

Sermon Outline - Sun, Jan 28, 2024 - Vision Month
(Matthew 2:1-12; Proverbs 29:18)

Overview – Every year we focus on Vision and this month we have looked specifically at the story of the Three Wise Men

First Sunday –

1. They were looking for a sign from God.
2. They were willing to let go of their comfort and privilege to follow God’s sign.
3. They placed their gifts before Jesus.
4. They kept listening to God– they went a different way.

Second Sunday -

5. Vision requires flexibility– you have to be willing to be responsive to Spirit.
6. God’s vision often unfolds in partnership – Look for your people.
7. Timing is key –trust God to order your steps.

Exegesis –

1. **Vision starts with God!** – God’s plan for the world, God’s plan for us

So often other things are guiding us – traumas, parental expectations, shame. We often decide what we want and then ask God to bless it. Misuse of scriptures like Psalm 37:4 – (Take delight in the LORD, AND he will give you the desires of your heart.) or Jeremiah 29:11

2. **God’s Vision rarely aligns with the status quo.**

If we are clear that the world is not as it should be then we should expect visions that are counter-cultural and radical. Even if we are called to do something that fits into the world, how we are doing it in a way that shifts paradigms. That brings more kindness, and healing justice to that space. Be suspicious of visions that don’t recall major changes on your part. If

3. **You must have a practice** –

Starting with God means being in conversation with God regularly, not just for the plan but the unfolding. You may not get the whole blueprint in no small part because you can’t understand it. Not having a practice is like being a telemarketer who doesn’t know how to use the phone or an IT specialist without an email. Spiritual practices are the foundation!!!!

In Black History Month, we will spend the first half looking at the legacy of Bayard Rustin, and then when Lent comes, we will go deeper into prayer. Prayer is essential to fasting, and to vision –it is essential to this Christian walk and collective prayer is a major practice in the Black spiritual tradition so we will lean into creating spaces for us to pray out loud, together as we seek God’s vision for ourselves, this congregation and the larger community.

Reflection Questions

1. As you look at your current life path, has your direction started with God? If you are not sure, how can you commit to really letting God direct your path?
2. How is God calling you to challenge the status quo – in what ways are you living your life in ways that spark transformation in your neighborhood, family, school or job?
3. What is your regular spiritual practice that allows you to hear from God? How might you start, shift or deepen your spiritual practice to clarify God’s vision?