

Welcome. My name is Steve Hardin, campus pastor here at The Village Church, Northway. That has even more significance today, because if you missed what Isaac was sharing earlier, if you came in a little late, or maybe were just a little distracted... I want to say welcome to those of you who are in the fellowship hall, our additional worship venue. Bless you over there. This is a live campus service today all day long. Just like the Denton Campus is celebrating five years of their existence after they merged with Grace Temple Baptist Church up in Denton, and the Flower Mound Campus has one of their Groups pastors preaching today, today we are celebrating.

This is a marker day for us, and so if you're a guest of ours and you had other ideas, I'm just glad that sovereignly the Lord brought you here. This is the day we're celebrating, not really a people or even a good heritage, even though that's a good thing to praise the Lord for, we are going to do that today, but today, we're exalting the goodness of God, his faithfulness over the seasons in the life of this church, Northway.

Today, literally on September 30, 1952, they constituted as church, and so that's a pretty big deal. I know some of you, most of you, have come after The Village merged with Northway three years ago. In fact, we opened the doors together three years ago in September as The Village Church, Northway. This church had been in existence for 60 years, of course, the church of Jesus Christ much longer than that.

We want to celebrate God's goodness today. I'm just glad you're a part of that. I'm going to share just a little bit about that out of Psalm 71, because I want to talk about what it really looks like from the psalmist's perspective, from the Lord, what it looks like just to endure for a generation, 40, 50, 60 years in one place. Wherever the Lord may send you, wherever you're going to live, my prayer, our prayer as the leadership of The Village, is that we would be, by the grace of God, a people who endure for a lifetime for the glory of God to make much of God in this city. Right? So that's what we're here to talk about today.

Just a generation, 60 years, these people have been faithful on this corner. They didn't flight out; they didn't leave as the city transitioned, as the nations came, as the neighborhood became so ethnically different, this little church right here on this corner, they remained faithful by the grace of God. So I want to talk about that in just a few moments, but before I do that, Harry Reese, who has been a member here for, I don't know, since the 1970s, met his wife, Patti Reese. They are both members here.

Harry, longtime member... I didn't want to do one of our cool Village videos. You know how we do those videos; it's got music in the background, right? You edit out crazy stuff that's said or maybe nervousness. I just wanted to go live, raw, let Harry Reese, who you never know what's going to come out of his mouth... I just wanted us to go just kind of raw today and depend wholly upon the Holy Spirit really for the glory of God and let Harry just share his heart. I'm so thankful for him.

Harry was a big part, as were many of you, who were a part of Northway, of just sowing seed of the gospel on this corner, and you remain faithful, and we're the recipients of that work. So this is a day where we celebrate the goodness of God. So we just welcome you into that. Bill and Sandy Hughes, I see you guys over there as well. You guys were a part of that. Is anybody else who was a part of the Northway crew, our heritage here in this room? Would you just put your hand up if you were a part of... There you go. I don't want to say old, even though it is old. Did you raise your hand up? Anybody moves a hand, I'm telling you, it's like the auctioneer; you're getting called out. Harry, share your story.

Harry Reese: Good morning. I was a deacon at Northway Baptist Church when the miracle on Walnut Hill Lane and The Village Church took place. For 60 years, we celebrate today the goodness and faithfulness of God to the vision and prayers of some people who got together, and they wanted a place to worship and serve this community.

I became a part of the singles group that was meeting in the early 70s, 400 of us each Sunday. In the late 70s, everything was moving north. So we sent a little mission venture down that way north, and it became Prestonwood Baptist Church. In the 80s, some more Northway members wanted to move north, and one of our associate ministers went with them to be their pastor, and they became ParkwayHills.

The elders of The Village Church wanted to come down and meet with the Northway deacons and talk about renting space, and that discussion changed to a merger. So it was going to be put to a vote to the Northway people to merge with The Village. In the history of Northway, ever since its beginning inception, there had never been anything ever...*ever*...voted 100 percent. For anything. It was put to the vote to the people, and it was 100 percent, and we became The Village Church at Dallas, Northway. Our God is an awesome God.

In this place you can feel the presence of the Lord Jesus, and his work on the cross is lifted up, and the Holy Spirit is transforming hearts and lives. Matt Chandler is a gifted proclaimer of truth. His insight and practical application of God's Word is tremendous, and he has a great sense of humor. He's the only one who'd tell you that, guys, we all married up. You'll never hear a woman say that.

Our pastor Steve Hardin has a deep passion for the Lord, and that passion is contagious. When he gets up here this morning, you're going to get excited with him. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I'd pay good money to get in here, but I'll tell you this. For you, my generation, with all these 25- to 35-year-olds, if you want to get committed to the Lord and serve, you'd better go get you a new pair of tennis shoes.

Steve Hardin: Thank you, Harry.

For just a few minutes I want to share, and then I want to get after the Lord in song. I want to talk to you really about, as the psalmist shares as he writes, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, what it really looks like to grow old loving God. I hope, by the grace of God... Unless the Lord tarries, Christ could come at any moment. He could just come through the clouds, take those of us who are in Christ Jesus. *Bam!* We're gone; we're out. New heaven, new earth, eternity, forever delighting with indefatigable delight in the Lord forever and forever and forever.

Until that time, unless Christ comes tomorrow, or if he waits another 40 years or 60 years... I mean, I'm serious, guys, on this day 60 years ago, this place became constituted, led by God to reach this part of the city; 60 years ago. I'm wondering, what are we going to look like 60 years from now? The majority of our fellowship... We are bumping 3,000 every weekend on this little campus down here. You wouldn't know it because we have four services. We're trying to really grow large by growing small, and so we're all crammed in here together.

The median age is 27 on our campus, and so there will be a large number of you that...I get it...the Lord is going send out. You're going to go here; you're going to go there. But I'm wondering what we will look like on this campus. I will be close to 100. I'm almost 50. So I'll be 110. How awesome would that be? Gumming it, no hair, shorter than ever. I mean, 5'6"...I'll be 4'2" then, man. Maybe it will just be the opposite. The Lord will just in years give me height.

I just wonder, in all seriousness, what is it going to look like 60 years from now on this campus? You need to hear that. What trajectory are we going to have? How faithful will we be? Will we be pressing in the Lord with greater diligence? Will we be praying? Will we be asking the Lord for souls? Will we be faithful, transforming this city from the inside out, getting into the city, loving the city of Dallas, being faithful to fight sin with one another, continuing to worship him with a whole heart? I just wonder.

Or will there be another remnant, like there was here three years ago that was, "Even if that's the case, praise the Lord"? Will there be a remnant left who stayed here by the steadfast goodness of God upon them where they are seeking the Lord, asking the Lord to redeem it? I just wonder. Will we grow callous and cold?

When Matt Chandler goes on to be with the Lord, because you know that could happen... I've known and walked with Matt since he was 19 years old. Love him. Where he is right now, you need to know this. The Lord may give him 40 years; the Lord may take him tomorrow. Where will The Village Church be? Where will they be without the leaders we presently have? Are our hearts anchored into the gospel?

Let me tell you something, guys. Northway Baptist Church existing for 60 years... They had pastors come and pastors go. They had a church split. They started churches out of this place. There was a faithfulness about the Lord here that a remnant held onto, and God heard their cries to continue the work of the gospel in this city through them. I just wonder, without Matt, without some of us, I wonder, if as the Lord would be good, would the work continue to happen and carry on here with a lot of fervency? I wonder.

That's my prayer. That's what we've been praying for, that the Lord would be faithful, that our hearts would not be so attached to men or to people, but our hearts would be taken and anchored by the gospel. That's the story of 60 years right here on this property. Not a perfect people. They're a messed-up, jacked-up people. I say that to Harry's face. They were a hurting people. They were a struggling people. They were a people who have gone up. Man, they have seen the Lord moving, and they've been in places where they just didn't know. They thought maybe the Lord's hand had left them, but God was faithful. They begin to seek; they continued to seek the Lord, and the Lord was good to marry the two of us.

It was 1952... In fact, I have not the original, but I have an original. This is a copy of the original. This was the *Dallas Morning News*, and I just want you to hear this. Then we're going to get into Psalm 71 for a few minutes. This is a newspaper. It's kind of old school...newspaper. *Dallas Morning News*. On the front page of the *Dallas Morning News*, there was this story about how Northway Baptist Church was organized here. In fact, on here I was reading, "Truman Starts His Campaign Trip."

That was 1952. All five of you remember that. It has "Aggies Fill the City with Grid Yells." Gosh! The Aggies beat the other Aggies, that was Oklahoma State. The Aggies down in wherever that is down South beat the Aggies up North. So the Aggies, front page. You made the front page paper. Also, this church, you wouldn't find that today. So I'm going to read this:

"Northway Baptist Church of Dallas was organized today as 51 people stated that they wished to form a new church, and so it was voted into action." In fact, they took up an offering that day of \$61.97. I love it, man! They sowed, baby! They sowed \$61.97. Look, here we are years later. I want to name the names of these people, so don't act like you're getting bored with this, because these are literal people God raised up, and you need to hear their names. Most of these people have gone on to be with the Lord, but this is *you...now*.

When Matt is talking about when Jesus is talking about being salt and light in this city, he's talking about *you*. He's talking about *me*. Here are the people. "The following were present today for the organization of this church: Doctor and Mrs. Allen; Mrs. Martha Hubbard; Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Brumer; Mr. and Mrs. John Cody; Mr. and Mrs. Coplin; Mr. and Mrs. Collinsworth; Mr. and Mrs. Durham; Wayne, Glenda, June, Dixie, and Joanne Durham; Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Huffman; Mr. and Mrs. James John; Mr. and Mrs. Winston C. Jones; Mr. and Mrs. Calloff; Mr. Roy Logan; Mr. William R. Illian; Mr. and Mrs. Raymond May and Linda (somebody had a child); Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Orr; Mr. and Mrs. William Perry; the Presleys; Mr. and Mrs. Posey and Mike; Mr. and Mrs. William Rains; Mrs. G. B. Reese; Mr. and Mrs. JD Salmon..."

Now Mrs. Salmon was our only charter member. She had been here for 60 years. Do you remember Mildred? Do you remember us talking about her? She just went to be with the Lord this summer. Sweet Mildred had been here for 60 years, man. In fact, I ripped this off from her house. Her daughters gave it to me, the original, and then I made a copy.

Mrs. Salmon was precious. In fact, it was Mrs. Salmon who said, on the day they voted to merge the two churches... It was Mrs. Salmon who came up to me afterwards, and she said, "Hey, I don't care what happens in there (talking about what's going to happen in the future) in terms of the worship style or Matt preaching on a screen or, Steve, you screaming at us the whole time. I don't care about that. As long as the gospel is preached, you won't have a problem with me." All right, man. I love that!

It goes on and it says, the Salmons, and then Mrs. Wumble, and Kenneth Hertick. So those were the members the Lord used to establish a gospel work right here on this property 60 years ago. My prayer, our prayer, the pastors' prayers, the elders' prayers for you, is that we'd be a generation who is faithful for the next 10 years, 15 years, 20 or 60 years, until Christ tarries.

Psalm 71. We don't have long, so turn there really quickly. I sure love you, and it is a privilege to walk with you, to serve you, and to get after this city of which... Man, I was born and raised here in this city, and so, you know, my passion for the Lord has been bent on this city coming to Christ. So this is no small thing that we're gathering here, that God has placed us here, that we're joining with a 60-year tradition. So I want us to think about what it looks like to grow old, getting after the Lord from the psalmist's perspective, because I want to do that, and I want you to do that. As difficult as life is, as much sanctification as we'll endure, I just want to be faithful getting the gospel to this city. So here we go. Psalm 71.

"In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in Your righteousness and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me." He did that to Northway. They cried out. He saved them, not saving them with The Village, but he has saved them. He has set them apart. He has done

this work of transformation in their hearts. God has heard their cries. He has heard our cries. There are many of us who can testify to the grace of God in Christ Jesus in us.

"...incline Your ear to me, and save me. Be my strong refuge [my habitation] to which I may resort continually; You have given the commandments to save me. For You are my rock and my fortress. ...out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You." I wonder about that. "I have become as a wonder to many, but You are my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day."

So I just want to stop and say I pray this will be a marker day for us as a people on this campus on this day, and that we will commit for the rest of our lives, by the grace of God, for the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years we would say, like the psalmist, that I will spend the rest of my life, remembering the thousands of times God has been my refuge, my hope, my salvation, that we will remember the goodness of God.

I mean, constantly recounting his deeds, praising him for his greatness until there is no room in our mouth left for anything else, that he will take murmuring, complaining, that he will take, the yea-yeain' and the nay-nayin', and whatever else I can say, that he will fill our hearts with a joy for his name. This corner represents the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God can come in and redeem a corner, hear the cries of jacked-up, messed-up people, and grant them his grace in his Son Jesus Christ for the good of this city.

So guys, I just pray for the next 20, 30, 40 years. If Christ calls me home tomorrow or you, praised be his name. Better to be in his presence, trust me. But if he tarries and calls us to stay here, I pray we'd be faithful and for the rest of our lives, we would be talking about and remembering with wonder and thanks the thousands of times we have leaned on God since our youth and how good he has been.

So I just think about that right here. I just start thinking about the evidences of God's grace. I'm looking out among you, and many of you, I know your stories. I'm thinking about how I just met with a young lady in between the services, and how the Lord has rescued her, redeemed her, how the gospel was preached. Her eyes were awakened to the glory of who God is in Jesus Christ. She has trusted in Christ and has been literally transformed, and there are hundreds of other stories like that on this campus. Hundreds. My heart is so satisfied with him, but I want to see more of him on display in this city, seeing and hearing more and more and more and more stories of God redeeming this city.

Do you hear what I'm saying today? I'm talking about how this girl came out of the adult entertainment work, and God just grabbed her, grabbed her boyfriend. They're going to stand up here in a couple of weeks when I'm up in Philly, checking out another big urban work of God. You know, what the Lord is doing in cities all over this country is amazing. It's not easy. On that weekend, you're going to hear stories of people's lives transformed, changed by the gospel, like that young lady. I think about the evidences of God's grace.

I think about Prestonwood, how God raised up Prestonwood out of this campus back in 1979, started a little plant, and how the Lord has just mushroomed that, how Prestonwood started Hope Fellowship up in Boston, how Hope Fellowship, as we heard over the summer, started City on a Hill with Bland Mason, and how City on a Hill has now planted two other churches, and how we are a partnering church with that church. I'm just thankful. I just pray that for the next 60 years there are more church plants, more church planters, more missionaries, more ministries started. I just pray whoever that dude is who stands up here 60 years from now is saying how good God has been over 120 years. How awesome, man!

There are going to be some of your children and grandchildren here exclaiming how God just changed your life, how he rescued you off porn, how he uncovered your addictions and our idolatries here in this place, how in this place we had a broken, crumbling marriage, even though we popped in here like most of the church does, week in and week out going, "Oh yeah, everything's great," like what Matt talked about two weeks ago. "Everything's fine," and you know it's not fine. Your house is a mess. It is so jacked up with sin.

How great that will be! Like many of us, our stories have been, "God grabbed me in my bankrupt estate. He uncovered our plot. He found me as a mess. He found me to be the fraud that I am, just the dude who is on the outside saying, 'Yeah, yeah,' and on the inside, my heart is just wretched. It's so far from him, and yet I was taken to the place at the foot of the cross, and that's where Christ grabbed my heart. I found I needed Jesus Christ, and he changed me." I just pray we have more and more and more stories like that.

That's my prayer. I know you're going, "Man, calm down." I just can't, and I had water this morning, man. I don't drink coffee. It stunts your growth, right? So man, I'm thinking about all that God's done. I'm thinking about Free City, a ministry that has come out of this campus with Jason Clark and his wife over in an apartment area north of The Village Apartments.

I just think about that work of Champions of Hope down in South Dallas. Jesus sent love, ministering to the girls and those men in the entertainment community right over here, the adult entertainment world off of Harry Hines. That was a neighborhood, when I was growing up, my mom and dad said, "Do not go over there," and now the church is being sent over there. I love that! Come on, church.

I think about getting into these schools with Wildlife, which is Young Life's equivalent for middle school, how the Lord has opened up the door, given us a portable so we can reach into the very fabric of that community. I think about what the Lord is doing with partnering with our pregnancy center called the Downtown Pregnancy Center in downtown and uptown, how the Lord is using you, how God has stirred in our hearts, how the gospel is really being used and effective through you.

Do not leave the city. God has called you here. He left Northway here for 60 years, guys, and he has called us here to be an agent of the gospel for the gospel of seeing the city redeemed, and it is like the work of Christ, man. This is not an easy work, but we are about a work like Christ, as Christ on this earth of seeing this city redeemed, and the way we get there is we live there.

So man, we're talking about South Dallas. We're talking about East Dallas, where I was born and raised. My heart is to plant a church over there. My heart is to get more ministries going in North Dallas. Our hearts are to get more ministries in South Dallas, West Dallas. We just want to infiltrate this city with the gospel, and we're not the only ones.

God is doing that with works all over this city, and so praised be his name. This is not about The Village. This is not about Northway. This is not about Matt. It's certainly not about Steve. It's not about you; this is about Jesus. We are preaching Jesus. So I just want to remember with wonder and awe the thousands of times God has just been faithful.

I think about all the missionaries, and I'm going to name them out of this campus. I think about sending the Carpenters. I think about the Smiths, Joshua and Melissa Smith. I think about how we've sent Shane and Allyson Smith over to Africa, the Strobels. I think about Nathan Jones, Phil Benavides. Rachel Lewis came from this Campus, Jennifer Lagrone, Ashley Sellars who are on the field in the nations now. I think about Julie Kolins, and Stephanie Ross, and then, last, KC Reed. I just think about how God has brought to our campus people from the nations. I love it!

In fact, I wonder right now how many of you in this room or in the fellowship hall were not born in the United States or whose parents were not born in the United States. I wonder who that is. Would y'all just raise your hand? Raise your hand. Keep it up there. That's incredible! Man, that's incredible. You know we've been praying for ethnicity, for the Lord as he has been good in this city to bring the nations here. So I pray we'll continue to grow in an appreciation and an understanding that the nations are before us, and while they're here and while we're here, God has given us a platform.

What about adoption? Think about how many of us are now pursuing, are in pursuit, or have adopted the little ones. I am just so thankful that Northway has endured and stayed the course by the grace of God in this city. Guys, we're not here for any glory. Who are we? We are here to make much of him. So I'm just going to go a couple of more minutes, I promise, and then we're going to sing. We're going to sing our hearts' affections, but I want to say this. Keep on reading. Verse 14.

"But I will hope continually and will praise You yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits." I've been at the gospel work for 30 years, man. I just want to keep seeing more and more and more, through you and through my own life, if God would grant it. I just want to continue to see the Lord glorified by changing lives; I just want to continue to see us get dirty in the city.

I know it's difficult, man, and I bless you. I'm so thankful for you. I'm so thankful that many of you started with us three years ago, man. There were 140 or 150 of us that merged in with 80 or 90 of Northway. We didn't know what we were doing. We really didn't, but the Lord has gathered us, old and young. Where does that happen?

People were coming in... We had music that was crazy, that was so different from what Northway had usually embraced. We were loud, and Matt was preaching on a screen. It was so different. People were coming in with short and hats and tattooed and pierced stuff and all, people from all nations. I never, I just had never... You need to hear this. I'm telling you the truth as God is my conscience. I've never had one complaint from the Northway people for the work of the gospel on this campus by being different, having a ministry that's so different from them. That's the work of the gospel. So I just bless you.

I'm just so thankful for that, because I'm just looking out over my city, over your city, and I want you to love this city like Jesus did. I don't want to be like Jonah here. I don't want our church to be like Jonah going, "Okay, God, I'll go preach repentance to that city. I hate Ninevah." I pray the Lord like Christ would put in our hearts a love for this city. We're so burdened for it and broken because of the ills of the city and the plight of the city. I do. I pray that the Lord keeps many of us planted right here, and if he takes you off and sends you, because I do believe this is a sending campus, then praised be his name.

I pray, like verse 17 says, **"Oh God, You have taught me from my youth, and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded..."** Or baldheaded or no-headed, whatever. **"...when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come."** I just want for 60 years, if the Lord permits and allows, for us to preach the gospel to a whole new generation, man. I just pray for a fervency and a faithfulness to the end. Do you hear what I'm saying? *To the end.*

We are a counterculture to this culture. I just pray we will be what the city is not, the city of God within the city of Dallas. I pray you would have a love and an appreciation for this city. I pray you would understand God has not called us to be a fortress here. That's why we don't do a lot here. That's why we say go to your group. We want to send you out (Brandon will say more about that in closing with Communion), but I just don't want this to be the only gathering place. We have to infiltrate the city.

I pray you love diversity. I pray you will understand it is by our differences... The Lord uses our differences and ethnicities and different backgrounds to humble us, because not everybody is like you. They're not like me. I would have never imagined the Lord taking a dude like me out of East Dallas, and he would keep me here in this city, and that I would have a little bit of a part of advancement of the kingdom-shaking kind of work. I just never thought the Lord would use me.

Look what he's doing in you. Look what he's doing in us, guys. He's faithful, and he is to be hoped in. So I'm telling you, man. There are a lot more people out in this city who need the hope of the gospel. This little campus is just a metaphor of what the gospel can do in changing people who are desperate. I want us to keep pleading. I want us to keep weeping. I want us to keep rejoicing. I want us to keep praying. I want us to take the gospel to the next generation. I don't care if I'm here or not, but I want you to be faithful to take the gospel to the next generation. Amen? Old, grayheaded, whatever. Praised be the name of the Lord.

Father, bless your name. I pray, knowing your faithfulness endures from one generation to another, your loving kindness has blown us away, so I pray you would be worshiped, glorified, rejoiced in, made much of, treasured in this moment and the next few moments we have to sing our songs of affection to you. Thank you for what you're doing on this property, for how faithful you've been to your own name. In Jesus' name, amen.