A Season of Rebuilding
Building a Future with Prayer

- Purpose Church I want to start a new series today! And while we are doing it be very transparent with you, this is a teaching series but this is also a series for regathering and refocusing on the mission of Christ and what God has for this church! This is a completely new season we are in but this new season requires some rebuilding! I believe God has mighty things for us and in order to do it we have to rebuild some things.

We are in this season of rebuilding so that we can lay the foundations for the future. So as we focus on these foundations we build towards God's future!

- From this moment forward our focus is future, our focus is building, laying the blocks of foundation that will take us from here to where God has called us to. We cannot look to backwards if we are to truly enter this season of rebuilding and building. And we stand on Ephesians 3:20!

Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." NIV

- God will do more and has more for us! I believe it is important for you to know throughout all my prayer and seeking for the future and building it, I firmly believe God is going to do something miraculous here! God has big plans for this body of believers for this church! Autumn and I are committed and we firmly believe God is committed to supernaturally building a future of ministry and effectiveness that is abundantly more than we could ever imagine. But we must fix our eyes on the things to come, we can't lose our focus and fixation on what God is doing!

Proverbs 4:25-27: "Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. 26 Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. 27 Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil." NLT

- It is so easy to lose our gaze, to stray from where we are headed, to get sidetracked and distracted, it's so easy as a church to lose focus and stray from the vision path God has for us. This series is all about focusing and gathering together on one focus, so our minds are clear and fixed on what God is doing in us, through us, and for us.

- I fully believe God has given me vision for where to go and the path forward for living out who we are called to be. I shared that vision last week and I plead with you we must follow this path, if we are to build the future, rebuild we are going to need as a congregation to avoid the distraction of the past, of what was or wasn't or isn't because God has a new thing and I know we are going to step into it together!

- When I was praying for this new focus this new vision God of course took me to who we are. I know you, you know who we are but I want to reiterate exactly who we are: Purpose Church!

Vision: Find Jesus, Find Purpose

Vision Statement: We exist to simply be the church, not just go to church. Our goal is to help anyone from any walk of life simply meet Jesus. We know when we meet Jesus we find identity, we find the "why" to life, we find our Purpose. Through people meeting Jesus and discovering their purpose we exist to see God build better families, better communities, and see God's power move in fresh new ways.

Our Patterns:

1. ***God's Word***
2. ***Time With God***
3. ***Deep Connection***
4. ***Generosity***
5. ***Live On Mission***

- Absolutely everything filters through this! As I was studying and seeking God I was brought to a passage that I'm sure you all are well aware of and that is Isaiah 61. This passage is a prophetic passage that Jesus even quotes in His own ministry while preaching at the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth. Jesus tells us the prophesy is fulfilled through Him. He specifically quotes verses 1 and 2 then some of chapter 58 of Isaiah. But God for us brought me to verse 4 and I want to read from verse 4 to verse 9.

Isaiah 61:4-9: "They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. 5 Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. 6 And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of your

shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.8 "For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them. 9 Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed."" NIV

- God speaks through Isaiah here all about restoration, and rebuilding for Israel and I believe this holds spiritual significance for us today. God has rebuilding for us! This isn't at all about physical buildings, not about rebuilding our building or anything superficial like that, though we are doing building projects, this is more profound and spiritual, God is rebuilding our church through the mission God has brought to me. I'm stating and saying right here right now I believe God is taking us into a new season that is building the very future of this church, and it is a season of fruitfulness, not just for the church but for us as individuals.

I believe we are entering a season, and not a short season but a long season of God's Favor through rebuilding and refocusing our very mission and minds as individuals and as a collective church body. We are stepping into what I believe to be a time of supernatural favor.

- This favor will come as we commit ourselves to rebuilding and building our future. We exist as Purpose Church to fulfill who we are and that is a church that prioritizes the presence of God, connecting people with God, connection with each other, living mission focused, we prioritize family, and worshipping as a family, we don't hold fast to tradition we are willing to be completely different! The new mission, the new name, all of it is simply nothing more than a vehicle for God's rebuilding and supernatural future!

- And as we aim to reach lost and hurting families we aim to reach people not only from ***every generation***, but from ***every life situation***! I want us to aim to be a church willing to lovingly come beside people in their darkest, messiest moments, that we as a body love people enough to trudge into the muck and mire of where people have found themselves by chasing their flesh and the world.

- And we do so for people from every ethnicity, every culture, every age, every stage of life. And we aim to do all of this simply to advance the kingdom for generations to come, to radically change Zeeland and Ottawa County, to be a

place of spiritual refuge and spiritual rehabilitation, restoration, deliverance, and discipleship!

- I fully believe the way to building our future, to rebuilding, is to devote ourselves to the vision and mission. As we come together under this banner of mission as a body we will see massive things happen, because we are asking for massive things, we will build a future we never could even imagine. A future guided and directed by God's hand and will, nothing like what we pictured but exactly how God wants.

Because as people of faith we don't settle for the way things are, the way things have been, we seek and run after the way things should be, and starting today from the top down, Purpose Church is committing to a vision of a future, to building that future, a future that blesses and disciples, souls of every generation from every life situation, all to see them Find Jesus and Find Their God Given Purpose!

- The best example we have in the Bible to model our church after is The Book of Acts and throughout the scripture we see the church being absolutely committed to the same thing, ministry and discipleship to people regardless of their circumstances, regardless of age, from gentile to jew, culture didn't matter, life situation didn't matter, the miraculous happened through the Holy Spirit and we are to be a church that reflects God's plan. This only happens when we decide for ourselves to unite and pursue the future and this vision, and through it we will see the supernatural reach our communities!

- Through this vision and mission God is going to do supernaturally huge things, and I know that as we commit to this season of rebuilding through this strategy we will build a supernatural future, with a firm foundation. That's what this season is going to be all about. I want to give an idea of what we are going to discuss throughout the coming weeks, because this strategy and building a future with it requires us to do some things. Future building, mission building requires us to operate in certain ways. So in the coming weeks I'm going to preach and outline 7 building blocks of rebuilding a future. What are those 7 building blocks? They are…

7 Building Blocks Necessary to Rebuilding a Future:

1.) Prayer 2.) Unity 3.) Focus 4.) Commitment
5.) Perseverance 6.) Faith Filled Pursuit 7.) Celebration

- We may not exactly talk about them in that order but that is my tentative order, those are necessary building blocks we must do or have in order to see through and achieve through this strategy the supernatural favor and future God has for us. Today as we start this whole series I want to look at the very first building block every season needs, no vision, no mission, no anything happens without ***Prayer. God has big plans for us, so we need to be praying big prayers!***

Building Block 1: Prayer

- For this whole series I want to base our building blocks under another rebuilding effort, I want to turn to scripture and look at the book of Nehemiah. This book outlines a huge rebuilding effort, the rebuilding of Jerusalem after it got destroyed years prior, and this is a massive building project! But despite us going to be mostly reading from the book of Nehemiah, this building project didn't start in Nehemiah. It truly started in the book of Ezra. We get so much context to Nehemiah from Ezra in fact originally they were a combined book and modern Bibles separated them. They are basically two parters.

- In Ezra we see the rebuilding of the second temple with efforts from Zerubbabel in chapters chapters 1-6 of Ezra. This all came from a decree from Cyrus the then King of Persia who was moved by God to allow the exiles to return to Jerusalem. Then in chapters 7-10 we move decades in the future and see Ezra's ministry in Jerusalem. Ezra was appointed by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, to lead another wave of people back to Jerusalem. He wanted to bring about social and spiritual renewal among the people, by focusing again on The Law.

- And then from there we have Nehemiah, he was an Israelite official serving in the Persian government. When he hears about the ruined state of Jerusalem's walls, he prays and is given permission from the Persian king Artaxerxes to go and rebuild the walls. The king even gives him an armed escort and extra resources. This is where we are going to read from in these coming weeks and today. We are focusing on Nehemiah.

- Before we dive into the word and read from Nehemiah I believe we need to understand if we want to be a church geared to building the future, just as we see Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah all were geared to building the future of Jerusalem, we must start with a firm foundation of prayer. The future won't be built without prayer. We must pray, and we see Nehemiah was a man of prayer!

- So to dive in I want to read the whole first chapter of Nehemiah to you, that sounds like a lot but it's only 11 verses so stick with me.

Nehemiah 1:1-11: "The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." 4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. 5 Then I said: "Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. 8 "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, 9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.' 10 "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. 11 Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king." NIV

- Now we know that leading up to this point we need to remember God kept His promise to His people and to Abraham but the Israelites did not keep their promise. They had a habit of worshipping other gods, sinning and distorting what God called them to do. God warned the people of the consequences, the nation split into two parts, the northern kingdom and the southern. The northern was taken into captivity by the Assyrian empire and the southern into captivity by the Babylonian empire.

- After 70 years of captivity The Persians conquer Babylon and the Persian King I mentioned earlier Cyrus allowed people to return and that's when we see Zerubbabel and Ezra and now Nehemiah. If you are interested in more context

read Ezra because it gives so much extra context to where we are, like I said basically two parters.

- Nehemiah heard from his brother here things were bad, the people weren't living right, the walls were broken, it was in rough shape and his heart was broken. He cared for Jerusalem and the remnant there. Nehemiah wanted more for Jerusalem! Just as I look around here, I came and this church had a remnant left, and I want to see more, and we need to do exactly what Nehemiah did, pray!

- Nehemiah prayed prayers of vision! Nehemiah despite never living in Jerusalem had concern for the city! Because it was God's city! Nehemiah wanted to bring glory and honor to the name of God and wanted to see Jerusalem rebuilt for God's glory! Just as I want to see rebuilding here! Not for us, or memories of the past, I want to see God do new, fresh, mighty ministry and rebuild this church and build a powerful future for God's glory!

The goal of a God focused vision should be bringing reverence, glory, and honor to The Name of God! We want to impact Zeeland not just for Zeeland, not just for our COG statistics, but for simply for the glory of God. For His Kingdom!

- Nehemiah had concern for Jerusalem and rebuilding all because he wanted to make God's name and reputation great! But he was also concerned about the walls because it was a reflection of the people. When see you see broken walls it is a reflection of the spiritual broken people.

- When you focus on the walls, that means you have vision for the future. Listen church like Nehemiah we must have hope for the future! He had a hope for the future so he wanted to rebuild the walls! We are in a season of rebuilding, and it isn't a building project like Nehemiah had, its a spiritual building project! We are building a new mission because we believe God has a future for us! We are focusing on these seven building blocks to hinge our mission and vision on because we have hope for the future! We believe God has a mighty future for us! Just as we read from Proverbs last week…

Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision [no revelation of God and His word], the people are unrestrained; But happy and blessed is he who keeps the law [of God]." Amplified Bible

- When we prayerfully follow the vision of God, God will bless, God will move, God will restore, God will rebuild, even better than ever before!

Haggai 2:9: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the Lord of hosts.'" ESV

- This was prophesied about the second temple, the very temple that was built in Ezra and we know it came to pass, Jesus was in that temple, the veil was torn in that temple! The glory was so much greater! And now we are the temple! God's glory is so great but I also believe that this is applicable to us as well! God's fresh new move and glory shall be even greater! And it starts with laying the foundation of prayer and asking, then enacting and filtering everything through the mission and vision!

- Nehemiah before ever walking out his vision, he prayed. He prayed and fasted and petitioned God. If we want to see God move, if we want to see mission and vision come to pass, a future where big things happen and God is glorified we must pray! Like actually pray! If we want vision, if we want to see this mission come to fruition, let me tell you this car won't move without the gas of prayer.

Vision is fueled by prayer!

- If the vision and mission is the supernatural, Holy Spirit filled, car we are riding in to the future God has for us let me tell you until we fill the tank up with the fuel of passionate and constant prayers we aren't moving an inch! No matter if we are talking about this church, your individual lives, your families, your workplaces, your marriages its all fueled by prayer.

- When building a future to glorify God prayer should never be our last resort it must be our number one priority, above everything else! We know how important prayer is, Jesus taught it to us, the Bible shows us, we must have open and constant communication with our Father. Look here are just a few verses highlighting the importance of prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." ESV

Colossians 4:2: "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." ESV

Ephesians 6:18: " Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere" NLT

- And that is just to name a few, the list of verses and passages is endless, and let me tell you our prayers should also be endless! You are never praying enough we should always strive to pray more! I get that the world is crazy, the world is throwing a lot at us, times are hard. But instead of griping, complaining, we need to pray!

Could it be our effectiveness as a church has nothing to do with our past, our circumstances, the wickedness of the world, but has everything to do with our lack of prayer?

- We must pray church! And I mean faith filled prayers, not wimpy, weaksauce prayers, real mighty, faith filled prayers. We have to learn to ask for big things, we need the audacity to ask! We must ask! I can tell you if I listened to your prayers and what you asked God for, it would show your theology and what you believe about God. Your prayer and what you ask for and believe for will tell me what you believe God can and will do.

James 4:2B: "…you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it." NLT

- This was my Ohio State Bishop's favorite phrase to say, he always said, you don't have it because you haven't asked. We have to learn to ask! It all starts with asking! We asking God for families, for every generation of people from every situation of life! Listen, we won't see the harvest, we won't make it to the future God plans for us if we don't ask! If we don't pray! We must pray, we must ask! This future God has for us is built and sustained by prayer!

- We must launch this vision, this mission and sustain it with prayer! And with that I am challenging you from today onward I am calling, asking, imploring, and challenging you, every single one of you to pray and ask God for lost families! For souls from every situation and generation of Zeeland and Ottawa County!

- There is roughly 308,459 people in Ottawa County and it is one of if not the fastest growing county in the whole state of Michigan so there is plenty of harvest to reach and I'm asking big! So should you! Every single generation of people, from every situation of life, I want us to minister and spread the love and gospel to! It's a big ask, but we can't be afraid to ask! It's huge and only God can do it and we cannot be afraid to ask!

It doesn't matter what our eyes see, what we think we can do or can't do be must be bold and audacious in our ask! God can do it!

- Let me tell you I mentioned prayer is the fuel for our vision, mission, and strategy, and you may be thinking: Pastor I understand prayer is good but why are you asking me to pray so much, and so big? Well let me tell why. Prayer does some amazing things, and I'll share with you three amazing things prayer does for us and our hearts for the harvest and the mission:

<u>Three Powerful Things Prayer Does for Us:</u>

1.) Prayer Opens Our Eyes To The Situations Around Us

- Remember Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the King, he was positioned pretty good. He was wealthy, comfortable, he could have stayed removed from the needs of Jerusalem and the people there. It's so easy to get caught up in our own bubble, our own problems, or even our own comfort and isolate ourselves from seeing the situations and problems of the people and community around us.

- Nehemiah could have easily stayed comfortable, he could have easily said, oh they made their mess, it's not my fault so it's not my problem. How easy that is for us as churchgoers to do. We either get so inward focused we aren't even looking around us at the needs of our community or we turn our nose to those in need in our community. We think oh, they did that to themselves. They chose to do those drugs, live in those conditions, not get a job, we make excuses and harden our hearts to the needs that we as the hands and feet of Christ are supposed to actually move our feet and help with our hands, we must operate with the heart of Christ.

- The second you place blame and remove yourself by saying you didn't make the mess you aren't responsible to help your heart is in the wrong place. Thats not the heart of Christ. Listen Nehemiah didn't cause the walls of Jerusalem to fall but what wasn't his fault became his burden. ***If we are going to have a future, if we are going to build a future for this church we must allow God to break our hearts over what breaks His!***

- Prayer increases our capacity to see and care about what God sees and cares about. So when you partner with me as your Pastor and pray and ask God opportunities to minister to every Zeeland/Holland resident from every generation in every life situation your heart is going to change, you are going to love more. ***Prayer helps us see that even if we aren't responsible for the***

creation of the problem God can equip and help us be the solution for it. Prayer will make someone else's problem your hearts burden!

Nehemiah 1:6-7: "6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses." NIV

- Look at Nehemiah's prayer here, he was asking forgiveness for himself, he wasn't there, it wasn't his problem! But God made it his burden and for the sake of future generations he took the mistakes of the past generations upon himself all so he could build a future! Our future depends on our willingness to have the heart of God and be broken for people!

2.) Prayer Stretches Us Into Boldness and Faith For Big

Genesis 18:14: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?…" NIV

- This question was asked to Sarah as a woman far past her childbearing years and God said by next year she would bear a son, after her reaction of laughter this question was asked. The answer is a resounding no! Absolutely nothing is too hard for God! We must grow in our boldness, not just to ask but to believe! I'll say it again we need to pray bold prayers! And constant prayer stretches us into that!

- We need to remember we are talking to The Sovereign Ruler of All Creation when we pray! Why are our prayers so small? It's so easy to fall into the trap of tiny prayers. We don't need to shrink God, and too often our prayer life accidentally does just that! We want to pray huge, extraordinary things! Because that is the God we serve!

Mark 11:22-24: ""Have faith in God," Jesus answered. 23 "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." NIV

- We know these verses so well but it's like we are afraid to actually practice them, to have the boldness in our prayer life to ask God for the mountains to

actually move. I want to be bold and ask God for the mountain of broken families in Zeeland and Holland to be moved! The mountain of addiction in Ottawa County to be broken! The mountain of suicidal thoughts and major depression to be cast out into the sea from the hearts of the hurting in our communities! I want to ask and believe God for big things! Things that seem impossible because thats what our God does!

- I want to ask and see 100 people get saved and set free in 2026! We need to grow our boldness and faith to where extraordinary becomes the ordinary in our church! We should be so comfortable with the miraculous because thats just what God does around here! It requires us to actually ask, to actually grow in boldness, in faith!

We pray to The God of The Universe! Elohim, the Creator of all! We should expect the miraculous in our church and community! Nothing is too hard for Him!

- We need to be asking for souls! We need to be asking for ministry opportunities! However, here is the thing with bold asking and bold faith, when we believe and ask for God to open these amazing doors, we must be willing to actually walk into the open door!

3.) Prayer Makes Us Actually Willing To Engage

- Nehemiah prayed, he fasted, he asked for God to do the miraculous for the walls to be rebuilt, but he didn't just pray he put his prayer into action when the door was open. Nehemiah prayed for success when petitioning the King of Persia. In chapter 2 we read Nehemiah asking King Artaxerxes:

Nehemiah 2:1-5: "In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before, 2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart." I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" 4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it." NIV

- Nehemiah didn't just pray but he acted, he was willing to engage. He got involved. Nehemiah's prayer pushed him out of his comfort zone, he asked the king and the King said yes! The same is true with us! When we pray and ask God for big things, for the souls of Zeeland and Holland, for situations and generations, God will push you out of your comfort zone and provide opportunities for you to actually engage!

- When we pray and believe for the future, for rebuilding then we have to actually take an active role in building. It not only takes prayer it takes action! If we pray for 100 people saved through this ministry in 2026 we all need to start sharing the gospel in our every day lives and allowing God to work and move through us!

The more we pray for the future God wants the more our heart will be postured to want to do everything we can to be used by God to build that future!

- God has a future for us, God is able, God is willing, no matter how big our ask is God is able to do abundantly more than we could ever ask for! God wants to do so much more than we ask, we need to start asking for more! And so we need to be ready to play an active role!