
VISION FORWARD



WHAT ARE WE PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Passion itself is not worthy of your pursuit, any more than growth itself is for our church. I find myself often praying something like, “God give me more passion, more energy, more courage.” But the question becomes: passion for what? energy for what? courage for what?

The goal is never to *create* passion, but to *discover* what you’re passionate about. That means finding something—or being found by something—that ignites, fuels, and drives the passion in your heart. Discovering what that is can provide a singular focus and set of priorities for your life. It can create a giant Yes in your heart that will enable you to say No to a lot of unnecessary things. What we are passionate about determines the direction our life. For good or for bad, in the end we all get what we want.

Now, remember this: the objective is never to become obsessive about our *passion*, but to become obsessive about the *object* of our passion. We should be single-, not split-minded, single-, not

multi-taskers, when it comes to our passion in life. “One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.” (Psalm 27:4).

As a church, what is our passion? We have one passion: Jesus Christ. We have one position: His servants. *Preoccupation* with Jesus is a disciples’s number one priority. It is the “essence of worship”.

Our passion, then, is “**Together, to know Jesus and to make *him* known**”. This is our mission statement. He is *why* we exist. *What* we do must be driven by that. And *how* we do what we do must be driven by that. But the “what” and the “how” are further shaped by the unique assignment God has given to us.

I once heard a preacher explain the difference between calling and assignment. Calling, he said, was an open hand. Assignment was the object placed into that hand. Now, God’s calling over our lives doesn’t usually change, but his assignments for us often do. Our assignment isn’t to be *passionate*. Our assignment is to with passion be *good stewards* of the task in hand.

We have said before that “what” we do is **connecting people to God, to one another, to the city, and to the culture**. In particular, it appears clearer and clearer to me that in connecting people to the city, we are being assigned and tasked *both* with discovering and identifying the gaps where needs are not being met (or where they could be met in a new and unique way) *and* with discovering and applying those solutions. Here the Holy Spirit will do an astounding new thing. These solutions will be things other churches and other groups aren’t doing, simply because their assignments are different.

On my office wall are going up sheets of paper with thoughts, Scripture verses, ideas, images — “promptings” that may or may not turn out to be assignments from the Holy Spirit. Our aim is not to become obsessive over good ideas, but to prayerfully discover the unique but cohesive set of tasks Jesus is entrusting us to do. We won’t aim to be *the* best. But we will aim to be the best at what God calls us to do and how he calls us to do it.

I love my wife. My love for her compels me to do anything for her, but it also leads me to delight in doing some things more than other things. This is the result of my personal knowledge of her and my personal relationship with her shaped by that knowledge. So with our city. The love of Christ compels us to serve anyway we can, but it also leads us to delight in doing some things more than others. These assignments are shaped not only by our personal knowledge and relationship with the city, but by the personal knowledge and relationship we have with the God who died and rose for our city.

Elim Grace, we are a people born and born again for such a time as this. Yes, let us become more and more passionate about Jesus, and the specific assignments he’s placed into our hands: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:6)