

Be Thou My Vision

“A Lost Vision”

Mark 6:5-6

Mark 6:1-6

1. Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! 3. Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. 4. Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." 5. He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6. And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

Luke 4:16-30

16. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19. to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20. Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21. and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 22. All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. 23. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24. "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed--only Naaman the Syrian." 28. All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. 30. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Luke 5:17 – His power was present to heal.

17. One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

I want to speak to you this morning of ...

The Peril of Visionless People

*When we say, "Catch the Vision!" It is not just a catchy phrase of a funding campaign. We want you to **catch the heart of God**. Catch God's promises. Catch God's purpose. Catch God's plan.*

Our story this morning moves from the circumstances of Capernaum to Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. There is a parallel passage of this same story in Luke chapter 4. Luke gives us even more insight to the "lack of faith" of these hometown folk. In Luke 4:12 Jesus stands in the synagogue and declares his Messiahship announcing that he came to do what was declared in Isaiah 61:1-3

1. The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2. to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3. and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

The people of Nazareth. Not only did they not believe what he wanted to do and came to do, they literally ran him out of town and tried to kill him.

I feel sorry for the people of Nazareth. There was not ringleader. No villain that led them astray. They were all out for number one, not interested in any thing else. Not even willing to consider that God might have had a better plan for their lives.

The Christian Life is to be an adventure.

(ie) Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, **Bilbo Baggins**

"I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it's very difficult to find anyone."

"I should think so-in these parts! We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner!"
-- Gandalf and Bilbo Baggins

Most people are content with the mediocre, the safe, the routine, the normal, the adventure-less, the miracle-less, and powerless Christian life. Why? Because it is so familiar. It is normal. It is what everyone else knows and has. It demands nothing, promises little and costs even less. "Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." - **They miss the adventure!**

I. God Has A Vision or Purpose For Your Life

By vision we mean God has a desire, a foreordained plan.

God had a vision of what he wanted to do in the life of every single person in Nazareth, but **they didn't want any part of it.**

The people of Nazareth: *I feel sorry for the people of Nazareth. There was not ringleader. No villain that led them astray. They were all out for number one, not interested in any thing else. Not even willing to consider that God might have had a better plan for their lives.*

John 1:11 "He came unto his own and his own received him not."

God's Purpose

John 10:10 "I am come that you might have life more abundant."

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Acts 2:38-39 "Repent and believe ... The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Getting God's Purpose, His Vision – Better Things

Noah caught the vision of God when he obeyed to build an ark in the desert.

Moses caught the vision of what God wanted to do for his people in Egypt.

Nehemiah caught the vision of God to break the status quo.

David caught the vision when no one dared to face the giant Goliath.

Every Man's Need, Purpose and Vision

(ie) Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life,

Chapter One – It's not about you.

The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It's far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by his purpose and for his purpose.

The search for the purpose of life has puzzled people for thousands of years. That's because we typically begin at the wrong starting point—ourselves. We ask self-centered questions like: What do I want to be? What should I do with my life? What are my goals, my ambitions, my dreams for my future? But focusing on ourselves will never reveal our life's purpose. The Bible says, "It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone's life is in his power."

Contrary to what many popular books, movies, and seminars tell you, you won't discover your life's meaning by looking within yourself. You've probably tried that already. You didn't create yourself, so there is no way you can tell yourself what you were created for! If I handed you an invention you had never seen before, you wouldn't know its purpose, and the invention itself wouldn't be able to tell you either. Only the creator or the owner's manual could reveal its purpose.

The people of Nazareth missed the Master of the Universe. They missed the point of living. They missed God's vision, God's purpose, and God's blessing. Each of us can do the same.

II. God Has A Vision or Purpose for Every Church

Just as people can reject Jesus in favor of their own Vision, so churches can elect to go their own way, do their own thing, and lose God's Purpose.

Churches Can Be Lost without a compass – No Vision

Without a vision the people perish (flounder)

- (ie) 80% of churches in America are plateaued or declining.
- (ie) 41% of Alliance churches in our own District number under 50 people
- (ie) The average American church has only 85 attending.
- (ie) 90%+ of pastors interviewed cannot articulate any vision for their church and ministry.

1. Why are we here?
2. What are we doing?
3. Where are we going?

Define Your Purpose

Our Church's Purpose

"We are committed to building a loving church family that is biblically sound, evangelistically passionate, ministry-focused, and radically committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – in worship, prayer, teaching and fellowship."

We have a dream that this church, our church, will someday be a House of Prayer and a Place of His Presence where Jesus is free to do his will and fulfill his purpose in us and in spite of us.

Our Church's Vision – 12 Strategic Priorities

"Break my heart with the things that break the heart of God."

Upward Focus	Inward Focus	Outward Focus
1. Worship 2. Prayer 3. Word 4. Fellowship	1. Children 2. Youth 3. College 4. Families	1. Training 2. Missions 3. Evangelism 4. Facilities

Look What The Lord Has Done! Luke 4:16, Isaiah 61:1-3

Edification 13% in 2002 30% in 2003 45% in 2004 25% in 2005 25% in 2006 ----- 138% in five years (27.5% per year)	Salvation Read the testimonies. To declare the year of the Lord	Healing Hear the Stories. Bind up the wounded	Deliverance Drug Alcohol Sex sins Addictions Set prisoners free
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Seven last words of a dying church...

“We never did it that way before.”

Matthew 11:2-6

2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,
3 And said unto him, Are you he that should come, or do we look for another? 4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

His Promises For Us

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Jeremiah 32:17, 27

17. "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.
27. "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

Jeremiah 33:3

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

Daniel 11:32

“but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.”

I Corinthians 2:9

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" –

Habakkuk 1:5

Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*.

III. Have You Caught The Vision of God's Purpose?

Closing

It is not about church growth. It is about people growth. Growing in faith and passion for the things of God. What God wants to do is **NOT ABOUT MONEY and NOT ABOUT BUILDINGS!**

It is about hunger, longing, faith. It is about a relationship with Jesus Christ that is intimate, vital, and alive. What are you letting God do in your life? What are you hindering him from doing in your life?

Prayer of Jabez

He waits to bless you.

Oh that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!
And God granted him that which he requested. – 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Steps To Take

1. *Claim God's Promises – Take a Step of Faith ask Jesus in...*
2. *Take Risks for the Kingdom – go out on a limb for impossible things
(ie) Mission Impossible – not mission difficult*
3. *Make Room for God's Work – not hindering, stretch self, step out*

Be Thou My Vision

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

The words to this hymn come from the Irish monastic tradition. Some scholars argue that they may date from 700 CE. It is an example of a "**lorica**" or breastplate - almost a sort of incantation to be recited for protection arming oneself for spiritual or physical battle. Another well-known **lorica** is "St. Patrick's Breastplate" "I bind upon myself this day."

St. Patrick's Breastplate - "St. Patrick's Lorica," or breastplate

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*