

Keeping Us Alert with Reminders and Reflection

Thesis: This morning, I want to help us to reflect on what the Lord has been doing in and through us recently. First, I want to share in such a way that we are encouraged in our journey and impact as a church. Second, I want to help us to engage in spiritual disciplines in such a way that we hang in there for the long haul. Third, I want to help us to show up well in a polarized culture.

Text: 2 Peter 1:12-13; Revelation 5:9-10; 1 Peter 3:15

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory ... (2 Peter 1:12-13 NIV).

Because the stakes are so high, even though you're up-to-date on all this truth and practice it inside and out, I'm not going to let up for a minute in calling you to attention before it. 13 This is the post to which I've been assigned—keeping you alert with frequent reminders—and I'm sticking to it as long as I live (2 Peter 1:12-13 MSG).

Nigeria report, Jan. 5-16

1. **Calvary, we have a high calling to partner with the Lord locally and globally.**
 - a. We are here to serve the Lord and to extend the kingdom of God in the nations.
 - i. *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10 NIV).*
 - b. We want people to experience the power of God, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the ministry of the Lord Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:5).
 - c. We long for people to know the name and fame of our God—who God is and what he has done.
 - i. *"And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory. 19 I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and*

Greece, and to the distant islands **that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations**" (Isaiah 66:18-19 NIV).

- d. Our church has been involved in sending teams to the nations for 30 years.
2. **During the conference**, the Lord met with me and surprised me. I would have a question pop into my heart. I wouldn't even have time to pray about the question. Then, one of the speakers would talk about it that day.
3. **We have known Apostles Mosy and Gloria Madugba since 1990.**
 - a. In 1993, Calvary participated in *Praying through the Window*.
 - i. The 10/40 window is where most of the unreached peoples of the world live, from the West Coast of Africa through Japan.
 - ii. This area is where there are unreached peoples living among Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu religions.
 - iii. Churches were asked to adopt a nation for prayer and for a prayer trip. The Lord led us to adopt Nigeria.
 - iv. We fasted and prayed for 30 days as a congregation, asking the Lord to speak to us.
 - v. The youth put together a notebook of the revelation and research which we received concerning Nigeria.
 - vi. Then, we sent a team of 4 people to travel through Nigeria to pray on site with insight.
 - vii. Rev. Mosy hosted us for that trip in 1993.
4. **Rev. Mosy has been involved in evangelism and missions since he was a young man.**
 - a. His heart beats for missions and for prayer.
 - b. In 1990 he was invited to attend a conference at Paul Youngi Cho's church in Korea.
 - i. There, he caught a vision of what the church could do though unity to impact a nation.
 - ii. The Lord would use Rev. Mosy to catalyze pastors and leaders to come together to form the Ministers Prayer Network and to launch the Global Prayerquake Conferences to help the church in Nigeria and beyond to partner with the Lord and one another for the sake of the nations.
 1. MPN and the Prayerquake Conferences started in 1995.
 2. They just celebrated their twenty-fifth silver anniversary this year.
5. **On Thursday of the Prayerquake Conference this year, Apostle Mosy shared the story and history of MPN.**
 - a. I was amazed at the impact that Calvary and I have had on Ap. Mosy, MPN, and the conferences.

- b. Our investment of time, energy, funds, and relationships have deeply impacted our friends in Nigeria and beyond.
6. **As I processed, the Lord reminded me of the impact we have had in many nations since 1990.**
- a. **We have had long term impact** in Latvia, Nigeria, Myanmar, Philippines, India, Guatemala, Germany, Israel, China, Japan, Kenya, England, Hungary, Uganda, Liberia, Peru, Argentina, Chile, other countries in Latin and South America, several Middle Eastern countries, and the list goes on and on.
 - b. **In those nations, the Lord has used us to prepare the way.**
 - i. We are not the only ones being used, but we are a part of what the Lord is doing.
 - ii. And, our part has been significant.
 - iii. Sometimes, I can't see the forest (the big picture) because I am just focused on showing up and serving (in the trees).
 - iv. **The Lord wants to remind us that our praying, giving, and going is making disciples of the nations.**
 - 1. We are preparing the way for the Lord.
 - 2. We are strengthening and equipping local pastors and leaders to partner with the Lord more effectively.
 - 3. **And, we share in the eternal fruit and reward to the glory of God.**
7. **Prayer Vigil at Glory House with Rev. Mosy on Monday, 1'14'20.**
- a. The prayer vigil was amazing as our friends gave 2.5 hours to pray for Calvary and for me.
 - b. Our friends in Nigeria know how to go to war and to fight in the Spirit for breakthroughs and victories.
 - c. Some of the prayer time gave directional prophetic words.
 - d. At other times, they fought for us and said, "It is done."
 - e. I am still processing and transcribing the recording of the prayer time. And, I will work with the Staff and Elders on processing any directional words which we received.
8. **Thank you for praying, giving and going in partnership with the Lord to the nations. Your investments are making an impact for eternity.**

21-Day First Love Fast, Jan. 6 – 26

- 1. **I am so proud of you, Calvary, for stepping up and taking on the 21-Day First Love Fast.**
 - a. As we reflected as Staff, Elders, and Deacons, we were so encouraged.
 - b. We were encouraged with the number of people who participated.

- c. We were so grateful to hear people were talking about the fast, doing it, and sharing with others.
 - d. We were blessed by the community aspect of the fast; it drew us together.
 - e. We were grateful for the level of corporate grace that was evident.
 - f. We were encouraged by the number of kids and youth who participated in some form or fashion in the fast.
 - g. We were encouraged to hear people want to take on a lifestyle of fasting, to keep fasting through the Global Bridegroom Fast (First Monday – Wednesday of each month) and a weekly one-day fast (Mondays).
 - h. The celebration service was a powerful night, a significant corporate experience.
2. **In our times of reflecting, sharing, and giving testimonies, I realized that we needed some pastoral insight.**
- a. For some of us, the fast was a time of experiencing breakthrough, increased intimacy, hearing the voice of the Lord, or getting new grace.
 - i. Others of us didn't feel anything or didn't receive anything we could see, articulate, or identify.
 - 1. That can lead to frustration, disappointment, or discouragement.
 - b. I want to remind us of the purpose of this fast: it was about pursuing deeper intimacy and fuller partnership with the Lord.
 - i. It was about drawing near to our Bridegroom King. It was about pouring our love on the Lord. It was about our declaration: Lord, we need you more than food or these other things.
 - ii. Obviously, there are different reasons for different kinds of fasts. Mike Bickle talks about 7 types of fasting in his e-book, [*The Rewards of Fasting*](#).
 - c. Sometimes when we practice spiritual disciplines, our focus is on us: what we get out of it and what God does in us.
 - i. That isn't necessarily wrong. God does reward us when we seek him, and he does great work in and through us.
 - ii. *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. **A man reaps what he sows.** 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; **the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.** 9 **Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up** (Galatians 6:7-9 NIV).*
 - iii. *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and **that he rewards those who earnestly seek him*** (Hebrews 11:6 NIV).

- d. **But, I want to remind us that we are here first to minister to the Lord, to love the Lord, to respond to what he is doing.**
 - i. *My sons [and daughters], do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense (2 Chronicles 29:11 NIV).*
 - ii. ***You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth"* (Revelation 5:10 NIV).**
 - iii. *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33 NIV).*
- e. **This fast was about the Lord, us pouring our love on him.**
- f. **And, when we practice the spiritual disciplines relationally, there is impact in our lives, whether you see it immediately or not.**
 - i. When we sow to the Spirit, we will reap life (Galatians 6:7-9).
 - ii. When we practice the spiritual disciplines in a relational way, we create capacity and grow our spiritual muscles.
 - 1. It's like doing exercise. This time I did 50 pushups. Next time, I can do 52 pushups.

How to show up well in a polarized culture.

1. Recently, I was very proud of how some of my friends responded to a recent post I made on Facebook.
 - a. I normally don't post about controversial subjects, but I did this time.
 - b. I was grateful for the responses. Instead of attacking, condemning, or judging, people responded well, thoughtfully, and energetically.
2. That experience reminded me to share some words of encouragement with you.
 - a. I want us to show up well in a polarized society.
 - b. I want us to think about what to say when we post in response to other people on social media like Facebook or Instagram... or, when we reply to an email.
3. **The principle of differentiation:** be the individual God has called you to be--share what you think, feel, and believe— and choose to stay connected with others when they share what they think, feel, and believe.
 - a. Too often, we want to share, but we don't give the same right or opportunity to others.
 - b. Or, when others do share, we disconnect from them because they don't think, feel, or believe like we do.
4. **How we approach conversations and topics online can close the door for sharing the gospel or can hurt our witness as ambassadors for Christ.**
 - a. You have a choice to make in your comments.
 - i. You can comment in a way to honor and love others well.

- ii. You can share well in gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).
 1. *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect... (1 Peter 3:15).*
 - iii. Or, you can share in a harsh way, seeking to win an argument, to prove a point, to shame people, or to correct others in a harsh, condescending way.
 - b. When I am posting or responding to others, I want to be reflective (thoughtful), not reactive. I am not always living into that value, but I am working on it.
5. **What is the higher value for when you post online? What are your guiding principles?**
- a. Are you seeking to respond well?
 - b. Are you seeking to love well?
 - c. Are you seeking to ask good questions and to learn where other people are coming from?
 - d. Or, do you fall into judging, correcting, and fixing others?
 - e. Are you being reactive or reflective (thoughtful)?
 - f. How we show up and how we respond on Facebook, on Instagram, and in emails and texts are important.
6. **Here is something I wrote about showing up well in a polarized world** (*Love Trumps Hate* sermon, 4'23'17).
- a. Not only do we live in a broken world, but we live on a battlefield. We think that our enemy is flesh and blood, when the Scripture teaches us differently. (See Ephesians 6:10-18). Listen to this excerpt from the CS Lewis classic, *The Screwtape Letters*.
 - i. The plot and characters of *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis are used to address Christian issues, primarily those to do with temptation and resistance to it. The story takes the form of a series of letters from a senior demon, Screwtape, to his nephew, Wormwood, a junior tempter. The uncle's mentorship pertains to the nephew's responsibility in securing the eternal doom of a British man known only as "the Patient."
 - ii. *My dear wormwood, be sure that the patient remains completely fixated on politics. Arguments, political gossip, and obsessing on the faults of people they have never met serves as an excellent distraction from advancing in personal virtue, character, and the things the patient can control. Make sure to keep the patient in a constant state of angst, frustration, and general disdain towards the rest of the human race in order to avoid any kind of charity or inner peace from further developing.*

Ensure the patient continues to believe that the problem is "out there in the 'broken system' rather than recognizing there is a problem with himself. Keep up the good work, Uncle Screwtape. (Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis.)

- b. In the midst of a troubled, polarized, judgmental, and fearful culture, I am working on showing up as my best self. With the Lord helping me, I want to show up as a person who listens well, who connects deeply, who labors faithfully for good, and who loves unconditionally. I have a long way to go, and am learning a lot about myself and others. And, I believe the Lord has called us to live in the midst of this culture as shining examples of the king and his kingdom in our values, actions, attitudes, affections, and practices. I have a lot of work to do and a lot more personal transformation to experience, but the Lord is worth it... and so are you.
7. I want to recommend to you a 2-part message I preached on April 23, 2017. It was entitled, [Love Trumps Hate](#). I think you will find that message very helpful for how to show up in our polarized culture.

Ministry Time

1. Praying for release of apostolic anointing, power, and grace.