

God's Vision For Us: Part One: Hope *"God's vision of hope"*

1. Isaiah 46:9-10 *"Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please."*
 - a. God knows the end before the beginning, which means He has a plan.
 - i. God has a vision, a plan for mankind, our world and for your life.
 - ii. There are no accidents in the eyes of God. Nothing catches Him by surprise.
 - iii. God has no beginning and no end. He is outside of time and sees the past, present and future all at once. He has established His plan and His purpose will be accomplished!
 - iv. It is a source of hope to know God is in control, and that we can TRUST His love to do what is best.
 - b. **So what was God's purpose in creating the universe?**
 - i. **Creation was created to host mankind.** I have heard astrophysicists say that because of the way elements are distributed across the universe, it is possible that the billion trillion galaxies were necessary to create one habitable solar system with one habitable planet for humanity to exist upon. Doesn't that awe you? It does me.
 - ii. **You were created to be the object of God's love.**
 1. That goes for every man, woman and child that has ever existed or ever will exist. It is the purpose for which man was made...to be the object of God's love!
 2. Over and over the bible says "God loves you."
 - a. *"God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
 - b. You are no accident, and you are more important to God than you can ever fathom. We just celebrated the Lord's Supper which is a perpetual memorial (remembrance) of the greatest act of love humanity has ever witnessed.
 3. The bible says that *"God is love."* (1 John 4:8)
 - a. It doesn't say "God has love" or that "God feels love."
 - b. It says God IS love. It is His nature and character.
 - iii. God has a purpose in this tumultuous world. God even knew we would sin and tear apart His creation and our relationship with Him. But that didn't deter his purpose!
 - iv. He planned for you to one day have a relationship with Him.
 1. He created you with a free will...so that you are the only one who can stand in the way of His plan for you.
 2. You can reject His love but He will keep on pursuing you to the depths of your own ruin if necessary!
2. You know that sin entered the world and has been disrupting lives since Adam and Eve.
 - a. Yet, **God's vision was for His Son to enter this sin torn world and set up His Kingdom upon earth so that you and I could be the objects of God's love.**
 - i. God's vision is to draw us back into a relationship with Himself so we can experience His love!
 - ii. And so God enters our world to bring us into a relationship with the Father, but He does it in what appears to be a contradictory manner.
 1. Why not blaze in from the skies, set up a kingdom and compel the earthly leaders and their subjects to submit?
 2. Why does God enter our world as an infant? Not only an infant but into a poor family at that!
 3. Did you ever think it was to reveal something about who He is, and about His love?

- iii. We'll hear more about this in the coming weeks. **But this week is about vision. God's vision.**
 - b. When we talk about vision, we are talking about SEEING something that exists.
 - i. Visionaries see things that don't yet exist, yet they see them as if they do.
 - ii. They compel their followers to pursue that dream until it comes into existence.
 - iii. God has vision, but His vision sees what will be! He tells us what it is and urges us to pursue it until it comes to pass! We often call that faith. And faith finds its birthplace in vision.
- 3. Did you ever think that perhaps God might have a vision for our church? God's vision for a person or a church is often revealed in its name. "Here's Hope." That is a strange name. We get phone calls from salespeople who ask our church's name and then get mail addressed to "heres soap baptist church" (powerpoint)
 - a. What does that name tell us about God's vision for our church.
 - i. It is no accident that this name was chosen by those who led this church.
 - ii. It is no coincidence that this church saw "safety" in hope and understood our proximity to the lake as an image of a "safe harbor."
 - iii. It is not an accident that during our time of fasting and prayer that there were many words about being a place of transformation and love for people in distress.
 - iv. It is not by chance that we heard God tell us that we need to be agents of change in our world by His supernatural power.
 - v. It wasn't even by my "choice" that I preached for 14 weeks on the Supernatural Life coincident with our church's study of "Experiencing God." These were all answers to prayer.
 - vi. So when we amended our church's Vision statement and approved it last month, it wasn't because some great wordsmith wrote something that sounded good, but rather, it was the reflection of what God has shown us about HIS vision for our church.
- 4. **"We exist to be a safe harbor of God's love where people are transformed into devoted followers of Christ who change their world with the power, love and grace of God."**
- 5. Vision Statement for HHBC explained Scripturally. I am only going to cover the concept of a biblically safe harbor today.
 - a. **God has made Here's Hope to be a safe harbor for you and others.**
 - i. Not just a safe place, where we won't embarrass you – which was the way I had always interpreted it. We are talking about a safe place of hope for people whose lives are in a storm!
 - ii. Psalm 107:23-32 *"Some went off in ships, plying the trade routes of the world. They, too, observed the LORD's power in action, his impressive works on the deepest seas. He spoke, and the winds rose, stirring up the waves. Their ships were tossed to the heavens and sank again to the depths; the sailors cringed in terror. They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits' end. "LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. What a blessing was that stillness as he brought them safely into harbor! Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for all his wonderful deeds to them. Let them exalt him publicly before the congregation and before the leaders of the nation."*
 - 1. Some "people went off in ships"...they were working at their jobs, providing for their families, just as people do today. Yet, a crisis arose, things beyond their control, and their lives felt like they were slipping away. Waves as high as the heaven and valleys so low.
 - a. For some it is a recession, a job loss, a bill they cannot pay.
 - b. For others it is fear, or the loss of a loved one.

- c. For you, it may be a family crisis...and it feels like you are going to perish!
 - 2. It says that these folks were at their wits' end! So they cried out to God! And God calmed their storm and brought them into a safe place, a safe harbor.
 - 3. Do you also see the praise and testimony that those who were delivered from the storm gave before their congregation? (just like us!)
 - iii. I want you to see the parallels between this passage and the passage where Jesus was asleep in the boat with His disciples – it is not a coincidence that Jesus calmed the waves. It was to fulfill the word in Ps 107 that He did so:
 - 1. *Matthew 8:23-27 Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. Suddenly, a terrible storm came up, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went to him and woke him up, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" And Jesus answered, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he stood up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly all was calm. The disciples just sat there in awe. "Who is this?" they asked themselves. "Even the wind and waves obey him!"*
6. People are coming to our church who are being buffeted by the storms of life. They are terrified by their circumstances and they cannot see that God wants to be in their situation with them and to calm the waves and wind with a supernatural word.
- a. You and I have been called to be His instruments to bring peace and comfort to those in need.
 - b. God has a plan for us, each of us, to be used by Him to bring a bit of hope to people who are in crisis.
 - i. Who feel as if their world is coming apart at the seams, or like they are about to drown in their troubles.
 - ii. God has called us to bring His hope to their lives, and to show them who He is.
 - c. We don't meet people's needs, God does! (Amen?).
 - d. We are called to meet people – in their homes, in their need and then God brings hope to their lives! That is our calling. To restore hope to the hopeless, to give hope and confidence that someone cares and that God exists and cares about them!
7. Is your life rocked by difficulty? Is there something that is too great for you to deal with? Do you feel like you are going to sink? Won't you come for prayer? God has an answer for your crisis.