

## Looking Back, Pressing Forward

By: David Burruss

As I sit with my thoughts at the close of 2025, I have to be honest. It wasn't an easy year. There were challenges that came from directions I didn't expect. Some were personal. Old wounds. Hidden things I hadn't fully dealt with. God has a way of bringing those skeletons out of the closet when it's time to grow, doesn't He? And He was faithful to walk with me through that process. I had to seek His wisdom in a deeper way than I have in a long time.

There were also some difficult moments within the congregation. Not over petty arguments or small misunderstandings, which are hard enough, but something deeper and more painful. Some chose to walk away, not because they didn't understand, but because they didn't want to follow where God was clearly leading. Their hearts weren't open to what He was calling them to do. And rather than be encouraged by others who were growing, serving, and walking in obedience, they grew frustrated. It's a strange and heartbreak thing to see. People getting upset, not because of sin or wrongdoing, but because Christians were doing what Christians are supposed to do. Living faithfully. Loving the truth. Serving with joy. Even something as simple as checking in on someone who missed services became a reason for offense. That kind of light, the kind that comes from genuine care and spiritual accountability, made them uncomfortable. That's not easy to witness. It hurts. You love people, you pray with them, you serve side by side, and then you watch them turn away. Not from you, but from the calling of Christ. And that kind of sorrow doesn't fade quickly. It lingers.

But in the middle of all of that, there were blessings. So many, in fact, that I can't look back at this year without gratitude. We saw five baptisms this year. Five souls choosing to put on Christ. Two of them were brand new to our church family. What a joy it was to welcome them in. But the other three, well, they were already among us. People we'd considered brethren. People we'd shared communion with and worked beside. But through study, sermons, conversations, and honest reflection, they realized they weren't sure why they'd been baptized. They didn't want to live with doubt. They wanted to be sure.

That kind of decision takes courage. It takes humility. And more than that, it takes a heart that's truly seeking God. Like Peter said in 2 Peter 1:10, "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble." That's exactly what they were doing. And it reminded me that this is what spiritual growth looks like. Not always flashy or loud, but real. Deep. Personal. It's what healthy disciples do. They examine themselves. They're honest. They obey from the heart.

So even though 2025 had its trials, it also had its triumphs. And both are part of what makes this walk with God so meaningful. We grow through the pain, and we celebrate in the joy. And as we step into 2026, I want to hold on to all of it, both the hard lessons and the beautiful victories.

Our theme for 2026 is "Be the Good." And that's exactly what we aim to do. We're going to keep pressing forward. Keep praying. Keep studying God's Word. Keep planting gospel seeds. And above all, we're going to keep growing. No coasting. No autopilot. Because when we commit ourselves to steady, faithful growth, God always blesses it. He really does.

Like Paul wrote in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." That's a promise we can hold onto.

So here's to a new year of planting, watering, and trusting God for the increase. Here's to being the good in our families, in our workplaces, in our church, and in the world. Let's stay faithful. Let's stay humble. And let's never stop growing.

Because the harvest is coming.