



VISION OF THE HOUSE 2023
MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH – NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
Bishop Joseph Warren Walker, III – D. Min., Senior Pastor

THE YEAR OF FORWARD FOCUS

Joshua 1:1-8 (NKJV)

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ²"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. ³Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. ⁵No man shall *be able* to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall ^[a]divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may ^[b]prosper wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you^[c] shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

I greet all of you in the unmatched name of Jesus Christ!

Mount Zion, I am certain that we agree that 2022 was an amazing year. To witness the hand of God on the Mount Zion church was nothing short of a blessing. There is no doubt that we fulfilled the vision God gave us for 2022 when we went over the wall. As we approach 2023, it is imperative that we maintain momentum. What God has called us to do does not afford us an opportunity to be at ease in Zion. We must remain committed to going from strength to strength and glory to glory. To that end, God has given me the vision "Forward Focus"! *Forward* is defined as onward to make progress toward a successful conclusion. *Focus* is defined as the center of interest or activity. It is the state or quality of having or producing clear visual definition. *Focus* is about aligning people, resources, and energy toward the fulfillment of their God-given destiny. *Focus* is the antidote for distraction. Going forward, undeterred—determined to accomplish what God promised us—is our aim.

When the children of Israel experienced the death of Moses, God spoke to them through Joshua concerning their next move. God revealed to the Israelites that His vision is continual—that it is bigger than any person or group. God's children experienced loss, yet for the vision to come to fruition, they could not romanticize their catastrophic circumstance—a circumstance precipitated

by their failure to reimagine what was emerging on the scene. If they were to achieve God's blessing, the children of Israel needed to forward focus. Forward focusing is what God revealed to me concerning this ministry. We thank you, God, for the accomplishments of one season—the year 2022, but at this moment in 2023, we must focus on what God has for us now. Mount Zion, every season brings loss and gain. God released us from those shifting away from our destination and aligned us with those moving forward—those walking alongside us. The word to Joshua says to go over the Jordan—to go forward: Take what God has promised you and take the people whom God has assigned to you with you so that they fully experience God's intent for their lives.

The vision requires both corporate and individual attention for it to come to fruition. We cannot live out forward focus, comparing ourselves to others. We cannot live out the vision with the enemy distracting us. Instead, we must be willing to march into territories and realms where we have never traveled. We must remain progressive trendsetters in ministry. Mount Zion, this is the season to forward focus. As we commit to going forward, let us examine four areas God is calling to our attention: Fearlessness, Connectivity, Uplift and Success.

FEARLESSNESS:

The year 2023 must be a year of boldness rooted in the application of the word of God. God tells Joshua to take the land, proclaiming that everywhere the soles of their feet touch will be theirs. Mount Zion, God will favor us to occupy fresh territory. The scope of this manifestation will expand our ministry in ways we have never seen before. Those connected to us will experience the anointing, pursuing occupations in their careers, including within their homes. As a church body, we will unapologetically commit ourselves to attaining territory that expands the kingdom of God. We will not operate from a spirit of fear. Rather, we will boldly stand fearlessly on God's promises for this season. Mount Zion, it is imperative that our voices and our lifestyle manifest the anointing of fearlessness. No matter what happens, we will remember the prophet Isaiah speaking the word of the Lord in Chapter 41:10 (NKJV). Isaiah says, "Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

OBEDIENCE:

Obedience is the foundation of this vision. If Israel were to experience the promises of God in the land given them, they would have to adhere strictly to His word. God tells them not to waiver but to focus. Like the Israelites, we, too, must be obedient throughout our Christian walk. We must do whatever the Lord says to do—when He says to do it. We must be committed to walking in integrity, understanding how our individual decisions collectively impact this ministry. We must commit ourselves to walking in obedience in the following ways. **First is RELATIONSHIP.** We can no longer walk into the promises of God and not spend time communing with Him. Our relationship with God must be evident in our character, our commitment, and our consistency. What God will do this season will require our spiritual accountability. We must be steadfast and unshakeable. A mere few of us cannot complete this work because it is too great. **Second is STEWARDSHIP.** God desires our full commitment—our time, talent, and treasure—in this season.

We must remember that God has given us gifts that benefit the body of Christ. Therefore, we must resist the urge to sit on them. Our gifts, talents and anointings are essential to successful kingdom building. Our service matters, and there is room for us to serve. Mount Zion will be intentional about discovering gifts as well as about creating opportunities for our gifts to flow. We must also remain faithful in our giving. Last year, our congregation raised over *One Million Dollars* on All Tithe Sunday for ministry outreach and for our debt-free Teen Center. Our commitment to tithing and to giving is a model for kingdom generosity. Mount Zion, because we serve in a debt-free anointing, it is imperative that our stewardship continues to go over the wall. It is imperative that we remain steadfast, pushing forward and focused where we are called to serve.

CONNECTIVITY:

The next area God has given to us is connectivity because our focus cannot be squarely upon ourselves. In this new season, we must realize the importance of strategic partnerships. Historically, Mount Zion has exceeded expectations in this area. If we are to manifest the vision in 2023, we must remain both visible and active servants—making connections where the Lord leads us. Connectivity will include expanding partnerships not only within the Nashville in-person community but also across our digital, social media platforms so that we reach more souls for the kingdom. We want to be intentional about connecting people to the resources they need to live the life God promises them. We will also foster the spirit of community *within* the life of our growing church. We will connect our members to their ministry flock leaders. We will strive to assure that those interested in Mount Zion ministries stay connected. Also, our continued investment in technology is essential to assuring greater connectivity. We embrace the mantra that connectivity is the new currency.

UPLIFT:

Uplift is the area that will squarely focus on outreach, which is one of our core values as a ministry. Outreach is a critical component to the manifestation of the vision because God has called us to serve and to uplift our community just as God instructed Joshua to take the people with him. Where God is taking Mount Zion will benefit those in our community. We will uplift our community educationally, economically, and emotionally. Once again, we will commit a significant part of our ministry budget to outreach because we believe that God has called us to be “an oasis of hope within the Nashville community and around the world.” We will continue to provide opportunities for every person connected to Mount Zion to volunteer in outreach. As we expand and diversify our outreach efforts to uplift our community, it will take all of us to be successful.

SUCCESS:

God has called us to extraordinary success. Such success is determined by measurable and sustainable outcomes. Mount Zion, whatever we put our hands to do, God will make certain that we produce the intended outcomes and bring glory to Him. Ministry departments, programs and events will focus on the success of your family, your business, your health, and your spiritual growth. Yes, we will be intentional about tracking the overall progress of our ministries. We want

to be a church ministry that provides encouragement, empowerment, and exposure to those pursuing success. When you win, we win! When we win, God is glorified!

Finally, I am eager to see the 2023 Vision of the House manifested, for Ecclesiastes 3:1, (NKJV) says, "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:" Mount Zion, during this season in the earth, we are uniquely in position to help others fulfill their God-given purpose. We stand readily equipped to help believers access everything He has promised them. God has blessed us with progressive-minded believers who connect to this ministry. We are a ministry of His people who refuse to settle for average. Consequently, I am confident that 2023 will be our year—a season of unprecedented growth, acquisition, and engagement—all bountiful blessings. Forward Focus will require that we be fully committed to moving forward in unity as we march toward our goal.

"We are marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion! We are marching upward [*FORWARD*] to
Zion, the beautiful city of God."
(Refrain written by Robert Lowry)

May God continue to guide us and give us the strength to accomplish what He has charged us to do.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Bishop Joseph Warren Walker, III
Senior Pastor