

Vision

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 January 2009

[0:00] It's a new day, it's a new year, and as we move forward in faith, the new building is! It's just a place to meet, that's all it is. It's just bricks and mortar. You are the church.

And really that new building is just hopefully a catalyst, like it's a turning of a page for some new momentum, a new chapter that we can start as a church. But really and truly it's just a place to meet. But it's a good time for us to reflect about where we've come from, where we can go to, and to move forward in faith together. And it's a great time for us to reflect how going forward we can use our energy for the Lord's glory. So just to look at Isaiah's vision, just some brief points around Isaiah's vision and what we can learn from it. Number one is the holiness of God, the holiness of the Lord, the worship of the Lord.

We see that Isaiah was staggered by the holiness of God, the consuming wonder and adoration of the enthroned one. I see the Lord high and lifted up, His tray filling the temple. The angels cry, holy, holy, holy. I see the holy one, the great King, the Lord of hosts. And when we see who God is, it puts life into context. It makes life make sense. It helps us put everything into perspective.

What really matters? What really counts in life? The holiness of God about what's truly important. What really counts? Secondly, we see the glory of God, the glory of God in Isaiah's vision.

The angels gave glory unto the Lord. Isaiah saw his own need and we saw his great need of repentance, of personal transformation. Isaiah encountered God. Isaiah encountered that cleansing, that release as he repented, as he met with God. And that's what we want to do, not just to have a meeting, but to meet with God, to meet with God, to be transformed by God, to see God get the glory. The focus is not on man or on machinery or on programs, on titles. The focus is on the Lord. The glory is the Lord's. The glory is God's. Glory to God. To God be the glory as we sing. We want to give him all the glory and all the praise as we look back.

[2:30] Hitherto hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Ebenezer. We can give God all the glory, the honor and the credit for what he has done despite us. I know for myself, I've been the subject of criticism. And I still am the subject of criticism. I'm my own worst critic. And then my wife's the next one. But you know, I value criticism. I need criticism. I've got lots of faults. As you get to know me, you'll get to know them all. But, or maybe some of them you won't ever get to know. But the glory is the Lord. It's not in the vessel. It's not in me.

It's not in you. The glory and the honor is to God. And despite us, God uses us. And I've made many mistakes. And I suppose I still will until he comes again. But meantime, let God use you. Let God take those humble steps. I know someone was talking to me how they came to this church. And it was the first time in many years as a Christian that they'd been asked to speak. To get up and speak and to preach the gospel. And this person talked about the risk that it was. Here was this unknown quantity to come and to stand and to take a risk himself. And to take that step of faith. And that's all any of us can do.

And our small stumbling steps at times are failings and faults. And sometimes the due criticism that we attract will help us hopefully we can all grow together as we go forward. And anything that we can do is not for our own credit. It's not for us to get any glory. It's His glory and it's His praise that prompts us obedience and service. Anything that we can do and give is because we want all the glory to go to Him. I know there's folk who didn't want their name to appear in here because they didn't want any recognition of themselves. I think that's to their credit. We don't want any recognition of ourselves. We just, it's like I heard it said that we're really just doing what every Christian should do. And some who are more active than others have just got the attitude, we're just doing what every Christian should do. It's not that they want to big note themselves. And that should be the attitude of all of us. That we're just His servants. We're unprofitable servants. As it says in the

parable, we're just unworthy, unprofitable servants. We've just done what we can do. And you might step out in faith and do something you've never done before. Maybe it's something you have done before and you've let it go for a time. Stand up and be counted. Stand up for Christ and take that step into the unknown and take that risk that God will help you to see it through. I know looking back as a church, as you've seen in the video, the overwhelming risk that it was buying a run-down building fit to be bulldozed with a pool in the middle of it. Nobody really wanted it. And God has helped us through the years to see it become a useful place to me. And God willing, we'll have an even more useful place to me as God helps us to in the future. And friends, we see in Isaiah's vision, the holiness of God. We see secondly, the glory of God. And thirdly, we see the purpose of God. The purpose of God. The purpose of God is still the same today. It's what Christ said in Luke 19 verse 10, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. It's still that same purpose. That's still the same purpose that Christ came from heaven's glory, from the eternal throne and to step down to this clay and to become dust like you and me, to become just an earthly man, a fleshly man, yet without sin. Why did he come? To seek and to save that which was lost. That was his purpose. That is the purpose of this church. That everything we do was not to become a happy, clappy, little cosy, smug social club. We are a mission. We are an army. We are an advancing commando force behind enemy lines. That's what we are here as a church. That's what we're meant to be. And Isaiah, he says, I heard the Lord. I heard the voice of the Lord saying, who shall I send? And who will go for us? And then I said, here am I, send me. And he said, go and tell his people. You could say, here you see the go of God. Not just the glory of God, but the go of God. God wants to give you some get up and go today. Some get up and go this year, to go with God, to go for God. Matthew 28, 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.

Looking at these now in the context of our church, just quickly, these three things. The holiness of God. Our vision as a church is that we have a respect for Bible truth, Bible holiness. We uphold the Bible truth, no matter what. The Bible truth that transforms lives. And when we experience that God life, that it will impact us and our lives and bring a personal revival, a personal revolution, and to our families and communities wider. We want to live our lives that are a witness for Christ, holiness unto the Lord. We want to have a standard as a church. Not a standard as a church that says, we are holier than thou, looking down on others. But a standard of a church that says, God is holier than us. And we want Him to be honoured. We want Him to be praised and lifted up and glorified.

[8:42] We want our lives to honour Him and worship Him and to be changed as a result of that encounter. And we want to have that standard as a church that shines that glowing, brilliant gospel testimony about us to the world in obedience to Christ to show the difference that Christ can make.

And for us as a church, this holiness of God, it means we uphold a strong Bible standard with sound doctrine that we're not ashamed of as we declare God's truth soundly, the whole counsel of God. And to be mindful of God's greatness and of our smallness in comparison, not that we can brag about ourselves as is prone to any of us as humans. We can sometimes get proud.

We can get proud that our church has got such good fellowship and so many good things. We don't want to get proud. We want to be humble in His sight and have that holiness that puts God at the centre, to be mindful of His greatness and to encourage people around us that they trust Christ and that their lives get transformed as a result to live lives of separation and holiness.

And so secondly, we see not just holiness, but glory, the glory of God. In all our doing, we want to have the focus on Christ and glorifying Him, that He would be glorified.

[10:10] As it says unto Him, be glory in the church. To have that sense of the glory of God, that sense that all that we can do is about glorifying Him and centering our lives on Him for His glory.

That all of our activity, everything that we do and go about our lives doing is to have that servant attitude that for all our actions, it's our Lord who merits all the praise. It's our Lord who merits all the glory.

And we're just only acting in response to Calvary, in response to the wonder of it. How can we do any less than give up all to Him? How can we do any less than give Him the glory and want to

please and honour Him with our lives? To put the spotlight on Calvary, on the crucified one, on the resurrected one. That we have that sense of humility about what we do that keeps the spotlight on Christ.

On Christ, not on programs, not on entertainment, not on a denomination, not on anything of flesh and man, but the spotlight is on Christ, that He will be glorified, that He will be the centre of all our worship, of all that we do. And in taking each step of the faith going forward, that we can maintain that responsive heart to Him and what He wants for us. So we seek the glory of God. And just lastly, the purpose, the purpose of the church.

Why are we here? It's been said of the church that it's the only institution that is really for the sake of those who aren't in it. Because we want to go into all the world and preach the gospel. We want to take this message to the Christless ones, to the ones who need salvation, who are in darkness and they don't even know it, that are hell bound and they don't even know it.

[12:02] Because they've rejected, maybe without even realising it, the Saviour, the only hope that they have, the only lifeline that they need is Christ and Him crucified, that we can cast out that lifeline into the dark way.

Our purpose, our purpose is to have ears that will hear His voice and say, Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? And that we will respond in faith like Isaiah did, to have that sense of, Here am I, send me. To develop that sense of mission, that whatever you're doing, whatever your circle of influence, and for some of you you might think, What can I do?

Who am I to do anything for God? Maybe you feel like there's nothing really much you can do for whatever reason, through health or age or circumstance, but God has placed you in a community. There's people all around you. There's opportunities. Just open your eyes and ask God to use you, to send you to the people around you, to have that desire from God that Isaiah had, as God challenged him, to see people converted, to see them healed from their damning condition, that their hearts should be changed.

And friends, I want to urge you and challenge you and encourage you to leave you with this thought today, to have that sense of mission, to have that sense of mission that, as a church, we'll have that corporate vision, we'll have that corporate mission, that we can team together, we can work together.

[13:31] Just because there's a name on here about people who want to do youth ministry, doesn't mean it all falls on them. There's different people here who can help shoulder the load and take a role to help play a part in support, in encouragement with youth ministry.

Likewise with the Sunday school, with setting up, with all of the different things that help make this church grow and be organised, that every one of you can find a place, as we saw this morning, someone wanted to play a part in helping with such a simple thing as the grape juice.

Organising these simple things, simple yet very important, very vital and needful, that we have people who will stand in the gap, they'll see the need and they'll meet the need, and they'll bloom where they're planted.

And so the purpose of this church is this mission field that is all around us, the northern suburbs, whether it be Modbury, Salisbury, Gawler, Elizabeth, Davron Park, Smithfield, it's all around us. The harvest is white, the harvest is ready. Let this sense of mission grip us and let it be implicit in our activities, in our mission, in our ministry, in every decision that we make, that this mission will drive us as we look for the Lord's grace to, in time, have newer buses that we can go and pick people up that will be more reliable, to go and reach out to people who lack transport, to reach out as an outreach to children.

[15:00] We've got steps in place to hope to upgrade some of the buses, so that we've got a more reliable bus fleet to go and reach out to the world around us. This is our mission field, we need to be responsive to it.

This is our Jerusalem that we need to win. Let our heart be ready today, that we will feel that sense of His call, that we'll hear His voice saying, Whom shall I send?

Who will go for us? That our heart will be ready, that our feet will be ready, that our lips will be ready to present Christ to others round about us, that at every opportunity we'll have that heart that is tuned to His praise, that hears His call and that takes personal action to be a faithful witness for His glory.

So friends, let's just prayerfully close. Lord, we thank you today for Isaiah's vision, that as he saw that wonder of that place of praise and glory, he saw you, Lord, high and lifted up, that wonder of your presence of that throne, as the angels gave glory and sang, Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord, let us have that vision today of who you are, of your holiness. Let us give you that glory, that praise, and Lord, help us to have that mission, that purpose, that same purpose that you have, Lord, in coming in Christ to die as that spotless lamb, that sacrifice for our sin, that only one who could save us.

[16:30] Lord, as you came and died on that cross, you bore our sin, our punishment there that weaken our salvation. Lord, we praise you for that. Help us, Lord, to be faithful, to take that message to others about us, through whatever means and ministries.

Lord, as you help us to see that vision become a reality of how this church can be an active force for your glory in this place.

Lord, we give you all the honour and praise for what you are doing, for what you have done. Help us, Lord, to be led by your Holy Spirit. In the days forward we pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.