

Vision 2016

Well, it's a new year....I don't know about you but for me it means 3 months of writing down the wrong year every time I have to date something.

For most people it's an opportunity to reminisce about the past year and look forward to the coming year. It's a time to start fresh, make changes or resolutions. If you've been here for more than a year and heard previous vision casting messages, you know my feelings on resolutions.

Actually, I love resolutions. When you make a resolution, you are coming to a definite or earnest decision to do something, usually a change. That's a good thing. What I don't like are **New Year's** resolutions:

- A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.
- May all your troubles last as long as your New Year resolutions.
- My New Year's Resolution is to break my New Year's Resolutions....That way I finally fulfill one of them!

For many people they make these resolutions to start a new year because, well....it's a new year. I'm just not a fan of putting things off (oh....I put things off....I'm just not a fan of it) I'm not a fan of waiting for the new year or waiting until this or that to make a change....that's called procrastination.

Procrastinators usually don't accomplish much. And most New Year's resolutions don't either. The main reason I don't like them is because if something is really important, you shouldn't wait.....do it NOW! You aren't even promised tomorrow....or next year!

But....I'll tell you what's worse than procrastination (and all procrastinators exhale...close one, there's something worse!)

What's worse is having no vision. I'm not talking about seeing with your eyeballs. I'm talking about an imaginative conception or anticipation, picturing things as they may come to be! That is motivation we need behind a resolution or any kind of change.

When people can really picture what that change would look like, that's when they can be motivated to pursue that change. In order to continue to sacrifice, you've got to be able to picture the end result!

Why do you think God put so much about change in the bible. There are loads of scripture about newness, change, the future, YOUR future.....

Isaiah 43:16-19 (HCSB)

16 This is what the Lord says— who makes a way in the sea,
and a path through surging waters, 17 who brings out the chariot and horse, the army and
the mighty one together (they lie down, they do not rise again; they are extinguished,
quenched like a wick)—

18 “Do not remember the past events, pay no attention to things of old.

19 Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it?
Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.

This scripture is to Judah, God is calling them to forget their struggles, how they fell short and failed. He has a new destiny for them. Change is coming.

This is what the Lord says to us today! **“Do not remember the past events, pay no attention to things of old. Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.”**

Today you can make the decision to pay no attention to the things of old. Stop looking back and look forward! That even pertains to the good things of the past. If you are still looking back how can you see the new that is coming???

Change IS coming.....do you not see it? If you aren't looking forward....you're gonna miss it!

Proverbs 4:25-27 (HCSB)

25 Let your eyes look forward; fix your gaze straight ahead.

26 Carefully consider the path for your feet, and all your ways will be established.

27 Don't turn to the right or to the left; keep your feet away from evil.

You don't look forward based on whether or not you like what was left behind. You look forward because that is where God is leading you....the devil leads you backward, Jesus leads you forward!

God has a mission for you and for this church. Today as we go through the mission and vision of this church....this applies to YOU! Ask “where do I fit Lord? what can I do to fulfill the mission?”

As a church, our mission is:

Making Disciples, for God's Glory, and for His Kingdom

Every single thing that we do ought to take us forward, toward this mission. If it's not, then it doesn't belong here! We can look around and see what hasn't been accomplished (past) or look to our commander for the mission and vision ahead of us!

Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB)

18 Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This is our mission as a church because this is the mission that Jesus gave His followers....the church! Make disciples....everywhere....teach them all of the things I have taught you, (The Word). Speak it, and live it! This is where the old and new come in....stop living the way you have lived and live in the victory that Jesus won for you!

To fulfill a mission you must have vision, how you plan to carry out the mission....

Habakkuk 2:2 (HCSB)

2 The Lord answered me: Write down this vision; clearly inscribe it on tablets so one may easily read it

Our vision comes from God's will for the church as laid out in the scriptures:

VISION STATEMENT: (on the back of your bulletin)

By God's grace and for His glory, we believe God has called Freedom Reigns in Christ Church to be a dwelling place for the Spirit of God and a hospital for the hurting and broken.

Too many churches today ignore or reject the Holy Spirit. We WILL NOT be one of those! We welcome the Holy Spirit to move in this place, in our hearts, and through us.

This is the only way that we can minister to those that are hurting....by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is not one thing good that we can do on our own.

It's only by the grace of God and everything we do, we do to bring glory to the name of Jesus!

Psalms 147:3 (HCSB)

3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

We resolve to carry out this vision by prayer and counseling. We will pray with you at the altar, we will meet with you to talk through difficult situations.

Freedom Reigns is committed to God honoring worship and to the preaching and teaching of the unadulterated, authoritative word of God.

If you have been here very long, you know that we are a house of praise and worship. We love to worship Jesus! We do not put a limit on worship time. It is the most important part of the

service. By our praise and worship, we proclaim the greatness of our God.

1 Peter 2:9 (HCSB)

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Psalm 150 (HCSB)

1 Hallelujah!

Praise God in His sanctuary.

Praise Him in His mighty heavens.

2 Praise Him for His powerful acts;
praise Him for His abundant greatness.

3 Praise Him with trumpet blast;
praise Him with harp and lyre.

4 Praise Him with tambourine and dance;
praise Him with flute and strings.

5 Praise Him with resounding cymbals;
praise Him with clashing cymbals.

6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

We worship Jesus because He is worthy, because He is holy. It's about Him, who He is!

When we teach and preach at Freedom Reigns, we teach and preach TRUTH! You will not get a sugar coated message. You will get the bible. Sometimes it will sting but it will always lead you to Jesus!

Romans 1:16 (HCSB)

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

We resolve to carry out this vision with worship and preaching on Sunday mornings as well as teaching in Sunday school and small groups.

Freedom Reigns is committed to advancing the Kingdom of God through the salvation of the sinner, and seeking Holy Ghost revival.

Advancing the Kingdom is why we desire to see the church grow, not so we can have more givers, not so we can win a popularity contest, but to see the lost saved! We set our sights on the Kingdom, not the temporal things of this world!

We desire a genuine Holy Ghost revival in St. Elmo! We pray: Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

If you come to our prayer meetings, you will hear people pray this way. We desire a Spirit led reviving of the church.

Do you realize the difference between the church in the book of Acts and the modern church?

Acts chapter 2, is well known for what happens in the first couple of verses.

Acts 2:1-4 (HCSB)

1 When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. 3 And tongues, like flames of fire that were divided, appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech.

Amazing....powerful.....but what about the rest?

They shared the gospel with boldness. They devoted themselves to studying the Word, fellowship, and prayer.

Daily they were in the temple....in unity. God added to the church daily those who were being saved!

People were being healed of sickness and disease. Those that were demon oppressed and possessed were set free!

Many signs and wonders were done but most importantly people were being saved by the masses.

THAT is why we are committed to seeking Holy Ghost revival!

We resolve to see this accomplished through prayer and preaching.

Freedom Reigns is committed to seeing healing and deliverance move the saint to a place of freedom from sin and into victory in Jesus.

Too many people come to Jesus only to walk around with their head down in defeat. Part of this is because they need healing and deliverance and most often they are not even aware of it.

Matthew 1:21 (HCSB)

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”

Jesus didn't just come to forgive but also to free us FROM our sins. If you have become new in Christ, the old things (every single thing since the beginning) has passed away.

You can have freedom FROM your sins, freedom FROM the enemy!

We resolve to see this accomplished again through prayer and counseling, as well as deliverance ministry. We believe that we can pray with you at an altar and the Holy Spirit can heal or deliver you!

Freedom Reigns is committed to loving people, making disciples, and equipping them for the work of the ministry.

THIS is what church is about, loving because Jesus loves us, leading people to Him, showing people how to live like Him, teaching them how to do the work He has created them to do!

Ephesians 4:11-13 (HCSB)

11 And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

We resolve to see this accomplished by using people's giftings to help equip the saints! We do this through our Breakthru and 4:12 youth ministries, men's group (coming soon), small groups, Sunday school, serving, most areas of the church fall into this section of the vision.

Freedom Reigns is committed to influencing the world through evangelism, and local, national, and international missions.

We have to, have to, have to influence the world! I am tired of the world influencing the church, it's time for the church to influence the world.

You can do this! I have a simple way for each one of you to influence the world for the cause of Christ. Act like Jesus.....all the time. Don't compromise when you don't feel like standing for righteousness,

1 Peter 1:16 (HCSB)

16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.

This isn't really as hard as people make it.

To be holy implies being "set apart" and therefore "different (distinguished/distinct)," or "other"NOT like everyone else, but instead ONLY like one, JESUS!

YOU have influence over people....you may not think so but the words you speak (or type) carry significant weight. Our words have the power to bring blessing and they have the power to bring a curse. Man be a blessing, be different....speak life, speak love (not tolerance).

Today with the internet we ALL have the capability to be local, national, and international missionaries. But be careful, your one stupid post or comment can ruin your ability to witness to

someone.

- Locally we support the Food Pantry and Ministerial Alliance
- Nationally we had people go to NYC a couple years ago, our biggest tool here is our website and podcasts, we reach people all over the US and even other countries.
- Internationally we support Fabian Grech in Iraq, Jeff and Maryann Stone in Israel, and Adam and Kate Jones in China, last summer we went to Costa Rica and had a great privilege to show Christ's love to the people there.

So that is our vision and how we as a church resolve to see it accomplished. Maybe this will help you see why we do some of the things we do.

But for a vision to work, it has to be owned by you, the congregation. You have to pray about it. You have to participate in it.

You have to help fulfill the mission: Making Disciples, for God's Glory, and for His Kingdom

We can plan all day long but the reason we are a church body, is because we need all of you to do your part for this church to accomplish the vision which allows us to fulfill our mission.

You can start here in the church, we are all called to serve Jesus by using our gifts and talents as a part of the body.

Today I want to encourage and challenge you to evaluate yourself, do you have resolve to see this vision accomplished?

- Should you sign up to clean?
- Should you help with the youth on Sunday morning (children's church or nursery), Sunday night, Wednesday night
- Should you go on the mission trip to Costa Rica or help provide for others to go?
- Are you praying for revival? Are you praying for the lost to be saved? Should you be attending prayer meetings?
- Have you been sitting in the pew during altar calls when you know you should be getting prayer? Have you let pride get in your way?
- Have you been putting off becoming a member of the church? Why are you hesitating to make the commitment?
- Are you making disciples?

If you are feeling defeated in your own life, you keep making resolutions only to see yourself fail again and again, you need vision. Vision leads to victory, if you want victory, you need vision!

Pray! Ask of the Lord and He will show you wonderful things that you do not know!

Your new year is going to be like your old year unless you change your ways - Pastor Richard