

Note from Coach Greg:

By now several of you are starting to worship in person again or you are in the planning stage for a June or July relaunch.

We need to have a discussion on "interpreting our new reality" post COVID:

- The 1,000 viewers on your Facebook/YouTube and or any other video platform will not translate into 1,000 people coming to your church. I do not want all of us to have a false impression of what we will return to
- More reality, you are not the only guy these 1,000 people are watching. The last I heard is that at the height (2-3 weeks ago) people were watching 2 or 3 preachers per Sunday or per week
- Viewership nationwide is already declining. Why? Watch the movie Gladiator, remember the line "are you not entertained," and "The crowd is fickle". IT'S TRUE. As novel as covid-19 is...the novelty of watching church on Facebook live etc. is showing its novel "shelf life". Numbers are starting to decline nationwide.
- Want more interpretation of reality? 25% of your church is ready to go back to church, 50% will wait a few more weeks and the other 25%, (see the bullet point two down).
 - For every person in the 25% ready, waiting and itching to come back there is another 25% waiting, ready and itching for the lake to open; state campground to open; the beach to open; the ATV trails to open etc. This group might keep watching you on Facebook but that will wane too. We might see these folks at Christmas.
 - Within a matter of weeks people will go back to normal attendance patterns, remember 9/11? Maybe you are too young, so read about it.
 - The final 25% two bullet points ago will be the ones likely to take 18-36 months to do much of anything. They will live in their turtle shell and be content to do so.
- All disasters take 18-36 months of recovery. This was not a tornado, earthquake, or a hurricane...it is worse, because it is nationwide and worldwide. I have been through two hurricanes in Texas and an earthquake while pastoring in the desert of CA. They are a kick in the gut, but you must persevere. This will pass.
- What about the new reality of online viewers? Yup, keep what you are doing, keep engaging them, talk to them every so often in your Sunday message but your online viewers will eventually become the minority again.
- You WILL have visitors!!! Of course. I have had 4 visitors in three weeks, but not a 1,000

I have been keeping my weekly videos since we entered covid era, but I am changing my strategy starting next week. I will be switching from inspirational topics to Bible Study. No, I will not announce it as a Bible study, I am just going to start. Why? As soon as I say Bible study, I will lose viewers...it is a mental block so play the mental game guys! It is the frog in the kettle approach.

I am learning to preach live to both in-person and online church on Sunday. It takes a little getting used too but you can do it!! You have preached to a camera for almost three months now. You are re-trained with a new habit of delivery, so are your people on how they receive your message.

So, this is your game sideline timeout pep-talk or maybe the halftime locker room talk. Take it as you need it, but as your coach (including Patrick, Robi and Matt), I need to speak the truth rather than have you dismayed, discouraged or worse...depressed!! When you open the doors and do not see the "numbers", it's time to interpret your new reality

One more Reality Check!! Here is what I have experienced in three weeks back in worship. You could say I am our test church for our network to dip our toes in the water:

- Keep in mind Creekside in Needville, TX was averaging 430-450 per weekend, the new reality is what is happening now and listed below
- Phase 1 reopening **"Preview Services"** at **9:30a only, no children's min**
 - First Sunday back was May 3, we had **75 in worship**.
 - Second Sunday back May 10, we had **125 in worship**
- Phase 2 reopening **"soft-launch"** (May 17, 24 and 31) reintroduced Thursday worship 7p; Sunday worship at 8a, 9:30am and 11:00a with children at 9:30 only.
 - May 17, we had 20 people on Thursday; 9 people at 8:00a; 70 adults and 25 kids/volunteers at 9:30a and 25 people at 11:00a for a grand total of **149 in worship** over 4 services.
 - Majority of people showing up are 40+ in age
 - We do not live in a face mask mandated county and so far, only 2 people have worn masks and we sold 300 masks...what?
 - The spirit is good but there is a sense of abnormal in the air
 - For the first time ever for me we are not passing the offering plate, because we cannot...for now. I will as soon as we are allowed
- Phase 3 will be June 7, 14 and 21 and treated just like a church plant **grand opening** with 10,000 mailers (mail drop is May 22-29) and big weekends planned. In phase 3 we will stop our temporary 8:00a service and keep our normal three services, Thursday 7p and Sunday 9:30/11:00a

Finally, as I have coached several of you recently, my advice is...when your state opens, YOU open. If your location is preventing you from opening, start looking for a new location. People love you, but they will move on if necessary.

All of this might be a tough pill to swallow but the work of both in-person and virtual is about to start again. If we do not have a grip or the proper interpretation of our new reality we will be in a state of confusion. I pray you are ready, rested and battle tested to charge the hill. I think Joshua was told just a few times to be "courageous" right?