

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 think, 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-apart 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 tenets 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*