

1 DNA 3 Sharing our hope (Vision)

We can ask the Question – **What is the biggest difference moving away from city into WCC?** Not a criticism. Our heart is that as a people we will become much more regular at sharing our heart. More consistent and regular. This is fundamental - this is Gods vision. Mathew 28:18 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Last word to disciples – this is what I want you to go and do now – this is your mission, because this is my vision. We are either on Jesus’s mission or on no mission at all. If we miss this then what is the validity of our church existence? This is a massive and central part of why the church exists – to share our hope with those around us. How we are doing in this will show how we are doing in following Jesus and growing in Christ likeness. If we haven’t shared the gospel with anybody – we must ask the question how are we doing following Jesus and growing into his headship?

It is our desire that we all go on together – this is an area of all our life that can be easy to neglect- we don’t make it any sort of priority. Very few of us feel motivated, equipped or able in this. Don’t want this to be a condemning message or bring a sense of failure- we want faith and vision not condemnation. Lets just agree together that we are prepared to change together that God will begin to stir something in our hearts

2 Cor 5:11-65 Therefor knowing the fear of the Lord

2 Corinthians described as a defence of Paul’s life – answering questions and opposition. Paul is defending why he is what he is- why he does ministry. It is a personal letter – and it gives us an insight into his ministry. When it comes to sharing our hope we can ask a number of questions:

1.1 What is our motivation ?

1.1.1 Reconciliation

- 1) **The gospel itself** – such an experience of the love and grace of God I am compelled by the love of Christ – it’s so much at the centre of who I am. I am totally under the servitude of the love of Christ – motivation of all of my ministry is the love of Christ. Beautiful place to be in awe of the cross – our own experience of the love of God.
- 2) Any one in Christ - **he is a new creation** – old has gone – celebrating new life in Christ all by grace of God – He reconciled us through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Note the order – our reconciliation leads to us being given a ministry of reconciliation.
- 3) **Our reconciliation** – what does it mean? In our sin we were fractured and separated from God –for our sake he made Jesus to be sin through his death on the cross. He took all of sin upon himself even though he knew no sin. Only innocent person without sin – he becomes sin bearing the weight of judgement – he gets everything of our rubbish – we get everything of Christ’s forgiveness, righteousness, loveliness . Paul says right here is the gospel – we are reconciled – this is where it starts – and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. What he received he was given the responsibility to pass onto others – he is commissioned to pass this on. For Paul his sense of mission overflows out of his relationship with God. We have to start with our own heart, our own recognition of the wonder of our salvation. We can be thankful that we have been reconciled with God – often we will excuse ourselves with sharing by saying this is not my strength or personality. Stop and realise that we are evangelising all of the time but not about God- we evangelise what are good films, restaurants shopping deals and other worldly attractions all of the time. Because sharing comes out of our overflow of experience. We can be the same with sharing the gospel. I have to ask myself why am I better evangelist for films then Jesus? Understanding and

meditating and grasping his hope Paul is zeroed in on eternity and heavenly indwelling and inheritance – out of this comes the calling. He is living in the space of this is my home – this is where I live.

1.1.2 Our responsibility

- All this is from God who reconciled us to Him. He gave us the ministry – we are inheriting the mission after we have received a true reflection on the value of our own salvation– we are part of God’s efforts in reconciling the world by entrusting to us the message.
- Think of the word **entrusting** – the responsibility of the church – it’s like a doctor came to you when you are sick – he has good news although you are sick – he has a vaccine that will get you better – this vaccine is available to everybody. The doctor cures you and then asks you to tell as many people as you can about the vaccine. In that scenario we would have been entrusted with a huge responsibility - but it would not be a burden. I am better and I have the key for others to get better. But when we think of the same responsibility we have been given in the gospel – and the reality of hell and eternity without God is much more dangerous than COVID-19- then the sense of us being entrusted is more important than anything.
- All part of the same message – sharing our hope is not an option – a hat or clothes we choose to put on. The church is the primary means by which God wants to share the good news – makes His appeal through us – through the church – through us – we are the primary means by which God will appeal to others. He doesn’t need us, but he has determined in His manifest wisdom to use us as his heralds. We should not be condemned by this – there is such grace – he doesn’t leave us on our own – but we must be wow – we have been entrusted. We are not living for the mission of our church lead elder but for the mission of God. I am called not to live for myself but for God. Don’t waste what God has given you.
- Paul V5 chapter 10 we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This sounds heavy but it is what the bible says – shouldn’t make us afraid – we are accepted – but we will stand before Jesus and he will ask what have you done with the gifts and opportunities that face you? How have you been my ambassadors? Therefore knowing the fear of God we persuade others. Knowing that I am being called to account I am going to talk to others – we are stewarding the responsibility – it is an amazing privilege. Jesus asks us not just to know him but he invites us into His mission – working together with Him – to encourage others to share the gospel. It is most exciting to have a conversation with non-believers. It is the most exciting conversation of all time- when we step out in this we can feel more alive – because we tap into the very reason of our existence in Christ.

1.2 What is our confidence?

This is the biggest barrier – not motivation – biggest issue is we lack confidence we worry, about getting it wrong, being rejected, being disliked – this is our biggest barrier. Bible teaches us – it says we can be confident in

1.2.1 What we proclaim ?

- a) Our focus can be in the wrong place –the focus can be all about us – this often springs out of our own ability, intellect and personality – and this is the totally wrong place to focus our confidence. The most important place for confidence is not in **how** but **who** the gospel is about. For what we proclaim is not ourselves but Jesus Christ - we ourselves are servants for Jesus

Christ. This is a key concept – we not proclaiming ourselves – we are proclaiming Jesus. This means talking about the good news of Jesus – sharing in an everyday way. We can miss the simplicity of this – we can boil it down to what evangelism is

- **Faithful presence** – living out our Christianity in an everyday way – we are good at this
- **Loving practice** – loving others again we do this well
- **Gospel Proclamation** – a lot of us fall down – first two things may soften hearts but they do not save people – you can't love people practically into the kingdom – faith comes from hearing. Hesitation comes sometimes through an overburdened sense of responsibility – we take it all on our shoulders – we forget that God empowers – Evangelism in a sceptical world means our role is to communicate in words and actions – our role is not the same as God's. We are not choosing who gets saved – nor doing the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting people of their sin. We do everything we can to communicate but we can only do so much. All we are called to do is to talk to people about Jesus. We can faithfully share and let God do the rest. We can stumble over our words and still be at peace that we do the little end piece – not die on the cross.

1.2.2 Gods power

- **Paul is clear about Gods power.** If you feel so inadequate and weak and fragile – that's ok. You are all of these things yet still fulfil the message of Jesus – God knows that about you – he knows that weakness – he totally gets that. There is a purpose in this. Paul reflects on the ministry – he says we have the treasure of the gospel in jars of clay – in earthenware pots. Why has God ordained it in that way – to show the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.
- **We get so caught up in ourselves** – our weak packaging of the Gospel can overwhelm us with fear – because we completely forget the power of the presence of God within us and the efficacy of the message. Like children undoing a present at Christmas we can so get caught up with the packaging we can forget the treasure within. Going out with a fruitful evangelist you may find that the person is quite unimpressive in what they do and say to people – but they will still be displaying the treasure within.
- Quote from power of gospel – **Every believer can and should share their faith** even if they have just found Christ – children who are young believers can evangelise, introverts can evangelise the aged can and should evangelise, you don't retire from it. Bottom line is all Christians can evangelise because the Holy Spirit loves to empower the church in this.

