

October 15, 2017

To My 12th Street Family:

On May 17, 1973, I walked down the aisle of this church and publicly received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. On May 20, 1973, I walked through the waters of baptism at this church. On March 5, 1978, I accepted the call to ministry at this church. On July 18, 1978, I stood behind this very pulpit and preached my first sermon. On August 9, 1987, I knelt in the altar of this church and was ordained to the gospel ministry by this church. On February 3, 2008, you granted me the indescribable privilege of being the pastor of this church. In between the months and years of these dates are countless investments that the people of this church made in me through encouragement, teaching, and mentoring me to mold me into the man I am today.

I have, with bold confidence, declared numerous times, both publicly and privately, that when God called me to be the pastor of 12th Street Baptist Church, that this call was the end of my resume, and I genuinely believed that was true. However, the one lesson that I have had to learn over and over again in 30 years of serving as a pastor is this: *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9)*. Similar to Paul in Acts 16, I had a plan that would cause me to stay here the rest of my days, but God has said no; I have another plan for you. While my days of ministry are not complete, the last church I will serve as a pastor will be my beloved 12th Street Baptist Church.

Three years ago God placed in my heart a burden for pastors and churches that led me to begin a prayer ministry for them. This ministry has swelled to over 300 pastors and missionaries around the world. Late last year I began to ask God to enlarge this ministry. I did not know how he would do it, but over the last several months he has revealed his plan in answer to my prayer.

So it is with great emotion that I announce to you today my resignation as pastor of 12th Street Baptist Church to accept the call to become the Director of Missions for the Etowah Baptist Association. My last Sunday as pastor of 12th Street Baptist Church will be October 29, 2017. My last day as your pastor will be October 31, 2017. I will assume the responsibilities of Director of Missions on November 1, 2017.

I will be forever grateful for every moment I have served as your pastor. I will be forever grateful for the people that I have had the privilege of working with each day. For those that were here when I arrived, Ronnie Cornutt, Don Young, Beverly Batemon, Joan Beaird, and Nancy Shelton, thank you for receiving me and helping me get my bearings as the pastor of this great church. For those whom I had the privilege of calling, Zac Clay, Charles Taylor, Seth Stanton, Ben Graham, Dannie Hallmark, Karen Moore, Misty Parker, and my two "Timothys" Nate Holder and Tyler Armstrong, thank you all for bringing inexpressible joy to my life. And thank you 12th Street for the privilege of serving as you shepherd these past nine years.

Sincerely,

Bro. Craig