

Where there is no vision...

## 1. Introduction

- a. This morning we are going to continue with our emphasis on prayer with a very specific need in mind.
  - i. Last Sunday, God did some amazing things as in the morning service we prayed for healing. Then, in the PM service, God helped us deal with deeply rooted needs in our lives. Instead of treating the surface-level symptoms, we asked God to go to the source.
  - ii. As we continue to ask the Lord to work in us, we need to be praying for God to do something else: give us a vision of how He wants to work in others!
- b. God's church is a missional church.
  - i. What do I mean by that statement today? God designed His church to be a part of His redemptive plan, His mission to see the lost saved.
    1. **2 Peter 3:9** makes clear the heart of our heavenly Father. He desires for all to be saved. God is "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
  - ii. God reinforced His desire through the giving of His Son.
    1. The blood of Jesus was shed for ALL. This remarkable answer to the universal sin problem covers all sin! Those who would believe in the Lord, call on His name, and ask for His forgiveness will receive it!
  - iii. The church has been designed by God to be the agency that carries out the mission of God. I'll say it this way, the mission wasn't created for the church, but the church was created by God for the mission.
    1. God's mission for His church has been laid out throughout Scripture. We can create phrases or catchy lines to help communicate His mission, but at the end of the day, it is His mission that we are to be about.
    2. Jesus Himself laid out the mission well in **Matthew 28:19-20** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- c. Now that we have laid out the basics of the mission, I want to get to the topic of the day.
  - i. What is mission without vision? Before we can answer that question, we need to first define the word vision.
    1. Vision defined is the act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be
  - ii. Now, with that in mind, let's look at how vision differs from mission.

1. Vision is looking forward to where we want to be. Mission is the vehicle that will get us there. The two work very closely with one another, but serve two very distinct roles.
  2. Vision for the church is not determined by man's imagination or by power of anticipation.
    - a. As the mission of the church come's straight out of God's Word, the vision comes straight from God's heart!
    - b. If we want to know where God wants us to go, then we must first know God; His heart and love!
      - i. Vision is not about what we want, but about what God is going to do.
  3. With that in mind, we must realize that vision is a statement of faith that is bathed in prayer.
    - a. If it can be achieved by man then we missed it. Let's not merely dream of what we can do, but let's dream of what HE can do!
  4. Our prayer will be for God to lead us where He wants us to go. It's up to us to follow where He leads us to go!
  5. Vision helps us understand what we hope to see happen as a result of carrying out God's mission. If mission is God-given purpose and instruction for what we do, then vision is God-inspired expectation of what will result.
- d. Tonight, we're talking about the vision for the church and defining what that vision really means.
- i. Why is it important to have vision as a church?
    1. Mission is what we do. It comes straight from the Word of God. It is our God-given purpose.
    2. Vision is where we are going. It comes straight out of the heart of God. It is our God-given direction.
    3. Vision and mission MUST line up.
      - a. Think of it this way: What if GM's mission was to build the great cars, but their vision was to have the fanciest dealerships in the nation. The vision somewhat plays into the mission, but it is misaligned. Building great cars is the mission, the vision would need to be something like placing those great cars in every garage. Yes, nice dealerships play into that, but as a means not an end.
- e. How important is vision? Today we are going to look at a passage that demonstrates just how important vision truly is when carrying out the works of God.

- i. God-given vision will require God-given strength and power to see it done. Impossibilities WILL exist that require believers to lean on God, not upon themselves, to help see it through.
- ii. The Israelites faced such an impossibility. Freshly delivered from the Egyptians, the people of God were standing on the edge of the promised land, a land to be said of flowing with milk and honey! They had envisioned taking possession of this land, but when obstacles were discovered, their vision began to crumble.
  1. Spies had been sent to scout out the land and the report they bring back troubles the heart of the people.
- i. **Numbers 13:27** They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.” **30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.”** 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” 32 **And they spread among the Israelites a bad report** about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. 33 We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”
  1. The land was very prosperous! If you look back at verse 23, it took two men with a pole to carry back a single cluster of grapes!
  2. The problem: their vision was lost for the obstacles ahead.
- ii. **Numbers 14:1** So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, **“If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!** 3 **Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”** 4 So they said to one another, **“Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.”** 5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: **“The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the Lord delights in us,**

then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only **do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land**, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and **the Lord is with us**. Do not fear them.”

- f. As we look at this passage today, we are going to see how a lack of vision can cause the people from experiencing all that God has in store.
  - i. Or as **Proverbs 29:18 KJV** states it, “Where there is no vision, the people perish”
2. Having the right spirit to gett from where we’ve been to where God wants us to go.
  - a. In our story, the Israelites faced some big obstacles before they could possess the Promised land.
    - i. They had come a long way and they were finally standing on the edge of what they had dreamed of for so many years! They were SOOOOO CLOSE! But as soon as the report came in, it was apparent they were still very far away.
    - ii. The crowd could not see beyond the giants that had to be overcome. But two men spoke otherwise. Caleb and Joshua NEVER LOST SIGHT of where God was leading them to go.
      1. Their confidence was in the Lord! Their defining moment came when everyone else wanted to flee! Caleb declared “We should go up and take the country!”
  - b. These guys were among those who had spied out the land. Caleb had a firsthand account of the situation.
    - i. He saw what the other spies saw. He recognized the enormity of the situation before them, but understood the enormity of their God.
    - ii. Caleb stood on the promise of God. Caleb’s vision was fully intact. If God promised it, He would deliver it! The only thing that could get in the way WAS NOT GIANTS, but a lack of faith in what God could do.
  - c. There are some big obstacles to overcome when it comes to accomplishing the works of God in our culture and around the world. As God calls us from where we are to where He wants us to be, are we going to focus on the obstacles or focus on the One who can help us overcome said obstacles?
    - i. Vision requires that we see beyond the how and focus on the who. The question is not how are we going to get there, but WHO is going to take us there?
    - ii. The Israelites were stacking muscle against muscle.
      1. They were looking at the situation from the wrong perspective. They saw themselves going against the inhabitants of the land and... losing! When you looked at the tale of the tape, the odds where not on their side... but God was!

2. God had led them out of Egypt. God had delivered them from the hand of the enemy. God had brought them this far, but they people couldn't see how God could take them further.
- iii. Instead of looking ahead, they began to look behind.
    1. Look at verse 2-4 of chapter 14 again. They began to wish to go back to the captivity from which they came! Better to be slaves in Egypt than to die fighting for the land was their thought!
    2. Sounds crazy to our ears, yet, such a mentality has held God's church from doing what the Lord has called it to do for generations!
    3. The Israelites were uncomfortable with what was ahead so they desired to go back. The problem is, going back meant rebelling against the plan and promise of God. Going back meant taking matters into their own hands instead of trusting in the vision God had given them.
    4. Caleb and Joshua, with great sorrow, pleaded with the crowd in verses 7-9. "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."
  - d. Herein lies the key to seeing God's vision fulfilled. Herein is the answer. How do we move forward, despite the obstacles, to see God's vision come to pass? With Faith and obedience to God.
    - i. The people wanted to rebel against God. This meant throwing the vision and promise of the land before them out the door.
      1. Such an attitude would cost them dearly. The only two that would inherit the promised land after this display would be Caleb and Joshua. God explains in verse 24, "because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it." God declares later in verse 30 that Joshua would also see the promised land.
    - ii. A lack of vision results in a lack of seeing God's work accomplished.
      1. God's plan will move forward. The question is, will you get on board or be left out in the wilderness?
      2. The Israelites would eventually receive the land promised of God, but not the generation of nay sayers who rebelled against His plan.
      3. Caleb had a different spirit, a spirit that said "Yes, with God's help, we can do this!" This would allow Him to see the vision come to pass.

- e. God has done amazing things, amen? But how many believe He has more, MUCH more in store?
  - i. If you believe this, will you join me in praying for God to lead us, to give us a vision of what He desires for this church to accomplish?
    - 1. I'm not asking you to pray for anything we can do on our own. I'm asking you to pray for the impossible! I'm asking you to believe for BIG things! Not for the sake of building a big church, but for the sake of the mission that God has laid out before us. The vision will line up with the mission.
  - ii. Getting from point A to point B is going to require something very important: the right spirit.
    - 1. As God pointed out in the life of Caleb, he had a different spirit. Caleb didn't grumble, didn't focus on the past, didn't fear or worry about what was ahead. Caleb believed in the power of God. Caleb believed God would carry them through. After all, it was God who had brought them thus far!
    - 2. God has brought this church to where it is today, but I believe He wants to take us to new levels!
      - a. New levels of discipleship. New levels of worship. New levels of fellowship and evangelism. New levels of missions and ministry.
      - b. Yes, obstacles may come to our attention, but as long as we remain faithful to God, we can see His vision come to pass!
      - c. STORY OF CHARLES BLONDIN**
        - i. Everyone could envision him pushing a man across Niagara Falls in a wheel barrow on a tight rope. But no one wanted to go on the journey with him.
        - ii. One man stood raised his hand and went with him. The rest of the crowd remained on the sideline.
        - iii. Will you go where the Lord is leading you to go or will you remain on the sideline, on the edge of what the Lord has shown you?

### 3. Conclusion

- a. So this morning I present two prayer points for us to consider.
  - i. Praying for God to help reveal and formulate the vision of this church.
    - 1. This is going to require research of the communities we serve. This is going to require the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
    - 2. GOD HAS A PLAN.
      - a. This plan includes His amazing mission of making disciples.

