

## Progressive Vision

- Opening Prayer
- Let us be thankful today for the things God has done already and let us move forward in expectations of the great things he will do.

How many of us today have less than perfect vision?

How many of us today need corrective lenses to see distance?

How many of us today need corrective lenses to read?

- How many of us are wondering where I am going with this?

If you will, let me bring you on a brief journey into progressive vision where we will find that the bible is our prescription, prayer is our framework and the Holy Spirit is our progressive lens.

Many times in my life I have attended various churches of varying denominations. I have done this to get an understanding of what different denominations in Gods kingdom believe. One of the most striking things is the variety of religious practice that I have observed. But at the core of the religious practices of service, there is a common theme. Almost all love Jesus and want to serve him. Even within Pentecostal churches there are differences in how church services are conducted, content, etc.

While I do recognize the diversity, we serve one God. A God whom I believe does not observe denominational boundaries rather he looks at the hearts for the Intent of the people who serve him.

Do I agree with all of the various religious practices? No! The bible clearly warns us against ritual instead of relationship. Do I, in the spirit of unity accept that if they are not against us they are for us – sure. Do I embrace that they Love Jesus as God and saviour. Yes and for that reason they are my brothers and sisters.

God also tells us in:

### **2 Timothy 2:10-14**

New International Version (NIV)

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*

*<sup>11</sup> Here is a trustworthy saying:*

*If we died with him,  
we will also live with him;*

*<sup>12</sup> if we endure,  
we will also reign with him.*

*If we disown him,  
he will also disown us;*

*<sup>13</sup> if we are faithless,*

*he remains faithful,  
for he cannot disown himself.*

**Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.**

Paul is telling us not to get caught up in petty doctrinal differences.

He is not telling us not to understand the scripture

To be in unity we need to know what we fundamentally believe

- We do not compromise who Jesus Christ is
- We do not compromise how salvation is achieved

## **THE SON**

The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of the Father, is true God and true man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and by His sinless life, miracles and teaching, gave full revelation of the Father. He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a substitution sacrifice. He rose from the dead. He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest. He will come again to establish His kingdom in righteousness and peace. We do not compromise how salvation is achieved.

## **SALVATION**

### ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

Salvation has been provided for all men through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. It is the only perfect redemption and substitution atonement for all the sins of the world, both original and actual. His atoning work has been proven by His resurrection from the dead. Those who repent and believe in Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and receive eternal life. Furthermore, in the atonement, divine healing was provided for all believers.

### REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Man can be born again only through faith in Christ. Repentance, a vital part of believing, is a complete change of mind wrought by the Holy Spirit, turning a person to God from sin.

### REGENERATION

Regeneration is a creative work of the Holy Spirit by which man is born again and receives spiritual life.

### JUSTIFICATION

Justification is a judicial act of God by which the sinner is declared righteous solely on the basis of his acceptance of Christ as Saviour.

**we are going to look at vision and values today...**

**What are our values? PAOC**

**We Value God:** His Word, and His Creation, His redemptive purpose in Christ for the world, and His presence through the Holy Spirit.

**We value people:** without Christ to whom we owe the compassion of Christ and an opportunity to receive the gospel and enter into Christian fellowship.

**We value individual believers:** and their personal commitment to Christ, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, discipleship, Christian family life, and fulfillment of the will of God.

We value local churches worldwide which are marked by sound doctrine, Pentecostal worship, every-member ministry, loving relationships, Holy Spirit-empowered evangelism, anointed proclamation and practical expression of Christian faith.

We value a cooperative fellowship that enhances the church's ability to fulfill its mandate, through servant leadership, a shared vision, flexible structures, and strategic mobilization of its resources.

### **So what does all this have to do with vision?**

Think of Google Maps... You need to know where you are to figure out how to get to where you are going. A map doesn't do any good, if you don't know where you are at. We need to be focused on what we are doing and not distracted by non-essential truths of the faith such as how many angels can you fit on the head of a pin? Are you a post trib, mid trib or pre trib believer? Admittedly topics like this are fun to discuss but not essential to mission.

Many times we get so focused on our habits of faith that we get comfortable and don't want to embrace the new things that God is doing. Do we throw out the old? No, but we also embrace what God is doing and about to do.

There is a vision regarding what this church is about. How many people can quote it right now?

It is my belief that to be more effectual we need to refine our focus. We need to distill who we are down to three or four simple truths about what we are about and who we are. When people come into the church we want them to be able to identify who we are immediately. Jesus is about clarity not obscurity.

For example, I recently went through an exercise where we have a vision in our church that was 2 pages long. Not even the Sr. Pastor had memorized and could relate the vision of the church. If the Pastor and Leadership team don't know the vision of the church, how then could anyone else be expected to get behind it and drive it forward? This is not to knock what has come before. It is a concerted effort to refine focus and shape vision so that is more easily understood and adopted by everyone involved.

As an example on a previous visioning project, my contribution to the project was to distill the vision down. We all contributed but my recommendation after reading through and studying what the vision was came down to this:

- We Love God
- We Embrace Community
- We Value Everyone

When I suggested these three I didn't know the values from PAOC

Now this was not the final set, but I will use it for illustration here.

When we are going to reach out to the community in evangelism, we need to be clearly understood. There should be no confusion and the gospel should be readily available and reachable by everyone.

When a person comes to the church and they read those three things, they are immediately understood and they understand the focus of the church.

Now when as a ministry team focused values are adopted there is a: "clarity of purpose and vision".

For example as projects or community events are planned, they are evaluated in light of the church vision. Inge would ask questions like: Does this show that we love God? Is it this a mechanism for embracing our community Does this activity show that we value everyone?

### **So why do we need this?**

The Lord desires to plant a progressive vision within us...

## **Habakkuk 2:2**

New King James Version (NKJV)

### ***The Just Live by Faith***

<sup>2</sup> *Then the LORD answered me and said:*

*"Write the vision  
And make it plain on tablets,  
That he may run who reads it."*

Proverbs 29:18 tells us... "Where there is no vision the people perish." Other translations give an expanded picture ... "Where there is no continuous revelation the people live carelessly." "Without a progressive vision the people dwell carelessly" ... "Where there is no vision the people cast off restraint" ... "Where there is no vision the people run wild" ... "Without prophecy the people become demoralized"

Some people get lost or stuck on what has been and want to relive those days. But those days are gone and living in the past is a trap that prevents us from discovering what the living Jesus has for us today.

### **Short Sighted**

So often churches are short sighted and rely on crutches like. "I will not be strategic in reaching people for the gospel that's worldly I am going to simply trust the Holy Spirit to bring people in to the church." This is tricky because there is an element of truth here in that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to draw ,an to Christ. But what did Jesus say? He said Go! And make disciples.

I think many leaders get confused between Star Wars and church. They close their eyes and try using the force. But we are told that when the blind lead the blind they both fall into the ditch...

We are told to not be slothful in business (Romans12:11) and there is no more important business of the church than that of winning souls. Short sighted cherry picking may be popular but a concerted effort into the community wins souls and fills Gods house.

Short sighted vision is what is employed in seeker sensitive settings where the pastor does not preach the gospel or teach about hell, because they are afraid of offending someone.

Personally, I believe we preach what Jesus told us too and whoever will - may come. In my ministry I don't ever want people drawn to church because of my charisma

Thank goodness, 'cause we'd be severely limited...

I want them to come because of the Jesus that they see in all of us.

## Far Sighted

Other times churches take the position that one day we will be a full house and everyone will love God each other. Won't it be glorious when that day comes? What a wonderful time we will have. Jesus is coming let's just wait for him. One day a remnant will be revealed and all the tares will be removed and we will rule and rain with Jesus. All true but when we account to the master for what we have done consider the parable of the talents:

### Matthew 25:14-30 New International Version (NIV)

#### *The Parable of the Bags of Gold*

*14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

*"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

*“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

*“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’*

*“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.*

*“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

## Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Doesn’t this mean that faith is what we should have? Doesn’t this mean that if we believe in something it will be done?

Yes, yes it does, but that word believe is a present tense participle. It is an action. James 2:13 tells us that faith without works is dead.

### **So what are the works and pitfalls regarding visioning?**

#### **Progressive**

A progressive vision does not promote a church that is a mile wide in her objectives and only an inch deep. We are told that a man of without focus is unstable.

### **James 1:7-8**

Amplified Bible (AMP)

<sup>7</sup> For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything [he asks for] from the Lord,

<sup>8</sup> [For being as he is] a man of two minds (hesitating, dubious, irresolute), [he is] unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides].

A church needs to learn from the past; because those who do not learn from mistakes in history are doomed to repeat them.

A church needs to focus not just of the present but we need a progressive vision that shows us where we are at, what is in focus in our short range vision, what is our long term vision and what are the steps we need to take to get there. If we are looking we can avoid the ditches along the way.

## **Matthew 15:14**

King James Version (KJV)

*<sup>14</sup> Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

To be very clear here: Looking only to the present is great for living of our life in the presence of God, and we should live in the present this does not negate the fact that we should be good stewards of our time. Not planning falls short of good stewardship of his church. We are to be anxious for nothing. We trust God as we steward his church and we seek his will in prayer.

How many people know that the pastors and leadership pray for this church constantly? Join us in our petitions to the Lord?

As we saw in the story of the man with the talents, fear cripples. Lack of proper stewardship and investing of our resources of time, energy and money into the future of the kingdom is futile without a focused plan. We want to please our master with proper care of what he has graciously given us to steward.

Jesus has a plan for us and he has laid it out clearly for us to follow. Do we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us? ABSOLUTELY! We plan through reading his word so we understand his ways. We pray for direction in everything we do. We ask him to order our path and we take up his great commission with fervour. We apply ourselves to his work. We are his servants and he is our master. Jesus loves us and wants this church to flourish. He wants it to be his bride. He wants it to be ready. Just like in the parable of the ten virgins the bridegroom is coming, we don't know the day or the hour, but he could come at any time. When he comes I want to hear him say: "come to me my beloved", not: "I never knew you, get away from me." Nor do I want to hear, "I would rather that you are hot or cold but because you are lukewarm I will spit you from my mouth."

I say onward Christian soldier!

I say let us take up that which he has given us!

Let us attend to the work to the best of our abilities with planning and forethought and let us embrace and focus the vision that Christ has for this church.

If you have ideas, concepts, thoughts, events or anything that you believe will better this church or reach this community, I encourage you to let me know.

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