

# The Purpose Of The Vision

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[ 0 : 00 ] You'll take your Bibles and open up to Ephesians 2. We will be in several texts of Scripture today, and that will be the first of them.

Well, almost the first of them. It'll be the first one I'll have you turn to anyway. So, just remember, go eat popcorn, right?

Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. So, we'll be in Ephesians 2 in a second. So, the past several weeks, six weeks actually to be exact, we've been looking at Scripture as it relates to the topic of vision.

We started with a brief look at Nehemiah and how his experience shows us the steps in developing a vision and the process of seeing it through. Next, we looked at what Christ's expectation is for the church and what the apostles practiced in the early church.

And based on that, a vision statement was developed, I believe, biblically sound, for our church. And I've put it on the bulletin.

[ 1 : 12 ] I didn't have it last week, but it's on the back of the bulletin this week. It's a book of biblical vision statement. And it states, I feel it's very biblically sound because it is basically taken directly from the text of Scripture in Matthew 28.

This vision may seem like no vision at all for some people, but merely just a restatement of a commandment by Jesus. And that's true.

I'm guilty on that charge is exactly what Jesus has stated. I contend, actually, that the church vision statements and goals, by and large, have been so influenced by the ideas of men that a return to the simple is what is necessary and best.

If you go to, you can go to definitely, you can go to church website after church website and review their mission statements and their vision statements. And you'll see there's some text of Scripture there, but there's a lot that is just so influenced by man and man's opinion and CEO mindset that it kind of goes off base.

And it's like, where in the world does this idea come from or why are we so focused on some of their goals and desires? So for me, I like simple is better.

[ 2 : 51 ] I'm a simple individual. I'm not simple-minded most of the time. But I like to keep things simple. And so that's what I wanted to do with this.

And who knows better than the Lord Himself what His followers are expected to be doing? And who can determine better than the Lord Himself whether or not His church is doing what He wants it to be doing?

And by what standard can a vision be held to determine if it is true to Christ's intention? Really? How do we know if what we are doing as a church is what God intends for us to be doing?

Well, you look at His own standard. You look at the Word of God. And if a vision is based on His Word, it cannot miss the mark. Unless you're not fulfilling it and being faithfully obedient to the commands of Christ.

But other than that, you can't miss the mark on a vision statement that's based on Scripture itself and how we ought to be living. So we've taken several weeks and determined the what question of the vision.

[ 3 : 54 ] And now we can explore the why and how questions we're going to do this week and next week. And this week, we'll look at the why as we explore the purpose for the vision.

Why did Jesus give this vision to the church? Why did Jesus give these commands and expectations and why should it be important to us? Now, why are we doing it?

Well, first, we're carrying out the vision and should be carrying out the vision because we are God's image bearers. We're God's image bearers. Man is created in His image.

In Genesis 1 verse 27, it says, Every creature, as you read through Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 and the creation account that's given to us there, you see that every creature was created after its own kind.

You've got cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth, and they all produce after their kind. Right? Cattle are not giving birth to dogs, and beasts of the earth are not having fish.

[ 5 : 04 ] I mean, you get the idea. It's kind produces kind. And that's how God created it to be. But man, man is unique in that we are created after our Creator in His image.

And we learn about our Creator by what He has revealed to us in His Word. So what's it mean to be in the image of God? Well, how about we read in the Word and get to know this God who created us?

And we start to learn more about His characteristics. We get to learn more about His image and who He is. And it starts in Genesis 1. You know, the first aspect of Genesis 1.

The first aspect of that image is that God gave us, you know, He is the sovereign ruler over all creation. And He has given man rule over all He has made.

The dominion mandate. So that is one aspect of the image of God. We could take many weeks in studying the image of God and His characteristics and how we relate to Him.

[ 6 : 02 ] And we share out His image to society and our culture. But He has taken time to reveal over 1,500 years, 40 different authors to give us His revelation of Himself and His intent, His purpose, and His promises.

So we ought to be responsible. And we need to be responsible to learn about Him so that we can show Him to others. So we need to carry out the vision that Christ has given us to be witnesses of what He has said and done for us because we are His image bearers.

And we are also, we are in Christ. We have that position of being saved and in Christ. Secondly, we are carrying out the vision because we're called to represent His image through our lives.

We're called to do it. It's not just that we're God's image bearers and so we're just going to go out and do it. We are commanded, we're called to do this very thing. Instinctively, Ephesians 2, we're going to get there right now.

Instinctively, by nature, we are inclined to disobedience. And we are separated from God because of that disobedience. This is all mankind. This is all humanity. Ephesians 2, read with me, verses 1 through 3.

[ 7 : 22 ] The Apostle Paul writes, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

There's a lot here that we can pull out and dig deeper in. But I mean, look at this. First of all, Paul is saying we're dead in our sins. That is all mankind.

And he's saying you once were this, right? He's writing to believers. He's writing to those who are saved and are in Christ. And he's saying there was once a time in your reality that you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

And you were following the course of this world. You were following the prince of the power of the air. What he's saying is that Satan was your leader. He's your father.

He's the one that you followed and you sought to obey and to please with your life. That was your reality. And you were children of wrath. That was your destination.

[ 8 : 38 ] That was what you could look forward to if you continued in this life. And then he finishes it in verse 3 there with, excuse me, you were children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

So he's making this accusation. He's making this statement that this is the reality of everybody on this planet. That they're dead in trespasses and sins and following the prince of the power of the air. And they're children of wrath. They're sons of disobedience. But, but, that's not you anymore is what he's writing here in Ephesians 2.

Continue in verse 5 through 10. I'm sorry, I skipped verse 4. That was unintentional. But God. So you were this, but God.

Being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us. Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

[ 9 : 45 ] And raised us up with him. And seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace.

In kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing. It is the gift of God. Not a result of works. So that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus for good works. Which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Christians are new creatures in Christ.

And these verses here. We're made alive by God's grace. We were dead in our sin. But we've been made alive by the grace of God. And we're seated with Christ.

And we are the evidence of his grace. I love that. Verse 7. So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us.

[ 10 : 45 ] We are... I don't like to put it... I'm not going to put it that way. It makes it sound so superficial. But we are the displays of God's glory and his goodness and his kindness for all of us.

We are the ones who are to display that and share that with the world. And show that to the world.

We're the evidence of his grace. And verse 10 says we are his workmanship.

We are created by God for a purpose. We're his workmanship created in Christ for good works.

Which God has prepared beforehand that we might walk in them. We're called to represent his image through our lives.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 17 says if anyone is in Christ he's a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold the new has come. No longer do we walk according to this world.

No longer do we walk according to our desires and our passions and our flesh. We're to walk according to something new. To walk according to the word of God. His commands.

[ 11 : 51 ] To walk in obedience. As new creations we're expected to walk in newness of life.

Romans 6 verse 4 says that we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death.

In order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. We too might walk in newness of life. The concept. The depth. I mean can you really fathom the meaning of this text?

I mean there's so much you can just sit and chew on and think about. That we are in Christ. And so when Jesus died on the cross that was God effectively putting to death our old self.

And our sin poured out on. And his wrath poured out on Jesus. And Jesus was buried. That's the old man done away. This is the picture of baptism right?

And yet raised up again. We are raised up with him. Now that's why with baptism you've got. You start with. You know. In the likeness of Christ. You're buried with him in baptism.

[ 12 : 55 ] And raised to newness of life. Right? It's all symbolic of a spiritual truth. That honestly is kind of mind boggling. To try to wrap your mind around. Especially on a Sunday morning.

Trying to do it in five minutes. Yes. But there's just so much to it. That we are together with Christ in all these things. By the grace of God. And because we've been buried and raised with Christ.

We have the responsibility to walk in a different manner. Than our old sinful way. This is an event that should change the way we approach living our lives. For the rest of our lives.

It should never be about us. It's never about our happiness. Right? Because our. No. It's about ultimately living in obedience to Christ.

And our joy. And that should be what makes us happy. Is when we live obediently to our Savior.

There was a Chinese farmer. Who had cataracts removed from his eyes.

[ 13 : 55 ] At the Christian mission clinic. A few days later. The missionary doctor looked out his window. And noticed this farmer holding the end of a long rope. In a single. In a single file.

Holding to the rope. Were several dozen blind Chinese. Who had been rounded up. And led for miles. To the doctor. Who had worked a miracle. On this farmer's eyes. Think about that.

This guy. Had this. The cataracts removed. Could see better and clearer. And he said. I know. Who needs his help. And he's bringing along.

A bunch of. Of blind Chinese brothers. That he. Could be. Helped out. Or he hopes could be helped out. And that's how we. Who have received. God's gift of eternal life.

Through Jesus Christ. Should be. We're so blessed. That we want everyone to know. So that they can receive. The same good news. As we have already. You've heard me say it before.

[ 14 : 51 ] But evangelism. You know. And ultimately. The Christian life. Is one beggar. Telling another beggar. Where he found bread. God. First Thessalonians 2 verse 12.

We exhorted each one of you. And encouraged you. And charged you. To walk in a manner. Worthy. Of God. Who calls you. Into his own kingdom. And glory.

Our lives should reflect. The grace. That has been. Bestowed upon us. Turn to Philippians chapter 2. So Galatians. Ephesians. Philippians. Next one over.

Chapter 2 verse 14. Therefore my beloved. As you have always obeyed.

So now. Not only as in my presence. But much more in my absence. Work out your own salvation. With fear and trembling. For it is God. Who works in you.

[ 15 : 48 ] Both to will. And to work. For his good pleasure. Father. Do all things. Without grumbling. Or disputing. That you may be blameless. And innocent.

Children of God. Without blemish. In the midst of a crooked. And twisted. Generation. Whom you shine. As lights in the world. Holding fast.

To the word of life. So that in the day of Christ. I may be proud. That I did not run in vain. Or labor in vain. Do all things.

Matthew Henry's commentary on this. He points out. Do all things. That's to do your duty. In every branch of it. Without murmurings. Do it. And do not find fault with it. Mind your work.

And do not quarrel with it. Do as God has commanded. And led you to do. Do it. Without grumbling. And complaining. Why?

[ 16 : 42 ] That you may be blameless. And innocent. Children of God. Without blemish. In the midst of a crooked. And twisted generation. Before whom you shine as lights. That would take us to.

Another passage in Matthew. In the Sermon on the Mount. Where Jesus likens his. His disciples. And his followers. As salt and light. We're the salt of the. We're the salt in the world.

And we're going to be light in the world. And ultimately. What. To what end. And to what purpose.

So that people can see our good works. And glorify our father in heaven. Not glorify your name.

Put on a plaque. Or a memorial. Or anything like that. It's to glorify your father. Who's in heaven.

We need to walk worthy. Of our calling.

And finally. We're carrying out the vision. Because we have Jesus Christ. Our example. The writer of Hebrews. Tells us in Hebrews chapter 12. Verse 2. Looking to Jesus.

[ 17 : 41 ] The founder and perfecter. Of our faith. He is the one. Whose life is the example. Of how we ought to live. And love others. What's a Christian life. Supposed to look like. Open up Matthew.

Mark. Luke. John. Read. And see how Jesus lived his life. And seek to do the same. That's the simple answer.

It's easy for me to say. Go read. And then do it. Because there's only one guy. Who's ever been able to do it perfectly. Colossians 1:15.

He is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of all creation. Hebrews 1:3. Tells us he's the radiance of the glory of God. And the exact imprint of his nature. He is God.

He is the imprint of the nature of God. He is the example to follow. He is the pattern to watch and look for. And remember. We are God's image bearers.

[ 18 : 40 ] So Jesus is God in the flesh. Showing us how to live it out. And do it. When Jesus called his disciples.

What did he say to them? Two words. Follow me. Follow me. Are we following Jesus?

Or are we trying to lead him? Are we trying to make him fit into our molds and our models? Or are we following Jesus? As he commanded his disciples to do.

The apostle Paul pointed to Christ as the one he was following. And encourages his readers to do the same. 1 Corinthians 11:1 is about as simple of a verse as it gets. And about as difficult of a verse to live as there is.

1 Corinthians 11:1. Be imitators of me as I am of Christ. What a burden to place upon yourself. To try to be like Christ.

[ 19 : 45 ] But what a joy. To seek to live and be like our Savior and our Creator. In whose image we are made. Is.

It's a daunting thing for Paul to have written that. Be imitators of me as I am of Christ. He is now holding himself to the highest possible standard. And that's what he desires of us.

To be imitators of Christ. And as we make disciples. Right? Coming back to this. We'll make disciples. By being witnesses of what Christ has said and done.

For us. These disciples will then be baptized. As a public proclamation of their identifying with Jesus Christ as their Savior. And then these baptized disciples will then be taught the Word of God.

And equipped to go make disciples. What's a disciple? Anybody? In a word? Follower. Someone said follower of Christ.

[ 20 : 44 ] I'll give it to you. Absolutely. They're a follower of Christ. Are you a disciple? Then you need to follow Christ. And live accordingly. And be imitators of me as I am of Christ.

Who should we be imitating? Christ. And as we interact with people in the world. As God gives us opportunities in our lives. To be a witness for Jesus.

And to be. To proclaim his excellencies. 2 Peter 2.9. And following. As we are living that out. And we are doing that. We are also to show others what it looks like.

Most people are not going to read the gospel for themselves. Most people. I've heard this statement. I don't know how I feel about it yet. There are some days I feel good about it. And I like it. And some days I'm not so fond of it.

But basically. Be the gospel. Because. Be the gospel for other people. Or something along those lines. And it's that aspect that.

[ 21 : 44 ] People are not likely to read scripture. And the gospel for themselves. But they're going to see it lived out in your life. And they should. And the way you live. Should point people to God.

And to his glory. Turn to 1 Peter. Chapter 1. 1 Peter 1.

Verses 14 through 16. Actually verse 13. I do this all the time. I look ahead.

And I pick what verses I want to read. Then I'm like. No. We'll go more. 1 Peter 1. 13. Therefore.

Preparing your minds for action. And being sober minded. Set your hope fully on the grace.

That will be brought to you. At the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children. Do not be conformed to the passions. Of your former ignorance. But as he who called you is holy.

[ 22 : 45 ] You also be holy. In all your conduct. Since it is written. You shall be holy. For I am holy. Our obedience is seen. In our commitment. To being like the Holy Spirit.

Holy One. In all our behavior. He's lived it. He's shown it. And that's what he calls us to. Be holy. As I am holy. We're God's image bearers.

Christ for salvation. Are called to represent his image. Through our lives. And looking to Jesus. As our example. Of what that image. Ought to look like.

We need to live it out. Two boys were playing in the snow. One day. When we were together. Let us see. Who could make the straightest path. In the snow. His companion readily accepted.

The proposition. And they started. One boy fixed his eyes. On a tree. And walked along. Without taking his eyes. Off the object selected. The other boy.

[ 23 : 42 ] Set his eyes on the tree also. And when he had gone. A short distance. He turned. And looked back. To see how true. His course was. He went a little distance farther. And again. Turned to look over his steps.

When they arrived. At their stopping place. Each halted. And looked back. One path was true. As an arrow. While the other ran. In a zigzag course. How did you get your path so true?

Asked the boy. Who had made the crooked steps. Why? Said the other boy. I just set my eyes on the tree. And kept them there. Until I got to the end. While you stopped. And looked back. And wandered out of your course.

If we fix our eyes. On our hope. The eyes of our hope. Our trust. And our faith. Upon Jesus Christ. And keep them. Continually fastened on him.

We will find. That our course is straighter. For having done so. And as our lives are lived. To his glory. We will find ourselves. Carrying out the vision. That he has given. To his church. The commands.

[ 24 : 40 ] That he expects. His followers. To fulfill. Because ultimately. It is not about us. It is not about our life. It is not about our happiness. It is about.

1 Corinthians 10. 31. Whether you eat. Or drink. Or whatever you do. Do all to the glory of God. And so that is. The purpose. Of the vision.

Ultimately. Is to bring glory. To God's name. In our faithfulness. And our obedience to him. Let's pray. To■.

We will find.