

## ***Making Room Sunday***

This morning we're taking a break from our sermon series on "The Word." We'll resume that series next Sunday morning. Today I want to talk with you about our *Making Room* effort. The basic idea behind *Making Room* is that ***we need to make room in our facilities and in our lives for the things that are near to the heart of God.***

Many of you were here last Fall when we launched this *Making Room* effort; what you hear this morning will probably be a reminder for you. Others of you have begun coming to Faith over the past year; you'll be hearing much of this perspective for the first time. In either case, we think it's good to be clear about why we're investing a significant amount of time and money in expanding our facilities. We want to be transparent and honest about this entire effort. We really want you to buy into this effort on a heart level.

Honestly, as I mentioned last fall, for many years I dreaded the thought of another building expansion. Traditionally building programs in churches are often divisive and often distract from important things. But God has done a real work in me to bring me to the place where I see this building expansion as a strategic way to pursue the mission God has given us as a church. In other words, I actually believe the things I'm telling you this morning. I'm not just standing up here because this is my job. I believe that God wants to use this *Making Room* effort to further His work in our lives and in this world.

Today we're talk about 3 things related to *Making Room*. First I'll explain briefly about the building - how we're making room in our facilities. Second, I'll talk about the vision - what we believe God wants to do in and through us in the future. Third, we'll talk about generosity - how we're asking you to give generously to this effort. Gordon Hibbard, who has headed up the capital campaign, will come and share more about this.

### ***"Making Room": Facilities*** (conceptual drawing on screen)

We are expanding this facility in phases. We began the first phase at the end of August. This phase involves new construction to the east (out the front doors) and to the west (behind the worship center). In front of our current building we are adding a large foyer with a coffee bar and seating areas. There will also be additional restrooms (that double as a storm shelter). And we are clustering all the offices together. Our current offices will be repurposed for a variety of different things such as storage and a hospitality room. In the office cluster there will be a conference room and a dedicated prayer room (for Sunday mornings and throughout the week; this room won't be used for anything else).

The worship center will be expanded 35 feet to the west (behind me). A good portion of that space will be storage. We'll be able to add 100+ seats to this room, which should help with overcrowding quite a bit. The baptistery will be moved to the center and the sound and lighting systems will be improved. There will be two entrances to the

worship center with the sound booth in the center of the back wall. We trust that the expansion of our worship center will really be good for our worship on Sunday mornings and for the use of this room for other events during the week.

We've also added an entrance for the children's ministry to the south; there will eventually be a check-in/welcome station at that entrance also. We're planning a significant upgrade to the parking. The parking closest to the building will be hard surface (concrete); the rest of the parking will be crushed concrete (not nearly as muddy as what we've had for the past 15 years). The entrance to our property from the south will be two-lane so you can both come in and exit from that direction. We think that after this first phase of Making Room the entire building and site will better reflect how we do ministry here at Faith.

The proposed second phase will involve renovation of the children's wing (to the south) and the addition of a youth wing to the north. The proposed third phase involves building a larger worship center to the east. We've designed our new foyer with that new worship center in mind.

The first phase will cost around 2.3 million dollars. We're talking about a significant amount of money. (As a point of reference, our annual budget is around \$750,000.)

Now I want to answer the question, "What is the vision for this building expansion?" Or, "Why are you making more room in this facility?" This is a vital question to answer. There are a dozen ways that "church building program" can go wrong if you aren't clear about why you're building. And so I want to remind you of our vision for *Making Room*.

### ***"Making Room": Vision***

Our vision for Making Room is rooted in the mission of Jesus. There is often a disconnect between the mission of Jesus and the mission of the church. But Matthew 9:9-13 illustrates that when Jesus calls us to follow Him, He calls us to follow Him ***in His mission***. He doesn't merely call us to go to heaven after we die; He calls us to follow Him in His mission of helping people who are far from God enter into a relationship with Him and learn to obey all that He's commanded.

Verse 9 tells very simply how Jesus "called" Matthew to follow Him as a disciple.

9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

Matthew wouldn't have been desirable as a disciple for a Jewish rabbi in Jesus' day. Tax collectors such as Matthew worked for the Roman empire, the world power that basically enslaved the nation of Israel. As such tax collectors were considered traitors. They were commonly lumped in with prostitutes and other notorious sinners in Jesus' day. Needless to say, Matthew wasn't anybody's five-star recruit.

But Jesus had a radically different mindset than the average rabbi/teacher. A person's past didn't disqualify him/her for discipleship. He'll explain all of this a bit later in the passage, but notice for now that when Jesus made an unqualified call to Matthew, "Follow Me!" that Matthew "got up and followed Him." Luke's account mentions that Matthew "left everything behind, and got up and began to follow" Jesus (Luke 5:28). In Matthew's context, following Jesus meant literally, physically following Jesus around and learning how to live like Him. Eventually "following Christ" took on a metaphorical meaning: when you follow Christ, you are learning to live as He lived.

Very significantly, the next event recorded in Matthew 9 involves Jesus sharing table fellowship with tax collectors and "sinners" in Matthew's house.

10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

Somehow Jesus secured an invitation to have dinner with Matthew and his friends - who, of course, were tax collectors and sinners. In that day (as in ours), table fellowship meant acceptance and friendship; you have relaxed, unhurried time with friends, you hang out with your friends. "Reclining at the table" with **many** tax collectors and sinners was simply scandalous.

11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

To the Pharisees, "tax collectors and sinners" didn't have a chance with God, therefore you avoid such people at all costs. Plus, they would ruin your reputation. Worse yet, you might catch what they've got! Pharisees in every generation and every culture will tell you that the safe thing to do is to avoid tax collectors and sinners at all costs. After all, by sharing table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners, was Jesus saying that He approved of their lifestyle? Was He saying that nothing needed to change in their lives? What if the average person started hanging out with that type of people?

Jesus eventually found out about the question the Pharisees had asked His disciples:

12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

Everybody would have agreed with that statement. But the application was difficult to hear:

13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6, a Scripture that would have been very familiar to the Pharisees. They would have said, "We've known that Scripture since we were children."

But the expression “go and learn what this means” is a way of indicating that needed to do more studying; the Pharisees may have been experts in the Hebrew Scriptures, but they completely missed the heart of God. God didn’t care so much that they paid careful attention to every detail of the old covenant sacrificial system if they lacked compassion. If you have to choose between the two, God says, “I desire compassion, and not sacrifice.”

Just like a physician who says, “I am called to help sick people get well,” Jesus said, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Jesus is apparently accepting people’s self-evaluation here. Jesus really doesn’t have anything to offer those who say, “I’m already righteous.” But Jesus has **everything** to offer those who come to him and say, “I’m sick. . . I need healing and wholeness.” Those are the people who are poised to experience life. Those are the people to whom Jesus says, “Come and follow Me!” Jesus would eventually go to the cross to pay for the sins of such people. He would bear their sin on the cross. Their healing and wholeness would come through His sacrifice.

That’s why Jesus had called Matthew to follow Him in the first place; and that’s why He befriended Matthew friends (who happened to be tax collectors and sinners). Befriending people who had everything wrong with them wasn’t some rare anomaly in Jesus’ life; this is what Jesus always did because the whole reason He came was to call sinners into a relationship with the one, true living God.

Here’s the point for us today: ***As followers of Jesus, we adopt His mission of calling “sinners” to Himself. Our commitment to this mission will be reflected in our facilities and in our lives.***

Our vision isn’t merely to take care of everybody who is already at Faith. Our vision is to see God use us to befriend many people who are currently far from God: people we already know as well as people we’ve never met. A Scripture that has captured my imagination for several years is Isaiah 49:6. God is speaking to the Messiah about His mission and about Israel’s calling.

6 He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also make You a light of the nations  
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

God wanted Israel to know that it was “too small a thing” for the Messiah to come only for them. God wanted to reach the “nations.” And it is too small a thing to have a church that exists only for us. God wants us to be a light to people who are living in darkness.

This vision is the driving force behind this *Making Room* effort. We want our facility to be a place that is not only welcoming to those of us who are already here, but also to people we might befriend. As a very practical matter, we need to make room in this

worship center so that we have the freedom to invite friends to join us on Sunday mornings. At various times of the year, this room is past capacity. Several times this fall people have been sitting in the foyer. We've even seen people drive here, see that there are no seats, and then leave without going to worship.

We feel strongly that if someone makes the effort to come here on a Sunday morning, we need to have a place for them to sit. Just like if someone showed up at my house for a meal, I'd have a place for them at the table; we need to have a place for people who show up here. We assume that God is at work in that person's life and that He wants to further that work through this body of believers.

This building expansion isn't merely for us. We don't need a bigger or nicer building for us; we've got a seat. It's a matter of having a facility that will allow us to welcome and show hospitality to people that Jesus wants to befriend. It's costly to expand this facility; but we believe that God wants us to make room in this facility for people who don't yet know Him.

Our commitment to Jesus' mission will be reflected in our facilities. But it will also be reflected in our lives. What's the point of making room in our facilities if we aren't also making room in our lives for people far from God?!?!

I'd like to suggest that ***Jesus is willing to do the same thing for you that He did for Matthew***. Matthew was probably as surprised as the Pharisees that Jesus wanted to be a friend to His friends. He was probably used to be despised and insulted and excluded from people's friendship. But Jesus actually came to his house, ate his food, and befriended His friends. If Jesus has called you to follow Him, Jesus is willing to befriend your friends - especially those who might be classified as "tax collectors and sinners" - those who have everything "wrong" with them.

Most commonly Jesus befriends such people through ***your*** friendship. Following Jesus' pattern, we should pursue honest friendships with people who are far from God. As you know, there's a huge difference between befriending people and merely "being friendly." The check-out girl at Target is friendly, but she's not a friend. Friends are people you include in your life, people you trust, people who trust you, people with whom you share your joys, frustrations, fears, failures, etc.

Some of you grew up in Christian homes and came to faith in Christ early in life; that's what we all want for our children. But some of you are here today because a follower of Christ befriended you when you were "far from God." I know many of your stories. Some of you were once very hostile to Christians and Christianity, but now you love God and you love serving Him. Some of you showed up at K-State with all sorts of stereotypes about Christians and the Bible; but you met some other students whose lives you couldn't ignore. Through their friendship, you entered into a relationship with Jesus that you'll enjoy for eternity.

If you come to the baptism this afternoon, you'll hear these types of stories. Some of those being baptized this afternoon came to Christ because others of you here at Faith had already made room in your lives for people far from God.

I certainly wouldn't be here today if a couple of guys hadn't befriended me when I was a sophomore in college. They invited me to play basketball on Friday afternoon, then to a Bible study. Eventually I fell in love with Jesus because I loved them and their lifestyle. It was far superior to anything I'd ever experienced.

As we make room in our facilities, we need to make room in our lives for people who are far from God. Honestly, there was a time in my life when I didn't really think this happened in churches. I came to Christ through a campus ministry. I understood how such ministries could see lasting spiritual fruit. There was a sense of mission and purpose and direction. But a local church? It seemed like daycare for grown-ups. You basically sit in a room once a week and pay attention to what's happening up front. I don't really think that a church could stay "on mission." But God has changed my heart about the calling and potential of the church. I believe that Jesus wants to draw many to Himself through us.

In many ways it's a basic matter of integrity that we make room in our lives to participate in the mission Jesus has given us. As you probably know, we've sent people from Faith to other parts of the world to represent Jesus there. As a sending church, we have basically said, "We believe that it's worth it for you to leave everything in order to befriend people in India, Indonesia, Hungary, the Arabian Peninsula, and China. We believe that Jesus wants to befriend people there who are far from God." As a basic matter of integrity, we dare not say, "It's great that you're willing to sacrifice in order to befriend people far from God, but us, we're a little busy for that!" We need to be the type of people here at home that we send others to be in other parts of the world.

As we make room in our facilities, we need to make room in our lives. Because we believe that God Himself has put this vision before us, we have asked and are asking you to support this vision through sacrificial giving. I'd like to invite Gordon Hibbard to come now and explain more about the type of generosity needed to pursue this vision.

***Making Room: Generosity*** (Gordon Hibbard)