

THE BIG IDEA: The Church I See is the church we'll be.

The Take-Off

[Eating ants and Sweet Sixteen donuts]

Sometimes, really bad things can happen when we can't see well. Or, at the very least, maybe nothing happens, and that's just as bad,

Proverbs 29:18 says that where there's no vision, the people perish, or where there's no revelation, the people cast off restraint. Vision is important!

In **Habakkuk 2:2**, God gave a command to write the vision down and make it plain so that we could run with it!

If we don't know where we're going, we won't know when we get there, or even IF we get there.

So, my goal this morning is to try to make the vision plain so that we can all run with it!

A few disclaimers before I start to share with you about the church I see:

1. Vision is about where we're going, not always about where we are. Here's what that means:
2. There will be corporate gaps. You'll hear things and think, "That's not how it is now!" That gap will require grace.
3. There will be personal gaps. You'll hear things and think, "That's not how I am now!" That gap will require repentance (which brings grace).

A vision for the future means nothing without action in the presence that moves us toward that vision.

I can say all day long that I want to qualify for the Boston Marathon, but if I don't actually start running NOW, no amount of talking about vision and mission will lead to mission accomplished.

That's one reason why - if you're a Millennial - you rolled your eyes the first time you heard me say vision or mission: you've seen it talked about to no end without any action.

We must not only dream; we must also wake up and do the things that lead to the dream.

That ensures today's Big Idea: **The Church I See is the church we'll be.**

So, with all of that in mind, this is The Church I See:

1. The Church I See always sees Jesus first (priorities)

- a. I know, every church says that it's all about Jesus, but that doesn't mean it isn't
- b. Here, we have said from the beginning that everything we do is about Jesus ... always.
- c. In fact, our **Core Four** values reflect it.
 - the UNDENIABLE message of Jesus
 - the UNBREAKABLE body of Jesus
 - the UNCONTAINABLE kingdom of Jesus, and
 - the UNEXPLAINABLE worship of Jesus
- d. When we are intentional about being about Jesus, we'll find that we value the word, the church, the evangelism of the world and worship. In short...

2. The Church I See acts like the church in Acts (power)

- a. I remember a few years ago, back when the church met in the coffee shop, doing a series in the book of Acts, and when I read the book of Acts, I see a church that I want to be a part of. I think most of us do.
- b. When The Church I See acts like the church in Acts, we'll be
 - a church on mission even if that's a little on edge
 - a church that is committed to community even when community is hard to commit to
 - a church full of the power of the Holy Spirit
 - a church that won't stop following Jesus, no matter the cost
 - a church that takes ground by laying down our rights
 - a church that values impact over size, but isn't afraid of either
- c. How does a church become like this? That's the next thing I see!

3. The Church I See is a busy body, not just a bunch of busybodies (purpose)

- a. Activity without unity turns into calamity!
- b. It isn't enough to be a bunch of independent people doing a bunch of stuff independent of each other
- c. Purpose comes when we are ONE body united around ONE mission.

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
- When we're ONE body busy about ONE mission, we give honor to parts that have are different from us
- When we're a DIVIDED body focused on only OUR part, we lose sight of how we need others (v. 21)
- d. Be busy doing what YOU'RE gifted to do (vv. 28-30), and love others while they do what THEY'RE gifted to do (1 Cor. 13)
- e. When that happens - when we are unified in purpose - something amazing happens...

4. The Church I See is seen by the city (presence)

- a. John 13:35 says that people will know who we're following when we love one another
- b. In other words, The Church I See will be seen by the city
- c. I see a church that marks the city with its presence in the city
- d. Not a bunch of land and a big building outside it, but a shared space inside it
- e. In fact, this space will feel full when we move into it because we want to plant and send from it!
- f. We will be a church that would be missed by downtown Albemarle because of the way we love and serve downtown Albemarle
- g. We will feed the hungry, serve the broken, open our new space was a shared venue, love the families and the businesses around us
- h. The Church I See is committed to the place where God has planted us, and we understand the cost of saying yes to that calling.

5. The Church I See pays the cost because it values the vision (passion)

- a. Mark 14:3-5 / this woman poured out a year's salary because she valued Jesus
- b. There is a cost to loving Jesus and a city and wanting to see that same city love that same Jesus
- c. There will ALWAYS be a cost involved when we value the vision God has given us
- d. It isn't forced, or manipulated, or taken from you; like this woman, it is intentionally - and gladly - given
- e. Our cost is \$921,000 - and while that can sound like a lot - what you need to know is that it could so easily have been 3 million dollars
- f. The Church I See understands the cost but doesn't celebrate waste
- g. We value simpler living because it enables greater giving, and this space will be done with simple excellence that allows us to continue to be the most generous we possibly can be with our resources
- h. The Church I See seizes the opportunity to take ground in the city and to shine a light in downtown Albemarle, and advances in faith and obedience!

The Landing

Now, what does that 921k look like practically? Who pays that amount?

We do. Graciously, First Bank has partnered with us and given us a construction line of credit for that amount, and yet we have the opportunity to give like never before and use our money before we use that money.

The Elders have prayed, talked, discussed this step for 2 years. We have NOT been quick to enter into this partnership.

We have been faithful to seek the Lord and have His peace and we can't wait to take the next step!

In fact, our Finance Team has already had us running on the budget that includes the 921k, and all that it would require for us to blow that budget out of the water would be an extra \$15/week from each giving unit that calls The Gathering home.

That, friends, is doable, and a cost that every one of your staff and elder families has been doing for a number of months already.

Now, we're asking you to respond to the vision, too.

The Church I See is growing, is engaged, is head over heels in love with Jesus, and is battle ready!

And as committed as we are to the vision, God is even more so.

That's what I know that The Church I See is the church we'll be.

Let's pray.