

**MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612**

**NEWS & EVENTS – March 2023**

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Have you ever been in one of those places where you think you were there before? Now I'm not talking about one of those so-called Deja Vu experiences. That's a discussion for another day. Or an emotional reaction triggered by being reminded of a traumatic episode. Many of us travel through that kind of space more often than we'd like. But I'm talking about a physical place in the earth where we've traveled at different times in our physical life. A marker on the map of our life. Kind of like *dropping a pin* on the GPS app to enable us to find a location or help someone else to find ours. Wow! I really am feeling my age when I can understand the meaning of some of the acronyms and abbreviations in some of our modern cultural communication. I recently learned how to *drop a pin*. It was a helpful learning experience in navigation through time and space. That little red marker on my phone map lets me and others know that *the place you seek is here*. Some things I still can't comprehend. But in my life I am still learning along the way...or at least I should be.

I was at one of those places the other day that I knew for a certainty I was there before. I wasn't thinking about being there and what the Lord wanted me to realize in the moment. It was just another day in my *tentmaking* world, and I was stressed out by the demands on my time and how the events of the moment can change everything you thought you prepared for. And you learn that the Most High God is sovereign in His call even when the choices we make seems to veer away from the path He's called us to travel. Let me share with you the backstory and the context of the lesson I learned just a few days ago.

As a bi-vocational pastor (the *tentmaking* reference that the Apostle Paul used), I am responsible for preparing and delivering construction estimates for the company in which I am employed. Some deliveries are easier than they used to be. Computers and email communication have propelled us forward from the days of long telephone conversations on bid day. I remember how the fax machine revolutionized the estimating world. You could send your bid over the phone line. But even the facsimile machines are almost obsolete in this generation. Sometimes the bid has to be delivered in person and on time. That's where the stress level began to ramp up that day. Traveling south on I-95 from Selma to Fayetteville I was making good time according to the ETA (Estimated Time of Arrival) on the GPS (Global Positioning System). See how much progress I've made in understanding what things mean! Then the problem began to materialize. Traffic began slowing down. Until it stopped. And the ETA on the GPS began to get later and later. I was in a construction zone along with the traffic hemmed in from either side by those temporary concrete barriers. Closed in from ahead and behind as far as the eye could see. I began to think my situation was hopeless. I was going to be late for the bid opening. So, I began to pray. That the Lord would make a way for me. Can you relate to what it's like to feel that time is slipping away? And it really is out of your control?

As the traffic crept toward the exit I was re-routing through the countryside and was able to go around the traffic jam caused by an accident that had paralyzed my progress. I made it to the place where the bid was going to be opened. However, there were not enough bids to be opened and the project was scheduled for rebid. All that stress about my plan had been for nought. All that stress about my plan was not good for me. Returning from Fayetteville and traveling toward the church I found that the I-95 route was still clogged.

So I took an alternative route. And I came to the place where I'd been before. At a certain intersection in Dunn, NC I was waiting for the signal light to change. I saw a four-story brick building that I first saw in May of 1973. I was 18 years old and coming to Raleigh to enter the military. I thought that I was in Raleigh. We didn't have buildings that tall where I came from. When I left RDU the next morning Texas bound I made a mental note of saying goodbye to Raleigh NC. Twenty years after that time I was back in Raleigh attending seminary. In 2023 I'm still here. The question I pondered that day is what the Most High God wants me to know. He is always faithful to be with me in my long journey home. You see, you and I have an appointment to make. And we won't be late for that one. We are on this road of life to our destination. God has called us to life. What occupies our minds and clutters our lives that keep us from thinking about God's plans and desires for us? Why do we get so stressed out when our plan doesn't come together? God wants us together with Him...forever. This Road of Life leads to Eternal Life when we take advantage of God's plan. His grace is extended to surrender to His Way...the Way of Christ. Consider the following and think about His plan.

*...it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment...(Hebrews 9:27)* Take the time to read these words in the context of God's story as it relates to humanity...we are lost in time...till God finds us.

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam