

REVIVE CHURCH- BEHOLDING GOD'S VISION FOR THE CHURCH

EPHESIANS SERIES #1

We are going to spend some time **catching God's vision for the church** and grow in our understanding and participation of His glorious vision and our glorious future in the book of Ephesians. **Ephesians unveils the mystery of the church like no other letter. God's secret intention is made known and includes:**

1. Forming a body to express Christ's fullness on the earth.
2. Accomplishing this by uniting one people, both Jew and Gentile including 7 pictures of the church. All seven apply a different facet.
3. To equip, empower and mature the people of God to the end, that they extend Christ's victory over evil.

We are going to take some principals that we have learned and applied for our own personal growth and apply them to our corporate growth together.

I. Becoming what we behold

Discipleship begins with the people of God corporately beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus. **This view emphasize the priestly functions of worship and prayer preceding the kingly function of duty and calling.** **In other words, we become what He has told us we are as we worship, pray and seek His face.** Discipleship in the West had been reduced down to receiving information rather than beholding the Lord for the purpose of love and transformation. We become what we behold.

Paul would write the church in Corinth. **2 Corinthians 3:18- But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

This is why the essence of worship is not beholding things as they are but beholding the face of God who brings us into His holiness, righteousness, power. **When we see Him we see what should be and what will be!**

As we behold (look into) we are continually transformed into the same image by the Spirit of the Lord. **We then with an ever-increasing glory, reflect what our eyes are fixed upon.** *When we say eyes, we are speaking of the eyes of the heart and the illumination the Holy Spirit of God releases as we set our hearts and minds upon Him in His word and are led by the Spirit and not the flesh.* **Discipleship is not behavioral modification, it is a work of the Spirit to make us like Jesus Christ through beholding His glory.**

We need to use the principal of transformational beholding not just for our own growth, breakthrough and calling but for the larger purpose of unity, oneness with other believers so that we can experience the one accord the early church walked in. Oneness (koinonia/fellowship) is so much bigger than your friend group. It is a yoking together with others in the body of Christ for His eternal glory.

Just as the Holy Spirit fell upon the unified church and empowered them to accomplish the calling set before them, the Holy Spirit will bring power that transforms the church to become everything that the Father has planned for us. **Jesus will get His unified church and His spotless bride! Notice that 2Corinthians 3:18 is plural. We all (together) are beholding Him, moving from lesser glory to greater glory.** **This shows us what God intends for all of His believers collectively. Without this proper view of God we get caught up into our own issues, problems and personal motivations. Gods plan includes you but is much bigger than you!**

I. God's plan for us is so much bigger than we have presumed.

Derek Prince “God’s vision for the church is that His people are not merely be a group of individuals but that we become a single whole, functioning as a unified body as we minister God’s grace to one another and to the world. The daily life of the local church is to be an example of a people living and working in harmony to fulfill God’s grand vision. What we become together is the final goal”

- Jesus ultimate vision is to blend individuals from every race and background into a visible unity.
- If we are going to reach the world with God’s redemptive message, we must be visible. Something the world can see, feel and experience and appreciate.
- *If the Jews are going to be provoked to jealousy by the church, they will need to experience Jesus through the church. (Romans 11:11)*
- We cannot downplay or hide our Christianity because God’s purpose is that we would be visibly united. As we become a true reflection of Christ and God’s redemptive people, we will become an irrefutable testimony to the world that the God sent Jesus and His Presence surely dwells in our midst!

As we look at the challenges that need to be overcome including the attitudes and unbelief within our own heart as well as the compromise that we have experienced within the church. One could definitely say like Mary “How can this be” *I would say the answer is the same response as the angel gave to Mary. Luke 1:35-“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you’.* God will do His part which is the miraculous and we must do our part of yielding and believing His word. The more we see and understand the word of God and the ways of God the more we will trust His leadership and sovereignty to accomplish His plan.

I. Beholding as in a mirror

Back to 2Corinthians 3:18-Scripture compares the word of God to a mirror that reveals our inward spiritual condition so that we may see ourselves as God sees us all the way to the end result. We should ask the Lord **How do you see me/us, How do you feel about me/us?** *When we look into the word of God we see things not only as they should be but as they will be . He will fulfill His word, it will not return void, it will accomplish its purpose (Is. 55).*

Before we are made right with Jesus Christ the word of God reveals our sinful condition and our need for a savior. We see with a veil over our eyes. 2 Corinthians 3:14 tells us that the veil is only removed when we believe in Christ. When we are born again, reconciled to God, cleansed from all sin we are a new creation, and we can experience in a personal way the truths of Scripture and have the veil removed as our mind is transformed and made new by the sanctifying power of the word and Spirit of God.

I. Objectives of redemption

Exodus 19:3-6- 3And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

In this passage we see God's purpose in redeeming His people showing us two primary objectives of redemption (God purchases us, saving us from our sin).

1. **The first purpose of redemption is a direct and personal relationship with God. The Scripture reveals that God brings the redeemed to Himself! (19:4).** *His first purpose of saving us, bringing His redeemed people into a direct and personal relationship with Him.*
- **The Father draws His people unto Himself. He saves us from the penalty of sin and death, sets us apart as His very own and brings us near.**
1. **The second purpose of redemption is for God to make the saved into His own treasured possession. This indicates that God desires to make us something personal and special to Him.** *This is a beautiful truth that highlights God's purposeful plan for His people. We are His special treasure, this is why He redeemed us. Deuteronomy 32:9a- 9For the Lord's portion is His people; God's purpose centers on His redeemed people. We are His portion, created for His purposes and His glory.*

Here is where we need greater understanding. His ultimate goal is not only to redeem individuals, it is also the creation of a unique and special people, a unified expression, not a singular one. *Contemporary Christianity places most of the emphasis on the individual and his or her personal relationship with God. Though this is important the final objective of God is not just redeemed individuals, His goal is a special people. We see God's heart to have His people who are His special treasure carry the identity of a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

In Jesus high priestly prayer we see the heart and longing of God for a unified church.

John 17:20-23 20"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Jesus ultimate vision is to blend individuals from every race and background into a visible unity. Something that confounds the world and brings glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That the world would believe!

Coming into God's vision for us requires us beholding His vision and picture of what we are to be and a trust in His power to accomplish His purpose.

Home group questions

Discuss—the essence of worship is not beholding things as they are but **beholding the face of God who brings us into His holiness, righteousness, power.** **When we see Him we see what should be and what will be!**

Oneness (koinonia/fellowship) is so much bigger than your friend group. It is a yoking together with others in the body of Christ for His eternal glory.

Discuss this quote from Derek Prince “*God’s vision for the church is that His people are not merely be a group of individuals but that we become a single whole, functioning as a unified body as we minister God’s grace to one another and to the world. The daily life of the local church is to be an example of a people living and working in harmony to fulfill God’s grand vision. What we become together is the final goal*”

Discuss God’s objectives in redemption as seen through Exodus 19:3-6.

- Direct and personal relationship with God
- To make His redeemed into His own treasured possession.

Are you committed to the bride of Christ and the oneness Jesus is interceding for or are you to caught up in yourself? Be honest about how you can grow in beholding His plan for the church and partnering with Jesus.