

Vision - Foundational Characteristics

We read many scriptures where God speaks to people in the bible. Some via the audible word, some are through visions or dreams, every one of those accounts are amazing. But do you know that God still speaks to His people today?

If you are a fairly new follower of Christ you may not know what I'm talking about...but trust me....He speaks.

You may not have heard the audible voice of God (although He certainly can speak in that way!), there are many ways that God speaks to us.

- His Word
- Through creation
- Through other believers
- Through music
- Through circumstances
- Through His Spirit
- Through prayer

So it doesn't always look the same, but the fact is....God speaks. What we need is to hear His voice, it doesn't matter what way it's delivered, we just need to hear it!

Proverbs 29:18 (HCSB)

18 Without revelation people run wild,
but one who listens to instruction will be happy.

The KJV says without vision the people perish, the ESV says Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint.

Whether you want to call it revelation, vision, or prophetic vision, doesn't matter, as long as you know what it means. This word in the Hebrew is chazown (khä·zōn') meaning prophetic vision or divine communication.....God speaking!

When people don't hear God's voice, they run wild, they lack restraint, instead of being led they try to lead. I don't know about you, but it doesn't matter how much natural leading ability a person has, I want them to be led by someone.....God! I don't want to just trust in their ability.

I do believe the ability they have was God given, so if they are a leader, then they should lead, but they need to be following God's voice, His instruction first and foremost!

Last week we looked at the mission and vision of Freedom Reigns in Christ Church. It's important to know why we do what we do. We are not a social club, we love Jesus and we are His servants and because of that we love and serve people.

Our vision comes from the voice of God. Our written vision comes from His written Word. It's good, it's exciting, and hopefully it's motivating!

The Word is where it's at.....and as God speaks through the various other forms it must all be tested by the Word. Because just as God speaks, so does satan. This is where we must take every word, no matter how good it may seem, and pray about it, and test it against the scriptures!

A counterfeit can seem an awful lot like the real thing. Have you ever heard of a fake hundred and one dollar bill? No, that would be stupid, it wouldn't fool even the most gullible people. People make fake hundred dollar bills that look just like the real thing. It takes great study and scrutiny to determine if it's genuine or not.

But there's no reason to be afraid of hundred dollar bills just because there are counterfeits out there. Similarly there's no reason to be afraid of hearing from God just because the enemy speaks too!

Remember satan leads you backward and Jesus leads you forward. That's one thing I love about prophetic vision, divine communication....it's always leading you forward. Regardless of your circumstances a Word from God will give you the strength, courage, energy to press on, continue moving forward.

Today we are going to look at some Foundational Characteristics of the Church that we have received through several prophetic visions in recent years.

Now, I think this is important because these are the things God has spoken directly to people about our church specifically....and if you are here, than this applies to YOU. You are a part of this church and this vision.

Foundational - the basis or groundwork of anything
Characteristics - distinguishing features or qualities

So we are talking about the features and qualities of the church that are the basis of everything else that we do. These need to be in place before we can go forward. These should be the things that people think of when they think of Freedom Reigns in Christ Church.

Do keep in mind that these are prophetic words of what our foundational characteristics WILL be. This is how God sees our church, some of these things are potential that He sees, we may not be there yet in some areas but this should give us vision to pursue what God wants!

Love

- A house of love.

John 13:35 (HCSB)

35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

We can't just say we are a house of love...we must show it! If you really love the people sitting around you, then show it! Talk to them, give them a hug, ask them about life, pray for them, if needed pray WITH them. Certainly we need to show love to new people but it has to go beyond that. You show that you are really a follower of Jesus if you have love for one another!

- Love guides everything we do.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (HCSB)

4 Love is patient, love is kind.

Love does not envy,

is not boastful, is not conceited,

5 does not act improperly,

is not selfish, is not provoked,

and does not keep a record of wrongs.

6 Love finds no joy in unrighteousness

but rejoices in the truth.

7 It bears all things, believes all things,

hopes all things, endures all things.

The passage does not focus so much on what love is, but on what love does and doesn't DO...the actions that occur when love is your guide. This is a guide for everything in life, how you treat others, how you view yourself, what you model for others.

- Love keeps us genuine and keeps us from becoming hypocritical

Romans 12:9-10 (HCSB)

9 Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. 10 Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.

When moved by love, genuine love, we will be genuine Christians...hating sin, loving righteousness. We ought to be the ANTI-hypocrites!

Let's practice what we preach. I love that last part of v10, "outdo one another in showing honor"

You ever heard someone on the phone getting ready to end a conversation and they are doing the “I love you more..... no I love you more..... no I love you more....” thing? Others usually think “you are making me sick, knock it off”

But what if we were that way in showing honor. What if we showed genuine appreciation and admiration for fellow believers by putting them first.....to the point where it makes others sick!

Righteousness

This is so near to my heart. I so want to be a house of righteousness. I want the people here to live with integrity, with biblical morals, spotless reputations, living that is approved by God. Jesus made this possible for us....

2 Corinthians 5:21 (HCSB)

21 He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Because of the work on the cross, with the Word as our guide, we can live righteously! I do believe that we should be constantly looking to rid ourselves of sin, even little things that can lead to sin, again, hate what is evil, cling to what is good....

1 Timothy 6:11 (HCSB)

11 But you, man of God, run from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

Humility

Humility is soooo underrated. We have got to realize that apart from Jesus we are not good and we can do nothing good. Our righteousness is in Christ. We can be saved and reborn because HE loves us and HE paid our penalty. The God of the universe gave His life so that yours could be renewed. He lived a selfless life, treating every other life greater than His own.....

Philippians 2:3-5 (HCSB)

3 Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. 4 Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,

James 4:10 (HCSB)

10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

If I'm anything of significance at all, it's because of Jesus, what He has done and is doing in my life. To Him be the glory!

Unity

1 Corinthians 1:10 (HCSB)

10 Now I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.

Church we have got to be on the same page. We are in this walk together, we are supposed to be pursuing the same thing....JESUS. And there are things that happen in life, even in church, that cause division and strife....these are tools of satan!

If you find yourself causing division....you better knock it off, you are not doing the work of God but the work of satan. If you are doing anything to harm the church (your very own body) then you are fighting against yourself because you delay the mission of furthering the Kingdom when you create division in a body that is intended to work together in unity.

When a physical body starts working against itself, the whole body is in danger of failure. Let's be a body that is united with the same understanding and conviction!

House of Balance

Proverbs 11:1 (ESV)

11 A false balance is an abomination to the Lord,
but a just weight is his delight.

We've got to have balance in the church.

- Wrath/Love
- Faith/Works
- Word/Spirit
- Love/Holy,Just

You can't have have any of these things without the counterpart that brings balance.

Influence

The church NEEDS to have influence in the community! You know what we have in the community? Sinners and saints. We need influence so we can work together with the other saints to reach the sinners.

We need to be able to have an affect on people's lives otherwise we can't make disciples!

Matthew 5:13-16 (HCSB)

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It’s no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled on by men.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

You and I have a purpose, and that purpose is to show people the goodness of God. The goodness of God is what makes life good and worth living. When people see Jesus in you, it affects the way they think, it provokes curiosity, it leads them to their Savior. It’s the goodness of God that draws the sinner to repentance. We have influence....let’s not waste it!

Proverbs 13:20 (HCSB)

20 The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm.

Strong Men

- Godly leaders
- powerful

The world says a strong man is one that has accomplished a lot, owns a lot. The bible on the other hand tells us that a strong man, is a man who leads, who prays, who sacrifices his life for his family but also his friends. A strong man loves, and lives like Jesus!

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (HCSB)

13 Be alert, stand firm in the faith, act like a man, be strong. 14 Your every action must be done with love.

Women

- bubbling forth with hospitality
- joy and love

The Church doesn’t need women who have the latest gossip, or women who are jealous of each other or threatened by each other. We need women who are full of love and joy. We need hospitable women who treat others like the kings and queens that they are in Christ. Giving, women.

Proverbs 11:16a (HCSB)

16 A gracious woman gains honor

Proverbs 31:26 (HCSB)

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom
and loving instruction is on her tongue.

Encouragement

Hebrews 10:24-25 (HCSB)

24 And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works,
25 not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging
each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

We have got to BE the church. A huge part of this is encouragement. Lifting up a believer who is down. Sharing words of faith and grace to build them up! No more strife and division in the church. Don't you dare sit around and talk bad about others!

- building each other up (dormant leaders)
- working together

Ephesians 4:29 (HCSB)

29 No foul language is to come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (HCSB)

14 And we exhort you, brothers: warn those who are irresponsible, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

All of these characteristics are foundational for our church! God sees these qualities in the men and women in this room but it's up to US to display them in our lives.

If we really believe our mission is to make disciples, it starts with these characteristics because these are the qualities that we NEED to reproduce in others. These are Kingdom qualities and Kingdom qualities are necessary for Kingdom work!

Making disciples means furthering the Kingdom!

- Get Serious. Step it up-Develop ministries so whenever the church grows, these ministries are prepared.
- This is a time of testing - Are we going to take this opportunity to ask for what we want seriously?