

Can you see message2020

Questions

Why do we need vision?

Is it important? Why?

Illustration

I Was Watching the Referee

Bits & Pieces, September 15, 1994, pp. 7-8

One time when Michigan State was playing UCLA in football, the score was tied at 14 with only seconds to play. Duffy Daugherty, Michigan State's coach, sent in placekicker Dave Kaiser who booted a field goal that won the game.

When the kicker returned to the bench, Daugherty said, "nice going, but you didn't watch the ball after you kicked it."

"That's right, Coach," Kaiser replied. "I was watching the referee instead to see how he'd signal it. I forgot my contact lenses, and I couldn't see the goal posts."

God does want us watching Him alright

Lynn Anderson

About 350 years ago a shipload of travelers landed on the northeast coast of America. The first year they established a town site. The next year they elected a town government. The third year the town government planned to build a road five miles westward into the wilderness. In the fourth year the people tried to impeach their town government because they thought it was a waste of public funds to build a road five miles westward into a wilderness. Who needed to go there anyway?

Here were people who had the vision to see three thousand miles across an ocean and overcome great hardships to get there. But in just a few years they were not able to see even five miles out of town. They had lost their pioneering vision.

With a clear vision of what we can become in Christ, no ocean of difficulty is too great. Without it, we rarely move beyond our current boundaries.

Key points about being visionary-looking ahead

- We need vision to see where we are going
- We need to ask How far do you see?
- How far should you see?
- We need to know that to look towards the future can bring encouragement and excitement
- To look ahead means you are not staying still
- To look ahead is to answer the question-where are you going

Foresight + God = vision for the future

In the old testament times

A prophet had a sacred place in Israel

In Israel's day, prophets were the agents by which the people would know what God wanted and what God wanted them to do and where to go. It was essential therefore for the prophets to really know what God was saying. There were times when they just had false advice and other times when the prophets followed God.

Jeremiah 23:16

16 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.

Jeremiah was the truthful one and the others were leading the people astray and towards judgment.

In the days of the Old Testament, if prophets' words didn't come true, then they were to be stoned. God wanted His people hearing what He would say because His words would happen. They were from Him and not a man's idea.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 New International Version (NIV)

²⁰ But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

²¹ You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?” ²² If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

The Lord considered vision for the people of the Lord to be precious and would not tolerate false prophets leading the people astray. Today God Has the 5 fold ministry (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) to help with this but He also gives us His Holy Spirit who leads and guides us into all truth. The Holy Spirit is the final authority on all foresight.

Ephesians 4:11-13 New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² **to equip his people for works of service**, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Vision is still highly important today because God wants His will done just as much as He did back then.

Essential foundational ingredients to having a vibrant vision for the future

- Surrendering our will and desires to God
- Seek the Lord for what He wants to happen in our lives
- Reject the notion that it has to be within our personal abilities to be from God
- Be willing to do it when we are given it no matter if we feel we can do it or not
- Vision for the future is always greater than ourselves

Judges 6

Illustration teaching these thoughts

Gideon

Biblical Meaning:

The name Gideon is a Biblical baby name. Biblically, the meaning of the name Gideon is: He that bruises or breaks; a destroyer.

The name Gideon is a Hebrew baby name. In Hebrew, the meaning of the name Gideon is: Destroyer One who has a stump in place of a hand. A hewer.

Gideon didn't believe his own name. He didn't realize his name either.

Background

Gideon's time comes in at a time of God's judgment for sin. The nation had been in a state of disregard for God's way. Vs 2-5-The Midianites were ruthless to the point that Israel was forced into homelessness. They couldn't keep what they had grown, and they lived in the mountains and crevices. No place was safe from losing what they had spent their efforts on. Have you ever felt like things went wrong no matter what you tried? That just when you thought things were going places, the bottom falls out. This was where the Israelites were. Vs 12-13 the angel addresses Gideon by the meaning of his name. Gideon does not see himself as this mighty warrior the Angel of the Lord thinks he is. vs 15- Here we see Gideon's declaration of his standing and Gideon's self-defeating assessment of himself. Isn't that something we do sometimes in disqualifying ourselves to what God may have in mind. The angel doesn't debate Gideon's blaming God but goes to give him a task. If Gideon does the task the people are delivered. If he looks at the task on a human strength level, then Gideon will say no and no deliverance will come. Vs 16 was God's declaration of what God wanted to see done. The vision Gideon had to adopt was to realize God can do anything thru anyone and that when God says go, we need to move with Him for the vision to be accomplished.

Luke 19:44 New International Version (NIV)

⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

This is Jesus foretelling the sorry state of Israel when Jesus was looking to Jerusalem.

God's giving of vision to Israel was His visitation.

What are we prepared to do when the lord coming calling to us?

Jeremiah 29:11

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.

John 10:10

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Our future is to be full and great. God wants us to protect what He gives us to do and the vision He has placed in our hearts.

Proverbs 29:18

18 Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction. **Vision is essential to move in a productive way in the plan of the Lord.**

Without vision we lose our focus on what we should be concentrating on.

We take up the deliverance in Judges 6:33-7:25

God gives vision with the thought that it is precious and He expect us to receive it so. He also knows we are frail and sometimes need help grasping the greatness He wants to do thru us. He will expect the glory and praise for the results as well.

With Gideon here, God tests Gideon's faith by reducing his numbers systematically so only the courageous ones will engage in battle. It didn't mean the ones back in the towns couldn't be effective. God wanted Gideon and Israel to put their full trust in God and that when God would deliver them, God would get the glory and Israel could not take the glory for itself that somehow they did it by themselves.

God was saying that He could accomplish His goals for His people with few or many.

How are we today? Do we think God has to have many people to get done the things He puts in our hearts to do? Are we tempted to say no to God because we don't see around us the elements that we consider will be needed for success for the body of Christ?

God's assessment of what He can do thru us

Ephesians 3:10-21 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly

realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

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, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Let the Holy Spirit's power work in us. Let it be in full measure working in our lives. We need to understand that power of His. Gideon had to realize how great the power of God was that was at his disposal. God even gave him one more shot in the arm when He told Gideon to check out the enemy's camp of what they were saying (6:9-14). God wants us to win for Him and be able to do the works of God. He will provide all we need to accomplish the vision He sets out for us.

To be able to look ahead is to see. To not be able to see ahead is to be blind. To be blind is to be hopeless. To be able to see ahead is to be hopeful. To be hopeful is to look ahead further. To be hopeless is to not want to see what could be ahead. God wants us all to be hopeful because he knows the future and makes it hopeful.

We can look with optimism for our tomorrows because He has already been there. He is the God of yesterday today and tomorrow and He is everywhere at one time. Today let's position ourselves with Him for Him and because of Him, to ask Him to help us to see as He sees and to go where He goes and to do as He does. That will enable vision to come and it will produce life, hope and a productive future.

Conclusion

Gideon was a beaten man hiding like the rest of God's people feeling God couldn't change their circumstances around. That was not God's view, nor should it be our view. It took a message from God and an obedient beaten man to step forward TO BE USED IN God's power, and the plan began to come into view.

Can you see what God is doing and wants you to do? Can we see what God is doing among us and wants to do? What are those things He has been putting in our hearts to do? To seek what God wants to do thru us is to be excited about the possibilities that can be and to seek to align ourselves for all God may want to do in Haida Gwaii.

Look around you in your life. Do you see as Gideon did, only the difficulties out there or can you see what God can do with those difficulties when His power is used thru his servants to accomplish His plan. This is how God wants us to respond. He wants us to look at all troubles and our future thru the lense of His power and will.

What will we do with the vision He gives us? Will we discount it and run to the hills to cower or will we stand and say with God all things are possible and I will work with God to this end.

Our choice

A great result awaits those who say I will seek the Lord's vision for my life and for the body of Christ here. I will stand for Haida Gwaii and beyond.

Let's pray

A prayer of vision for the future

Lord, I praise you for inviting me into your eternal purpose. I thank you that you are working out everything in conformity with the purpose of your will (Ephesians 1:11). You are the master strategist. Give me a greater vision of your purpose for my life. Awaken my heart and establish your reign in my life. Out of Your glorious riches strengthen me with power through Your Spirit in my inner being and give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation that I may know you better (Ephesians 3:16-17). Make me fully alive to your destiny in my life and to the body of Christ around me. Amen.