



# NEW YEAR SERMON (3)

Sunday 10 January AM

# INTRODUCTION

We have entered a New Year . . . new opportunities . . . new possibilities

## PREVIOUS WEEK (1) DOING THE SAME WORKS JESUS DID!

John 14:12 <sup>12</sup> "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in Me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works

- Death, burial, resurrection, His right to forgive sins etc.
- He met needs of ordinary folk . . . pointing them to GOD
- He acted with humility, compassion, love . . . *sought to change lives*

## LAST WEEK (2) DON'T BE TEMPTED TO KEEP LOOKING BACK!

Luke 17:32 <sup>32</sup> Remember what happened to Lot's wife!

- She looked back on what she was leaving behind
- Maybe longing for her old past life . . . maybe regrets for mistakes made
- You will not be moving forward with Christ – if you keep looking back – our hearts shouldn't be where they once were

## THIS WEEK (3) WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE NEW YEAR?

- Not a supernatural vision of the future
- Simply the DIRECTION we believe GOD would have us to go
- Be prepared to think further ahead . . . than just 'now'!
- Imagination . . . ok to dream . . . important to pray!

- In business there is need of a 'vision'
- Vision is set by those who have the capacity to look and plan ahead
- Vision identifies where they want the business to be
- It is applicable . . . in our own walk with Christ . . . as a church

FOR THE BELIEVER . . . BODY OF CHRIST . . . THE MOST CRITICAL COMPONENT . . . IS THAT IT BE GOD-GIVEN / GOD-FOCUSED

- We cannot treat the church like a business
- It cannot be self-centered
- Heaven forbid if our only vision is designed by us to benefit us!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A VISION?

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no vision from GOD, the people run wild, but those who adhere to GOD's instruction know genuine happiness

- It is so important to know where you are headed . . . *heaven*
- Hebrews 12:1 . . . Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us

An ancient Egyptian proverb

A man without a vision for his future, always returns to his past!

## HABAKKUK 1 & 2

- Habakkuk . . . GOD-given vision
- He embraced GOD's vision . . . BY FAITH

In Hebrew Habakkuk means . . . 'to embrace'

- But he questioned it . . . even complained about it . . . but later got to grips with it

## HABAKKUK 1

NKJV 1:1 The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw

THE VOICE 1:1 This is the vision with which the prophet Habakkuk was burdened

- Initially Habakkuk could only see trouble for GOD's people
- He would rather that GOD rescue His people and punish their enemies

2-4 The Prophet Questions GOD (complaint)

5-11 The Lord's Reply (you will be amazed at what I am about to do!)

12-17 The Prophet Responds (disappointed)

NLT 12 O Lord my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal—surely you do not plan to wipe us out? O Lord, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. 13 But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery?

I don't understand this vision you have given me . . . it isn't what I expected!

I want people to repent . . . but does that mean being punished by the Babylonians?

If you pray for a vision . . . it may not be what you are expecting!

## HABAKKUK 2

NKJV 2:1 I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected

NLT 2:1 I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what the Lord says and how He will answer my complaint.

- Habakkuk had the good sense to wait for GOD
- 2:2-4 GOD reveals the long term plan – this is the vision for Habakkuk to record

NLT 2 Then the Lord said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. <sup>3</sup> This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. <sup>4</sup> "Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to GOD.

Galatians 3:11

NLT 11 So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

Your vision for 2016 may simply be 'to be all that Christ wants you to be'

- I am going to be faithful to GOD

## THERE ARE SOME GOOD LESSONS IN HERE FOR US

### #1 – THE VISION HABAKKUK SAW CAME FROM GOD

- There is a MAJOR difference between setting OWN goals and having a GOD-GIVEN vision
- Clearly Habakkuk's vision came from GOD

Habakkuk 2:2-3

*NLT* <sup>2</sup> Then the Lord said to me, "Write My answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. <sup>3</sup> This vision is for a future time

### LESSON: THE ONLY VISION WORTH FOLLOWING . . . IS ONE FROM GOD

- Q. Is your vision from GOD?

On a personal level: We felt GOD's calling into the ministry . . . our highest priority was to know for sure that it came from GOD – if it was simply our own personal goal it would not have been worth following

John 7:16-18

*NIV* <sup>16</sup> Jesus answered, "My teaching is not My own. It comes from the one who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own. <sup>18</sup> Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

## #2 – IF YOUR VISION IS FROM GOD – IT WILL SURELY COME

- IOW . . . you won't have to be orchestrating everything to make it work!
- Reminds us of the man who sought to do GOD's will . . . he knew his wife had been on to him about stopping on the way to work to buy donuts . . . he said, LORD, if it is Your will for me to stop give me a park right outside shop . . . after 10 times around the block . . . guess what!
- Why won't we be trying to orchestrate everything?
- Because He will provide . . . He opens doors . . . He will make it happen

EVEN IF THERE SEEMS TO BE A DELAY . . . don't panic!

Habakkuk 2:3

*NLT <sup>3</sup> This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.*

- It will come . . . that means all our steps will be directed by Him

## LESSON: BETWEEN ANY DREAM AND FULFILMENT THERE WILL BE MANY TESTS – ONE OF THOSE IS THE PATIENCE TEST!

- Patience isn't just hoping things work out

On a personal level: Our vision is to see CBC grow – to see more and more souls saved for Christ – to have a relevance in the community – to be a place of where believer's grow and mature and get active in the Lord's work

- Patience is persevering . . . and IT IS believing what GOD laid in your heart was real
- If it was from GOD . . . He would make it happen . . . BUT in His timing
- What we need is to be patient and steadfast

Hebrews 10:36

<sup>36</sup>For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise

## #3 – IF YOUR VISION IS FROM GOD . . . HE WILL GIVE YOU A PASSION (desire, hunger, thirst) FOR IT

- A sad sight . . . someone with no passion
- Passion is having zeal
- Zeal is an enthusiasm and keenness that is unstoppable

Psalms 69:9

The zeal for my Father's house has consumed me

- Q. What consumes you?
- Think of the Apostle Paul
  - a) His burning desire was to spread the Gospel abroad
  - b) We know he succeeded – three missionary journeys
  - c) But even when imprisoned . . . he didn't give up! He simply turned his prison into an evangelistic mission center

## LESSON: IF OUR VISION IS TRULY OF GOD – IT WILL CONSUME YOU UNTIL IT IS COMPLETE



## WARNINGS

### 1. Beware White Elephants

What is a White Elephant?

A 'white elephant' is the subtle gift of our enemy . . . EXPLAIN

White elephants were sacred – couldn't work – no value – they ate heaps – when the kingdom was under siege from those who had gifted the elephant – they had to be fed – the people starved!

Sometimes what we think is a GOD-given vision . . . turns out to be 'white elephant'

Hebrews 12:1-3

<sup>1</sup> Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of GOD

### 2. Stop listening to voices that discourage you

The enemy does not want you to succeed

But you will make it . . . GOD has promised it!

MOSES

He had a history changing message for Pharaoh – but he was a poor speaker!

He got angry at times

He didn't get to make it into the Promised Land

Mark 9:4 – we find him there with Jesus and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration

DAVID

You say you've failed quite a bit in the past . . . therefore you are a little hesitant about asking GOD for a vision

David failed!

GOD didn't make excuses for David – He just forgave him!

### 3. It isn't over until GOD says it is over!

You may feel that it is over – but if you listen to what GOD is saying and you are obedient to Him – He say's your vision will live on

We ought to aim to live to see that GOD-given vision fulfilled

Philippians 3:12-15

<sup>NLT</sup> <sup>12</sup> I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.

<sup>13</sup> No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

<sup>15</sup> Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you.