

# Vision Sunday

## Love Liberate Lead

Vision Sunday is a time when we re-engage with the call of God for the year ahead. This year we wanted to emphasise clearly that it is not that we have a great church (although we do believe we have a great church) but that we have a great God. Our vision is the path that God has laid out for us, which is why we surrounded ourselves with the word of God on the windows of our church.

### Part 1: The church is the hope of the world

#### Colossians 1:24-29 (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

<sup>25</sup> I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness--

<sup>26</sup> the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

<sup>29</sup> To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Paul is saying that all I have suffered has been worth it – for the sake of the body his church – Christ in you the hope of glory – the local church the hope of the world.

Five years ago we were moved to develop the mission statement, Engage, Grow, Go to express something of God's calling. This year we would like to flesh this out a little bit more with the following:

**Engage to.....Love**  
**Grow to.....Liberate**  
**Go to.....Lead**

When we are truly being the body of Christ to Engage is to Love, to Grow is to Liberate and to Go is to Lead.

#### Love

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

<sup>5</sup> It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

<sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

<sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Christ's love is the hope of the world because it is, without doubt, the best framework in which people flourish.

**Liberate**

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)*

Christ's liberating power is the hope of the world because it is without doubt the best way for people to be saved from the mess which sin makes of our lives.

**Lead**

*For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

*(Revelation 7:17)*

Christ's leadership is the hope of the world because it is without doubt that only Jesus knows the way to abundant life, eternal life and healing.

When we love, liberate and lead in the way of Jesus then the church is the hope of the world.

**Part 2: Power walk**

<sup>1</sup> *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.*

<sup>2</sup> *He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*

<sup>3</sup> *You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.*

<sup>4</sup> *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.*

<sup>5</sup> *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

<sup>6</sup> *If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

<sup>7</sup> *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

<sup>8</sup> *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:1-8)*

Last week Paul preached a challenging message on God's call for us to engage in continuous pesky, audacious prayer and that this is prayer in the context of relationship with God. The John 15 passage on Christ as the vine, reaffirms this truth and points out that in order for the church to have power, to ask and receive the things of God, we must remain relationally connected with God and this is prayer. We cannot live out our mandate to be the hope of the world without complete engagement in prayer with God.

We know in our heads that *unless the Lord builds the house the labourers labour in vain* (Psalm 127:1). Prayer is our spirit living out that principle. When we pray we are declaring, apart from you Lord we can do nothing. Lord in order for us to love, liberate and lead we need your power in our lives and in our church. As a community we need to throw that switch, we need to discipline ourselves as a people of prayer and in response God says – ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

**Community prayer for our church**

Dear Lord

We are captivated by your vision and awed by your grace and mercy.

We would see your kingdom come in our lives, in our church and in our community.

We know that without you we can do nothing.

We do not have enough love, liberating power or leadership for the needs of our community – But you do.

We ask you to pour out upon us your grace and power, not for our own sake but for the sake of those who are in desperate need.

We will seek to:

Trust without doubting

Love without limits

Liberate without hesitation

Lead without fear

And pray without ceasing

Lord you are our God and the lover of our soul

And we would see your name being honoured throughout our community in the wonderful name of your son Jesus

**Amen**

**Part 3: God is counting on us – our response**

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:11-12

4000 years ago, God revealed himself to humanity through Abraham and his family. In those times God acted powerfully in human history, raising up Israel, saving them from Egypt, giving them the promised land. At that time His presence is visibly seen in the tabernacle and then the temple – this is where God dwelt in this world.

Then 2000 year later God gives humanity the full revelation of who he is in Jesus Christ. In him we experience the full presence of God, in human form – he lived as an ordinary human, he teaches us, he died for us and in his resurrection and ascension we learn that God no longer dwells in a temple – in a building of stone; He no longer lives in a tent – in the tabernacle; He has now made his dwelling place in humankind. This is a radical shift in thinking.

As his people, the place where God's presence in this world is now found, we have a responsibility as seen in Ephesians 4:11-12.

As God's people we are given different abilities, gifts, with our own ideas and passions. Why are we given these gifts, why are we created with such diversity?

<sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service,  
so that the body of Christ may be built up

Once God would work in this world through miracles and wonders but now in the era of faith, He has a new way. God now intervenes through us, He reaches out, and He makes himself known in us. He does great works of mercy and charity in and

through his people. He reveals himself to the world, through his body which is the church.

And in this we have been given a mandate – to be the body of Christ – to be his hands and feet, to do the works of service he has called us to do SO that the body of Christ might be build up.

In us and through us God builds his Kingdom, this is the place of the church, his Body. This is Christ’s vision for how the church in this era of faith.

God is willing and able to do amazing things in us and through us but he needs US to be willing to do our part; he needs us to get on board with his vision to see his Kingdom reign.