

2020 Vision (5): Building Some Momentum

(Review)

I. Introduction

A. My second year of college, I had a new 1975 Toyota Corolla (\$3200)

1. The car had nothing on it– no radio, no A/C (not even an option)
 - a. It did have a dead short the Toyota folks had a hard time finding
 - b. Battery drained every night; I had to remember to disconnect
 - 1) It was so light, I got it rolling with one foot and popped clutch
 - 2) Kept me from sharing the car with my sister until it was fixed
2. Someone told of a car with a battery that was so dead wouldn't jump
 - a. But if you'd push it with another car 30 mph, could pop the clutch
 - 1) He was stranded one day and asked buddy to give him a push
 - 2) He explained they'd have to be going 30 mph before it'd work
 - b. He got all set and looked back to see his buddy coming at 30 mph
 - c. Guy who told me story was from Arkansas; lends bit of credibility

B. Sometimes you do need a little bit of momentum to get re-started

1. Last year, we planned to end the year with series called *2020 Vision*
 - a. What is our vision for the church at Denbigh in 2020 and beyond?
 - b. Where do we see God leading us; what is He leading us to be?
 - 1) We referred to the decade ahead as the “Roaring Twenties”
 - 2) Will they roar on without us? Will we make a mark for God?
 - c. We were using our mission/vision statement as our series outline
Living as God's family under the cross: Loving, Serving, Praising, Proclaiming
 - 1) **Factoid:** Two churches “appropriated” our vision statement!
 - 2) Right along with the logo! That means it must be pretty good!
2. We were “interrupted” by some good things (*Cindy's Ukraine report*)
 - a. Then the holidays seemed to sneak up on us a bit faster than usual
 - b. I had to decide whether to abbreviate the series or finish it in 2020
 - c. That's what I decided– to finish *2020 Vision* in 2020 (catchy, huh?)
 - 1) **Problem:** We've lost bit of momentum and need to pop clutch
 - 2) Let's review just a bit so that we can get back to where we were

II. God's Family Under the Cross: Review of Three Points

A. **First**, we are to live as God's family... hard work (**Rom 12:10**)

1. As you know, the Greek's had multiple word for love
 - a. Paul uses a compound of two of those different words here
 - 1) One is *philos* which is the basic word for friendship
 - 2) The other is *storge*, which is natural or family affection
 - b. In fact, "*be devoted*" (NIV) might not be quite strong enough
Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Outdo one another in showing honor (CSB)
Love one another like brothers and sisters. Give each other more honor than you want (NCV)
2. He then goes on to explain in practical terms what that looks like
 - a. Sharing lives through hospitality and meeting needs (**12:13**)
 - b. Share the ups-and-downs, trials-and-triumphs of life (**12:15**)
 - c. Fellowship everyone; ignore any and all differences (**12:16**)
3. If we see each other 1 hour a week, we're not following Bible!

B. **Second**, we are to live as that family under the Cross (**1 Cor 2:2**)

1. Paul said that his basic message was the cross. Is that our message.
 - a. Like most churches, our statement belief is on web (stolen too!)
 - b. But we have our faith statement on building– Church of Christ
2. Luther said that the cross puts everything to the test... puts us to test
 - a. Paul was glad he didn't baptize many– personality cult at Corinth
 - b. He didn't want to do anything to rob the cross of its power (**1:17**)
3. We should be just as concerned as Paul the focus is on the cross
 - a. There are no hoops to jump thru, boxes to check, steps to climb
 - b. There is only one step to salvation– Jesus took it for us at cross

C. **Third**, we're God's family under cross called to love (**1 John 4:7-8**)

1. When Jesus asked greatest command, He narrowed it to two
 - a. Why? Because in essence they are one and the same thing
 - b. Love comes from God for God is love... so we must love
2. The greatest expression of God love was the cross (**John 3:16**)
 - a. Jesus laid down his life, we must lay down ours (**1 Jn 3:16**)
 - b. Like we suggested, that requires more than one hour a week

III. God's Family Under the Cross: Heart of the Matter

- A. What do you say if someone asks, "What does your church believe?"
(If people never ask you that, then maybe you aren't having the right conversations)
1. Is your answer something like, "*We just go right by the Bible...*"
(Most churches say that; no church says, "We don't need no stinkin Bible")
 2. But we have this self-image that we just go right by the Bible
 - a. Others may have the fiddler-on-roof (tradition); we have scripture
 - b. We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where it is silent
 - c. Do Bible things in Bible ways; call Bible things by Bible names
- B. Really? Let put that to the test today by looking at church bulletin
1. Are church bulletins biblical? Anyway, look at *Order of Worship...*
 - a. There's a list of songs Roger chose & PT rehearsed (**1 Cor 14:26**)
 - b. There's also a short reading from the New Testament (**Col 4:16**)
 - c. We have Lord's Supper every week or then so we (**Luke 22:20**)
(Why does a symbolic snack count a meal but a symbolic sprinkle...)
 - d. It says here we'll have 4 prayers... all led by men (**1 Cor 11:5**)
 - e. There's an invitation song, not even invented until 18th century
(What would happen if I announced that we were no longer having one?)
 2. **Point:** Our order of worship feels right to us because it is OURS
 - a. *Many Biblical ways!* Supper around table? Spontaneous prayer
 - b. How about no song leader or planned songs– spontaneous singing
 - 1) One church did. Worship became production; fired worship team
 - 2) For while no one was in charge of worship ("*Heart of Worship*")
 - c. Sometimes you have to knock the fiddler of tradition off the roof!
- C. To be Biblical, we can't just be SAFE; we also must be EFFECTIVE
1. Two years ago, we struggled with so few of our kids in Sun School
 - a. We considered radical changes– Sunday school during sermon
 - b. We considered less radical changes– swapping the two services
 2. When push (back) came to shove, the fiddler won. We played it safe
 - a. Now many weeks we count elementary/preschool on one hand
 - b. What is our 2020 vision for Denbigh? Why this series is needed!

IV. Conclusion

- A. Thom Rainer has some advice that we need to take to heart, I think
1. He was president of *Lifeway* and a church growth researcher
 - a. He suggests that declining churches share one key common trait
 - b. Research cuts across church denominations, demographics, size
Stated simply, the most common factor in declining churches is an inward focus
 2. If we spend our time in naval-gazing, then the church will decline
 - a. When church activities and ministries are largely for members.
 - b. When funds are used almost exclusively for needs of members.
 - c. When worship times of styles are geared primarily for members.
 - d. When conflict takes place when members don't get their way.
 3. Dr. Rainer give "warning symptoms" of churches with inward focus
 - a. There are few attempts to minister to those in the community
 - b. Meetings become arguments over preferences and desires
 - c. Members are openly and secretly critical of the leadership
 - d. Any change, even small ones, is met with anger and resistance
 - e. The past becomes a hero to exalted as "the good old days"
 - f. Culture is "enemy" instead of "opportunity" for salt-n-light
 - g. Leaders are discouraged and tend to give in to loudest voices
 - h. Denomination tends to mirror the same loss of focus and identity
- B. In an earlier lesson I quoted Bobby Kennedy (*poster in school room*)
Some men see things as they are, and ask "Why?" I dream things that never were, and ask "Why not?"
1. Do that! Let's dream what never was and ask God, "Why not?"
 - a. That's better than sticking fingers in our ears, "*La lala la lala la*"
 - b. Is that any different than doing the same old things over and over?
 2. Do we come here week after week because we are playing church?
 - a. Or are we really trying to live as God's family under the cross?
 - b. We need to decide what our 2020 Vision will be of ourselves
 3. Will we come back to the heart of worship and make it about Him?