

WELCOME 31st January 2021 – 4th Sunday after the Epiphany '21 B

1 Chronicles 28:20 & 29:10-20

Welcome! It's great to be together again. Delighted you are here.

As has become our custom there are Group Study & Discussion resources in your hands. *So that for each of us worship is an all week long experience & as God leads you into the fullness of His word & his work in your lives & he will then lead you to someone this week who needs to hear the good news from you.* We are still doing those things we need to maintain a level of safety: Hand sanitizer. Masks. Sign in. No morning tea just yet. Offering. Communion.

AND – AGM as soon as we can get a few things set up so please hang around.

As we move into this week...Succession planning – Wills – Passing the baton – Passing the torch – Leaving a legacy...We know the words, even the experience to some degree...But what if you knew you could hand on a vision so compelling that it captures the heart, ignites the imagination, inspires the community, motivates behaviour, spans generations, shapes culture & drives a breath-taking destiny?

That's the God-sized vision David received, passed on, invested in & summoned others to join. David knew what matters most in life is that people have access to the presence of God to receive the life-transforming grace that alone gives, sustains & fills life to abundance now & forever.

Anything less is a shadow of the real life God has in store for you. God daily strives to re-set our vision & increase our investment in that vision so together we move into the future more confidently, engage God's Word more consistently & share our faith enthusiastically. More than anything else we do...that will bless the world.

“O LORD, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes.

We'll explore & experience that together. Let's pray...then we'll get stuck into it.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Father God, we know, that just as Moses and your disciples were changed by their experiences in your presence, we too are changed and transformed into the image of Christ by your power. So from today on, may our lives reflect your love, radiate with your hope, and shine with your light. Through Christ who is alone Lord & Saviour - Amen

Let's sing & then we'll hear God's Word...

FAITH CHAT:

1. Name 1 “fork-in-the-road” moment from your life. things just changed...transition
2. What is one thing you want your family to know before you die?

4 Epiphany '21 B – RE-SET... VISION

I had an amazing conversation with a senior saint the other day. It was yet another version of a conversation I have had many times over the last 30+ years... The good news? I **finally** have an answer that makes sense to me & **began** to make sense to the person to whom I was speaking. How did the conversation go?

The person was wondering if their life still had purpose... Is there a reason for them to still be alive? Now... before you get nervous... This person is well-aged but in complete control of their mental faculties. Their health is pretty good & they're surrounded by loving family & manage to stay in touch w/ a few friends. You know as you get to a certain age your friends may not be here any more...

So what did I say? Do you pray for your kids every day? Yes. Do you pray for your grandchildren every day? Yes. Do you pray for your great-grandchildren every day? Yes. About the GGC... Who in their life will teach them about knowing Jesus over the course of a lifetime?... good & bad, tragedy & joy? Me I guess. You know a handful of pastors & have been part of a few churches in your lifetime. Do you pray for those pastors & churches every day? Yes. You read the Bible every day? Yes. I know this person is generous... we affirmed their open-handed \$\$\$ support. It seems to me you are fulfilling a great purpose... everything in your power is focussed on seeing what God wants accomplished in the lives of folks around you is being achieved. What more do you think you need? What purpose is bigger than seeing God's work & will accomplished where you have influence?

Here's the cool thing... that person is doing in a small way what David does w/ Solomon in a BIG WAY. **BIBLES...2021 – year of bringing your BIBLE** 1 Chron 29 is the tail end of David's life. Israel's greatest earthly king... man after God's own heart. But like every one of us... he knows he's only got a little time left so he wants to make sure he leaves nothing important undone. He wants what we all want: Finish well. And what does that look like?

In David's life he had accomplished everything it seems he wanted. He had lived fully & boldly & faithfully... Perfectly? No. Sinlessly? Of course not? But throughout his life, David never walked away from a command from God or thought he was bigger than the relationship w/ God that sustained him his whole life. He knew every day he breathed he was accountable to the Father... was to live responsive to God's Word... build the kingdom of God's people such that he lead according to how God wanted his people to live. Now... at the end of his life he knows there's one thing left unfinished: The Temple (artist's idea) But because he had been a warrior for so much of his life God was not going to allow his bloody hands to build the Temple.

The Temple would be Solomon's job. But the Temple was not just a building project like a road/canal/hospital. The Temple was **THE PLACE** where God would dwell among his people. It was **THE PLACE** where God's people would experience his direct presence & receive his grace & goodness. It was **THE PLACE** from which God would fill their lives & guide & protect them as His people. The Temple was **THE PLACE** that would hold the 12 tribes together as a nation. Sacrifices could only be offered at the Temple in Jerusalem. 3X/yr mandatory festivals would draw them together in worship & devotion & they would re-new the covenant God had given to them in his promises to Abraham/Sarah & the subsequent generations of their ancestors through Moses Joshua & finally David & Solomon.

David knew what matters most in life is that people have access to the presence of God to receive the life-transforming grace that alone gives, sustains & fills life to abundance now & forever. That's the God-sized vision David received... a vision so compelling it captures the heart, ignites the imagination, inspires the community, motivates behaviour, spans generations, shapes culture & drives a breath-taking destiny. As he hands that vision into the next generation he gives this assurance: *"Every part of this plan," David told Solomon, "was given to me in writing from the hand of the Lord." Then David continued, "Be strong & courageous, & do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work related to the Temple of the Lord is finished correctly"* Absolute truth... What God has called into being; God will see to completion.

Don't ever forget that. In fact... when we're sitting in our AGM in a little while... think on that. What God has called into being; God will see to completion. That Temple will stand until the nation is divided & so unfaithful & idolatrous that God up & leaves & allows it to be demolished & his people exiled as his judgement against them. So when we're looking at the year ahead... remember...

God has called Living Water Fellowship to be a vibrant Christian community that glorifies God by inviting all people to become disciples of Jesus who grow in his grace and go in his power to show his love to the world.

What God has called into being; God will see to completion... until we actually accomplish that in this city; **OR** until God gets sick of watching us **not** do that we have work to do. *"Be strong & courageous, & do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it..."* Solomon of course has work to do... stones to cut foundations to dig mortar to mix workers to recruit train & pay... but as he faithfully carries out the call of God, God assures him of completion... assures him of God's presence/provision every step of the way. What God has called into being; God will see to completion

1 Chron 29 begins w/ the offering...What David has given toward the building...I'll spare you the details: David gives about \$5-6 billion & the nation matches it in spades. They got money that would crush our poor little box back there the table it's on & this building. This offering was huge; it represented a significant part of their national economy & livelihood redirected into ministry. David will likely die penniless because he's cashed all in for the vision God has entrusted to him of a people united in worship in the presence of the Father. But the \$\$ was far less important than what was happening in the hearts of those people.

The people rejoiced over the offerings, for they had given freely & wholeheartedly to the Lord, & King David was filled with joy. (29:9) What that means is there was no pressure & no limit...They were seized by the God-sized call/vision for their lives & nothing could stand in the way of living toward that call. Nothing in their possession was off-limits because **Everything** in the heavens & on earth is yours, O Lord, & this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is **over all things**. I love that word "everything." You belong to God. Your life. Your health. Your strength. Your house. Your children. Your friendships. Your job. Your car. Your intelligence. Your personality. All that we are & all that we have comes from God...we borrow it for a time but it is always His...never ours. *Harry Wendt "maker & still owner of heaven & earth."*

But who am I, & who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, & we give you only what you first gave us! We are here for only a moment, visitors & strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace. O Lord our God, even this material we have gathered to build a Temple to honour your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you!

David prays knowing that they can never out-give God. They will never match the Father's generosity. Seriously...what could you give God knowing that God the Father came to us in & through Jesus the Incarnate Son precisely to be w/ us & for us through thick/thin through life/death. In fact, God came in Jesus to be w/ us through death into new life...so that we can walk in his ways & in his likeness & in his presence & in his power & for his purpose in this world...What's that worth to you? What's it worth knowing that God comes to us personally & rescues, recreates, & reunites all things through the life, death, resurrection & rule of Jesus Christ? What God planned & promised from the beginning is fulfilled in Jesus & will reach its completion when Christ returns to reign forever. Who am I...Who are we, that we could give anything of any value for that unsurpassing great gift of life love hope salvation that is ours only in Jesus Christ? But every day can be lived in response.

AND...We live & pray & work toward extending faith & faithfulness into the next generation. David has done just that: *"O Lord, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, & Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes. Give my son Solomon the wholehearted desire to obey all your commands, laws, & decrees, & to do everything necessary to build this Temple, for which I have made these preparations."* David knows like we do: the next generation lives on the knife edge. There is always a bidding war for the souls of our children friends grandchildren neighbours co-workers classmates...But by the grace of Christ & the power of the Holy Spirit we have a stake in & a promise to declare to those souls... (Sue – put Living Water Vision here please)

We live in Christ w/ a vision of love & life & hope & joy & peace & contentment so compelling that it captures the heart, ignites the imagination, inspires the community motivates behaviour, spans generations, shapes culture & drives a breath-taking destiny. What matters most in life is that people experience the presence of God in Jesus & receive the life-transforming grace that alone gives, sustains & fills life to abundance now & forever.

6 years ago I asked you to do this little experiment...Think about 5 people you met/interacted w/ this week...in person on the phone at the shops via computer...You may not see them again but next week you'll encounter someone like them...Do those 5 people know how much Jesus loves them? Do they know that from before the advent of time God wanted more than anything to be in relationship w/ them every moment of every day? Do they know of the God who comes down into their lives to raise them into his forever?

We who have been grasped by God's grace & compassion & mercy...find an irresistible drive in our hearts to love them & want their salvation & set aside our greatest fears - set aside our own hang-ups & half-measures - so they too might Come to Jesus. Grow in His Grace. Go in His power. Show His love. I'll pray for us & then we'll pray together: *"O LORD, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes."*

Father we make no pretence to your throne, so have your way in us. Re-set our lives to your will. Re-set our hearts to your way. Re-set our path to your purpose. Re-establish your rule over us as your people. Reorient our hearts to your promised destiny & fill us with courage to obey you in all circumstances. Re-focus our eye to your vision of lives transformed forever so we live out your grace and love to all we know. Through Jesus Christ we pray... Amen.