

Vision Gathering:

HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER

2019-10-13 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Exodus 14

Don't forget:

- Smile more! 😊
- Develop a burden
- Affection for these people! Gratitude—Paul's heart for people!
- Giveaways—Radina's gift card, Jimmy John's, coasters, koozies, resource table books, ???
- **Psalm 90:17** Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!
- **Psalm 115:14-15** ¹⁴ May the LORD give you increase, you and your children! ¹⁵ May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth!

Ice Breaker (15 min.) End at 4:15pm

- \$15 Radina's gift card—go do a tawG there!
- \$10 Starbucks gift card—go do a tawG there...really early!
- Coasters, koozies, Jimmy John's sandwiches

Exodus 14 (5 min.) End at 4:20pm

- I want to take us to a passage that was instrumental in planting Tallgrass Church.
- I recently revisited this passage out of personal need for that same sort of vision that this church came out of. I've been having a tough couple weeks emotionally. Those of you who know me well know that my emotions can go up and down from encouragement to discouragement just like most people. Well, the last couple weeks have been tough. As I've been battling for perspective I revisited a passage that you might even say Tallgrass Church was born out of, Exodus 14. I invite you to turn there if you'd like.
- Try to envision yourself as one of the Israelites in this historical event.
- God freed the Israelites from Egypt but now they faced the Red Sea in front and the Egyptian army behind. They were surrounded by two cliffs on either side. They were truly between a rock and a hard place. Terrifying! Scary surroundings!
- God didn't lead them by the way of the Philistines, although that was near. He actually led them on a less scary path. (13:17-18)
- Traveled by day and by night. They were exhausted. But, of course, God was with them every step of the way. (13:21)
- They had some soldiers but were mostly women and children. Imagine fleeing an army just with our church, with all of our kids! Yeah, crazy.
- It's here in an impossible spot that God makes a way where there is no way...but it's in his timing.
- ^{10a} When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly.
- They actually wanted to return to serve the Egyptians at this point. They wanted to go back to their old lives (sound familiar to anyone?). They felt like they had to figure it out on their own. That's my big lie, "I have to figure everything out on my own!" But God was taking them to a new land!

- **SLIDE:** ¹³ And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”
- This historical event that we have recorded in the Scriptures is the story of each of us. We desperately need to be delivered from the penalty of sin. But beyond that, we face times throughout life when we need God to show up otherwise there’s no path forward.
- As I flip through the Tallgrass Family Directory and pray for you all I know that many of you are facing situations where there seems to be no way and you desperately need God to make a way.
- This is an exciting place to be, anticipating God doing something amazing when you can’t see the path forward!
- **SLIDE:** ¹⁵ The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.”
- In the midst of scary surroundings we’re called to fear not, stand firm, and see the Way Maker make a way where there is no way! But we also have to go forward.
- God makes a way where there is no way! But the people still had to GO FORWARD!!! We still have to GO FORWARD!!! Fear must give way to faith. This is not a one-time event. This is an ongoing process. God wants to push us and press us and stretch us to trust him more deeply and relate to him more intimately.
- ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²² And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴ And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”
- Imagine the scene. It’s dark. It’s insanely windy. It’s chaotic. They are in the midst of the sea depending on God’s continued provision every minute. They are walking all night long and then in the morning, the Egyptian army gets thrown into a frenzy. Their chariot wheels are clogging and so they drive forward feverishly. That would be terrifying. Will they catch us? Will God continue to save us?
- They had to have patience in the waiting.
- **SLIDE:** ³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.
- There’s always the next step of faith to take. Within three days, the Israelites were grumbling in the wilderness because they were thirsty. Read all about it in Exodus 15 and on.
- In some ways, you could say Tallgrass Church was born out of this passage. The story of God making a way for the Israelites out of Egypt when there was no way is the story of us all. I remember when I was at a point personally when I did not see what God was wanting to do in and through me. I felt extremely stuck in life with no way forward or backward. I felt like I was in between a rock and a hard place and I desperately needed the Way Maker make a way.
- And I remember that moment when Maris, my wife, was sitting on the kitchen floor and she said, “Maybe God wants us to plant a church here in Manhattan.” Maybe so. Next thing you know, God parted the proverbial Red Sea and here we are today!
- And in ways, a year and a half into this church plant, we are right back at the proverbial Red Sea needing God to be the Way Maker yet again. We experienced an amazing start and now we’re in a new season of trusting and not seeing the path forward and desperately needing God to make a way where we don’t see a way forward on all sorts of things, people’s personal and marriage issues, in our community, and with our church budget.

- We want the story of Tallgrass Church to be God doing God-like things in our community...and us responding! The Way Maker making a way where there is no way...and then us stepping forward in faith. That's what our mission statement is all about: Because God first loved us, we exist to love God and love our neighbors.

Vision for 2020 (10 min.) End at 4:30pm

On Thursday I was scrambling to think about how to convey what God has done and what we long for God to do in and through Tallgrass Church. I went to Anneberg Park, just trying to clear my mind. I started walking the walking trail and my mind went to Psalm 136. That's the Psalm where after every sentence is the refrain, "For his steadfast love endures forever." 26 times in 26 verses

We remember what the Way Maker has done already and that gives us vision for what he longs to do in and through us in the future!

Give thanks to the LORD... His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the LORD...for all these kids... His love endures forever.

We started with twenty-five kids or so and now have 62 kids and teens in our Tallgrass family directory. I'm thankful for the twelve babies we've celebrated at our Baby Celebrations and the more celebrations that are on the way. I'm thankful for all these Sprouts volunteers. If you've served with Sprouts please stand. Nate and Jermaine Dillon are currently serving in Sprouts and not in here with us because of that.

Give thanks to the LORD...for adoption. His love endures forever.

We've been able to invest in families who have adopted. We want to invest in adoption and orphan care. We've helped both the Greeves and Swansons with their adoption expenses already. \$9150 have been giving by Tallgrassians to support families adopting so far. 5% of all funds given to Tallgrass Church currently goes into this Adoption Fund because this is on our heart. We currently have \$10,000 in our Adoption Fund and are ready to help families who are adopted. We have vision to support good work like what's happening with the Orphan Helpers as we're able. And to come alongside others connected to our church working towards adoption like the Thorpes who've started Open Window Adoption to help fund families who are adopting.

Give thanks to the LORD...for our leadership teams. His love endures forever.

Elder Team, Staff Team, LIFE Group Leadership Teams, Introducing a new team, the Tallgrass Women's Team with Edie Doane as the Point Person.

Give thanks to the LORD...for other churches in town. His love endures forever.

We've been able to partner with other churches like we did for two Central Gatherings with College Heights and one with First Free Methodist and our joint Prayer Gathering with Trinity Canton.

Give thanks to the LORD...for our vision for neighboring. His love endures forever.

We want to build a paradigm of neighboring. And then build infrastructure to help facilitate the neighboring efforts of the Tallgrass family. This is happening! We've used this fund to come alongside neighboring opportunities with a \$50 gift from Tallgrass Church (at times more, depending on the situation) then encourage Tallgrassians to jump in as well. So far \$7660 have been given by Tallgrassians to support these neighboring efforts plus whatever neighboring has happened that hasn't gone through the Tallgrass Neighboring Fund. 2.5% of all funds given to Tallgrass Church goes into this Neighboring Fund because we care deeply about neighboring. Our Neighboring Fund currently \$1700.

Give thanks to the LORD...for our LIFE Groups. His love endures forever.

LIFE Groups are a huge part of our effort to reclaim neighboring. LIFE Groups are places that anyone and everyone can be a part of wherever they are at on their spiritual journey. We love that our LIFE Group engagement is strong

and includes more people than our Central Gathering. Now we're needing to work at helping people prioritize being together here on Sunday afternoons. If you're a LIFE Group leader please stand up. We started with two LIFE Groups and now we're four! We need to celebrate our most recent LIFE Group plant. The Greeve LIFE Group came out of the Renberg LIFE Group! Stand up if you're a part of the Greeve LIFE Group. Stand up if you're a part of the Renberg LIFE Group.

Give thanks to the LORD...for our Central Gatherings. His love endures forever.

We began with about 35 adults and about 25-30 kids (hard to keep track of) on our Launch Team and now in our directory we have 80 adults and 62 kids and growing every week.

Shape culture. Sing together.

Give thanks to the LORD...for this space to meet in. His love endures forever.

We've been so thankful to lease College Heights Baptist Church but are always exploring new possibilities for meeting spaces and meeting times that could fit us better. We've got a possibility in the hopper that we're exploring right now.

Give thanks to the LORD...for all our musicians. His love endures forever.

We're continuing to develop our team of musicians and have ideas for growing as a church that responds to revelation through song. If you're served in the band or ran slides or sound at any time this past year please stand.

Give thanks to the LORD...for new pockets of people that are increasingly connected to our church. His love endures forever.

International students. If your name is Bill and you've served as our HIS Facilitator, please stand. 2.5% of all funds given to Tallgrass Church goes to Helping International Students. \$5850 has gone to Helping International Students.

College students.

Soldiers.

Give thanks to the LORD...for the discipleship relationships that are developing. His love endures forever.

I'm thankful that we have the need for discipleship because we have lots of messy folks coming through the door and those of us who planted this thing still have plenty of mess needing to move towards maturity. I'm thankful that we've had several come from a difficult drug and alcohol and pornography addiction backgrounds and move towards greater levels of freedom in Christ. This is an area we can focus on more in the future, offering practical groups to help people experience deliverance from all sorts of addictions.

Give thanks to the LORD...for a new lung. His love endures forever.

More healings on the way, please, Lord!

Give thanks to the LORD...for all the equipping opportunities that we've been able to have. His love endures forever.

- Like our discussion lunches. Shanna Goodman testimony.
- Marriage Retreats.
- Thrivent Workshops
- Soul Care Training with Ken and Diann Goodyear
- Xenos Summer Institute.
- Global Leadership Summit.
- Kansas Leadership Center. BTW, we've been awarded a Leadership Transformation Grant through the Kansas Leadership Center that you'll hear more about in the upcoming weeks and months.

Give thanks to the LORD...for the baptisms we've been able to celebrate. His love endures forever.

Scott Hertzig, Kassi Chapman, Jurnee LeMoine, Hanna Hertzig, Charis Greeve, with more on the way.

*Give thanks to the LORD...*for the extended Tallgrass family, all the people that are part of our church family and have moved from Manhattan. *His love endures forever.*

Josh and Laura Wuthnow, Andrew and Meredith Shields, Alex and Laurel Thomson. Plus others who moved from Manhattan before we planted Tallgrass Church but are definitely a part of our extended family, like Steve and Rebecca Thorpe.

*Give thanks to the LORD...*that we started out so strong financially as a church plant. *His love endures forever.* Of the 17 Giving Units that made up our Launch Team the average giving was \$528/month. That's amazing!

These are all just beginnings of what could be. But they're the right beginnings. The roots of this church plant are going deep!

*Give thanks to the LORD...*for all the ways you've grown since Tallgrass Church began. *His love endures forever.*

Where were you at spiritually when Tallgrass Church was planted on April 8, 2018? How has God used our church in your life? We want to highlight the stories of two who have grown a ton this past year and a half.

Testimony—Hanna and Amalie (10 min.) End at 4:40pm

- Watching Amalie grow in so many cool ways.
- Getting to meet Hanna and begin to see her growing in so many cool ways.

Budget Update and Need (10 min.) End at 4:50pm

Snapshot of where we're at financially as a church:

- Strong giving early on! The average monthly giving from Launch Team families was \$528/month. We've not had much drop off but we do have great need now.
- Dave Geldart gave a great talk on *Relating to Money* on September 8.
- Even still, August and September have been the lowest giving months ever.
- Deficit vs budgeted income 2019 = -\$16,237
- Average 2019 Income = \$12,571/mo. Average deficit (giving)/month = -\$1,804. 2019 Budget = \$14,375/month.
- Our checking account has \$45,545 in it.
- Of that \$33,634 are general funds. We like to keep 3 months of budgeted expenses in our general fund and we're now dipping into that pretty significantly. For our current 2019 budget we should keep \$43,125 in the general fund.
- Looks pretty bleak right now.

How Tallgrass Church is funded:

- We have 64 Total Giving Units, 51 from within Tallgrass Church, and 13 from outside our church.
- Six core Tallgrass families give 43%.
 - 11% of our Tallgrass family gives 43% of the funds.
 - These families believe deeply in what God is doing in and through this church family. Their heart is in this church, because where your treasure is, there your heart is.
- Those outside Tallgrass Church but who believe in our church give 24%. 13 Giving Unit.
 - We are a nondenominational church so we have no denominational financial support. But we do have these generous donors who are investing in this little church plant in the heart of Kansas.
- The other 33% comes from 19 other Giving Units within Tallgrass Church. 37% of the Tallgrass family give 33% of the funds.
- That means that 26 Giving Units within Tallgrass Church give 0 or nearly 0, so close to 0 that it doesn't register on this chart.

How we're trying to *go forward* as an elder team:

- Dave Geldart's message on *Relating to Money* was a great communication piece. Give it a listen, please.
- Thrivent Financial Workshops—Investment Basics next Sunday; Today's meal was funded by Thrivent Action Dollars that Dave Geldart received.
- Ron Goodman visit each LIFE Group
- Giving Intention cards—Please return by next Sunday. We're asking everyone to prayerfully consider taking a step of faith in your giving to your local church, Tallgrass Church.
 - "It's more blessed to give than to receive."
 - "God loves a cheerful giver."
 - Our story: *Money, Possessions, and Eternity* in 2011
- If 24 Giving Units, which just means a family or an individual, gave \$75 more/month that would get us up to needed 2019 monthly avg.
- Or, if, instead of other increases, we had 13 TG families increase giving \$250/month, we'd get back up to needed average AND we'd make up the 2019 deficit within 1 year, putting us in a great position for growth in our budget in 2021, when the next Spider-Man comes out.
- There's so much room to grow within our church family right now!
- \$100 investment in this stewardship illustration. We're stewards, not owners. Stewardship illustration with five \$20 handed out. You will give a report on how you steward these funds.
 - Go in together on a neighboring initiative.
 - Get someone a specific resource to help them along in their spiritual journey.
 - Take someone out for a meal to have an intentional conversation.

Q&R&Stories (10 min.) End at 5:00pm

Guided Prayer (5 min.) End at 5:05pm

Sing (10 min.) End at 5:15pm

- *God of This City + Way Maker*
- *The Benediction*

The Chopping Block:

Budget Deets:

- Four TG families have responded since Sept 1 with increased giving totaling \$700/mo.
- So with those 4 "pledges" we still need \$1,100/mo more in pledges. Not sure if best to communicate this stat to show movement and response and make gap seem doable? Or best to communicate 1800/mo shortfall and then be able to communicate these 4 as the 1st pledges?
- If 36 people gave \$50 more/mo that would get us up to needed 2019 monthly avg.

Did some quick numbers for Jan-Aug 2019:

Total Families / Giving Units (GUs) 2019 = 64

- GUs who have moved/moved on = 8
- Members (GUs) = 25
- Non-Member TGians (GUs) = 18
- Outside Givers (GUs) = 13

Total Giving by category so far 2019:

- Those that have moved/moved on: 3.9%
- Members: 70%
- Non-Member TGians: 1.7%
- Outside Givers: 23.4%
- Cash/1 time visitors: 1%

Those who give 0:

- Members: 4 (those who give NEARLY 0: 5 more for a total of 9)
- Non-Member TGians: 15 (those who give nearly 0: 2 more for a total of 17)

Exodus Reflections:

- Had a mixed multitude with them of foreigners.
- 600,000 men (or 600 chiefs) plus women and children plus livestock!
- The Egyptians will know that God is God through the deliverance of the Israelites. There's so much more going on here than their scary surroundings.