
Vision Sunday

Rob Rogers April 3, 2022

Introduction

Today we're going to be talking about Vision. **Why?** Well, because the Bible talks about vision.

Proverbs 29:18

If people **can't see** what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they **attend to what He reveals**, they are most blessed.

- It says in Judges, when there was no King in the land, everyone did what was right in their own eyes—it was total chaos.

For us today, we want to perceive, know, and understand what God is up to. We have enough chaos in the world, and we want to be about the Father's business! That's where we're going today. Where we've been. Where we are. Where we're going.

Where we've been

Several months ago I mentioned that our staff, and our elders were going to be taking a series of retreats to seek the Lord together. There has been a team of intercessors that have been actively covering all of us and this entire journey in prayer.

We've had times of repentance, of refreshing, of encouragement, of confession, of reflection, of envisioning what the Lord might do with this church moving forward. The Lord has been knitting our hearts together in a way I've never seen in any church before. There is a unity, camaraderie, determination, unwavering focus that is present among the leadership and staff. So, before we move forward, I want us to collectively say thank you to the commitment, perseverance, patience, and sacrifices of every single staff member who continues to love and serve the family of Grace Chapel.

One of the steps we walked through was our history as a church body

- there are some incredible things that have been built into the foundation of this church body...
 - The radical faith of four families the sensed God's calling and moved across the country from California to plant this church

In fact, I want to take a moment and celebrate one particular family that made the move in '94 and has been serving this body ever since. Ron Clonts has been faithfully serving as an elder and on staff, for the last 28 years. Both he and his wife Pat, who has been my assistant over the last year and a half, and was the very first staff member of GC, are stepping into a season of well-deserved travel and rest — until they come back and they start working for free!

Ronnie has been an example to me in his diligent leadership, His heart to faithfully steward God's resources. He is an incredible man, that God has used greatly over these last many years.

Pat Clonts, just a quick example of what an encouragement this 5-foot firecracker has been to me — a while back — in a moment of vulnerability, I threw out there that I might need to sit while I was preaching that next Sunday. Pat Clonts steps up right in front of me, looks at me, and says, "Rob Rogers, you listen to me, you are the pastor of this church, and you will not sit when you preach the word of God, young man. You. Will. Stand!" You know what I said? "Yes ma'am!"

Ron and Pat Clonts, thank you for loving me, and our church family so well over these last many years, and in this last season of life. Church, it's because of their faithfulness that we have as a church family kept on moving forward — Ron and Pat Clonts — collectively as the GC family we bless you, and we thank you for your faithfulness to the body of Christ.

*These families, built into the foundation of this church, a **RADICAL TRUST** in God's provision, and an **OUTRAGEOUS GENEROSITY**, that through the years allowed us to get the place last year where we were able to pay off the last of our debt.*

Grace Chapel is officially Debt Free. Something that is objectively true is that *God has done incredible work through the generosity and diligence of a lot of people to get this church set up for what God has in store for our future*—for which we are eternally grateful.

Now, we spent time evaluating where we've been, we also spent time evaluating where we are... because it's impossible to know how to get to where you're going if you don't know where you are!

Where we are

Over the last year 114 people were baptized, over 500 people are connecting in life groups. *But there we some things that rose to surface that we need to change or adjust.*

1. **MEMBERSHIP** – What is it? Why should you become one? How do you become one? What are our expectations of members? Once you become a member... then what? What does your involvement look like afterward?

Now, for those of you that have gone through the 714-week class to become a member—your membership still counts!

- a. But for those that are and become members of the church moving forward... it's going to be very clear what is it, what it's for, what's expected, and there is going to be an enormous level transparency that we've never had before...
 - b. We're going to have regular membership meetings with detailed reports on the spiritual impact and financial health of the church so that our members know — when you give, where is your giving going? What difference is it making? What percentage is going where? What adjustments will we be making moving into the next quarter? Even where do we need your help! Because church, if we're going to step into all that God has for our future, we can't do it alone!
 - c. I also want you to know that on average, only 13% of weekly attenders give. But look at what God is doing with just 13%! What might God do if 50% or 80% consistently gave? What if it was 100%! What might God do with THAT lever of faith and obedience in one church?
- Vision will always outpace our resources. We'll do everything we can with the resources we've been entrusted with.

Now, I know I'm not even to the "Where we're going section" yet...

But I'm asking you — if you call GC your home church — to make a decision that you're going to obey God in your giving. *"Oh, here we go, pastor talking about money..."* I have absolutely no shame in talking about money because it's not about the money, it's about your motive. It's not about wealth, it's about your worship.

And I'm not asking you to do anything that I'm not doing! The reason why I'm unashamed in asking you to give is because it's FOR YOU — it's about your trust in God — It's about your maturity as a follower of Christ, it's about your obedience! Financial generosity is the only area in scripture where God says, "Test me."

Malachi 3:10

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And thereby put Me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

- I'm asking you to test God in your giving. In your TITHE 10%... See what God does... Ramsey Plan: Give 10 – Save 10 – Live on the rest. I know gas prices and the market we're living is so inflated right now – and maybe you can't give consistently give 10% – start somewhere. But where you start, let it stretch your faith.

Now, starting back up next week, our YTD and weekly offering numbers will be printed in our programs as well – so more transparency, accountability, and clarity moving forward regarding membership, and also the finances of the church.

1. **WE'RE CLARIFYING OUR PARTNERSHIPS - Local and International Missions**

Partners – We want you to know who we're partnering with locally and overseas to further the mission. We've relied on what we say on Sundays to bring awareness. But there's no way to communicate effectively about all of our partnerships during the announcement time on Sunday mornings. So, you're going to be able to walk in on a Sunday and see who we're partnering with, what they do, and how you can be involved with those non-profits, or ministries, and missions' partners.

Now, there's a lot more, but those are just a few examples of what we're going to be clarifying in the days ahead. But our entire staff dreamed up some fantastic ideas moving forward as well.

- **Community Pastors:** Where we have a Pastor over one geographic area... for example, we'd have a Franklin Area Pastor, and Spring Hill area pastor... and that pastor would serve the Life Groups and be available and accessible to those who live in those areas... Being present in the community where people are!
- **Lay Counseling Ministry:** With the mental health crisis our world is in right now, Rick and Diana Cua, and Ron Gonser, are working on a lay counseling ministry where we equip and empower those within our body that would love to serve in a counseling/mentoring capacity to be able to do so.
- **Partnerships with Other Churches:** Where we link arms with the great things that other churches are doing in the area... instead of being territorial and competitive... what if we actually operated as if we were all on the same team, on the same mission together and celebrated each other's successes. That means we actually need to believe that the Kingdom of God really does supersede all other agendas, platforms, and kingdoms.
- **Bringing Potlucks Back!!!** Keep your potato salad cold, Betty Sue... cause we're shaking hands in the lobby and eating lunch in the parking lot!

There were so many fantastic God-breathed ideas coming to the surface... in fact, **77 pages of ideas...** some we'll implement, some we won't, but of all the ideas, all the dreams, all of the envisioning, prayer and fasting, one thing was crystal clear – **but before we get there...**

I've noticed some things being a part of the western church for the last 18 years. Churches DO A LOT of things! In all of our activity, all of our busyness – the question I have is, **“Are we actually accomplishing what Jesus commanded?”** The world looks in on what the western church is doing and says, “What are they up to? Who knows? But they sure are busy!”

The final words of Jesus recorded by Matthew...

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and **DO A WHOLE LOTTA STUFF** in all nations,

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and **ATTEND CHURCH SERVICES** in all nations,

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and **FIGHT THE CULTURE** in all nations,

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and **PLANT CHURCHES** in all nations

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and **PREACH THE GOSPEL** in all nations

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and **BELIEVE IN GOD** in all nations

Matthew 28:19-20

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 all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

*Grace Chapel... we could do a whole bunch of stuff... we could have great services, we could run great programs, we could even plant a whole bunch of churches.... But if all that activity FOR God is not accomplishing the ONE THING God called us to do then **we are failing to fulfill the calling and command that Jesus gave us in the Great Commission!***

In all of our prayer and dreaming, all the ideas... they all tuck under heading. **One purpose. One singular focus.**

We're going to be a church that... MAKES DISCIPLES

Q: What is a disciple? In fact, we've been teaching this in our steps classes and life groups for the last 8 years...

Matthew 4:19

Follow Me, - and I will make you - fishers of men.

DISCIPLE: Someone that is **following Jesus**, being **changed by Jesus**, and **on mission with Jesus**.

What is a disciple?

FOLLOW | CHANGE | MISSION

FOLLOW

Did you know Jesus never asked for believers? Not once. Jesus never asked for attenders either.

*Jesus said **FOLLOW ME**.* Which means — you're obeying Jesus, you're learning from Jesus, life is continually looking more and more like Jesus. In what you say, in how you live, in your love for people, in how you spend your time, the things you care about, even the motives of your heart are informed by, shaped by JESUS! Why, because you're following HIM! It's daily. It's moment by moment! It's active.

CHANGE

Jesus spent that majority of His ministry, not **gathering crowds, but growing people**. He spent three years with a small, ragtag group of nobodies who flipped the world upside down and changed the trajectory of human history!

It's time that the church stops measuring success by quantity of attenders, but by the quality of our disciples. It's about your maturity! Not just coming to Christ, but growing in Christ, being changed by Him!

MISSION

Well, Rob, I just want to attend a service 1.73 times a month and call my Christianity good enough...

- I don't know what that is, but it's definitely not Christianity... you know what that is? BORING! I can preach... but my preaching isn't THAT good! Man, Logan can sing! Good for him! Who cares! Is your Christianity really relegated to watching a few people operate in their gifts and calling it good enough!?

We're going to be about the mission...

"Do you mean you actually want me to bring someone to the Lord? You want me to make disciples? Rob, that's your job! Btw, while we're at it we want you to do more altar calls..."

Ephesians 4:11-14

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to **equip the saints** for the **work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ **so that** we may no longer be children...

- You know what that says? A pastor's job, is to WHAT? EQUIP! EQUIP WHO? The saints! Who are the saints? YOU ARE!

IMPORTANT: The success of the church does not rest with the clergy... it rests on the shoulders of the saints! The potential for world impact is infinitely greater with you, than it is with any pastor.

- Why? Because you are the ones rubbing shoulders with people that are far from God every single day in the workplace, in your neighborhood, on campus... in your schools. You are the ones modeling for those around you what it means to be followers of Christ, for your family members that don't believe... for coworkers and classmates.
- Do you know why the world mocks the church? Because we've taught people that attending a service once a week and giving occasionally absolves them of their responsibility and calling of living out the mission of Jesus in their daily life!

OBJECTION: *I just don't know how to do that!* Good!!! *The first step in recovery is acknowledging that you don't have a clue what to do or where to start.*

- this is our first Discipleship Anonymous meeting, "Hi everyone, my name is Rob, and I struggle with discipleship." And you say...
- the church is a spiritual family where you learn what it means to **be a disciple and makes disciples!** God doesn't expect you to leave here today and magically become a Rockstar disciple-maker. **But He does expect you to obey His commands.**

John 14:15

"If you love Me, you will obey My commandments."

- Do you love Jesus? Make disciples.

Here's what I think God wants to see here... every single member of Grace Chapel, being disciplined and making disciples for the glory of God. *I think God wants to start a disciple-making movement right here, right now, with every single one of us leaning in together...*

I'd love to see in Columbia, in Chattanooga, in Memphis..., in India, Haiti, DR, Mexico, Romania, Ukraine... disciple-making movements that are so far reaching that disciple-making churches just start popping up!

Pastor Jimmy, shared with a few of us last week... *"you know you can plant churches but that doesn't mean disciples will be made. But if you make disciples, church will be planted."*

Did you know that if you made two disciples this year... and they each made two next year... they each made 2 more the next year... just two... in 15 years, you know how many disciples will have been made?

What the body of Christ can do together is infinitely more than any pastor, any evangelist, any gifted teacher, any one single person can do on their own. The language we're talking here is not addition. It's multiplication. It's not top down. It's low control, high empowerment, it's movement!

IMAGINE: *If every single person in this room, watching online... every single one of us today, put a flag in the sand, and made the decision — that starting today, I'm going to be a disciple — “Follow, Change, Mission” I'm going to be a disciple that make disciples, not perfectly, but obediently, willingly, and consistently.*

Ephesians 5:15-16

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the **best use of the time**, because the days are evil.

- Jesus had 3 years. What did he do? Where did He invest his life?

If we're FOLLOWING JESUS, BEING CHANGED BY JESUS, AND ON MISSION WITH JESUS, where should we invest ours?

OBJECTION: *Rob, I'm not educated, I didn't go to seminary!* Good! Now you don't have to unlearn anything. **OBJECTION:** *I'm not perfect.* Good, you'd ruin what's God is doing here if you were... This is a process. It's a journey. Like the gospel, it's low and slow over a long period of time... It's not flashy, or showy, it's simple. It's a process. It's messy. His grace is sufficient for you. We'll figure it out together. And we'll be spending the rest of our lives working this out and by the grace of God, become a disciple-making church in middle TN, that brings the life of Jesus to individuals, communities, nations!

Discussion Questions

1. What is the correlation between obedience and giving of financial resources?
Why do you think such a small percentage of weekly attenders give?
2. What is the primary COMMAND of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20?
3. Who is this command for?
4. How are you fulfilling this command in your life (or not)?
5. How do you perceive that this command is being carried out at Grace Chapel?
6. What can be done at Grace Chapel for us to more fully Make Disciples?

NOTES