Annual Celebration and Vision Sunday

"Defining Our Purpose & Setting Our Course"

Luke 9:51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

Jesus was had a plan. He did not live his life by the seat of his pants. I didn't shoot from the hip. He didn't make it up as he went. Jesus had a plan for his life and ministry. Where did he get the plan? I believe that he got the plan right after his baptism when the Spirit led him into the wilderness to fast and pray forty days and forty nights. What do you think that was all about? Jesus was listening to His Heavenly Father to get the purpose, priorities and plans for his 3 ½ years of ministry. It is near the end of that ministry, just before going to the cross that this verse appears. "He set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. That is a man on a mission. That is a purpose driven life. Jesus lived his life with purpose and a plan.

God has a purpose and a plan for each and every believer's life. He has a road map for your life. Read Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

"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."

While on my recent sabbatical I had some time to do some recreational reading and study. I decided to continue the research on my genealogical studies. I have tracked both of my mother and father's family line back to about 1690. Historical documents tell us that the originator of my mother's line began in America with Louwys Belyea, a mariner, sailing his ship from LaRochelle, France to New Amsterdam (NYC) with a load of Huguenots. Further study showed that he probably was not the captain of a ship, or if he were he did not sail directly to America or it would have been recorded in the ship passenger logs which I have searched back to 1600. It is more likely he fled Huguenot persecution with other Huguenot aboard the many privateering ships that left LaRochelle for the West Indies. Many of those originally honest Huguenots turned into pirates and finally settled in New Amsterdam.

The question came to me as I researched his ship voyage as to how anyone in that era navigated across an ocean they did not know to a place they had never been. My studies revealed some interesting things about navigational techniques of the 16th and 17th centuries. There were a variety of strange ways that sailors tried to steer their way to America before longitude and latitudes were established.

Illustration: **(ie) Navigation techniques through the ages**

Latitude & Longitude: Ancient mariners did not have the advantage we have of knowing latitude and longitude and they certainly did not have GPS guidance systems.

The Raven: Floki Vilgjerdarsson, a great Viking explorer credited with the discovery of Iceland, carried aboard a cage of ravens. When he thought land should be near, he would release one of the

birds. If it circled the boat without purpose, land was not near, but if it took off in a certain direction, the boat followed, knowing the bird was headed toward land.

Lead Line
Much more valuable, at the time, was the invention of the **lead line (c.13th Century)**., which was a tool for measuring the depth of water and the nature of the bottom. This line was weighted with lead and had graduated markings to determine sea depth. The lead was coated with wax to bring up samples of the bottom. Sailing directions from the 14th Century reading, ***"Ye shall go north until ye sound in 72 fathoms in fair grey sand. Then go north until ye come into soundings of ooze, and then go your course east-north-east."*** (A fathom is about 6', 72 fathoms is 432 feet! – that's a long line.)

(For futher information on navigation see the illustration below.)

Our Lives

Sailing navigation is a lot like the way some people live their lives. They are adrift on the sea of life, not sure where they are much less where they are going. They live without purpose and without a plan. God has not put us on earth to make our way blindly through life without direction. He has given us directions for finding His purpose and plan.

Many people live their lives with a sea anchor. A sea anchor was a broken mast and sail dangling over the side of the ship that acted as a drag, thus a sea anchor. It could cause the ship not only to slow its progress but turn gradually in a large circle. Sea Anchors are those things that that drag you down, things you never got over, things you refuse to let go of.

My message this morning is about God's Purpose and Direction for this church, but more importantly it is also about God's purpose and direction for your individual life. Where are you this morning on the sea of life? What is your purpose? What is your course setting?

Personal Purpose: What is your purpose?
(ie) A Purpose Driven Life (Church) by Rick Warren

God wants each of us to live our lives with purpose. What has God called you to do? To fulfill that calling there are some things you must NOT do or you will be sidetracked and not reach His desired haven.

Corporate Purpose: So too, God has a plan for His church, not just the church universal but for every local church. The question for us is "Where the church is going. What's our purpose, our priorities, and our course setting and direction?"

There are three points to the message this morning. We will be looking at three different passages. We will go as far as we can this morning and pick up next week where we leave off.

1. Our Purpose – Colossians 1:25-29
2. Our Priorities – Philippians 3:12-14
3. Our Plan – I Corinthians 9:24-27

1. Our Purpose – Colossians 1:25-29

Our purpose helps to keep us focused. It serves as **a compass**. (True North)

Colossians 1:25-29 NIV

*25. I have become its servant by **the commission God gave me** to present to you the word of God in its fullness -- 26. the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28. We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may **present everyone perfect in Christ**. 29. **To this end** I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

"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."

There is nothing here about size, numbers or buildings. This church is not about itself, or expanding its influence, or becoming a mega church, or an influential church. This church is about JESUS CHRIST and exalting him above all else.

Every time we gather together (and that is the meaning of the word church- ecclesia, gathering or assembly) we do so to lift up Jesus Christ. That is true whether it is Sunday School, prayer meetings, worship services, youth groups, small groups, board meetings, committee meetings, or for fun and fellowship. It is all about JESUS.

He is the HEAD of the church. We are the body. I am not the head of the church, Jesus is. I am an under-shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd. We who gather are God's church, his body, his family. We are the family of God if we are saved by faith and washed in his blood. We exist to be His dear children, His family and to bring others into that family while there is still time. We are not building our own kingdom. We are building His Kingdom. Our little kingdom fiefdom will end. (You know what a **fiefdom** is?

When we cease to be a family we cease to follow his directions, his course, and his priorities. When we cease to be a family I don't want to be your pastors. I don't want to be the CEO of a corporation. I want to be the under-shepherd who cares for God's sheep even as Jesus would. Does that mean we cannot grow beyond 300, 400, or 500? No, that means we must build a community, of families within the family.

My Personal Purpose: "Love them, feed them, care for them." Preach the Word, Pray.

Personal Purpose: Where Are You Going
(ie) Billy Graham story of Albert Einstein.
(ie) Are you sailing without a compass, or like Capt Jack Sparrow, with a broken compass. Have you lost focus? Have you lost your way?

We will pick up next week where we left off.

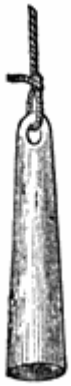
Navigation

Latitude = north/south direction, like a ladder
Longitude = east/west direction, long or width

Determining **latitude** can be accomplished relatively easily using celestial navigation. In the Northern Hemisphere, mariners could determine the latitude by measuring the **altitude** of the North Star above the horizon. The angle in degrees was the latitude of the ship.

Longitude: Throughout the history of navigation, latitude could be found relatively accurately using celestial navigation. However, longitude could only be estimated, at best. This was because the measurement of longitude is made by comparing the time-of-day difference between the mariner's starting location and new location. Even some of the best clocks of the early eighteenth century could lose as much as 10 minutes per day, which translated into a computational error of 242 kilometers (150 miles) or more.

Raven Navigation
Floki Vilgjerdarsson, a great Viking explorer credited with the discovery of Iceland, carried aboard a cage of ravens. When he thought land should be near, he would release one of the birds. If it circled the boat without purpose, land was not near, but if it took off in a certain direction, the boat followed, knowing the bird was headed toward land.



Lead Line
Much more valuable, at the time, was the invention of the **lead line (c.13th Century)**., which was a tool for measuring the depth of water and the nature of the bottom. This line was weighted with lead and had graduated markings to determine sea depth. The lead was coated with wax to bring up samples of the bottom. A method of navigating from one depth to another based upon the condition of the bottom developed, with sailing directions from the 14th Century reading ***"Ye shall go north until ye sound in 72 fathoms in fair grey sand. Then go north until ye come into soundings of ooze, and then go your course east-north-east."***
(A fathom is about 6', 72 fathoms is 432 feet! – that's a long line.)

Dead Reckoning
Experienced mariners were said to plot their course by major constellations, though this was not an exact science. Vessels followed the east/west movement of the sun or the track of the stars. However, the navigator had no way to accurately determine longitude and therefore, once out of sight of land, had no idea how far east or west he was. Estimates were made based upon the time it took to get there, a simple form of **dead-reckoning** still used by navigators today.

Speedometer
A major advance that made dead-reckoning much more accurate was the invention of the **chip log (c.1500-1600)**. Essentially a crude speedometer, a light line was knotted at regular intervals and weighted to drag in the water. It was tossed overboard over the stern as the pilot counted the knots that were let out during a specific period of time. From this he could determine the speed the vessel was moving. Interestingly, the chip log has long been replaced by equipment that is more advanced

but we still refer to miles per hour on the water as knots. Using the sun and the stars, the navigator knew his beginning and ending latitude – now he could determine the distance he had traveled to estimate his east/west position.

Astrolabe

Mariners at this time also used the **cross-staff** and the **astrolabe (c.1484 Martin Behaim)** to measure the angle above the horizon of the sun and stars to determine latitude. The forerunner of the much more portable (and accurate) **sextant**, the astrolabe was used to measure the altitude of a sun or star. Heavy and clumsy, it was very difficult to use aboard a rolling ship, however, when new land was discovered and the astrolabe taken ashore, it was valuable in fixing the approximate latitude of the new discovery.
(the cross-staff, astrolabe, and quadrant, It was used to measure the altitude of the Sun and stars to determine latitude.)

Longitude Clock

But the key to determining longitude (how far east or west they were located) lay in the invention of an accurate time-keeping device. It had long been known that the earth was a globe and rotated one complete revolution in relation to the sun every 24 hours. Navigators knew that the sun reached its maximum altitude at noon, no matter where on earth they were. If they could determine what that exact time was on the longitude of 0° they could easily calculate the longitude of their present position by the difference in the two times (one hour equaling 15° of longitude).

This was considered so important that countries offered prizes for the invention of an accurate chronometer. The British prize was won by **John Harrison in 1764 for his seagoing chronometer** accurate to one-tenth of a second per day. James Cook used Harrison's chronometer to circumvent the globe and when he returned in 1779 his calculations of longitude based upon the chronometer proved correct to within 8 miles. A scientist and accomplished surveyor, Cook completed such accurate and detailed charts during his voyage that he changed the nature of navigation forever and charts were rapidly developed around the world.

In 1884, by international agreement, the meridian of Greenwich, England was adopted as the **Prime Meridian** (0°). Prior to that, all of the seafaring nations had their own prime meridians, causing longitude to be different on charts created in different countries.

SHARING SOMETING HEARTWARMING

Billy Graham is now 86 years old with Parkinson's disease. In January 2000, leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina, invited their favorite son, Billy Graham, to a luncheon in his honor.

Billy initially hesitated to accept the invitation because he struggles with Parkinson's disease. But the Charlotte leaders said, "We don't expect a major address. Just come and let us honor you." So he agreed.

After wonderful things were said about him, Dr. Graham stepped to the rostrum, looked at the crowd, and said, "I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist who this month has been honored by Time magazine as the Man of the Century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it.

The conductor said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it." Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist d own on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one."

Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going.'"

Having said that Billy Graham continued, "See the suit I'm wearing? It's a brand new suit. My wife, my children, and my grandchildren are telling me I've gotten a little slovenly in my old age. I used to be a bit more fastidious. So I went out and bought a new suit for this luncheon and one more occasion.

You know what that occasion is? This is the suit in which I'll be buried. But when you hear I'm dead, I don't want you to immediately remember the suit I'm wearing. I want you to remember this:

I not only know who I am ... I also know where I'm going."