

Vision Sunday

Love Declared • Love Demonstrated

Jesus had a vision to change the world. His was the vision of the kingdom of God and He calls us to place it at the centre of our lives, to make it our reason for existence (Matthew 6.33).

Today on Vision Sunday I want us to turn again to the reason, the meaning and the hope we have in the vision of our church – it's Jesus!

Jesus' Cause

Jesus' mission statement:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Luke 4:18-19 (NIV)

Jesus lived an incredible life totally given over to this cause. This cause was His reason for being born, His reason for living, and His reason for being prepared to die and He calls others into this same cause.

Called for the Cause

Jesus handed over the mantle of His amazing ministry for His followers to share in His cause.

Luke 9:1-6

Matthew 10:7-8

Matthew 28:18-20

Counting the Cost

Jesus made it very clear that there was a high cost involved in being a disciple (a follower of Jesus committed totally to His cause).

Luke 9: 23-26

Luke 14:26-27

A Cause to Live and Die For

After the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, they finally understood His cause, and realised that His victory over death had won for them eternal life (John 3:16), abundant life (John 10:10), and every spiritual blessing imaginable (Ephesians 1-3).

They understood the incredible privilege to be agents of His cause – the seeking and saving of fallen humanity so that they might also have the same privileges. They were no longer in doubt or ashamed of His cause – they were prepared to lay everything down on the line. Jesus then gives His final words before ascending to heaven to be with His Father.

Acts 1:8 still applies to us today, for when we came to faith in Jesus Christ, we too received the gift of the Holy Spirit for the ultimate purpose of being Jesus' witnesses.

What would it take to have Christ and His cause possess and motivate us like the early church?

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We believe that 2018 is the year for us to communicate both in word and deed the message of salvation to this community and the greater city of Brisbane.

We believe God is saying to us as a church, "This is just the beginning!" There are thousands of lost people who matter to Him, who are not in His family yet; and we feel that God is counting on the witness of this church to burn brighter than ever, to be a beacon of hope to people who are lost and facing a 'Christ-less' eternity.

Our Goal is to release **YOU** - an empowered people who declare and demonstrate Christ's Kingdom!

What does that look like?

- + People reaching out in compassion every day to those around them
- + People sharing the name of Jesus and the message of salvation
- + People speaking openly about their faith and the faith
- + People boldly praying for the sick
- + People listening to God for others
- + People being generous to those in need
- + People living out love – putting others before themselves
- + People unashamed of the Gospel of Jesus

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." Romans 1:16 (NIV)

Jesus is our hero, it's His cause we live for – He's our confidence! Not a program, not an event, not a ministry – therefore we walk with Jesus and walk with people. We have confidence in knowing that Jesus is the answer.

Restoring Our Commitment to the Cause

Commitment to Jesus Christ and His cause is an outcome of the profound realisation of what Jesus has done for us – what He has delivered us from and what He has delivered us to, and what He has delivered us for – to partner with Him to enable every member of the human race to be saved from sin, to experience the abundant life, and have an eternity with Him.

To be a truly missional-incarnational church, passionately committed to Jesus Christ and His cause, is an incredibly exciting challenge, which it is hoped Riverlife will take up. To be that kind of church will require us each to change our view of commitment to Jesus Christ and commitment to His cause. It will require us to take very seriously the vision of our church and on that foundation look seriously at how we can reach into the special community of not-yet-Christians God has given us personally, and as a church, to reach.

Today is your opportunity to get on board with the vision of 2018 – to be a people sold out for the cause of Christ. We are committing to declare and demonstrate the love of Jesus to anyone, anywhere, anytime in 2018!

Discussion Questions

1. Read together Luke 4:18-19. What inspires you about Jesus' mission statement?
2. In Luke 9: 1-6 Jesus invites His disciples to join in His mission. How much does that look like (in a modern day context) your following of our Saviour?
3. Jesus said; *"Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure the lepers, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!"* (Matthew 10:7-8)
What stops you from being a radical follower of Jesus committed to His cause?
4. Imagine for a moment thousands of people coming to Jesus through Riverlife people sharing the Good News. Share together what Love Declared / Love Demonstrated could look like for Riverlife in 2018.
5. What does Love Demonstrated / Love Declared look like for you tomorrow?