

## “Vision Sunday 1 – What Christianity Is All About”

Following Jesus is the best way to live and the only way to die! This exciting walk of faith is a step-by-step adventure. We don't always know how it fits together, but we trust that God knows and is working everything together for the good. Even though our understanding of many things will remain clouded on this side of eternity, other things do become clear to those who walk with Jesus. The purpose of Vision Sunday 1 is to make it clear to ourselves and others (about Mentone Faith Chapel): what we're all about, how we see things, and where we're heading. May we all clearly understand what we would like our approach to be in explaining Christianity to both unbelievers and followers of Jesus Christ.

People should be able to expect from us that we're going to tell them the Gospel truth about how a person becomes a Christian, what happens to a person once they become a Christian, and some basic traits that should characterize the lives of those who follow Jesus. True Christianity will never appear cool to a heathen world. Instead of acceptance, we should expect hatred. The cross of Christ will always be offensive, foolish and a stumblingblock to those who are perishing. It's important that we tell people the whole truth and let them count the cost. If they start the right way, they will continue in the right way. Jesus watched good people turn away, desert Him, and walk away from salvation when they could not accept the terms that He presented. Regardless of what everyone wants to believe, not everyone is going to end up in heaven – only those who accept God's truth on God's terms will receive eternal life. Being a Christian means giving up everything you have and are to receive everything God offers to us. It all starts with a faith and belief in Jesus as the Son of God that is so profound that it changes everything. This must be our clear approach in explaining Christianity and the Christian Gospel.

Once a person is saved, Galatians 4:19 captures our approach: *we will keep laboring, even in painful toil (like a woman about to give birth), until Christ is formed in you!* Believers need to keep becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. Believers need to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit, as He continually chips away the flesh to let the beauty of Christ-in-us shine through, more and more. Our faith needs to be so genuine that it shows up in every aspect of our lives. We need to keep running away from sin and running toward Jesus. We need to keep moving closer and closer to Jesus. As Pastors, leaders, ministry servants, and fellow brothers and sisters of Mentone Faith Chapel – we don't want anyone to fall short of the Kingdom of Heaven. And so, we will keep urging and exhorting one another toward complete Christlikeness!

Even though we teach and instruct from the whole Bible, it has become clear that there are **eleven traits** that should characterize the life of every Christian. To this end we are going to keep laboring and toiling. So, **first** of all, our heart for you, is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *shares Christ*. We witness, testify and bring others to Jesus, recognizing that Jesus is too great of a treasure to keep to ourselves. It's simply *one beggar telling another beggar where Bread can be found*. **Secondly**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who

*inspires others*. No person is an island unto themselves; we're all in this thing together. Help others on their Christian journey, as others help you. Don't always stay at the rear of the pack, keep moving forward, and begin to lead others. **Third**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *gives*. We want to be like God, and God is a giver. We are always going to exhort you to honor the Lord with a tithe, and discover the joys of giving above and beyond the tithe, as well. **Fourth**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *has a personal relationship with Jesus*. We are always going to encourage you to intimately walk with the Lord through regular Bible study, prayer, and worship. Keep plugging into Jesus daily! **Fifth**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *attends Church*. Good things await when we come to Church. Coming to Church does us all good. Don't ever get into a habit of *not* meeting together with other Christians. **Sixth**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *serves in ministry*. We are not saved *by* works, but we are saved *to* work. Find your place and discover the joys of serving the Lord and helping other people. **Seventh**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *confesses sin*. Don't ever settle for living with sin in your life. Embrace the life-long struggle of saying "no" to sin and "yes" to Jesus. Strive to not sin (using all the grace gifts and spiritual weapons that the Lord has made available to us). But, if you do sin, immediately and sincerely confess your sin (so you can be forgiven) and get back onto the highway of holiness. **Eighth**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *subscribes to Biblical family values*. Don't look to this broken world for family values, always get your instructions from God's Word. This world keeps trying to move ancient boundary stones, but we need to honor what the Lord has established. Always strive to be the kind of family that God's Word describes. **Ninth**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *does everything in love*. Love should be the distinguishing hallmark of all who follow Jesus. Love God, love yourself, and love others. **Tenth**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *is kind and compassionate*. Here's a great question to always ask and answer: *what would Jesus do?* Just like Jesus, sacrifice your own ambitions and desires to selflessly serve the needs of others. Do daily acts of kindness in Jesus' name. Respond to human need as if you were responding to Jesus Himself. **Finally**, our heart for you is that you would be the kind of a Christian who *is Spirit-filled*. We are proud to be Pentecostal, because it's Biblical, and because we need Holy Spirit power to be effective witnesses for Jesus, and to be victorious over sin and the flesh.

Hopefully it has been made clear the direction we are heading, and the end to which we will continually labor and strive.

## Discussion Guide/Action Steps

1. Are you with us heart and soul?
2. Please use the attached Personal Inventory to assess your present status in the eleven areas that should characterize every Christian.