

World Vision For Christ

Lesson Text: Matthew 28:19-20 & Proverbs 29:18

INTRODUCTION:

A. **Illustration:** A Vision in Your Soul.

1. The story is told of a wise Indian father who wished to give his property and his possessions to that one of his three sons who showed the most prowess and promises.
2. As a test, he pointed to a mountain bold against the sky, and sent his sons toward it, asking each to bring back a token to show how far up the mountain he had climbed.
3. The first one returned with a white wild flower in his hand. The father knew that it grew above the timberline.
4. The second one returned with a red flint stone which revealed to the father that he had made it almost to the top.
5. The third son was gone for a long time, and returned empty-handed.
 - a. "Father, where I went," he explained, "there was nothing to bring back, but I stood at the summit and looked out upon a valley where two great rivers join the ocean."
 - b. The proud father said to him: "It has been the ambition of my life that one of my sons should see what you have seen. You have nothing in your hands, but you have a greater thing — a vision in your soul. This is the greatest of all!"

B. In my years of service for our Master, it has been my good fortune to:

1. Have been on four continents a number of times.
2. Have been in a least fourteen to fifteen countries of the world
3. Have crossed the Atlantic Ocean between twenty and thirty times.

C. Now I stand before you, as it were, empty-handed.

1. Where I have gone, figuratively speaking, there was nothing to bring back.
2. But I have stood at the summit and looked out upon a valley where the great rivers of human need and soul starvation join the ocean of life.
3. I have nothing in my hand to show for these travels, but I have something better — a vision in my soul. This is the greatest of all!

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS VISION

A. **Proverbs 29:18** - "Where there is no vision, the people perish . . ."

1. The word "vision" has many meanings.
 - a "The faculty of sight."

- b. "Something that is or has been seen."
 - c. "A revelation."
 - d. "Intelligent foresight."
 - e. "The way in which one sees or conceives of something."
 - f. "A mental created by the imagination."
 - g. The mystical experience of seeing as if with the eyes of the supernatural.
2. Proverbs 29:18 uses the word in the sense of a "revelation."
 3. This lesson will use "vision" in the sense of "**the way in which one sees or conceives of something**."
 4. If there is no vision in the church, we can expect no salvation in the world.
 5. Six vital questions::
 - a. What is vision?
 - b. How do we get it?
 - c. What kind are we to have?
 - d. What are we to do with it?
 - e. Do we have vision?
 - f. Could we get along all right without it?
- B. Vision deals with "an appearance; that which comes into view; a spectacular sight."
- a. He will see a lost world.
 - b. He will see a saving gospel.
 - c. He will see that the world is lost without the gospel.
 - d. He will see that he will be lost unless he has a part in taking the gospel to the world.

EXAMPLES OF THIS VISION

- A. In the Bible we have several examples of vision.
1. Paul
 - a. In **Acts 16:9-10**, Paul had a vision in which he saw a man from Macedonia crying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."
 - b. Paul was not indifferent to that vision.
 - c. Paul had been called to become a chosen vessel of the Lord.
 - d. He became a man of great vision.
 1. The vision of believing in Christ.
 2. The vision of obeying Christ.
 3. The vision of belonging to Christ.
 4. The vision of behaving like Christ.
 5. The vision of bringing others into Christ.
 - e. Paul's world vision for Christ enabled him to:
 1. See things.

2. Believe things.
3. Do things for Christ.

- f. In **Acts 26:17-19** Paul is recounting the Lord's appearance to him on the road to Damascus as he converses with King Agrippa. "I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

1. Jesus instilled a vision in Paul.
2. The Bible should instill a vision within each of us.
3. Had Paul not been obedient to that vision, thousands would have been deprived of the gospel, and he himself would not have been saved.

2. Peter had a vision in Acts 10:17-19.
 - a. Other nations were involved in that vision.
 - b. In fact, our salvation was at stake in that vision, for through it the gospel was brought to the Gentiles.
3. Ananias had a vision in Acts 9:10-12. It resulted in his baptizing Saul of Tarsus into Christ.

B. What about our vision?

1. It, too, is one of believing in Christ, belonging to Christ, behaving like Christ, and bringing others into Christ.
2. Through the gospel we are called and sent to a world that is lost.
3. There are battles to be fought for God and a world to be saved for Christ.
4. Our call to be Christians likewise involves a world vision for Christ.
5. We must see:
 - a. The lost around us at home.
 - b. The lost away from us around the world.

C. How could we be indifferent to that vision?

1. Will we be as obedient to our world vision as Peter, Paul, and Ananias were to theirs?
2. Will this vision cause us to see things, believe things, and do things for Christ.
3. If not, we will rob the world of much that could be given, and ourselves of much that could be gained.

THE SCOPE OF THIS VISION

- A. In Luke 15, Jesus so vividly shows the glory of seeing and saving the lost.
1. Therein we can observe:
 - a. There was a lost coin *at home*.
 - b. There was a lost sheep *away from home*.
 - c. There was a lost boy *away from home*.
 2. Two of the three things lost were away from home.
 3. In each case, a most eager search was made.
 - a. Not all who are lost will be sought.
 - b. Not all who are lost will be taught.
 - c. Not all who are lost will be saved.
 - d. Not all who leave will return.
- B. There are people who are lost at home; there are others who are lost away from home.
1. We must become interested in the lost wherever they are.
 2. We must begin by:
 - a. Lighting God's candle.
 - b. Sweeping the houses of our own communities, and searching diligently until we find the lost there.
 3. We must also:
 - a. Leave the ninety and nine here in the states.
 - b. Go into the wilderness abroad, and go after the lost until we find them.
 4. To have a world vision, we must have:
 - a. A world outlook.
 - b. A world understanding.
 - c. A world interest.
 - d. A world concern.
 5. How could we have a world vision, however, when we haven't caught a vision of what is around us yet?
 1. Some haven't even gotten a Myrtle Beach vision yet!
 2. Or a Tennessee vision yet!
 3. Or a Southeastern United States vision yet!
 4. Or a United States of America vision yet!
- C. This vision must start at home, but must not be parked there.
1. "The light that shines the farthest, shines the brightest at home."
 2. Mission work must begin at home, but cannot stop there.
 3. Our concern for others' salvation must begin where we are, but must not be limited to that one little segment of the world's population.
 4. Brethren:
 - a. We must come to think of the world through the mind of Christ.

- b. We must come to see the whole world through the eye of Christ.
 - c. We must become interested in the whole world through the heart of Christ.
 - d. We must rise to action for the salvation of the whole world through the teachings of Christ.
5. Let us not be so selfish as to withhold the gospel from any nation, and let us not be so prejudiced as to withhold the gospel from any race.
 6. Christ viewed the earth as one world, and not a world "great nations" and "small nations," of "superior races" and "inferior races," but:
 - a. A world lost in sin!
 - b. A world for which Christ died!
 - c. A world that needs the gospel.
 7. Let us have this worldwide outlook, and see all people—not as Americans, Orientals, Europeans, Asians—not as white, black, yellow, or red—but as human beings created in the image of God, who because of sin, stand in need of a Savior.
 8. Let us not withhold the gospel from those outside the United States on the flimsy pretext that "there are plenty of heathen at home."
 - a. Usually, those who say this do very little to reach the lost in their own communities.
 - b. Be not among such a number!
 9. This vision carries a tremendous responsibility.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THIS VISION

- A. **Ephesians 3:8-11** - "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,
- 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;
- 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,
- 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."
1. What a great responsibility the Lord's Church has!
 2. If we can't see the Lord's message to us, then we've become blinded to the vision God would have us see.
 3. If we can't see—that's what a vision is, seeing — that the salvation of the whole world lies on our shoulders, then we had better restudy the Bible, and get a better vision!
 4. Do you have a world vision for Christ?

B. Hear the words of our Lord:

1. Four important passages:

- a. **Luke 24:47** - "And that repentance and remission of sins **should** be preached in His name **to all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem."
- b. **Matthew 24:14** - "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached **in all the world . . .**"
- c. **Mark 16:15-16** - "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel **to every creature**.
He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."
- d. **Matthew 28:19-20** - "Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

- 2. In these passages, the Lord is was not merely giving His *permission*, but His *commission*!
- 3. This is not *one way* to do it, but the *only way* to do it.
- 4. These are the marching orders of the church.
- 5. They involve going.
- 6. You can't spell "gospel" without "go."
- 7. The Lord said:
 - a. **Acts 5:20** - (To Peter) "Go . . . speak." He meant just that
 - b. **Acts 8:26** - (To Philip) "Arise and go."
 - 1. Verse **27** says "He arose and went."
 - 2. Apparently, he saw more in the Lord's bidding than we see.
 - 3. The Lord showed him his *responsibility*; he in turn showed the Lord his *ability* to respond.
- 8. That's what responsibility is, simply the ability to respond.

C. There is not only a "going" but a "sending" as well.

- 1. A great evangelist once said, "Either go across in person, or come across in purse!"
- 2. **Romans 10:15** - "And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"
- 3. Some went; others sent!

D. At the Sea of Galilee, Jesus one time said to His disciples in **Mark 4:35** - "Let us go over to the other side of the sea."

- 1. He is now saying to us, "Let us go over unto the other side of the seas of the earth."
- 2. The disciples then took Jesus across that little sea; will the disciples now take Him across the big seas?

3. Perhaps, God is saying to us some of that which he said to Abraham in **Genesis 12:1** - "Get out of your country. . . from your father's house, to a land that I will show you."
4. There are other lands that God wants to show us.

THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS VISION

- A. "Where God guides, God provides."
 1. God has given some pretty big assignments, but never too big to be carried out.
 2. Ours is a worldwide one, but don't think for a moment that it is an impossible one. It can be done!
- B. One of Israel's kings said to his people in **1 Kings 22:3** - "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" (NKJV)
 1. (KJV) - "And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye not that Ramoth in Gilead is our, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?"
 2. We, too, could say, "The word is our for Christ, but we be still, and take it not out of the hands of Satan!"
 3. Let's not be still, but rise up and take it.
- C. May I suggest six things, each beginning with the letter "F." that either are, or can become ours.
 1. The **faith** can be ours; do we have it?
 2. The **feelings** of responsibility should be ours; do we share it?
 3. The **facilities** are ours; do we see them?
 4. The **finances** are ours; are we using them?
 5. The **finishing** must be ours; what will we do about it?
 6. We not only need initiative, but we need **finishitive** (If that isn't a word, let's coin it) as well.
- D. In rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and in constructing the city, Israel had a most difficult task, and yet not an impossible one.
 1. There was a vision that enabled them to see it through.
 2. It was said **Nehemiah 7:4** - "The city was large and great."
 3. It could also be said that the challenge and the cost were great.
 - a. The **city** was great.
 - b. The **challenge** was great.
 - c. The **cost** was great.
 4. But those three "C's" were offset by three other "C's."
 - a. Their **conscience** regarding it was just as great.
 - b. Their **conviction** about it was just as large as the challenge.

- c. Their **courage** was just as large as the cost.

OUR FAITH IN THIS VISION

- A. Why haven't we had more faith?
1. Have we not had a big enough vision?
 2. Have we lost sight of the fact that God is our Partner?
 3. God's Word will not return unto Him void. **Isaiah 55:11** - “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”
 4. **Ecclesiastes 11:1** - “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.”
 5. In **Luke 8:25** Jesus asked - “Where is your faith?”
- B. Where was the faith of the one-talent man?
1. The difference between him and the other two men was a matter of vision.
 2. One *criticized* while the other two men *visualized*.
 3. One chose a *microscope* (which deals with details), while the others chose a *telescope* (which deals with).
 4. Maybe, we, too, have the wrong “scope!” This will affect one's vision.
 5. To have the harvest we must sow the seed.
 6. We can't cast a stale crust of bread on the waters and get chocolate cake and ice cream in return.
 7. Ten cents worth of assistance is much more valuable than ten dollars worth of argument.
- C. One great mistake the church has made has been lack of faith in the sowing—
The harvest will come!
1. We are not told to baptize every creature, but to preach the gospel to every creature.
 2. If we don't reap (or baptize) right away, we begin to lose faith in the sowing.
 3. We must be content to let others reap the harvest for which we have sown.
 4. We must be willing to sow for the harvest we may never see, believing the seed will eventually grow, and the harvest yielded.
 5. Jesus said in **John 4:37** - “One sows and another reaps.”
- D. The faith of Joshua and Caleb is so greatly needed today.
1. The majority had lost faith, but these two men would not give up.
 2. They threw out a challenge to their faithless brethren by saying in **Numbers 13:30** - “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”
 - a. Oh, for a spirit like that today!
 - b. There was an urgency in that; there is an urgency today.
 - c. “At once,” or never!

- d. There is no time to lose.
 - 1. Souls are lost.
 - 2. Faith of others is being overthrown.
 - 3. False doctrines are making great inroads.
 - 4. Satan is going into all the world, why can't we?
- E. Like Joshua and Caleb, "we are well able to overcome" the world for Christ.
 - 1. We are well able **numerically**, we have the people.
 - 2. We are well able **physically**, we have the strength.
 - 3. We are well able **educationally**, we have the training.
 - 4. We are well able **doctrinally**, we have the truth.
 - 5. We are well able **financially**, we have the money.
 - 6. Are we well able **spiritually** and **enthusiastically**? This is the question

THE EXCITEMENT OF THIS VISION

- A. Brethren, what are we waiting for?
 - 1. Maybe we haven't seen the joy and excitement of taking a whole world for Christ!
 - 2. We think so little about souls being saved, because we think so little about souls being lost.
 - 3. As students of history have we not observed that as the population has continued to increase, how God has blessed us with new technologies to use in communicating His Word to the world.
 - a. The printing press.
 - b. Radio
 - c. Television.
 - d. Satellites to send signals around the world.
 - e. Computers, web sites, and the internet.
 - f. What will be next?
- B. In the Bible we are challenged by the little word "behold."
 - 1. It occurs frequently in the Scriptures.
 - a. 1,326 in the Bible.
 - b. 1,104 in the Old Testament.
 - c. 222 times in the New Testament.
 - 2. Don't overlook that word.
 - 3. You perhaps have read it a thousand time, without stopping to consider its full meaning.
 - 4. The word suggests "wonder, amazement, something out of the ordinary."
 - 5. It says, in essence, "Here is something terribly exciting, and here is something to get terribly excited about."

6. Permit me to give you a few of the many passages in which this little word is found.
 - a. **John 1:29** - "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
 - b. **I John 3:1** - "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"
 - c. **John 4:35** - "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"
 - d. **Revelation 3:8** - "Behold, I have set before thee an open door."
7. If we would only "behold," we would see more of the world crying out for what we have that once could every imagine.
 - a. Bibles.
 - b. Knowledge of its content and teachings.
 - c. A knowledge of and relationship with Christ and His Father.
 - d. Salvation.
 - e. The hope, promise, and assurance of Heaven.
8. Muslims know to wash their feet before entering a mosque for prayer.
 - a. More important than the water to enter a mosque is the water that is necessary to enter Christ.
 - b. They need to know about being washed in the blood of the Lamb (baptism) for the remission of their sins.
9. In Buddhist temples worshippers fall prostrate before their shrines, so that nine parts of the body touch the floor in worship to their pagan gods. • They need to know that the true "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (**John 4:24**).
10. An evangelist friend of mine asked a 12-year old Chinese boy in China if he had ever heard of Jesus.
 - a. "Yes sir," he replied, "I hear of him for the first time in the movie, Ben Hur."
 - b. He was so eager to hear more about Jesus whom he said "must have been such a great man."
 - c. Who is going to be there to tell him?
11. All around the world one can smell the odor of incense being offered to gods that can not smell.
12. True examples:
 - a. In Russia there was the 20-year old girl who asked for a Bible, was given one, and read it until three o'clock in the morning.
 - c. In Israel there was the lady in the village of Maghar, Israel, who begged, "Please come to my house and teach me and my family about God."
 - d. In many fields there are overcrowded church buildings filled with people, whose faces reflect hunger and a deep thirst for the God their government repudiates.

- e. In Israel, a young Arab wife says, "I want you to teach me the Bible in English."
 - f. Multitudes are begging for a copy of the Bible.
13. Should we not be made restless by such news?
14. The world needs the gospel so much!

THE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS VISION

- A. Friends, such a vision calls for action . . . quick action!
1. Let each of us say: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day."
John 9:4
 2. Let each of us say: "Wherefore I will not be negligent." **2 Peter 1:12**
 3. Let each of us say: "I am not ashamed of the gospel." **Romans 1:16**
 4. Let each of us say: "This we will do if God permits." **Hebrews 6:3**
- B. You and I were "allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel."
1 Thessalonians 2:4
1. Is the gospel safe in our hands?
 2. Can we be trusted to take it to the whole world?
- C. To accept this vision, there must be three things:
- Perception
 - Preparation
 - Participation
1. The *more vision* we have, the *more provision* the world will have.
 2. "Be strong, and do it," the Lord is saying. **1 Chronicles 28:10**
- D. In order to stamp it indelibly in your hearts, may I suggest five things, each beginning with the letter "P." These deal with the assignment this vision calls for:
1. A **preaching** assignment.
 2. A **personal** assignment.
 3. A **precious** assignment.
 4. A **pleasant** assignment.
 5. A **possible** assignment.
- E. What a pleasant assignment to break good news to people.
1. To inform a family that their son is on his way home from overseas.
 2. To inform a person that they have fallen heir to a fortune.
 3. To inform a man that his wife has just given birth to a healthy baby.
 4. To tell a patient that he doesn't have the dreaded disease he expected and feared.
- F. Preaching the gospel to the lost is more pleasant than one could ever imagine.
1. The good news that is brought.

2. The blessings that are afforded.
3. The salvation of souls bound for Heaven.

THE RESULT OF THIS VISION

- A. What will the next generation say about our reaction to this vision?
1. Will they be able to say: "They took Christ even as He was." **Mark 4:36**
 2. Will they be able to say: "They went forth and preached everywhere."
Mark 16:20
 3. Will they be able to say: "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." **Romans 10:1**
 4. Will they be able to say: "The gospel was preached to every creature under heaven." **Colossians 1:23**
 4. Will they be able to say: "The gospel was preached to every creature under heaven." **Colossians 1:23**
 5. Will they be able to say: "They so spake that a great multitude believed."
Acts 14:1
- B. In **Acts 14:7**, we have this record: "There they preached the gospel."
1. May that be said of us!
 2. May that be said of the church in every generation.
 3. May this generation be able to post for succeeding generations, these words above every city of every nation in the world.

THE KEY TO THIS VISION

- A. This vision can be met, but:
1. We can't meet this vision with **Diotrophes** who want all the preeminence.
 2. We can't meet this vision with **John Marks** who turn back when the going is rough.
 3. We can't meet this vision with **Judases** who consider it waste, the money being spent for the Lord's cause.
 4. We can't meet this vision with the **Pharisees** who do nothing but sit on the sidelines and referee.
 5. We can't meet this vision with the **one-talent men** who bury their talents.
 6. We cannot meet this vision with **Laodicean churches** which are complacent and see no need.
 7. We cannot meet this vision with **priests** and **Levites** who pass by unconcerned about the needs of starving people by the wayside.
- B. To meet this vision:
1. We need **Simon Peters** who will say, "Such as I have, I give". **Acts 3:6**

2. We need **Isaiahs** who will say, "Here am I, send me." **Isaiah 6:8**
 2. We need **Macedonian churches** that beg to give, though in deep poverty themselves. **2 Corinthians 8:1-5**
 4. We need Jerusalem churches that have evangelistic fervor. Acts 8:1-4
 5. We need **Philips, Pauls, Stephens**, who will become "all things to all men, that they by all means might gain some." **1 Corinthians 9:22**
 6. We need **Barnabases** who will be quick to encourage those who are engaging in good works. Acts 4:36
- C. A 23-year old boy, once walking along the shore of one of the Japanese Islands, was washed into the sea by high waves. Help was called, but while those on the shore were arguing about trivial things, the boy drowned.
1. Sad as the incident is, there is something far worse.
 2. People have been washed into the sea of perdition, and many will drown, while those on the shore are arguing about trivial things.
 3. This is no time to be divided.
- D. May I challenge you with the following statements.
1. We'll never bring all the world into Christ, until we bring Christ into all the world!
 2. We'll have no faith in the mission before us, unless we have faith in the Master behind us!
 3. We'll never get others to obey the great commands until we obey the great commission!
 4. We cannot expect the world to react to the Word, till we act on it!
 5. We'll never get excited over sowing the seed, until we get excited over seeing the need!"
 6. We can't make Christ mean anything to others, until we make Him mean everything to us!
 7. Let's not jeeringly say, "Look what the world is coming to," but joyfully say, "Look what has come to the world!"
 8. We will make more conversions, when we have more convictions!
 9. We'll never get others to see the joy of claiming Christ, till we get ourselves to see the joy of proclaiming Christ!
 10. We'll never be challenged by seeing through our task, till we recognize the challenge of seeing our task through!
 11. We'll never really consider the lost, till we stop considering the cost.
 12. We'll quit trying to save money, only when we really start trying to save men!
 13. We'll be in a better position to help, when we are in a better disposition to help!

14. We won't have to pay the penalty in the reaping, if we are willing to pay the price in the sowing!
15. Every heart without Christ is a mission field, and every heart with Christ is a missionary!
16. We are not going to bring in the sheaves until we roll up our sleeves.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Vision and action are both important.
 1. Vision + Action = Carrying out the great commission.
 2. Vision + Action = Faithfulness.
 3. Vision + Action = Souls taught.
 4. Vision + Action = Souls converted.
 5. Vision + Action = Souls saved.
 6. Vision + Action = God pleased.
- B. Let us do what we can to take Christ into all the world so we can help bring all the world into Christ.
- C. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**