INTRODUCTION:
1. There are certain words or phrases found within the English language that thrills the hearts of man when heard.
   A. Phrases like - “I love you” sends chills up the spines of people every day.
   B. Words like - peace, love, joy, mother, freedom, and hope cause us all to feel better about things.

BODY:
1. As we think of the church we should be able to see that in so far as the way Godviews it, it is glorious.
   A. This is because:
      1. It had a glorious origin.
         A. This is so because Jesus loved the church and gave himself for it - Eph. 5:25.
         B. He purchased it with his own blood - Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19.
      2. It has a glorious relationship to Deity.
         A. As head of the body Christ saves and defends it - Eph. 5:23, 24.
      3. It has a glorious mission.
         A. That mission is to take the gospel to the world (Mt. 28:18-20) and bring glory to the Father’s name - Eph. 3:20, 21.
      4. It has a glorious unity.
         A. We share in the great blessings with every other child of God - Eph. 1:3; 4:1-6.
         B. Unity of believers is that which the Lord prayed for in John 17:20-23.
      5. The church has a glorious future.
         A. The reason for this is that the church awaits its final redemption - Eph. 5:27.

2. But what about this congregation?
   A. There is a story about two little boys whose mother asked them to chase a chicken snake out of the henhouse. They looked everywhere for that snake, but couldn't find it. The more they looked, the more afraid they got. Finally, they climbed up slowly and stood up on their tiptoes to look on the top nesting shelf ... and came nose to nose with the snake. They fell all over themselves and one another running out of the chicken house. “Don't you know a chicken snake won't hurt you?” their mamma asked. “Yes, ma'am,” one of the boys answered, “but there are some things that will scare you so bad you'll hurt yourself.”
   B. What do you find when you go looking for the future, especially as it relates to this congregation?
      1. Is it one of those things that'll scare you so bad you'll hurt yourself?
   C. As elders, deacons, and members of this congregation, what do you see when you look down into the deep recesses of your hearts about the future of this congregation?
      1. Is it fear?
2. Or is it hope?

D. I can assure you that what you find depends upon several things.
   1. Much of which you control.
      A. Ask yourself these questions in relation to this congregation:
         1. “If everyone attended services as I do, what would be its future?”
         2. “If everyone gave as I do, what would be its future?”
         3. “If everyone worked within this congregation as I do, what would be its future?”
         4. “If everyone sought to build this congregation up as I do, what would be its future?”

3. What lies ahead for this congregation?
   A. I am not a prophet, nor the son of prophet, but I believe I can make predications based upon what the Bible has to say.
      1. The future of any congregation can be a glorious future or it can be a miserable failure.
         A. The choice is ours.
            1. If you do not believe this is so, spend a little time with Revelation chapters 2 and 3 and the seven church of Asia.
   B. If you want this congregation to have a glorious future you must take the “bull by the horns” and do that which will cause it to do so.
      1. Success is not that which comes accidentally!
      2. Rather, it is the result of effort - 1 Cor. 15:58.

4. A glorious future lies ahead for this congregation if…
   A. …you will preach the word - 2 Tim. 4:2.
      1. The hope for the world is not in the words of man’s wisdom, but in the gospel - Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:17.
      2. It was the preaching of the cross that saved men in the first century and it will do the same today - 1 Cor. 1:18.
   B. …you will stand for that which God stands for, and against that which He is against.
      1. The listing of the “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the spirit” clearly contrasts the two - Gal. 5:19-23.
      2. It is past time that we “hate” that which God “hates” - Psa. 97:10; Amos 5:14, 15.
         A. For the life of me, I do not understand people who claim to be Christians who get their standard of morality from Ophra, and others like her.
         B. People sit “glued” to the TV and “gulp” down the words of advice of those who live in open disregard for what the Bible says, and then complain about a sermon from God’s own Word that is longer than 20 minutes.
   3. We are clearly living in a time much like one described in a couple O.T. passages - Hosea 4:6, Amos 8:11.
      A. If you want this church to have a glorious future you need to be a people
of the Book.

1. Not just readers of it, but doers of it - Ezra 7:10; Jas. 1:22.

C. …you will do those works that God would have you to do.

1. Although “work” is a four-lettered word, it is not a “dirty” word as some in the church seem to think.
   A. Jesus spoke of doing the work he was sent to do - Jhn. 9:4.
   1. He taught us to do our duty - Lk. 17:10.
   B. Paul teaches us that in order to “walk worthy” we must be fruitful in our work - Col. 1:10.
   1. He connects the grace of God to the works of man - Eph. 2:8-10.

2. Granted, we cannot all do the same, but we are not “called” to do the same, just that which we can - Eccl. 9:10.

A. Remember the parable of the “talents” in Matthew 25:14-30?

D. …you will reach out to the lost of this community and the world.

1. There can be no future for a dying church (not that this one is, but you are but a generation away).
   A. Many congregations are dying from the lack of new members.
   1. Much like families who have no sons to pass on the name, congregations, often have no new sons and daughters to pass on the name.
   A. Consider Genesis 30:1.

CONCLUSION:

1. The future is yours.
   A. It can be glorious, or it can be a miserable failure.
   1. You have the ingredients for it to be glorious.
   A. But just like baking a cake, they must be used properly or the cake will be a failure.