari. This is Manna not Steak au Poivre. So what does your family NEED this year? Frame it in a word or a short phrase and over the next month, bring that Manna Word to God. Embrace the reciprocal aspect of provision. We cry out for Manna. We cry out for Quail. We cry out for Water, then we respond overwhelmingly with gifts for the Tabernacle.

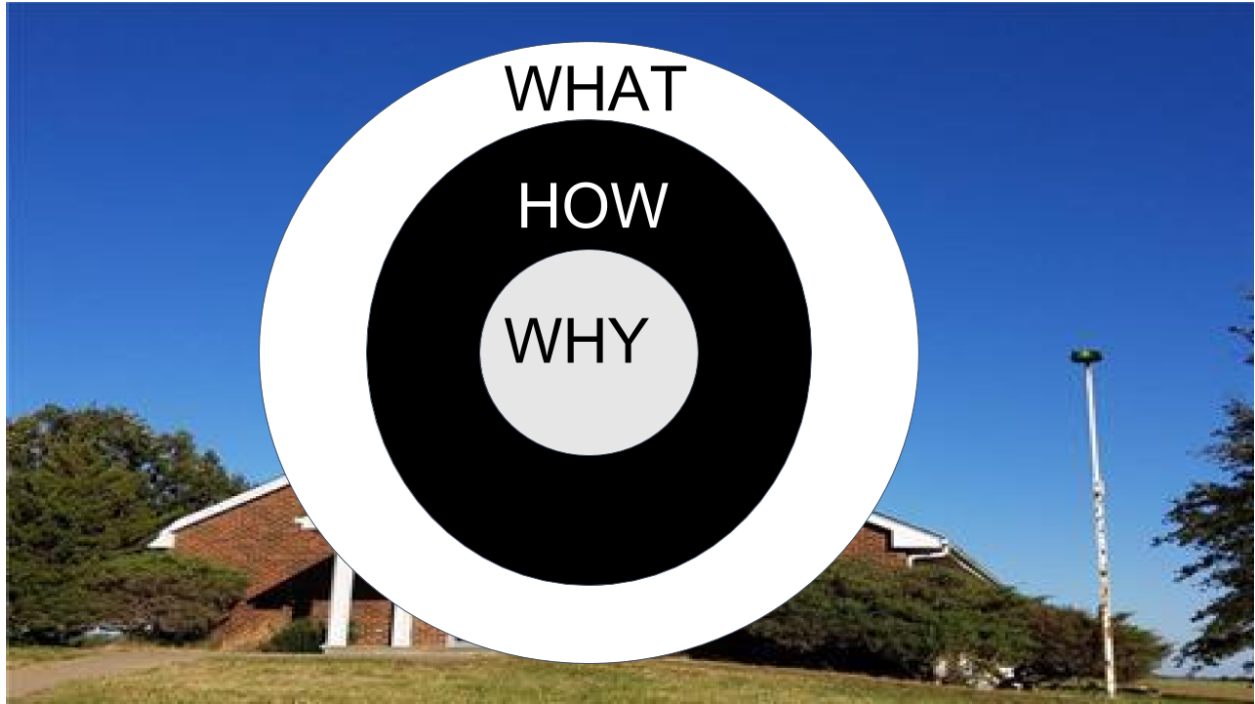
So right out of the Gates, be thinking about your manna. Lock it in and take it to God over the next month.

Now, as we get into our Vision, let's start with our published Vision Statement. This was the very first

language we put to Open Table a little over two years ago and it reads like this...

Open Table Community Church is a community organized by and around the Word of God, to cooperate in the Mission of God of furthering the Kingdom of God. We accomplish this by gathering in worship together around a common teaching and a common table, by living in fidelity to Christ and one another, and by working together to bring reconciliation to the four relationships broken by sin in the Fall.

Honestly, maybe one of my favorite things that I've ever written. But before we can dig into the language, I feel like we have to break down how great Vision works.



Not original with me...

I got this from Simon Sinek

Everyone knows what they do

Some know how they do it

Very Few know why (profit?)

Most go from the outside in, from the thing we know the best to the thing we are most fuzzy on

What makes Apple so successful?

Same access to talent

Same media

Same Material

Apple could say:

WE make great computers,
beautifully designed, simple to use, user friendly,
want to buy one?

This is how most function. WE say what we do, we
explain how we do it and we try to close the sell

Apple actually says:

In everything we do, we believe in challenging the
norm, we believe in being truly innovative and creative,
We innovatively challenge the status quo by making
products that are beautifully designed, simple to use,
user friendly,
and today we are making computers

People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it

This is why we buy a computer or mp3 player or phone or
tablet or watch from apple

Dell made mp3 players that no one bought

Dell made computers (what)

They used good materials and good people (how)

People bought them for their “what”
Why would you buy an mp3 player from a computer company, but that’s exactly what an ipod was

People bought Apple’s “why” so when they changed their “what” no one cared. They bought it.

People will work for a what, they’ll die for a why

Why do Organizations fail?

Lack of capital

Inadequate personnel

Bad market conditions

Samuel Pierpont Langly

\$50,000 from government war department

Seat at harvard and worked for Smithsonian

NYT followed and rooted for him

Wright brothers had no money, an uneducated team, no press

But they did have a belief

Langley wanted money and fame

Wright's team worked for nothing and gave blood sweat and tears.

The day Langley heard about the Wrights had flown, he quit

Martin Luther King gave the I have a Dream speech, not the I Have a Plan speech.

People don't buy **what you do**, they buy **why you do** it

So the first step in understanding and owning OTCC's vision is to catch our WHY.

What is the core value that defines us a church?

And the answer is in the first half of our vision statement...

Open Table Community Church is a community organized by and around the Word of God, to cooperate in the Mission of God of furthering the Kingdom of God.

In short, We Are a Kingdom Community. Our Vision, the reason that we are here. Our "WHY" is to build

community. To connect people. Our first priority is to Create a people who do life together.

Now, some might be shocked to hear that Open Table Community Church's vision isn't first and foremost to glorify Jesus or to Love God and Love People but please bear in mind that there is a difference between the "Why" of an individual and the "Why" of the church Body. I believe you individually should live to glorify Jesus and that you should Love God and Love People, but you should do that whether you are at OTCC or not. The reason we function as Open Table is to do life together. To build Kingdom community.

Esther and I met, dated, got married, and learned to do life in the context of a small group ministry that ruined us for "normal" church. We truly did life together and for the next 20+ years we wondered if you could do Church in a way that was like that. The churches we attended were all either Megachurches or small churches pretending to be Megachurches hoping that one day they would be a Megachurch, and all the while, we were longing to be a part of a people rather than an organization.

We pray every week for our kids that they would never know a day that they don't feel part of the people of God.

That's our desire for all of us. That we would feel a part of a people. That we would feel like despite our theological differences, despite our different convictions, despite our differing level of convictions, despite our differing opinions on politics, despite racial, socio-economic, or gender differences, THESE ARE MY PEOPLE.

The very first thing that God said was NOT GOOD happened before sin ever entered the narrative. God looked at Adam all by himself and "it is not Good for you to be alone". That means that if you lived a perfect life and had a perfect relationship with God and you did it alone, it would not be good.

This is why the Lord's Prayer, that Jesus instructed us to pray, says "OUR Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give US this day OUR daily bread and forgive US OUR trespasses as WE forgive those who trespass against US.

It doesn't say, MY father who are in heaven. Give ME this day MY daily bread.

This life of faith is supposed to be a communal life...

American culture is going the other direction. We have a million imitations for community. We have Coworkers, kids sports team parents, Social Media followings, a million other online communities, but according to all studies, Americans are the loneliest people on the planet. My personal opinion is INDIVIDUALISM is one of America's greatest idols. We literally revere INDIVIDUALISM and it's just unBiblical. We were created for community.

One of the first "STAFF" type positions we filled was to put Brent and Steph in charge of the Connections Ministry. I asked them to daydream about how to keep us connected. I told them that this ministry would undergird every ministry of the church. In everything we would do, we would ask the question, "but how is this leading to deeper connection"

Why does Open Table Community Church exist?
Because **it is not good to be alone.**

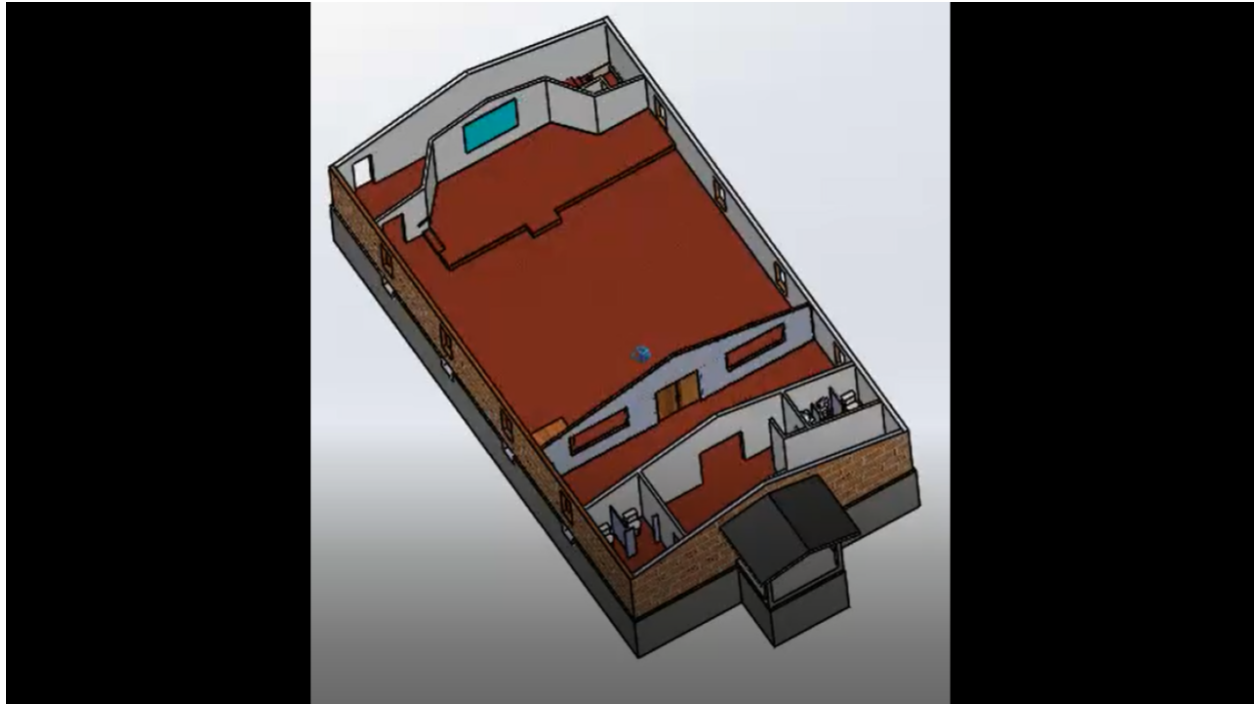
Now, most experts believe that Culture is always value driven. In other words, the atmosphere and ethos of an organization will be created by that organizations "Why". The best organizations are the ones that are able to truly identify and own their why.

We've all been to churches who have a well worded and truly Biblical Vision Statement but it doesn't take long to figure out that the true value at the center of the organization is Growth. That's why they do everything they do. That discontinuity between the declared Purpose of the church (We're here to glorify Jesus and Love God and People) and the Culture that is created by the actual unspoken value at the core of the church (to grow big) can lead to a great deal of frustration and hurt.

So the best organizations are those who allow their true "Why" to shape their Culture in a way that is honest. This means the language we use to describe ourselves must line up with our "Why", it means the activities we engage in must line up with our "Why", and it means the space we create within which to exist must be driven by our "Why".

This last one is very important to us at this time because we are currently creating said space. So, I would love to share with you some of the changes we are making to our building and how our "WHY" is driving those decisions.

(There was a Video of our first walk through of the church and a video of the 3D plans)



One of our first changes is to add a wall in the back of the sanctuary to add more Foyer space.

Now, in this day and age it's counterintuitive when planning a church building for your very first move to be to shrink the sanctuary and offer fewer seats for a Sunday Morning. We made this move because our core "WHY" is not to have a great Sunday morning church service. We want this of course, but our core, driving "WHY" is to have a community. To accomplish this we thought we would need a community space. A space to sit with someone and have a cup of coffee. A space to just be together. A space for great conversations. A space to meet throughout the week and be a people.

Our first impression should be welcoming like a coffee shop.







In fact our Nursing Moms room should be a place where moms can care for their littles during a service but also where two or three moms could have a play date and hangout...



The Young Adult/Cafe 56/Youth room should be the same...



Even the style of our Worship Space is being driven by the Culture we hope to create.

Low Stage

Monastic Decor

Chairs instead of pews

Multi-purpose room for banquets and parties

Which leads to our kitchen



Though the small kitchen would have probably been sufficient, it wouldn't have been us. We expanded it to a

20x12 working kitchen for events and fellowship that suits our “WHY”.

Throughout the rest of our series I’ll be explaining more of the space and how we envision it being used but more than anything else tonight, I want you to catch the “WHY”.

Next week we’re going to talk about the “how”. We’ll discuss the core tenants that we want to be part of everything we do as a people.

Then on week three we’ll talk about the “WHAT”. This will be the week that we dream about the future. It’s the nitty gritty discussion about future events and long term vision and plans.

Then on January 27th, we’ll have a special service to bring our offerings and our Manna Prayers to God.

So How do we respond to this?

Three things...

First, Start to Pray -

Ask God what part you are supposed to play in the vision of OTCC

If you've never prayed a prayer like that, this is a great time to start. Give it a shot.

If you've prayed that prayer before and never really got much out of it, try again.

Spend the month expecting God to speak. Knock, Seek, Ask - and let God do the rest.

Next, Spend the next couple days searching your heart. If you had a Manna. If you had a, I desperately NEED this. Not a want, not a luxury, but a NEED. Not a steak dinner, not Creme brulee and champagne, but MANNA. What would you ask God for. Write that thing down. Don't you dare even consider giving to this church if you don't have firm in your guts that God is the provider. We aren't asking you to buy a time-share here. I'm not selling anything.

Our core value is to be a Kingdom Community. What that means is... we have this reciprocal relationship with God where He meets our needs and we invest to advance His kingdom. Those Go together. So if you are giving, underneath that is the understanding that this is all God's anyway. If I have Manna in this wilderness called Life, then the rest is available to God.

And Third, Spend this month praying for Open Table Community Church. Pray that God would provide for our Vision. We need him to send the right people who will buy into our WHY, we need Him to send resources, and above all else, We need God to send speak to us this month. To move so powerfully in our midst that following becomes easy.