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How Good is Our Vision?

Proverbs 29:18 - "Where
there is no vision, the
people perish"

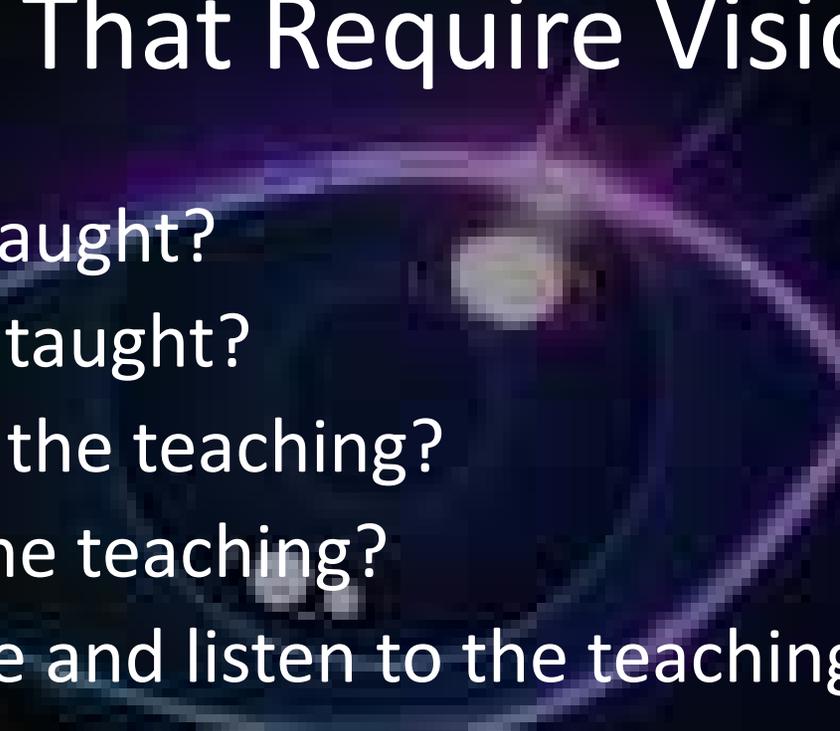
Vision

- Literally means the ability to see things that are visible, but it also used to mean the ability to see things not discernible to the eye
- “Unusual competence in discernment or perception; intelligent foresight” (American Heritage Dictionary)
- “Vision is the art of seeing things invisible” (Jonathan Swift)

The Common Vision For Local Churches:

- A paid for attractive church building with comfortable pews and good temperature control
- Plenty of paved parking near the building
- A clearly visible sign that says church of Christ and includes the service schedule
- An adequate preacher who recites the plan of salvation at the end of every sermon

Things That Require Vision



- What will be taught?
- How will it be taught?
- Who will plan the teaching?
- Who will do the teaching?
- Who will come and listen to the teaching?
- Who will prepare the teachers?
- How will they be prepared?
- Who will bring the guests?
- How will we bring the guests?

How Good Is Our Vision?

- In the Lord's work, we need a greater vision for the future of TR
 - We need greater objectives (what can be done)
 - And specific plans (how it can be done)

How Good Is Our Vision?

- Jesus' vision

- Matt. 9:36-38 - “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”
- John 4:35 - “Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

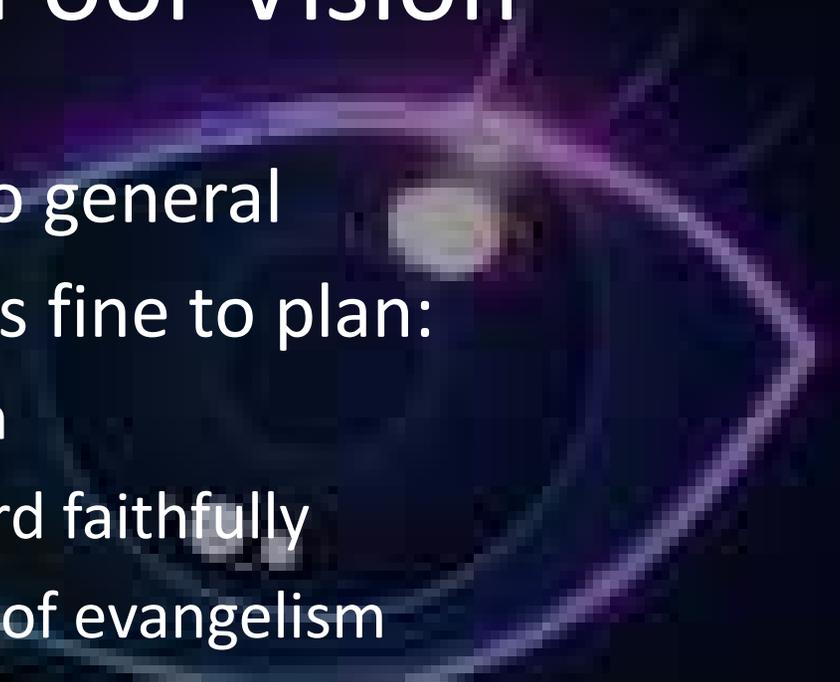
Poor Vision

- Most churches have “Jesholdinarown Syndrome” and are content to just keep the doors open, hoping people will come in and ask to be baptized
- Of the ones who have some vision for the future, often their vision is too small or too general.

Poor Vision

- “We want to reach as many people as possible with the gospel.”
- Sounds good at first hearing, but there are two things wrong with it:
 - Too general; no plan, no specific course of action
 - Too small; non-specific goals lead to contentment with mediocre efforts and results

Poor Vision



- Vision that is too general
- For example, it is fine to plan:
 - To go to heaven
 - To serve the Lord faithfully
 - To do the work of evangelism
- But how will you do those things?
 - By what means will you get those results?
 - What specific, measurable actions will take you there?
 - How much time, effort, and money will it take?

Poor Vision

- Vision that is too small
- Past failures impact present vision and future effort
 - Personal efforts unfruitful
 - Influenced by defeatist brethren
 - Believe that people are not interested in spiritual matters
- Many churches and individuals seem content with just keeping house for the Lord
 - With limited vision, little is done and therefore little is accomplished

Poor Vision

- The Lord intends greater things for local churches
 - Matt. 13:31-33 - “Another parable He put forth to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. 33 Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

Poor Vision

- 1Cor. 16:8-9 - “But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”
- Rev. 3:8 - “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.”
- Do we think He will be happy with “we’re Jesholdinarown”?

Good Vision

- Our vision needs to be greater and more specific
 - To fill every pew in five years by every member bringing one visitor per month
 - Challenging, yet reachable goal, reasonable time, workable plan
- What sacrifices are you willing to make when weighed against value of a soul?
 - Matt. 16:26 - “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Good Vision

- Our vision needs faith
- Faith in the power of the gospel
 - Rom. 1:16-17 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

Good Vision

- Our vision needs faith
- Faith in the power of the gospel
 - 1Peter 1:22-25 - “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

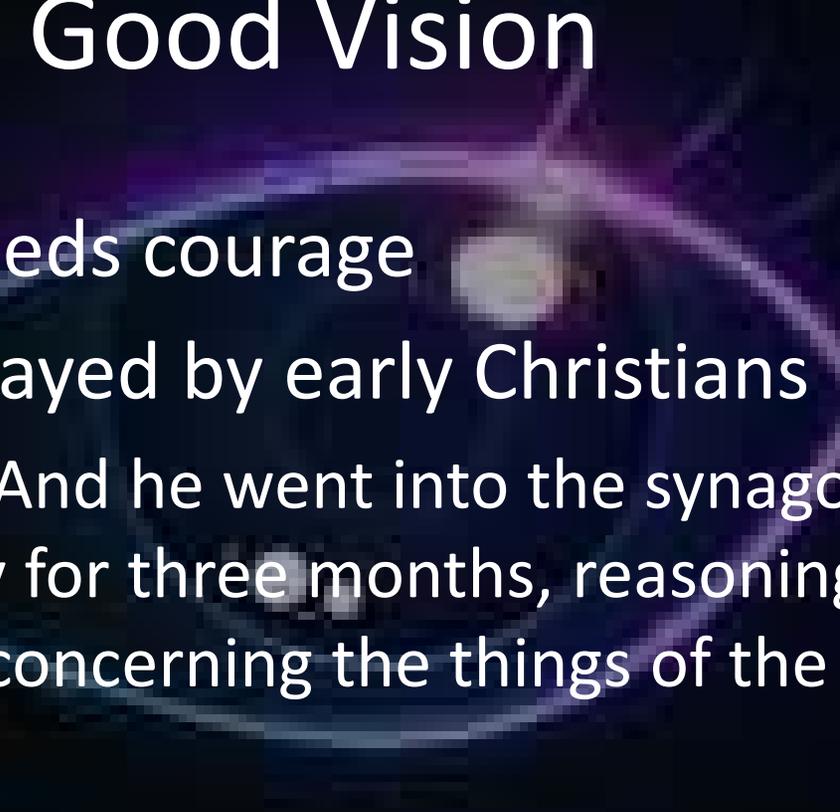
Good Vision

- Faith in the power of the Lord
 - Phil. 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
 - Eph. 3:16, 20 - “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”

Good Vision

- Our vision needs courage
- A virtue displayed by early Christians
 - Acts 4:13 - “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”
 - Acts 13:46 - “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.”

Good Vision



- Our vision needs courage
- A virtue displayed by early Christians
 - Acts 19:8 - “And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.”
 - Acts 28:31 - “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”

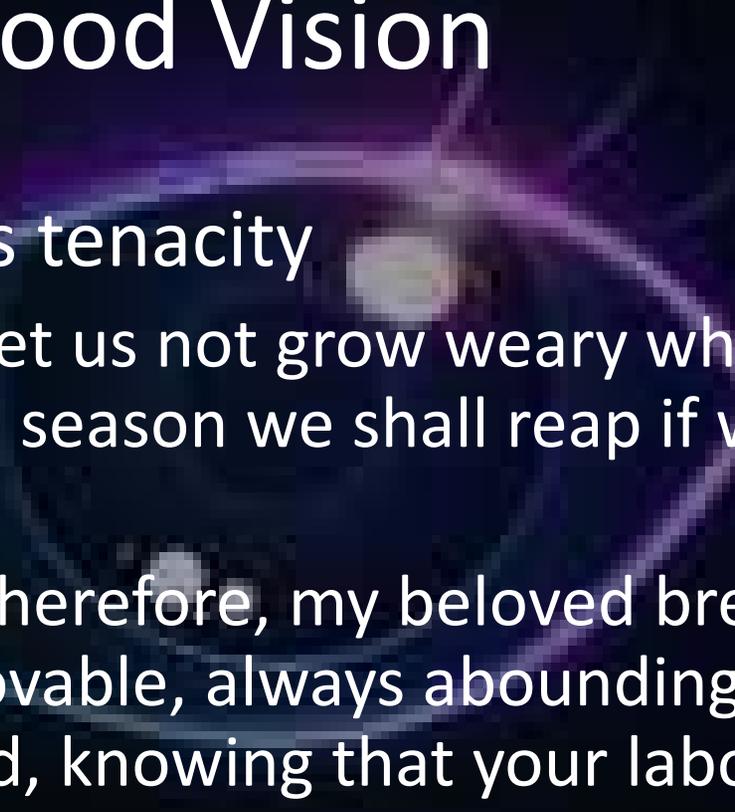
Good Vision

- For which they prayed
 - Acts 4:29 - “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word”
 - Eph. 6:18-20 - “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Good Vision

- Based on our hope in Christ
 - 2Cor. 3:12 - “Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech”
 - 1Thes. 2:2 - “But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict.”

Good Vision



- Our vision needs tenacity
 - Gal. 6:9 - “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”
 - 1Cor. 15:58 - “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
- Many visions are never realized because people give up too soon

How Good Is Our Vision?

- Not all vision is good
 - Some have tunnel vision, focusing on small and often insignificant matters in the church
 - Some have despairing visions, seeing only the negative
- John 4:35 - “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest”
 - This was said by someone who never baptized a single convert; He saw far ahead to those who would, and prepared the way for them