

Unfolding the Vision Bible study: Part 1 – Seeing Clearly

Opening

Leader: Open in prayer.

Getting to know one another

- Tell the person next to you one thing you think they don't know about you.
- When you go to bed, do you a) just let your clothes fall on the floor b) hang them over a chair or the end of the bed c) put everything away neatly in the wardrobe?
- Tell about a time when you were inspired by the words or actions of someone, which opened up possibilities that were new to you. (IT could be a sporting achievement, a political speech, an act of bravery, or an inspiring book that opened you up to a different way of seeing the world).
- Tell the group about a moment when you saw something more clearly and in a different way than you had seen it before. What led to this new viewpoint? What changed afterwards?

Wrestling with God's Word: Vision

What is 'vision'?

How would you define the word?

Where have you heard it used?

In the biblical sense, 'a vision' is usually a *mental image or picture which gives insight into what God is doing*. It can sometimes (as in the case of a prophetic vision, such as described in the Book of Daniel or the Revelation) be a much larger thing, a cosmic unfolding picture.

'Vision' is a glimpse of God's preferred future for a community or for the world. It is a 'red pill' time when 'things as they appear to be' are peeled back and we get a glimpse of 'things as they really are/could be.'

Read **Acts 9:1-17**.

How did Ananias's vision potentially change the course of the history of the church?

What would have been different if God had not given him this vision?

How did Ananias ‘see things differently’ before and after his vision? What about Paul?

What did Ananias see of God’s preferable future? How did that motivate him to action that he would not have taken before?

What do you think God would have done if Ananias had refused to go to Paul in answer to this vision?

Read **Joel 2:28**.

Now read **Acts 2:14-24**.

On the day of Pentecost, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Peter quotes the passage from the prophet Joel, speaking about what God would do in the last days. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit means that people have more opportunity to ‘glimpse what God is doing’ – especially through his servant Jesus – and to be invited by the Spirit to be a part of what God is doing.

From your reading of these two passages, what part does God play in granting people ‘visions’ – glimpses of his preferred future? How does God do that?

What part do people play in responding to these visions?

How does the resurrection of Jesus make a difference to the world and the way we see it, according to Peter in this passage from Acts?

Wrestling with the World: Visioning for our Community

Vision For our community

If LSF = Love one another, Serve the World, Follow Jesus.

Share with the group your story of a life-giving or faith-building experience you have had of the LSF community doing one of these three things (Loving one another, serving the world, following Jesus.) Look for common threads that run through different people’s stories.

Imagine...

Imagine a community of disciples of Jesus which is so generous that it gives more than 20% of its offerings to mission outside its own walls.

Imagine a place and time where tertiary students from around the world come to faith in Jesus, and people who’ve never heard the gospel before are hearing it clearly.

Imagine a community which sends its members out beyond their comfort zones to learn and grow in partnership with people from very different cultures.

Imagine a congregation of God’s people which is growing so that between a third and a half of the worshipping members are new – within the last twelve months.

Imagine a community which serves University students at the very heart of their culture, a community which is invited by student leaders to be present with students – even though they know we are Christians.

Imagine a group of people who care for one another, who give space to ask the tough questions about life and faith without shutting down conversation, people who are there in the tough times. Imagine a group of people committed to following Jesus right where they are, and so making an eternal impact on the people around them.

Imagine a worshipping community with vibrant music and a group of talented musicians that many small congregations would just about kill to have even a quarter of. Imagine a community that is serving other congregations through sharing that very same musical talent with them.

Imagine a group of tertiary students who give up weeks of their lives and holidays to serve high-school age people and help them grow in faith.

Imagine a worshipping community where everyone is being intentionally cared for by others in the community.

Imagine a ‘hub’ of faith building for people across Melbourne and further afield.

Imagine a community where everyone is actively encouraged in their faith and discipleship, in reading God’s Word, in nourishing one another, in praying for one another.

Imagine a group of people who are intentionally working to multiply the seed of God’s word on university campuses around Victoria and elsewhere.

Imagine a congregation that is helping people grow in faith in Christ and becoming a ‘net exporter of disciples.

- Which of Pastor Nathan’s ‘Imagine’ phrases in the sermon most fired your imagination? Why?
- Spend a couple of minutes in silence thinking about this. Write it down before each person shares with the group if they are comfortable. *If you could add another ‘imagine’ phrase for this community, what would it be?*

How does your new ‘imagine’ phrase or the one from Pastor Nathan reflect Jesus’ call to ‘Follow me,’ ‘Love one another,’ Or ‘Serve the world’?

How might doing those three things change ourselves, our community, and the world around us? How does this unfold and uncover God’s vision for this community? Together as a group, try and draw a picture (with words or pictures) of what has emerged from this Bible Study – a glimpse of God’s vision.

What excites you about this vision? How do you think you might be a part of ‘unfolding the vision’?

Spend some time in prayer for one another, asking the Holy Spirit to help you become people who Love one another, Serve the World, and Follow Jesus.