Thing I have Learned 4.

Pastoring a church is an arduous task, involving running a business, taking care of records, finances, legal matters, and it involves people, counseling them, marrying them, burying them, dealing with the endless involvement of people in their work, their families, their community, and behind the scene, with their deepest secrets.

If a pastor does their job, they will work hard for endless hours and will be beset by projections from people and the draining of their energy day in and day out. It is not an easy road, but it is a beautiful road and one that I have walked willingly and with great satisfaction.

I have tried to teach well, but I am the one who was the student and I learned far more than I taught. I have been the benefactor. I came to town to change Reno, only to find out, in the end, that God sent me here so Reno could change me. I came, filled with illusions that I did not see as illusions and expectations that would be reshaped by reality. God has been good to me, and so have the people that put up with me.

I assumed that people would need me to help them know how to live, but that was the height of arrogance. They did not need my youthful wisdom, but they did need someone who could walk with them, be broken by life and stung by pain and who could survive the fires of hell and escape without being destroyed. They did not need my pontifications but my example. I only hope that I provided that, even though faultily, to measure up to the ideal of Christ Himself.

And that is what I have learned, that we all, as human beings need to understand the riches of His grace and the glory of His person. Christianity is not found in forms, rituals, organizations, programs, structures, buildings or the usual offerings of our church world. It is found in Him.

The solutions to the failures of humanity is found in the accomplishment of Christ, who willingly gave to us all that He is in exchange for all that we were. We fall far short of understanding that and of living in it. We struggle with life and success and meaning, yet, it is there, right there - in Him. And He is not some religious figure in the sky, He is here, with us, in us and surrounding us. The concept of God in us and our being in Him is the essence of the good news and the pivotal point of understanding life.

We tend to think of ourselves as distant from God who dwells somewhere, up there, out there, away from us. We go to church hoping that He will condescend to arrive and be felt by us will bless us. But that imagery is an illusion and a trap to keep us from the realization of who He is and who we are.

The presence of the eternal Creator God, is not out there, but in here. He is in us and we are in Him. When we go to church, we take Him there, and yes, to the store, to the job and into our homes. He has provided for us the fullness of Himself. We lack nothing, but possibly the realization of what we are. We are the place of His dwelling. He is not in the temple in the holy place, He is in you and in me, as fully as He was in the creative act at the beginning and as much as He was and is – anywhere and everywhere.

We labor to ask God to come to us and do things for us and to work miracles in our behalf. But He did. He divested Himself of His throne in glory and is content to be where He ever desired to be – IN HIS PEOPLE.

Our potential is to be the precise extension of Christ to our generation and to our communities. We will not someday have the power and the grace – we have it now! It is not a matter of finding God. He is not lost. It is a matter of the realization of the finished work of the cross in which I am Crucified with Him and as He rose from the dead, victorious over death, hell and the grave, so also do I have that victory in me. The potential of Life in Christ is far beyond what we have yet realized.

I desire to be part of a people who will rise up in this end time and see the release of the victory won on Calvary. I desire to get in touch with the Christ within and to release Him in all of His transcendent glory and power.

Rise up oh people of God! Rise up and do exploits. Rise up and release the power of God through you to crush the works of darkness and set the captives free.

Pastor Dave