

SLIDE 1. 2025 Summer Series

Teaching: *Foolish Question*

Sunday August 24, 2025

It was a household name.

Founded in 1985, it became a leader in its field – with thousands of stores across the globe. Customers would visit physical locations to rent games and videos for a few days.

It worked – until it didn't.

In the early 2000's, new technology – and shifting consumer preferences – started rewriting the rules of media consumption. Enter Netflix – a scrappy startup offering DVD rentals by mail. Then, in 2007, Netflix did something game changing: it introduced streaming.

In 2000, Netflix co-founder, Reed Hastings, approached this company with a proposal: acquire Netflix for \$50 million. Hastings was laughed out of the room.

THAT was a \$50 million mistake.

At the time, Netflix's DVD-by-mail service was novel but niche. This company's leadership failed to see the bigger picture – that Netflix wasn't just mailing movies – it was building the foundation for a digital-first model of entertainment.

By the time this company responded with its own digital offerings – it was too little, too late.

This company, of course, *was* BLOCKBUSTER. What happened?!

SLIDE 2

BLOCKBUSTER failed to embrace technological change.

Blockbuster underestimated the power of digital disruption. It viewed streaming as a fringe technology rather than a fundamental shift in how people would consume content.

BLOCKBUSTER clung to a fading business model.

Blockbuster had thousands of brick and mortar stores. It was deeply invested in a physical retail model. But as streaming offered convenience, selection, and speed from the comfort of home, customers moved on – and Blockbuster couldn't pivot fast enough.

BLOCKBUSTER lacked motivation and agility.

Netflix iterated rapidly. Blockbuster hesitated. It wasn't until 2010 – after Netflix had already become a household name – that Blockbuster launched its own streaming service.

CHANGE is hard.

Harder for some than others.

But I am convinced that things that don't change don't grow, and things that don't grow – die.

So CHANGE is necessary – for businesses AND churches who want to live.

But the emotional gravity of the PAST is SO strong, isn't it?

When we look back and think about what was – we remember all those good ministries and times – but we tend to filter out the challenges and the losses. Nostalgia skews the truth of what was.

Let these be a metaphor...

I found them down the hallway of our offices: these HO – YA Pad Thai instant flavored rice noodles – with a best before date of August 23, 2023! And these – Mr. Noodles – beef and chicken – with a best before date of June 20, 2023!

They were – in the past – arguably - a decent meal replacement for a person with a tight timeline – but now – 2 years later...

Are we trying to kill each other?!

We look back and ask ourselves, "It worked then, why can't it work now?"
BECAUSE times change.

Because we are (in Canada) a post-Christian people (and have been for a while).

The days of families dropping their kids off at church for Children's or Youth Ministry aren't what they used to be.

The days of the church being a respected voice in the marketplace have come and gone.

The days of people gathering for worship on Sunday mornings because "It's just what you do" – like it's some kind of a matter of fact, weekly rhythm in a family or a person's life – have ended!

But the days of *investing* in family and friends to *invite* them to church or an outreach - aren't over.

But the days of praying for family and friends, listening to them, eating with them, serving them, and sharing our stories of faith with them – aren't over!

But the days of loving our neighbors – aren't over!

In light of these contrasts, here is our bible text for today...

SLIDE 3. *Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions* (Ecc. 7:10).

Hmm. What do we make of this? Other than it seems to be a bad question.

Well. Let's pull back and remind ourselves of what the book of Ecclesiastes is about...

It is one of five wisdom books in the bible – the other four being Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and the Song of Solomon.

It is a book written by a wise, older person, presumably King Solomon, taking stock of his life. He takes measure of humankind and sees: that our wisdom has limits, that we madly pursue one thing after another, that we labor as if we could master the world, that we vainly pursue hopes that in reality are "meaningless, a chasing after the wind."

But faith, he sees, teaches us that God has ordered all things according to his own purposes, that we can cohere with them, and in so doing enjoy life as God gives it, that we should know our limitations and not trouble ourselves with unrealistic expectations, that we live carefully before God and, above all, fear God (worship him) and keep his commands.

Because life *not* centered on God is meaningless.

But life *centered* on God allows us to gratefully receive all his good gifts and to use them and enjoy them to the full!

Zooming back in...

Chapter 7 of Ecclesiastes is a series of loosely connected observations about life. V. 10 being among them.

Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions (Ecc. 7:10).

Why isn't it wise?

Because times change.

Such that the only question, perhaps, worth asking is: Are we changing with them?

SLIDE 4. Not the gospel: the beautiful news that **Jesus is God with us, come to show us God's love, saves us from sin, set up God's kingdom, and shut down religion, so we can share in God's life.**

The gospel must not change - but how we act as followers of Jesus and how we talk about him needs to change with the changing times.

SLIDE 5. Do we (SLC) embrace technological change? Do we cling to old ways of doing ministry? Do we lack motivation and agility?

Do we embrace technological change?

I think we have – though there's room to grow!

We have changed much of our sound equipment from analogue to digital! We have changed from hand-written-on plastic sheets on an overhead projector to using a PC – which is linked to projectors built into our ceiling.

Most of us receive our weekly church newsletter online (to stay informed). Most of us register for events online. Most of us give electronically.

Lots of us are on social media.

But imagine if more of us were on social media to like and to share our ministries.

Imagine how much easier it would be for you, our staff, and volunteers if all of us had the one-stop CHURCH CENTRE app on our phones (with notifications ON) – where we could give, sign up for a small group, have instant access to our directory, and to know what's going on at church through the week via our EVENTS tab.

Never mind how much money we would save if we could use one platform (Planning Centre) vs. two (Planning Centre and Sunergo)!

Imagine if you didn't know HOW to embrace these technological changes, if you are intimidated by technology, or you get so far in the process and then just give up – imagine if you could ask someone who's already on the CHURCH CENTRE app or if you could ask our Church Administrator, Dawnelle, who has repeatedly offered to help anyone needing help!

We are embracing technology. Good stuff, SLC! Even if some of us embracing it like a stiff arm hug.

Do we cling to old ways of doing ministry?

I'd say YES and NO.

I'd say that we have held onto an INVEST and INVITE corporate form of evangelism at the expense of being personally missional.

By this I mean that – in the past – it seems that SLC has experienced numeric growth when we have invited family and friends to join us at an event or to a Sunday morning service and they've stayed – they've joined our community.

Which is great – but it has left the work of evangelism up to paid professionals or testimony-sharing volunteers - not so much the people who brought the people.

I'd say, too, that we cling to (and have clung to) an old model of governance – which we have outgrown but not updated.

We ARE working on that!

And I'd say that we've held onto demographic ministries – like Men's Ministries and Women's Ministries and Senior's Ministries – even though leaders are hard to find, numbers are waning (with the exception of Women's Ministries), and very few (if any) not-yet-followers-of-Christ participate.

If I were to dream of what we could be it would (still) be this (notwithstanding groupings for Children's and Youth Ministries): a community of Jesus followers who gather weekly to praise God in music and prayer and learning together, who meet in small groups through the week to care for each other, to pray together and to study God's Word, and to, collectively, love each other's neighbors.

But let me encourage you SLC – we have made room for our community to use our building as the gift God gave us to share with others.

Between our Sports Ministries and our Rentals Ministry – we have more than twice as many people in this building during the week than we do on a given Sunday morning – *because* we were willing to change this space (the gymnasium) – to make it more accessible through the week AND because we have changed our perspective of this building from "It's ours to use!" to "It's ours to share!"

Things are changing – even if that change is coming slowly...

We have had new people join us here @ SLC who have come to us through our pickleball ministry. And I say "ministry" – because we are at a point where half of our pickleball community comes from the community!

And then – as you may or may not know - 20% of our campers at March Break came from the Ukrainian School – the school who we rent to on Saturday mornings through the year!

This year – we will be offering pickleball on Monday nights, indoor soccer on Tuesday nights, ball hockey on Wednesday nights – and new to our Sports Ministry line up – Cornhole on Friday nights! Let us know if you or someone you know has a sports ministry idea for Thursday nights!

We will continue to rent to Brookwood Boot Camp, Coppersea Dog Training, Narcotics Anonymous, 4 H Club, Movie Production Companies, the Ukrainian School – and add a home school group on Tuesday mornings – right here!

We will also continue to partner with Sonshine St. in a long-term lease – as they expand their childcare this Sep. to include before and after school care.

And while this might sound like more INVEST and INVITE mentality – because it is! – I'd like to try to refocus it...

Imagine a funnel with the spout pointed down.

At the mouth (at the top) of the funnel – we have these INVEST and INVITE outreach events – or as one of our Leadership Team members, Emmie, put it to me and another Leadership Team member, Karina – **Gateway Opportunities** – low barrier ways for our community to connect in our space with us!

These include the aforementioned Sports and Rentals Ministries, but these also include the yet-to-be named and branded and broadly communicated Friday Night Community Outreach, and our Men's and Women's and Senior's Ministries (and our Youth and Young Adult Ministries if we were to have people lead them).

These also include our Christmas Eve service, HDIC, and our Annual Cornhole tournament.

All of this is moving down the funnel towards the ALPHA COURSE in Feb. – March and our Summer Day Camp! All of this inviting you to invite others.

And then to the bottom of the funnel – *small groups*.

All this to ask 2 questions:

SLIDE 6. What are some thoughts or verses we might put up on a couple of walls as invitations to know Jesus for those who come and go through the week who might not know Him?

SLIDE 7. Would we be willing to begin our Sunday morning services at 10:30 vs. 10:00 so that we could give our AV teams more time to set up and our Music teams more time to rehearse?

Please think about these things and then share your thoughts with me or anyone on our Leadership Team.

Last question...

SLIDE 8. Do we lack motivation and agility?

I don't know.

Here's what seems to be true: that SLC church – such as we are right now – is a community of older people who have given, who will give, but can't give like they did – and we are a community of younger people – many with young families – who give what they can when they can how they can – but have limited time and energy - and lots of bills to pay!

And then - we have a few folks in between: people in their 40's and 50's. People who (in most churches) *lead*.

So, right now, we have all kinds of older and younger people who are willing to help but aren't necessarily able to *lead*.

We will continue to meet on Sunday mornings – just like this – to sing and to pray and to learn together (and hope to hire someone between now and the end of the year to lead our Music Ministry).

And we will continue to disciple our children (and grandchildren) in our ever-growing KIDS CHURCH (and hope to hire someone between now and the end of the year to lead our Children's Ministry).

We will add a fourth small group in the Aldergrove area.

And we will try a monthly outreach to our community – our community of families FOR families in our community – a time to eat together and play together – a time to connect!

We will get bigger and smaller in our Senior's Ministry – where we will come alongside and promote existing outreach opportunities – namely the Thursday *walking club* AND our *parachurch partnerships* with the Food Banks (of Aldergrove and Langley), Gleaners, and MCC. We are also hoping to host some LUNCH + LEARN outreach opportunities in the new year.

And, of course, we will look to study the bible and to pray together.

We will be hosting 2 Women's Ministry outreaches and 2 Men's Ministry outreaches this coming year. And – because of the size of the groups and having no leaders for them at present – we will pause both youth and young adult ministries.

Here is what I am asking of you...

SLIDE 9, 10, 11

1. Pray for me and our church leadership as we look for a Music Ministry worker and a Next Gen. Worker.

2. Ask yourself, "Do I complain about change and resist it or do I lean into it as something necessary for growth?"

3. Think about and pray for 3 people in your life who you could invest in to invite to any of our gateway connections and then ALPHA.