

Keynote Speaker for Crystal Beach Community Church's
Family Learning Center Dedication Service

Rev. Dr. Paul Stake

April 12, 2009

Picture This

Text: James 2:26

I have chosen for our text, on this special day of celebration, a verse from the book of James: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead; so also faith apart from works is dead." I am sure you have heard many sermons on that text, and I would suppose most of us would agree with James. But works has many interpretations especially if we apply it to our individual lives or groups we belong to, or places where we work or to our church life.

This morning I want to apply it to church life and especially to the life of this church in this particular place. And the works I want to talk about, in church terms, is Mission. I believe Mission is asking, "What can I or we do?" Seeing it. And then doing something about it.

During the last few years, you have used a lighthouse as a symbol of this church. It is a good symbol. I like to visit lighthouses in my travels. The experience of those visits has usually been the same. It takes a lot of hard work to get to the top where the light is located. And if you want to experience it fully, you have to go out on the little ledge that goes around near the top. If you are like me you hope there is a good protective railing. I'm not too comfortable being up on those heights and looking down. But here is where you experience the lighthouse. You see clearly down and around - here you get the view and the vision of the place.

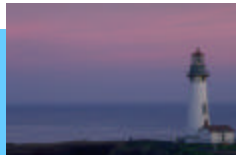
One of my Favorite TV shows of yesteryear was The Golden Girls. I liked when ma would start her story with, "Picture This" and she would take us on a mental imaginary journey back in time. And so I want you to "picture this".

Close your eyes for a minute and picture the small lighthouse out front of the church. And now let it grow. It's growing. Make it bigger with at least 100 steep steps inside. Its standing out there. You got it in your mind's eye. You can open your eyes. And begin a journey with me. We are going to climb that lighthouse a few times in the next few minutes.

First we are going to climb it with Cora and Fred Markert. They have come over from Tampa. These committed Christians had asked what could they do. They had answered the prompting of the Spirit by starting an orphanage and ministry to children and call it Faith Mission. Now they are ready to do something special. They look down from our lighthouse and they see a wonderful place to move their orphanage. Here was unspoiled land right on the Gulf of Mexico. With the help of the Ringling Brothers Circus group and others they get funds to move here and what a wonderful place they create for children. Faith Mission builds an orphanage and wonderful camp sites. Faith Mission will also impact our lives in the future.

August Bredemier marries into the Market family and becomes involved in Faith Mission. It is the 50's and the times are changing and all kinds of restrictions make it harder to keep





the orphanage going. When the Bredemier's climb our imaginary lighthouse with 50 some people they get another vision as they look down. They ask What can we do here? They see a building that belongs to Faith Mission, which would make a wonderful home for a community church. And they do some-thing about it. Crystal Beach Community Church is born. Rev. Bredemier becomes the first pastor of the church and continues to work with Faith Mission. Years later Faith Mission will give the beautiful Carillon you hear inside and outside the church, in memory and honor of Pastor Bredemier. When you hear give a thought of thanks for those early pioneers in this place.

Then our own June Parker and her husband Alvin come from the Midwest to this special piece of God's country. They climb our lighthouse with considerably more people and it is crowded and as they look down they ask what are we to do if our mission is to grow? The church has become a vital part of the community and people are being drawn to it. They see the need for an addition to the facility. And they do something about it with the addition of the fellowship hall and kitchen.

Jim Whitehurst arrives with his bag of tricks. That is a compliment because Jim is a great magician. He climbs those steep steps with Lois and is accompanied by many of you who are here today. You see that Faith Mission is in trouble and Jim and you do something about it by running the day to day business of housing for seniors. There are many houses and a retirement home to manage. And you see a need for an outreach to the children of the community and give Tom Aparo and Chris Sheets the resources so that the Youth Center down the street could come into being in a building owned by Faith Mission.

Then Janet and I climb this imaginary lighthouse with many of you and we get a vision right below the lighthouse of a need for a parsonage. And you do something about it. We also look farther out and see opportunities for missions beyond this place. If you are a new here—ask some of the older members to tell you about the herd of goats we bought, and the bags, which filled the choir loft, representing rice for starving people in Haiti, or the young people standing at the door shaking them down for their loose change. How excited they were when a visitor dropped a hundred dollar bill into the jar.

It is time for Jim and Judy Bradley to climb these steps of our lighthouse to get a glimpse of the vision. Many of you have made the climb before and for some of you it is the first time. Jim leads you to a new vision, for something more, if the mission is to continue to reach others for Christ... You ask what can we do. And then you do it by making plans for constructing the building we dedicate today.

Now you climb the steep steps of our lighthouse with Sue Cashion. You are looking out and down and you see a wonderful place for ministry. Pastor Susie will lead you in capturing a new vision for these uncertain days. This building will give you new opportunities for ministry. Be open to where the Spirit is leading you. You have a great task before you. But you respond in Faith. For it was with faith all of this started.

In times like these days, it can be easy to find reasons not to do anything, but you have chosen to step out boldly. Let us not forget those who went before us did not have it easy. But they were convinced that the Holy Spirit was at work giving them the visions for this place. You will be long remembered by those who follow you in this place.

