

Our Vision- Part 1

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 1st Jan 2011

Intro

- If you were asked the question 'What is the most significant speech, or quote of the 20th Century?' what would you reply? Perhaps Churchill 'We will fight them on the beaches' etc. Perhaps the lunar landing 'One small step for a man..' However, perhaps one of the most moving and significant speeches of the 20th Century has to be Martin Luther King in "I Have a Dream" on August 28th, 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in which he called for racial equality and an end to discrimination. It was ranked the top American speech of the 20th century by a 1999 poll of scholars of public address. 46 years later King's words were literally fulfilled when America elected it's first black president Barak Obama.
- As we start a New Year what is your dream? Maybe your dreams have been dashed, maybe hope deferred has made the heart sick. I believe God would have us look afresh today at the dream He has put in our heart, to excite us again to that dream and to give us His strength to make the dream, like King's speech, become a reality.

Read Hab 2:2-4

- Habakkuk had a horrific vision of the Babylonians coming in to destroy nations and questioned God about whether He would allow such a thing to happen. God replied by basically saying 'If I say something is going to happen, it's definitely going to happen, yet those who are righteous will be saved by the ingredient of faith'. Paul refers to this when he says in Romans 'The just shall live by faith' (Rom 1:17). God is basically saying TRUST ME and write down what I say because it will come true. There is something in human nature that believes the bad stuff more than the good. God wants us to be those who dream of His kingdom coming in power despite all oppositions. The bad part of the revelation was fulfilled by the Babylonian exile, but the good part by the return of the exiles, and more fully by the coming of Jesus and the gospel message that we are saved through faith in Christ.
- Hab 2:2 says to write down the vision and make it plain so that he may run who reads it. Although this sounds complex, the Hebrew behind this is 'write it down so it is quick for the readers eyes to run over'- i.e 'write down the vision I give you in a way that is quick and simple to read'. This is what we do when we write out a vision statement.
- This is what we have done with the initials of Brynmawr Family Church. We take the 'BFC' and we incorporate the Church's job description given by the risen Jesus to His Church into these 3 letters. That job description is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- We put it simply as '**B**uilding **F**ollowers of **C**hrist'.
- The Great Commission of Jesus to His Church is to make disciples of all nations- that's what we have been commanded to do by Jesus and empowered to do, by Jesus.
- '**All authority**'- **Matt 28:18**. We have power to build followers of Christ. We have been delegated authority from the One with all authority (Mt 28:18) to do this very

job. Jesus will always be with us in power to accomplish this (Mt 28:20). We are to see the authority of Jesus being established on earth as in Heaven. When He sent out the 12, and the 70 He delegated His authority over sickness and demons to the apostles and they preached the Good News, cast out demons and healed the sick (Luke 9:1,6; 10:1, 17). In the Great Commission this same authority is delegated to the Church to get the job done in power.

-**Mark's gospel** (Mark 16:14-20) records Jesus giving this commission once again to His Church when He speaks to His disciples in a different location and with different words. Again power signs are to follow those who believe- casting out demons, speaking in tongues, handling serpents (Paul on Malta), and being unaffected by poison, laying hands on sick. Mark 16:20 says that the disciples went out and preached and signs followed (as we see in the book of Acts). Although this ending to Mark is not found in all the manuscripts it does occur in a large number of them and so the early Church must have sought to include it in scripture for a reason.

-**The end of Luke** contains a similar commission (Luke 14:46-49) together with a promise of power through the Holy Spirit to fulfill that commission. Acts 1:8 which follows on from Luke's gospel says that we have received power through the Holy Spirit to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

-**In John 20:21** Jesus said 'As the Father sent Me, I also send you' and then He breathed on His disciples and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.

-**So we have in 4 different gospels** the great commission to us given on various occasions and each one with the promise of POWER! We have been commanded to build followers of Christ and also empowered to do so. Hallelujah!

- **'Make disciples'** – Matt 28:19. **BUILDING** followers of Christ. We are to build them in the sense that we both lead them to Christ and also teach them how to follow Him, as we also are following Christ ourselves. It is a process, and we need to be good at every aspect. Our job is more than just evangelism, it also involves teaching, encouraging, building people up to become all they can in Christ. **'Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you'** Matt 28:20- our job is not over with evangelism. We must teach people how to love one another, how to worship, how to follow Jesus, how to use their gifts to build up the body. **'Baptising'**- there is a growth process- repentance and faith, baptism in water and the Holy Spirit, discipleship. We must become excellent midwives and health visitors and G.P's until we see people come into their full stature within Christ's body (Eph 4:13).
- Building **FOLLOWERS** of Christ. A disciple is a learner, one who follows a teacher, Jesus. Jesus said when He called His disciples 'Follow me' (Mat. 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 2:14; 8:34; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:23, 59, 61; 18:22; John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26; 21:19, 22). We are to build followers.
- **'The nations'**- formerly Jews only, now Jews and Gentiles (in Hebrew the Gentiles are referred to as 'the nations') although the Church didn't realise this until Paul was called to the Gentiles in Acts 9 and Peter was called to the Gentiles in Acts 10. See also Matt 24:14, Acts 1:8, Eph 2:6. The ends of the earth must be reached so even though we are to firstly reach our locality with the gospel we must be a sending and releasing Church that sends people into all the world. 'The nations' means progressive geographical outreach (Acts 1:8- 'Jerusalem, all Judea & Samaria, and to the ends of the earth'). 'The nations' also means all cultures- not just those we are comfortable with. Church will look differently according to those it reaches.
- **'To the end of the age'**- this commission will not be replaced by some other vision- it is the call to the Church- all of God's people. We are to be motivated by the fulfilling of the great commission. This means that all of our activities must be governed by this rather than doing things without purpose.

- I have a dream that children who are both black and white, rich and poor, Welsh and English, from Brynmawr and Blaina shall one day worship hand in hand the Lord of Glory, together with those from every nation, tribe and tongue under Heaven. I have a dream that God will use us to fulfill the Great Commission in our day in this nation and in other nations around the world.

Read Acts 14:21-23

- In order to fulfill the Great Commission, Paul and the disciples had a strategy, so must we. When Paul went to preach the gospel he didn't just give out Bibles, or flyers, or a year's subscription to God TV: he worked hard to establish Churches in each locality; so must we. Planting Churches takes time, effort and dedication. Paul wrote to them, encouraged them and visited them, establishing leadership.
- **Our strategy.** Preaching the Gospel and establishing a strong local Church in our community which in turn grows and preaches the gospel and plants Churches into unreached peoples in the surrounding areas, Wales and the nations. The local Church is the 'hope of the world' (Willow Creek quote). We believe in one church, the body of Christ, of which we are a part. We believe in the pattern set down in the New Testament of godly leadership through elders and deacons.

Read Acts 13:1-4; 14:26-28

- **Accountability and submission to authority.** Paul was not a loose cannon, and did not send himself into ministry, but was recognised and sent out by godly leadership. He later returned to report back and spent a long time then at his sending church. We live in a culture where people flit from Church to Church or group to group as it pleases them, but this is not the Biblical model. As a Church, we are looking to develop relationship with a larger grouping of Churches so that we can be accountable.
- **Apostolic Centre-** a Church which has the genetics to plant other Churches. It grows individuals with the DNA to go and plant other Churches and return for equipping. Biblical example=the Church in Antioch (Acts 13:1-4; 14:26-28). Jim Drown's prophetic word.

In our next session we will continue looking at our vision by seeing the type of Church Jesus wants to build.

Summary

- We looked at what our vision should be in the light of Jesus Great Commission, given in each of the Gospels, and the promise of power for us to get the job done.
- We looked at Acts 13 & 14 about how the early Church fulfilled the Great Commission by preaching the gospel in the power of the Spirit, but also sought to establish strong, healthy churches in each locality, and how Antioch was a model of a Church that was outward looking and apostolic.
- In our next session we will looking at the type of Church Jesus wants to build.

Song: *I giving you my heart*

Our Vision- Part 2

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 16th Jan 2011

Intro

- Last time spoke about the most significant speech, or quote of the 20th Century. Martin Luther King in "I Have a Dream", 1963. 46 years later literally fulfilled when America elected it's first black president Barak Obama.
- Last time asked a question- as we start a New Year what is your dream? As we own God's dream together, trust God and obey Him He will do 'exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or tink, according to the power that works in us.'(Eph 2:20).
- We looked at the importance of writing down vision and making it clear (Hab 2:2-4)
- We said that our vision must be to fulfil the great commission of Jesus (Matt 28:16-20) to make disciples. We said that the vision of BFC, Brynmawr Family Church is to Build Followers of Christ. This command is given in each gospel, along with the promise of power and authority to do so.
- We saw how the early church lived out this commission by preaching the gospel in power, but always establishing local churches in each area where the gospel was preached (Acts 14:21-23).
- In Acts 13:1-4 & 14:26-28, we saw how Antioch was a sending Church- an Apostolic centre. Paul was accountable to authority- was sent and later returned to report back. In each Church he established godly leadership of elders and also deacons.
- This week we will continue to look at the dream? What sort of Church do we dream about?

Read Acts 2:40-47

What sort of Church?

8 areas. 'System's analysis' word. Rick Warren's purpose driven Church. Position ourselves to do the work, and be doing it alongside other Churches, and the fire of God will come up the Heads of the Valleys like a river of fire setting it alight for the Glory of God. Position ourselves in faith and obedience for growth. 8 key areas are Discipleship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Prayer, Presence, Ministry, Mercy and Worship. This week we will look at the first 4 areas, and in the next session we will cover the last 4.

- **Discipleship- v40-** Purity, set-aprt from degradation, not tolerating sin. **V42** 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine'- i.e. they lived instead by the teaching of the Bible, and submitted themselves voluntarily to the leadership of the Church. They 'disciplined' themselves, became 'disciples', followers of Jesus. They were hungry 'learners' rather than people who thought they'd 'arrived'. A disciple is constantly learning how to follow Jesus more effectively. They weren't just interested in the Spirit, but were full-on for the Spirit and the Word. We too are to be like them; evangelical, believing the Bible to be the authoritative, infallible word of God and also living in the power of the Spirit (Smith Wigglesworth's prophetic word). We are to hold firmly to the tennents of the Christian faith (the trinity, the virgin birth, salvation by faith in Christ alone etc.) Our foundation mustn't be our feelings, but God's Truth. **Application-** Repentance- a decision this year to turn from sin and live according to God's Word. A decision to actively keep learning how

to follow Jesus more effectively.

- *I have a dream of a whole community of disciples of Jesus, continually growing into His likeness. I dream of seeing multitudes of new believers being baptised in water and the Holy Spirit, becoming part of the Church and being taught how to follow Jesus effectively. I dream of a highly skilled community effective in bringing each person onto the next level of maturity. I dream of a people who cherish the Bible as the Word of God and clearly expound it to others, whilst at the same time being powerfully anointed and free in the Holy Spirit. I have a dream of God's people living in integrity of character and lifestyle, perfecting holiness and the fear of the Lord.*
- **Evangelism- v41**- '3,000 souls were added'. In **Acts 1:8** Jesus promised that we would be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Here Peter has been a witness to what Jesus did and the result is 3,000 people's eternal destiny is changed from Hell to Heaven. We need a passion for souls as Jesus had, and as Peter had- every soul is precious. 'Those who gladly received his word were baptised' (**v41**). Those who became Christians acknowledged publicly they were followers of Christ by being baptised. We need to be public and visible about our saviour, not hiding our faith, but sharing it in love. 3,000 were added in a day through a large open air gospel preach, but also in **v47** 'The Lord added daily to the Church those who were being saved'- i.e. there was a gossiping of the gospel by the many Christians behind the scenes leading to daily salvations of individuals. We need both/all types of evangelism, and we will be suited to some methods more than others, but let's choose to be a witness. **V47** they had 'favour with all the people'- God has given us favour in the community. This year He wants us to become more visible again, advertising, inviting, making most of opportunities.
- *I have a dream of the Church in Brynmawr effectively communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in Brynmawr, and then reaching out to the surrounding valley towns, Wales and the nations. I dream of seeing the gospel demonstrated through signs and wonders done in the power of the Holy Spirit so that the gospel is not merely words, but demonstrations of the Spirit's power. I have a dream of seeing all in the church released and empowered in evangelism, communicating clearly God's love by all possible means. I dream of seeing the transformation of lives and community through the salvation of the lost.*
- **Fellowship- v42**- 'they continued steadfastly in ..fellowship'. The early Church was steadfast in it's committment to one another, no matter what background people came from. This involved time, money, and dedication. The word 'fellowship' here is 'koinonia', which means sharing on an intimate level. Here they are sharing bread together, later it says they shared possessions. The word 'koinonia' comes from the word 'koinos' meaning 'common', and so means 'having things in common'. Our word for community likewise comes from 'common' and 'unity'. Koinonia was used of business partnerships and marriage. Their fellowship was expressed around meals together, including the Lord's supper, but also agape meals ('love feasts', see **Jude 12**). It was also seen in their committment to large groups ('one accord in the temple' **v46**) and small groups ('from house to house' **v46**). Jesus ministered to the crowds but also dedicated Himself to a small group. Both are important for community transformation; the large groups important for unity and direction, and the small groups important for building relationship, accountability and equipping. The early Church also met in both large and small groups, but meetings in the home became hugely important to the growth of the Church. We also have our main meeting, and homegroups. Not all purposes can be met in 2 meetings, however, and as we grow, ministries will develop in special areas of focus, but the overall vision remains the same- to make disciples of all nations. The 'one accord' in **v46** speaks about their decision to be unified. This needs to be internal- within our Church, and external- with other Churches. Jesus prayed in **John 17** that His Church would be united.
- *I have a dream of a family where people of all social backgrounds and ages feel loved, accepted and valued. A dream of a people, called the Church of the living God, building strong, trusting, genuine relationships. A dream of a people united internally and externally with others in the body of*

Christ. A dream of a people who speak words of edification to one another and challenge any attitudes which in any way undermine the unity of the Church. I dream of a Church which secures a safe environment for all and shows warmth and hospitality to outsiders.

- **Prayer -v42** - They 'continued steadfastly ..in prayers'. Prayer has been termed 'The Boiler House of the Church'. Prayer is one of the acknowledged factors to the great revivals that have swept different countries, including Wales, throughout history. **2 Chronicles 7:13-14** says concerning Israel 'If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land'. Although this refers to Israel under the Old Covenant there are parallels today, as can be seen when you watch the 'Transformations' videos made about how prayer has transformed whole communities. The Chinese know how to pray. Dave Pritchard in Korea- they have a passion for prayer. Jesus developed such a habit of prayer that His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. '7 days without prayer makes 1 week (one weak)'. Jesus would get up whilst it was still dark and pray. He often withdrew to lonely places to pray. He started His ministry only after 40 days of prayer and fasting. He said that certain demons would only come out with prayer and fasting. Jesus is still praying now and lives forever making intercession for the saints. Prayer is reliance on God.
- *I dream of a whole community of people who intercede and stand in the gap for the lost in their community. A people who know the power of prayer and see incredible answers to prayer, resulting in God being glorified. I dream of a people who have a passion and ongoing commitment to pray. A people willing to invest time in God's presence for His Glory to be manifest through continuous revival in the Church. A people who through prayer see the power of God manifested setting people free from demonic strongholds and destroying all the works of the evil one.*

Summary

- We looked at what our vision should be in the light of Jesus Great Commission, given in each of the Gospels, and the promise of power for us to get the job done.
- We looked at Acts 13 & 14 about how the early Church fulfilled the Great Commission by preaching the gospel in the power of the Spirit, but also sought to establish strong, healthy churches in each locality, and how Antioch was a model of a Church that was outward looking and apostolic.
- We looked at what sort of a Church should we seek to establish?- We looked at Acts 2:40-47, looking at the first 4 of 8 particular purposes of the Church, and the dream of how this can become a reality for us in our situation here in Brynmawr if we remain focussed and obedient to God's call in our lives.
- Our key values- Discipleship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Prayer, Presence, Ministry, Mercy and Worship.

Song: *I giving you my heart*

Our Vision- Part 3

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 6th Feb 2011

Intro

- **In part 1** of our vision I spoke about the importance of having a dream. I illustrated it with what many people regard as the most significant speech, the 20th Century, Martin Luther King in "I Have a Dream", 1963. 46 years later literally fulfilled when America elected it's first black president Barak Obama.
- We looked at the importance of writing down the dream or vision and making it clear (Hab 2:2-4).
- We said that our vision must be to fulfil the great commission of Jesus (Matt 28:16-20) to make disciples. We said that the vision of BFC, Brynmawr Family Church is to Build Followers of Christ. This command is given in each gospel, along with the promise of power and authority to do so.
- We saw how the early church lived out this commission by preaching the gospel in power, but always establishing local churches in each area where the gospel was preached (Acts 14:21-23).
- In Acts 13:1-4 & 14:26-28, we saw how Antioch was a sending Church- an Apostolic centre. Paul was accountable to authority- was sent and later returned to report back. In each Church he established godly leadership of elders and also deacons.
- **In part 2** we began to look at what a healthy Church comprises of. I shared about the 'System's analysis' word I felt God had given me, and the need to be see the overall picture of a healthy church- to know the cylinders of the engine and to be firing on all cylinders. I began to speak about 8 areas I believe are key for a healthy church. We looked at the early Church in Acts 2:40-47 and noted 4 of those areas. This week we will look the other 4 areas using the same passage:

Read Acts 2:40-47

What sort of Church?

Areas we looked at last time:

- **Discipleship- v42** 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine' **Application-** Word and Spirit- becoming more like Jesus by living according to His Word.
- **Evangelism- v41-** '3,000 souls were added'- mass open air evangelism, **v47** 'The Lord added daily to the Church those who were being saved'- the one to one, friendship evangelism, gossiping the gospel. Reach all by all means.
- **Fellowship- v42-** 'they continued steadfastly in ..fellowship'. Large groups- 'one accord in the temple' **v46**) and small groups ('from house to house' **v46**). Jesus ministered to the crowds but also dedicated Himself to a small group. The importance of unity- John 17. Brynmawr 'Family' Church.
- **Prayer -v42** - They 'continued steadfastly ..in prayers'. Prayer has been termed 'The Boiler House of the Church'. 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 'If my people' .'Transformations' videos. Revival following prayer.

This week we will look at 4 more areas: The presence of God; Ministry, Mercy and Worship.

- **Presence -v43** - 'Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles'. The word 'then' used here implies a result to everything the believers had sown- i.e. prayer, discipleship, evangelism, fellowship. Because they had responded to God in various areas previously mentioned God was able to light the touch-paper for the whole thing to ignite. They had positioned themselves in faith ready for God to come. We need to do the same- to keep our zeal serving the Lord and loving one-another, but at the same time relying on the manifest presence of God to bring the breakthrough. The fear of God came after the Holy Spirit had come in power- the Church needed shaking up- only 120 are mentioned at the prayer meeting in Acts 1:15, even after they had met the risen Jesus! 1Cor 15:6 says that over 500 brethren saw the risen Lord at the same time- where were they now? In Matt 28:17 it says that when the many disciples saw Jesus at a mountain in Galilee they worshipped but some doubted! It was the power encounter with the Holy Spirit that made all the difference- suddenly people realised- God is real!

John Allison when he had a power encounter at Stoneleigh.

Revival is when the presence of God comes to such an extent that the fear of the Lord affects the whole community around.

Charles Grandison Finney ministered during the 1830's and became known by many historians as the "father of modern revivalism". Directly, or indirectly he credited with conversions of around 500,000 people. It is said that his revival meetings transformed entire towns. It is said that in some towns after the meetings the bars would close down because there was no business for them, and churches would spring up in their place. He stated the following about revival:

1. A revival always includes the conviction of sin on the part of the church.
 2. Backslidden Christians will be brought to repentance.
 3. A revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God. Just as in the case of a converted sinner, the first step is a deeper repentance, a breaking down of the heart, a getting down into the dust before God, with deep humility, and a forsaking of sin.
 4. Christians will have their faith renewed - they will see things in that strong light which will renew the love of God in their hearts. This will lead them to labor zealously to bring others to him.
 5. A revival breaks the power of the world and of sin over Christians.
 6. When the churches are thus awakened and reformed, the reformation and salvation of sinners will follow.
- We were designed by God for the presence of God (made in His image for relationship- Eden), but when sin came in separation came in. In the Old Testament we see glimpses of God's manifest presence in key situations and in key people's lives. The shekinah glory of God- the tent, ark, temple (Solomon). Shekinah leaves temple in Ezekiel's vision. Through the cross we are restored to true fellowship with God as Father, daddy. When Jesus dies temple torn in two from top to bottom- God now dwells in people- His Church, the living temple. It says in **Ephesians 2:19-22** that we have been chosen as Gentiles together with the Jews to become a spiritual temple where God lives by His Spirit- God has chosen the Church is to be the dwelling place of His awesome presence. When His presence is manifested people notice! In 1Cor 6:19 Paul says that each one of our bodies is a temple of the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-23 God, Father, Son and Spirit make their dwelling in us (through the Holy Spirit)! We are then, both individually and corporately the dwelling place of God by His Spirit! We are commanded to go on being filled with the Holy Spirit. When we are all filled there is an overflow which affects the community around us- Ez 47 the river flowing and becoming uncrossable. Peter's shadow, Paul handkerchief, Acts 10:44- Holy Spirit falls on a crowd during the preach, Hebridean revival ("Revival is a community saturated with God.", Duncan Campbell). "God breaking in and upon and over His church like ocean waves upon the shoreline rocks." (Jonathan Edwards). "Revival is the Church falling in love with Jesus all over again." (Vance Havner). "A revival means days of heaven upon earth." (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

- Have you been filled recently? Do you need to get back in the river? Do you need to get back your first love? Are you experiencing Heaven breaking through to Earth?
- *I have a dream of a community saturated with God. A community for whom the presence of God is everything. I have a dream of a people prepared, a house where the Spirit of God is pleased to dwell. I dream of every believer in this community regularly filled with God's Holy Spirit and cultivating a lifestyle of hunger for God's presence. I dream of such manifestations of God's presence when we meet, that as God's Church we become revived. I dream of seeing outbreaks of God's glory outside of meetings and in our community. I dream of a body of believers who are so Spirit-led and Spirit-saturated that the glory of God is made manifest to all and indifference vanishes.*
- **Ministry- v43** – 'and signs were done through the apostles'. Here we have the start of spiritual gifts being used to edify and build up the body of Christ. It was not that the apostles were to do all the work, but they were modelling something to the masses who had just got saved, so that they too would be released to do the same to others. Although signs and wonders were the hallmarks of an apostolic ministry as Paul notes in 2Cor 12:12, Jesus makes it clear in John 14:12 that 'he who believes in (Jesus)' will not only do signs and wonders, but also higher caliber ones than Jesus did! We have power tools to get the job done. Paul would later write about the privilege we all have as Christians to share in spiritual gifts (**1Cor 12:1-31**). God has given each one of us a unique role to fulfill in His body, and the body reaches maturity when each part does its part and functions properly (**Ephesians 4:4-16**). We all have a part of the jigsaw to put in, and unless we put our piece in the picture will be missing bits. We belong to each other, so should use our gifts in humility to serve God through serving each other (**Rom 12:3-8**). The Church is not a one-person ministry, but an every member ministry. We are all 'ministers' in this sense (in fact the word 'minister' means 'servant'). Jesus illustrated how we are to serve one another by washing His disciples' feet. Phil 2 says that Jesus humbled Himself taking the form of a servant- He was obedient to the call of the Father to serve us by dying for us. If you say you truly love Jesus, what are you doing to serve His body as He has commanded you? The final commendation from Jesus for each one of us will be related to how we served whilst here on earth- He told a number of parables about servants- some were rebuked for their laziness, whilst others were commended by the master. Let's aim to be faithful with little, so that we can be trusted with much. Let's make it our aim to be the ones He says 'Well-done good and faithful servant' to.

Between the things that are too small for you to bother with, and the things that are beyond your ability to accomplish, you actually DO very little for the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said those who are faithful in the "little things" will be made ruler of much!- unknown

- *I have a dream of every Christian in Brynmawr Family Church recognising, using, and growing in their natural and spiritual gifts for the glory of God and for the building up of His body. A people who cultivate an attitude of humility and service for the benefit of others. A people who see the needs of individuals met through diverse ministries within the Church. I dream of the roles of apostle, prophet, pastor teacher, and evangelist as well as diverse spiritual gifts being received and developed here in Brynmawr and in Wales as a whole.*
- **Mercy - v45** -They 'sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need'. God wants fairplay for the oppressed and downtrodden. True mercy to others springs out of a correct understanding of the extreme and lavish mercy that God has poured upon us, who didn't deserve it, through His generosity shown us in the cross of Christ. Jesus had a heart for the poor- He made the disciples carry around a purse for the poor (Judas was in charge of it), He made Himself poor to serve others, He advocated people selling their possessions and giving to the poor to develop purses in Heaven. How is our purse in Heaven doing? Steve & Pat built up a purse in Heaven.

A man named George Müller (1805-1898) had heard that Bristol had very poor sanitation, and soon after Müller arrived, the city was devastated by an epidemic of cholera, and many hundreds of people died. He visited the sick people, trusting God to keep him from catching the disease. So many people had died that there were hundreds of orphans with no-one to care for them; many were reduced to begging in the streets. George Müller

wanted to do something to help, and it was this that started his life's work for God. Through the power of prayer, together with action George made a difference. He never once asked anyone for money, but brought his prayer requests to God, and saw answers. In his life he cared for 10,024 orphans. He was well-known for providing an education to the children under his care, to the point where he was accused of raising the poor above their natural station in life. He also established 117 schools which offered Christian education to over 120,000 children, many of them being orphans.

Micah 6:8 says 'He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'. There is something in God which cries out against injustice, and cries out for mankind to display mercy to one another. Band Aid, when 1 film shown of children starving to death everyone suddenly realised what it was all about and shut their mouths and wept. The gospel is good news to the poor (**Is 61:1**). Jesus said when we do something for the least of His children we do it for Him, and that in the great judgement the mercy we have shown in this life will determine our eternal destiny (**Matt 25:31-46**). Tony Campolo has once said 'It would be good for you to have a child you sponsored standing up for you on the day of judgement'. We know we are not saved by works, but as James points out- faith is accompanied by works (**James 2:14-26**).

- *I have a dream of a people who minister God's love, help and healing to the lost, poor, sick, forgotten, unloved, bound, abused, and lonely. I dream of a people who speak God's prophetic voice in our community, seeing God's justice established. I dream of a people who feed the hungry and comfort the grieving. A people whose faith is demonstrated by action. A people known as generous, and giving. I dream of a people who have Jesus' compassion for those who are captives and set them free to serve the Lord.*
- **Worship- v46-47** – 'So continuing daily..praising God'. Worship was not a chore for these believers, but an outflow of their gratitude, and a lifestyle to them. It was a daily overflow rather than a Sunday ritual. **Romans 12:1** says that our surrendered lives to God as living sacrifices are our true worship- it affects the whole of our lives. **John 4:23-24** says that God the Father is seeking worshipers who will worship in spirit and in truth. God wants us to break free from dead tradition and apathy and worship like we really have been raised from the dead! The Church is to be the place where fresh, vibrant, spontaneous, free expressions of worship happen. Just as King David was creative in his expressions of worship to God, so should we be- we are the children of the One who created all things. David danced publicly before the ark of God as part of his extravagant worship, and was highly criticised by his wife, Michal for doing so. Are we willing to be public about our love for the Lord in a culture which is embarrassed and ashamed about bringing up the name of Jesus in public? Muslims are not afraid to show their faith in public places, nor should we be. Graham Kendrick broke some major chains when he got the Church in the U.K and around the world going out on 'Make Way' praise marches, however the Church seems once again to have retreated back into the four walls. In the deep south of America there are so many Christian radio stations, but here radio stations are fearful of even putting out any 'Christian' type comments for fear of losing their license. We need to be influencers of the culture we live in, rather than the other way around- Linda's picture of a harp for us as a Church- highly visible worship here in Brynmawr. Are you progressing forwards in worship? Are you vocal about your love of your saviour? Are you extravagant in your expression of thanks to Him?
- *I have a dream of a community hungry for intimacy with God, expressing their love for Him in open, expressive, creative, lavish, sacrificial ways. I dream of a community where worship is expressed by the sacrifice of lives laid down and a lifestyle of worship rather than an attitude of 'a few songs on a Sunday'. I dream of a people accustomed to bringing contributions of worship when they gather and used to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as they share their love for the Lord. I dream of seeing new songs being written and new forms of expression, through the arts, of our love to God. I dream of people experiencing God's presence as we worship, and getting healed, delivered and set free.*

Summary

- We looked at what our vision should be in the light of Jesus Great Commission, given in each of the Gospels, and the promise of power for us to get the job done.
- We looked at Acts 13 & 14 about how the early Church fulfilled the Great Commission by preaching the gospel in the power of the Spirit, but also sought to establish strong, healthy churches in each locality, and how Antioch was a model of a Church that was outward looking and apostolic.
- We looked at what sort of a Church should we seek to establish?- We looked at Acts 2:40-47, looking at 8 particular purposes of the Church, and the dream of how this can become a reality for us in our situation here in Brynmawr if we remain focussed and obedient to God's call in our lives.
- Our key values- Discipleship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Prayer, Presence, Ministry, Mercy and Worship.

Song: *Jesus Love the Church. Days of Heaven*