

Talk It Over

20/20 Vision Clarity (Week 1)

SMALL TALK

1. Without glasses, how is your vision? If you wear glasses, do you like wearing them?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ 1 John 4:19;** and **Romans 5:8.** How does God's love bring 20 / 20 Vision clarity to a person's life?
3. **READ Ezekiel 36:24-27;** and **Ephesians 4:17-24.** What did God promise to give? What did God promise to take away? How did God do this?

GETTING PERSONAL

4. Can you relate to the pinhole camera kind of clarity, narrowing the field of focus to see more clearly?
5. Are you focusing into distracting places? Is this causing difficulty in your clarity of focus right now? If so, what kind of distractions cause you to lose focus?
6. What do you think of the ONE word for the year "filter" concept to bring focus and clarity? Do you want to spend some time praying and asking God for which one word focus might help you this year?
7. How can we challenge each other to live lives that are filled with love to the point of overflowing?

MAKING PROGRESS

8. One of our core statements is: "Love God Wholeheartedly." Would you say this describes your life with God, or has it been more duty based, or possibly merit based religion thinking rather than relationship thinking? What one thing could help you experience more of God's love this year? This week? Today?

January 26, 2020

20/20 Vision Clarity

I thought I was so clever with this title. Then everyone else had the same idea. Not so clever, not so original. So, then I thought what a perfect time to give a CLEAR state the church address and where we are headed as an organization. There was just one problem. I didn't have 2020 Clarity on important details...

So, after 3 major drafts, I bring you what is CLEAR.

We are still a church that is all about helping each of us *take steps from wherever we are to where God wants us to be.*

Today is going to be a more personal message about personal clarity!

A little over a decade ago I had to go to glasses for clarity. Some of you knew this to be true before I knew it. You had already noticed that I was holding my preaching bible further and further away to see the words clearly. I was unfamiliar with what was happening, but a number of you had already gone through your 40s and 50s with the same phenomenon. What was the phenomenon? Your arms were shrinking and you couldn't hold it far enough away anymore to read!

No, actually your eyes were going through some of the typical changes that age can bring.

Then a few more years after wearing glasses, and by the way, when you have good vision all your life, wearing glasses is just not enjoyable. Now, if you can't see without them, glasses are such a relief. But that was not my problem. I could see great...until you held it too close.

I was with some friends one time and discovered a little trick from one of my friends. He did something strange that evening. I didn't know what he was doing. He was holding his hands up to one eyeball like this, with his 2 forefingers and 2 thumbs pinched together forming a little viewport and he was looking through this tiny viewport. When I asked what he was doing, he explained that he forgot his reading glasses. He explained that when you force your focus through a tiny hole it brings clarity. NO WAY, REALLY?

Yes, he said. Try it. I did. It works! But it works. Now I do this when I forget my glasses. Looks strange, but it works.

Narrowing your attention fixes your focus.

VIDEO ABOUT ONE WORD FOR THE YEAR

FOR used to be just a preposition with little meaning until November last year in the series **FOR the Verde Valley**.

I've added the Power of a ONE word focus to my life, I will share it with you later today.

Today I want to share with you what is clearly our focus as a Church. We used to have 8 CORE STATEMENTS, but we have added one, and now we have 5. It's not NEW math, it is an effort to be more focused and aligned.

The one we added is what we focus on today. We added it because this one unifies all of our core statements and makes them more powerful. And this unifying effect brings clarity of focus.

1. LOVE GOD WHOLEHEARTEDLY

This is not how you get into heaven. This is our response to what God did for us!

1 John 4:19 (NIV) We love because he first loved us.

Many people are still trying to earn God's love. We don't need to do this. WE need to simply receive it. If you are still stuck in duty, or merit based thinking, you won't think in terms of a personal loving relationship, but in terms of religion, and making sure you do enough. That isn't what God is after. He is after your heart.

But you can't give your heart until he gives you a new heart.

*Ezekiel 36:24-27 (NIV) “ ‘For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. {25} I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. {26} **I will give you a new heart** and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. {27} **And I will put my Spirit in you and move you** to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

Jesus came to make this possible. He changed everything from a duty based religion approach through priests and ceremonies, to a relationship approach through Jesus alone as our Savior and mediator/priest. Now we are moved by his Spirit and we are wholeheartedly grateful for what he has done, he changes everything from the inside out.

How does this work? God takes the SELF-CENTERED human heart where SELF is on the throne, ruling, and reigning, and trying to control life, and make life ordered and happy, and he brings us to a waking up to the reality that we are doing a poor job of it. Things are not in focus. Things are not clear, our life is not well-ordered, things are a mess.

God makes us his home and totally rearranges the furniture inside of us! Everything shifts.

It is like we see ourselves clearly for the first time. I am a sinner. I need a savior. You (God) are holy and I am not. I was self-centered, self-gratifying, self-absorbed. I didn't know what I was doing. And I didn't even know that I didn't know.

Jesus gave us a new way of seeing everything. It is through the pinhole which brings focus to everything. It causes all that is unimportant to drop away from focus in a background blur as we look through the lens of JESUS.

What is this one tiny pinhole that gives CLARITY to everything else?

GOD LOVES ME!

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV2011) {37} Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ {38} This is the first and greatest commandment. {39} And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ {40} All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

What does this look like? **GOD GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME!**

I love him. What does this look like? It looks like a rearrangement of all the furniture inside of you. Let me show you. Before the rearrangement it looks like this: we are on the throne. With religion we add God to bless our lives and kingdom. With A personal wholehearted love relationship with Jesus, everything changes. He is not an add on. He is the center. He sits on the throne of your heart. And where are we? Here, at his feet in worship, praise, and adoration. He bring the chaos back into order.

He brings clarity, wisdom, and revelation. Praise is the highway to the throne of God.

2. **Do FIRST Things FIRST**
3. **Don't Do LIFE ALONE**
4. **SAVED People SERVE People**
5. **FOLLOWERS Say, "FOLLOW Me."**

My word for 2020 is MENTOR. I want to be a MENTOR and have a MENTOR. I want to model the way, Have a mentor and be a mentor. Wouldn't it be great if we took seriously Jesus' final command to us?

Matthew 28:18 (NIV) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

He gives us HIS authority and Power

Ephesians 1:19-20 (NIV) and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength {20} he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Ephesians 2:6 (NIV) And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

He us on HIS THRONE to reign with him.

Matthew 28:19-20 {19} Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What if Everyone had a mentor and was a mentor to someone else? This is how the Jesus movement exploded into growth. God never intended that we “BUILD the church”. Jesus said, “I will build the church”. It’s not our job to build the church, its our job to make disciples. Let’s grow and look to a mentor and let’s mentor people. Then let’s watch Jesus do a work in us and build His church!