

Catalyst Planning Meeting Wednesday August 28th 5:00-7:15 pm

Christ Covenant Church is developing a plan to fulfill our Vision & Mission. Earlier this year our congregation reflected on our Vision & Mission through a series of Catalyst Sermons and Catalyst Conversations. Then we had a season of prayer. In July we began the process of setting goals for our plan. That process has the following steps: 1) Brainstorming Ideas, 2) Writing a List of Goals, and 3) Prioritizing the List of Goals. Steps #1 and #2 are done. After brainstorming 130 ideas, we grouped them by common themes with some ideas being listed in more than one group. Some of the ideas were stand-alone concepts and were not grouped. We have a list of 54 goals. Not all of the ideas could be addressed as goals, but will be referred to appropriate teams for consideration.



Pick Up a Packet on the Table in the Narthex at Barnwell St.

There is a packet you can pick up at church. This packet contains the 54 goals developed in Step #2. Underneath each goal are the brainstorm ideas that were the basis for that goal. Additionally, ideas that were referred to teams for consideration are hi-lighted.

Join Others at CCC to Prioritize the List of Goals

On Wednesday, August 28, from 5:00 to 7:15, we will complete the goal setting process by prioritizing the 54 goals. This will be accomplished by separating the goals into the following 3 categories.

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| 1. Have to Do | <i>Closest to fulfilling our Vision / Mission. Items viewed as the "best".</i> |
| 2. Ought to Do | <i>Items view as "good".</i> |
| 3. Nice to Do | <i>Items that while important, we are willing to put off.</i> |

A goal that has several facets and might take several years to complete could be placed in #1. On the other hand, there could be a "simple to do goal" placed in #3.

Some groupings of ideas, such as "A" have several goals from A1 to A4. Each one is a separate goal. One person might place all 4 in #1, while someone else might list them separately across the 3 categories.

With the idea "that its better to do a few things well", we are going to limit the number of goals for category #1 to 15, and we'll distribute the rest of the goals into the other two categories.

In the fall we will develop a plan to meet those 15 goals starting in 2020. We might also include some goals from the 2nd category in the plan.

If you have not attended all of the previous goal setting meetings, or you could not make any of them, you are welcome to participate, please come.

To prepare for the meeting on Wednesday August 28th 5:00-7:15, you can do the following: Pick up a packet of the 54 goals; Sign up on the sign up sheet or on the church website; Read Proverbs 16:1 – 3 & 9, praying and reflecting on these verses; Finally, read through the packet and select the goals for the 3 categories.

Dealing with Doubt

Jude tells us to have mercy on those who doubt (Jude 1:22). This is how Jesus dealt with those who doubted before him. There are two kinds of people who doubt. There are those who walk away from God in doubt and those who walk toward God in doubt. The doubter who is fleeing God for the freedom of self is walking into greater darkness. But the doubter, who often feels like they're struggling with their faith, is facing God, and in the midst of doubts, is walking into greater light.

We all face doubts at different times in our lives. Some of us doubt whether our faith is real or not. Some doubt God's goodness. Some doubt the reality of God himself, or the truthfulness of his Word, the Bible. Doubting is a reality if we ever think or feel deeply about the realities of life in this fallen world. Therefore, "have mercy on those who doubt." (Jude 1:22)., Jesus did.

In Mark 9 Jesus meets a man who is wracked by the pains of seeing his son overpowered and possessed by an evil spirit. No one can do anything for him. The man asks Jesus to do something for him, "if he can". Jesus replies, "If I can! All things are possible for one who believes." (9:23). The man immediately cries out to Jesus, "I believe. Help my unbelief." (9:24). At this crucial moment of faith in Jesus there was doubt. When it seemed all that his son needed depended on his strength of faith there was the presence of doubt. He did not walk away from Jesus with his doubts. He faced him in his weakness that he might receive grace and mercy to help him and his son in his time of need. Jesus showed the doubter and his son mercy. He cast the demon from the son restoring him to health and to his doubting father. They saw the glory of Christ in the midst of doubt. Doubters need a merciful Savior who does righteousness, even when they doubt.

In Matthew 11 Jesus says of John the Baptist, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11). This was after John the Baptist had suffered doubts about Jesus. John was in prison and he heard about the things Jesus was doing. He sent word to Jesus through his disciples saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3). This is John who when he saw Jesus as he was baptizing by the river and preaching had said, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." This was the fearless preacher of repentance and faith, who dressed in clothing of camels hair, at locusts and wild honey and lived in desert regions for the glory of God. Jesus said there was no one greater. But for whatever reason while he spent the last days, weeks, and months of his life suffering in prison he had his doubts about if Jesus was really the Messiah. Jesus showed him mercy. He sent word back to him that would align what he was doing with what the prophets had prophesied about him, and then he spoke of his love and admiration for John before others calling them to walk toward God as John did by repentance and faith. When the great man among men born of women, John the Baptist, doubted Jesus showed him mercy. He received more light in his doubts.

In John 20 the resurrected Jesus shows mercy to his doubting disciple Thomas. The other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." (20:25). Jesus had appeared to the women and the disciples but Thomas could not believe in the miracle of the resurrection. This was a doctrine on which the truth of the gospel depended. So, after another weeks time Jesus appeared again to his disciples, and this time Thomas was present. Instead of Jesus rebuking Thomas for his unbelief he showed his doubting disciple mercy. John tells us the story this way, "Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." (20:26-27). In mercy he came right down to Thomas' doubts and gave him what he needed. In this way faith was born anew in Thomas. He never walked away from God in his doubts for freedom in self. And Jesus never abandoned him in his doubts, but went to him showing him mercy. The doubter began to live in the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Dealing with doubts requires mercy. If we will go to God's throne of grace where Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses and doubts, he will give us grace and mercy to help us in our time of need. And so we must be ready to show others mercy who have doubts. We must be patient with them and walk with them toward the living God who gives the grace of faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of our pains and doubts. We must be willing to answer the same questions again and again with those who ask the same questions and struggle with the same doubts. Doubts are natural to the human condition in a fallen world, and God brings his supernatural mercy to doubters.