

State of the Church 2022 – Gal 6:9-10

Introduction – 2021 was a tumultuous year for many individuals, families, churches, and this world in general. These are both trying times and times of great opportunity. There are real threats to the gospel in our day and there is also reason to be hopeful that we live in a day where people sense the need for something transcendent, and solid, more than ever in our lifetime. In the midst of it, Trinity Church has been blessed with many answers to prayer and opportunities to share the distinctive gifts of our church with others. There are many stories of faithful generosity of time, talents, and treasures that come from you all to others in this body. And as we have been a church that met to worship, we became a refuge to many who often felt they had nowhere else to go. Paul's exhortation to the churches of Galatia is very applicable to us this year.

Do Not Grow Weary (Gal 6:9-10) – The reason Paul had to give this command is because there was the temptation to grow weary. We grow weary because we do not see immediate results. We grow weary because the works of the enemy seem so intense and consuming. We grow weary because of the deceitfulness of sin and weak faith (Heb 3:12-14). We grow weary because we forget that God is truly in control of the narrative of this story. And so he gives us an agricultural metaphor to illustrate. We will not grow weary if we keep our eyes on the harvest. *"In due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."* To change the metaphor, like a good halftime charge, Paul challenges us to therefore look for the opportunities now to do good to all, but especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord (1 Cor 15:58) – Because of the coming resurrection, Paul charges us to remain steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. The reason to do so is because it is impossible for your labor in the Lord to be in vain. We are not to grow weary in doing good (2 Thess 3:13) because our good works now are going to be fruitful then. Whoever gives a cup of water in His name will receive a great reward (Mark 9:41). We labor with faith. We even lay our lives down with faith. We follow Jesus.

Particular 2022 Applications for Trinity Church

Preparing to Stand Against the Soft Tyranny – We said "no" to the nanny-state telling us how to worship. But there are signs that this battle will move into other issues. In his book, *"Live Not by Lies"* Rod Dreher states that families are resilient cells against such tyranny, and religion (Christianity) is the bedrock of resistance. That is why tyrants always try to break down the family and make Christianity as weak and irrelevant as possible, if not illegal.

Family – Do not grow weary in strengthening your family. Faithful marriages, the blessing of children, vows lived out and promises stood upon, these are necessary tools to stay strong in the Lord and against the lies of our secular leadership. We always knew that secularism was not neutral; it's just becoming more and more obvious. Children, your Christian education and upbringing has been given to you at great cost and sacrifice by your parents. Do not grow weary in applying and living out all that you have been given. Do not grumble over our imperfect provisions for you. Instead, stand on our shoulders and take it all to the next level. As the title of one excellent book puts it, we are "rebuilding the ruins."

Church Community – One of the first gifts/distinctives of Trinity Church was its commitment to family structure and Christian education. In our zeal, we may have neglected as a church the development of the church community and loyalty to the local church through generations. As we have matured, God has moved us to also realize the importance of building up the community of the church itself. Paul says *"let us do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith"* (Gal 6:10) and certainly he has local congregations in mind. The time is ripe for us to build up the church in this way, especially with so many new believers and families in our midst. Watch for Trinity Groups to be started up this spring.

Church Life – It can feel as though we are in exile, or at least in transition. A very temporary looking facility, the exodus of many families out of the area, and the lack of much of what we had musically for quite some time. How should we be shepherded through these times?

Music Reflecting Glory – God has called His people to be singers, musicians, people full of song (Col 3:16 and the entire book of Psalms). Pray and labor with us to preserve what Trinity Church has been given and to recover what we have lost. We pray for the ability to teach everyone here to sing well, to establish choirs, more church musicians, and to be led in this by a well-trained, like-minded Chief Musician.

Stay Here? – There is a (not so) quiet, ongoing mantra by many that this area should be abandoned, that it has been lost to the statistics, that the cost of living is too high, that the ability to have Christian neighbors and friends is too low, that the persecution is growing. Time to get out of Washington? Or would it be better to see this area as prime missionary work – a work to be accomplished by small colonies of faithful families bound together by one faith, serving the world by example first and then inviting that unbelieving world, charging that unbelieving world, to bow the knee with us at the name of Jesus? It might cost more. It might require some sacrifice. It might entail imaginative answers to make it possible to stay and thrive. Well, were we not told to go and disciple the nations?

Property and a Building – Much of what needs to be done has to be done with the long term in mind. And so, we seek to build a beachhead and a place of refuge, a building that speaks, stones that cry out, “God is with us, God is good, God is merciful, God calls you to come.” We seek to build an altar, a memorial, to the faithfulness of Christ who ministers His gospel to the city of Woodinville and beyond through His Spirit-filled church. God grant us the faith that we may not grow weary.

Hospitality as a Weapon – Totalitarian, State-worshipping idealists seek to isolate and atomize the population so that the need for the State, from cradle to grave, becomes more seductive. The church must see that her families have a great weapon against such mind-numbing lies, and it is around tables of food and fellowship. In your homes, grace has a smell, a taste, a sound. Give it – more and more. “*Be hospitable to one another, without grumbling*” (1 Pet 4:9). This could be called the Subversive Work of Hospitality. Our homes are minas, talents, given to us by the Lord. Turn a profit.

Seattle Will Be a Christian City – There are and will be ongoing skirmishes between the church and her enemies, and skirmishes within the church rooting out false-teachers. This has always been the way of the Lord disciplining and maturing the church. But we labor not in vain (1 Cor 15:58), Paul said. And He said this as a conclusion to the argument of the promised defeat of those enemies as Jesus sits on His throne (1 Cor 15:25-26). The earth will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Well, that means that Seattle, and the Eastside, and the State of Washington, or whatever governing authorities remain along with its people on this land, will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Whatever twists and turns 2022, and beyond, bring, God promises that our work in the Lord will never be in vain. Trinity Church has a mission and ministry here and now, and we are to not grow weary in doing good.

Dave Hatcher – January 2, 2022