

The Road Less Traveled – January 6, 2017

This Sunday we will begin the second round of our Holy Conversation for the As For Me & My House visioning process. This is a process that we began back in the fall and is designed to help us to discern where and who God is calling us to be as a church moving into the future.

Last fall, as we were gearing up for this process, Dr. Eric McKinney, the consultant who is guiding us through this process, asked me a question that really made me think. He asked, “If this process isn’t successful, what will be the reason?” I had to think on that for a while, but finally told him, “If it isn’t successful, it will be because we were too impatient to let the process fully unfold.” Nearly halfway through this visioning journey, I am convinced more than ever that I was right.

This is an awkward exercise because it is not the normal way that most of us make decisions for the future. In most cases, we figure out where we need to go, how best to get there and then we take action. We make our plans and then try our best to make those plans a reality. We figure out *what* to do, then do it. It is expedient, to be sure, but in that process a critical element is lost.

Why.

Why are we here? Why do we exist as a church? Why do we do the things we do?

They sound like simple questions, but in reality they are not. In reality the why question is the most difficult but critical question we have to answer.

Several years ago I read a book that really changed the way I looked at church. In fact, it changed the way I looked at life. The book was *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* by Simon Sinek. The author is a business consultant with a unique perspective on human behavior. His premise for business is that people don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it. Meaning that people subconsciously make decisions based on values and beliefs more so than a collection of data. He points to industry trendsetters like Apple and argues that people are willing to stand in line for hours to buy the latest iPhone not because the technology is so superior, but because they share the vision that the company articulates: *Everything we do we believe in challenging the status quo; we believe in thinking differently.*

That’s Apple’s *why*. The products the company makes are secondary to its vision, merely the way it makes its beliefs real. And the fact that the company historically has been driven not by what it does but rather why it does it has made it an industry leader in practically every product it has ever produced.

Because people don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.

You can experience Simon Sinek in his own words [here](#).

That is why we are taking the time to complete this visioning process. It is designed to help us discern and articulate our *why*. We could engage in an exercise of strategic planning, come up with a multi-point plan and put it into action. We could figure out what to do. But unless we

understand why we are doing it – and unless what we do is a natural expression of why we exist – then we are just another church trying to lure people with flashy programs.

But I don't believe that we are just another church. I don't want us to be just another church.

This is a deliberately slow, lengthy process. And I am by nature an impatient person. But years ago when I read Simon Sinek's book, it had a startling ring of truth to it. And over time I came to believe deeply in the efficacy of his analysis. I am convinced that after watching him for yourself, you will, too.

And so I pray that you will make yourself a part of our visioning process. Whether you participated in the first round of Holy Conversations, I encourage you to become part of the conversation this time around. You can sign up for one of the conversations [here](#).

What is our *why*? Answering that question is where our future begins.

See you Sunday.