

Vision II  
Week Three  
April 15<sup>th</sup> 2018

We are in the third week of our series on Vision part 2.

We began on Easter Sunday. saying that Jesus' resurrection from the dead gave the first disciples a brand new vision for their lives.

Vision is sight, it basically helps us see, its clarity and direction allowing us to move, grow and get to know the world around us.

Vision emerges from exploration and discovery and at it most insightful and inspiring it looks beyond what merely is to a view of what it could be, that whole world of possibilities that always stands before us.

Vision is a picture  
of what could be and should be,  
but does not **yet** exist.

It is a picture of a preferred future.

When we live with Vision,  
we live with optimism and hope  
that we **do not** have to accept  
things as they are  
that they can be different  
that they can be better,  
**that we** can actually leave the world  
better off than we found it.

Vision can also create a sense of energy  
and urgency to make it happen  
and the thing about Vision  
great Vision  
always brings blessing and adds value  
into the lives of others  
and that's what good leaders always have.

We believe that Jesus Christ was the greatest leader who ever lived because he had the greatest vision that ever was.

Jesus' resurrection helped his friends and followers to see this great vision and come to understand the impact this would have on them and for everyone in their community and in the world.

At the opening of our New Church I stated that our Vision here at Good Shepherd was that we wanted to be a Church  
*Who are growing disciples,  
Who are growing disciples*

That we will grow deeper in our relationship with Christ and help other's do the same.

And then as disciples

we will go wider,  
reaching new people  
with the life-changing message of the Gospel.

My friends this is the hope of the Diocese  
as we move into families of Parishes  
that each Family  
with help deliver this message

Why because this is the Vision/Mission  
of the Church  
This is the message  
of Our Holy Father Pope Francis  
He wants us each person  
to know the message  
and help change the world.

Our hope for this series is to  
...to [continue growing disciples  
who are growing disciples.](#)

This is the most important  
our new church

**is not about a building**  
but this building  
and our growth since we moved in  
is helping us achieve our vision  
and the mission of the Church.

You have seen the growth  
I know that you  
have shared about message series  
with others  
and that you have invited them to come  
to hear this message  
and then they bring it to others.

This is what our Parish Pastoral Council,  
Pastoral Team  
and other Group Leaders  
want to move ahead  
this is what our Holy Father wants...  
grow our ministries and outreach,  
growing in numbers  
this is Evangelization,  
spreading the Gospel

...beyond this building  
...building disciples  
...who build disciples.

Last week, Deacon Rick focused on the Acts of the Apostles and that early Church came to understand that as healthy disciples they shared everything in common

We are told,

*"...no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common."*

Acts 4: 32

In other words they were willing to invest their time talent and treasure to advance God's kingdom.

Today, we are going to look at our vision of going wider.

Once again we are going to look at a passage from Acts of the Apostles. we are looking at Acts 3.

The specific verses we'll be reviewing are from a message Peter gave to the people of Jerusalem.

A little background ...

One day, Peter and the apostle John were going to the Temple to pray.

On their way into the Temple, a crippled beggar asks them for some money. Peter turns and looks at him and tells him that he doesn't have any money, but then he says,

*<sup>6</sup>... but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk."*

Acts 3: 6

He then grabs the man

by the hand and commands him to get up and walk.

Immediately, the guy gets up and walks into the Temple with them. All the people knew this man was lame, they had seen him many times begging for money, so when they see him walking around, they are astounded.

A crowd gathers all around Peter and the man who had been lame. So Peter takes this opportunity to preach a spontaneous message. He says,

*<sup>12</sup> ... "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"*

Acts 3: 12

Peter tells the crowd that this miracle did not happen because of their power or their holiness

or their goodness.

He says, “I didn’t do this.”

The power came from somewhere else.

So where did the power come from  
to heal this man?

Peter goes on,

*<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him.*

Acts 3: 13

Peter tells the crowd  
that the power to heal the cripple  
came from God’s servant Jesus Christ.

In our culture the word servant  
usually carries a negative connotation,  
but throughout the Scriptures  
this is considered a high honor  
– to be a servant of God.

Peter then goes back to what then would have been very recent history – only a few months.

He says you remember Jesus, who you denied before Pontius Pilate and as a result was crucified.

Let me tell you about him.

Peter continues,

*<sup>15</sup> and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.*

Acts 3: 15-16

Jesus **CHRIST** is the author of life. Through him all life comes. All life. Through him all things were made. And through him comes God's life and a life that is worth living.

Jesus is the author of life.

Peter tells the people  
that because they participated  
in the death of Jesus, he is risen.

Even death could not hold him down.  
Peter says he is a witness of this.

He saw Jesus resurrected.

**Ultimately, Christianity  
is not based on a set of beliefs.  
It is based on an event on a person.**

The apostles and first disciples  
sacrificed their whole lives  
because they saw and experienced  
Jesus risen from the dead.

And because of what they saw  
and experienced they gave their lives  
to share it with others  
so that 2,000 years later  
we are listening to Peter's words.

Going back to the lame man  
and what healed him, Peter tells the crowd  
it is on the basis of faith in the name of Jesus,  
faith in his power  
that this man can now walk.

Faith in the name of Jesus  
makes all the difference.

There is power in the name of Jesus.  
There is power in the name of Jesus  
to cleanse our sins  
and wipe away all our regret.

There is power in the name of Jesus  
to set our hearts free from fear and worry.

There is power in the name of Jesus  
to heal our wounds and broken hearts.

There is power in the name of Jesus  
to change and transform us  
into the men and women we want to be.

Peter tells the crowd  
that it is faith and belief  
in the name of Jesus  
that healed the lame man.

There is power in the name of Jesus,  
but we access that power by faith.  
when we trust God with all our lives.

When we trust him with all our heart  
and acknowledge him in our ways,  
there is this great exchange.

We give him our lives.  
We give him our work life,  
our financial life,  
our relational life,  
our recreational life  
and in exchange he gives us his power,  
his healing, his grace, his mercy.

Peter wants the crowd to know

that the same power that healed the lame man is available to them.

Jesus isn't distant or far away.

He is accessible. So he concludes,

*<sup>17</sup> "And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup> In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, <sup>20</sup> so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus,*

Acts 3: 17-20

Peter says you didn't know what you were doing when you had Jesus put to death, but God did.

God knew he would send his Son to suffer to fulfill his promises. God isn't mad at you.

He doesn't count your **failings** against you.  
He can wipe away all your **failings**,  
give you a fresh start  
and shower his blessings upon you.

Your job is simply  
to turn back to God  
and believe that the same power  
is available to you.

So what happens after  
this impassioned speech?

How did it go?

Well, we will pick up the story next week.

Here's what you need to know this week.  
Peter paints a new vision for people's lives.  
He awakens them  
to the power of Jesus Christ  
that comes through faith and trust in him.

Like the people in Jerusalem,  
many people in our community  
live in ignorance of what faith

in Jesus Christ can accomplish in their lives.

They believe in God,  
but they think when it comes  
to making life work,  
they are pretty much on their own.

Because they are pretty much  
on their own,  
they have no vision  
beyond looking good,  
feeling good and having the goods.

Many settle for a life of survival  
or even worldly success,  
when we have been made for so much more.

They have been made for significance.  
God has created us for a purpose  
that no one else can fulfill.

Without a relationship with God  
people will chase everything

and anything to fill the whole in our hearts  
that only God can fill.

They look for the power  
to run their lives,  
only God can supply.

Scripture tells us,

*"Where there is no vision the people perish."*

When people do not grab hold  
of God's vision for their lives.

Marriages and relationships fall apart.  
Parents and children are estranged.  
People turn to alcohol  
and meds to numb their pain.

Where God's vision is missing  
from people's lives  
they will turn to everything and anything

Where there is no vision people perish.  
But where there is vision, people thrive.

As a church, we are hungry people  
telling other hungry people  
where to find some food.

We are people who are being healed  
telling others where to find  
the divine physician.

We are sharing the Good News with people.  
If you found the cure to cancer,  
you would share it with people.  
It would be wrong not to.  
We have found the cure  
for what ails us most:  
our personal [failings](#)  
and regrets and sense of meaninglessness  
apart from God.

We share a message that God  
isn't too far away.

He hasn't created the world  
and then left it to its own devices.  
He **hasn't** created us and left us all alone.  
We share **the** message  
that God is accessible  
through a relationship with Jesus Christ.  
And this is a message we must share.

The Church is the only organization  
that exists for its non-members.  
The Church doesn't exist for the Church.  
The Church exists to share its faith  
in Christ with the world.  
Our "**Vision**" campaign  
is not about the building.  
It is about the people  
out in our community  
who are far from God  
and are drowning because  
they are expecting the next trip  
or the next party  
or the next toy  
to fill their lives with meaning and purpose.

We do this to make an eternal difference  
for people in our community.

You see, I know...

You don't have to do this.

We get to do this.

You don't have to contribute.

You get to contribute.

You don't have to be a part of it.

You get to be a part of it.