



ENTER God's presence

One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

-Psalm 27:4

Heavenly Father, you have generously given us yourself in your word and in Jesus Christ, the word made flesh. Your vision for us is to live lives which are full of your presence. So, we thank you that as we gather as your people, you are with us. As we gather around your word, may we be conformed ever more closely to the vision that you have for each of us. Amen.



SHARE life together

- 1. Share your highs and lows with each other?**
- 2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
- 3. What does the word 'vision' mean to you?**
- 4. What is the point of having a 'vision'? How does a vision influence your daily routine and choices?**

A vision so compelling that it captures the heart, ignites the imagination, inspires the community, motivates behaviour, spans the generations, shapes the culture and creates a ongoing legacy that is breathtaking to behold. That's the God-sized vision that David shared, passed on, invested in personally, and invited others to participate in. For David knew that all that matters is that people have access to the presence of God and receive the life-transforming grace that alone can give, sustain and bring fullness of life now and for eternity. Anything less than this vision is an imitation of the life God has in store for you. So let's unpack and explore how God can reset your vision and increase your wonder that together we may see tomorrow more enthusiastically, embrace change more confidently, and take bold steps more consistently. It's a gift that will bless the world.

Week beginning:
Sunday 31st January 2021

Worship series:

RESET



VERSE for the week

Lord, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.

1 Chronicles 29:18



REMEMBER this week

Everything that matters, still matters and will always matter, that is, the presence of God in our lives.
A life that is given over to and directed by the Gospel, a life that responds to the generosity of the Gospel and prioritises the message of the Gospel, is a life that will experience and witness the glory of God in the most incredible ways and lead to overflowing praise of God.



LISTEN attentively

Read 1 Chronicles 28:1-7, 20-21 and 29:10-20

- 5. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
- 6. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
- 7. How does David's vision of a temple or house for God, pass on to the next generation?**

'Vision' is an interesting English word, it gets used in many different ways. It can refer to what you physically see in front of you, that is, what is currently in your 'field of vision'. You can have a 'vision', a picture or ideal of something you would like to see happen in the future, and then there is the more prophetic kind of understanding of the term when you might enter a trance like state and see a vision of some kind of alternate or future reality. However, what all of these types of vision have in common is that they require focus. If you can't focus your eyes on the things physically in front of you, then your vision will be poor, that can be dangerous. If you have a powerful dream or vision for your future, but lack the focus and drive to actively pursue that vision and make it a reality, then the vision is meaningless. Prophetic dreams and visions are similar, there are numerous times in the Old Testament and some in the New, where God gave people dreams and visions to communicate an important truth or reality but they needed someone to explain them and interpret them, to bring focus and clarity. It is only when the vision is clear and the focus and commitment to it are present that vision brings change. David had a vision for the temple of God in Jerusalem and he told his plan to Nathan the prophet (2 Sam 7:1-17). Nathan was given the unenviable task of telling King David that he would not build this house for God but that his offspring would complete the task. For many people, this would have killed their passion for the task, but David remained committed to the vision, even though he knew he would not see it completed. He saved and collected and personally contributed much of the wealth needed for the temple, he continued to listen to the Lord and to draw up plans, make preparations and put things in place so that his son Solomon, whom God had chosen to be the next king, could see the vision through. Often when we have mission and vision planning days or workshops, either for our churches or in our workplaces we look at what we want to do and what we want to achieve. King David wanted to build God a house. God said no. Not no to the house, just no to David. David's vision was not wrong, it just needed adjusting. Because he was focussed on listening to the Lord, the adjustments were made easily.

- 8. Have you ever had a vision or a plan that needed adjusting? How did you become aware of the need for the adjustments?**
- 9. Sometimes our field of vision can get very narrow when we are focussed on a specific task or plan. How do you make sure that the vision or the plan, does not supercede God's vision or plan?**

As we have already discussed, David's vision for the temple was not something that he got to see completed; it was carried out and finished by the next generation of leadership, his son Solomon. Yet this did not stop David from doing all he could to support and contribute to this vision. David's own personal commitment and generous investment to this vision is a large contributing factor to the way the rest of the community got involved. Each element of the Israelite community had a way to contribute to the building project. Some contributed wealth, others contributed their talents and craftsmanship, others contributed time and labour. David's vision was to build a temple, a house for the Lord. God's vision was to build a nation, to establish them as his people, in the land that he had given to them. God's vision was achieved to a large extent through the vision of the temple that he had given to David. The people came together for this epic building project, each part of the nation, people from every tribe, every level of leadership, every status group, contributed to building the temple which was a sign of God's presence with them. This is what defined them as a people. This was always and still is God's vision for us, that we would be a people marked by his presence with us, and that through us he might bring blessing to all nations (Gen 12:1-3).

- 10. Have you ever been involved in a group project that had clear vision and direction? What is it like to work with others who are all committed to moving together towards the same goal or to achieve the same vision?**
- 11. Although King David was committed to this vision for the temple, he was still more committed to following God's lead. Can you recall a time when your own vision may have been in conflict with God's vision for you and your life?**



GROW deeper

One of the significant purposes of the temple in Jerusalem was to have a visible reminder of the presence of God with his people. The temple which David visioned and Solomon built was destroyed when the Israelites were carried off into Babylonian captivity. Temple rebuilding efforts provided a focus for the returning Israelites to re-establish their identity as God's people. Today, we acknowledge, that since God physically came to the earth in the person of Jesus Christ, and by his death and resurrection, restored our relationship with God, that God now dwells, by the gift of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his people. As a child of God, you are now a place where people should be able to come and encounter the love and presence of God. That is God's vision for you. Yet we all know how badly we do at this some times. Like the people of Israel coming together to build and rebuild the temple, we need each other to build each other up, to support and encourage each other to be a part of God's vision for his church and for his world. This is often a costly exercise, it does require investment, commitment and focus. The investment might be financial, or an investment of time, or talents and skill, or of all three. The commitment is usually to others or for the sake of others, not for yourself. The focus will almost certainly be on things which the world doesn't value, but when the focus is right, when it is on the vision and mission of God, you can be confident of a positive outcome.

12. How much time do you spend focussed on or investing in God and his vision for you, your family and your community?

13. Twice in 1 Chronicles 28, David exhorts Solomon to be strong and do the work. What does 'the work' look like today? What 'work' might God be asking you to contribute to his vision?



LIVE purposefully

Right from God's first choosing Abraham to be the forefather of the nation of Israel, part of God's vision was that all the earth would be blessed through Abraham's descendants. We also hear Jesus refer to the temple in Jerusalem as being a house of prayer for all the nations. All of these human endeavours, Abraham packing up his family and moving to an unknown land, massive and expensive temple building projects, the crucifixion method of execution applied by humans to God himself, all served God's vision of restoring us to relationship with him. Any plans or visions we make ought to have God's vision as part of their consideration.

14. How do your dreams and visions for your future provide opportunity for you to contribute to the vision and mission of God?

15. What ways has God used your life already to contribute to his ongoing vision and mission of restoring humanity's relationship with himself?

16. How might you be more intentional about your contribution to God's vision and incorporating it into your own vision?



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for the generosity of his presence with us.
- Thank Jesus for his faithfulness to the Father's mission and vision.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you generously live out the vision of God in your life.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], the Lord will not fail you or forsake you. Amen.