

BREAKTHROUGH VISION

Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024

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Okay, so do you know where you're going? [Feigns someone else talking:] *"Richard, I'm going to heaven. I don't know about the rest of you people, but I'm going to heaven."* So do you really know where you're going with your life? Do you know where you're going? Do you have a vision for your life that you know where you're going? [Feigns someone else talking:] *"Well, no, Richard, I'm kind of playing it -- kind of winging this one. No, no, I'm not really too committed. I'm just going to keep my options open. But I'm just going to let myself roll and just see what shows up."*

So the two weeks we talked about who you are and really clearly defining who you are. And now I want to talk about your vision for you.

Excuse me, I got a tickle and it's about to become a problem. We have this new secret drawer. [Congregation laughs] You didn't even see that water bottle, did you? It just came out of nowhere. It's almost like magic. Okay, so wait. Just turn me off for a second. Pause [Coughs] Okay. Ready to go.

Okay, so for the last two weeks, we've been talking about the vision of who you are. And everything has to start with **you**. I know it seems a little egotistical, but it's just the way it is. Everything has to start with **you**. You have to know who you want to be; how you're going to show up; how you're going to live. You need to know who you are, and how you want to express God.

But once you know who you are, then the next question is: What's your vision for your life? How are you going to give your gifts? What impact do you want to make on your family, your friends and the world? Because once you know who you are, the next thing is: What's your vision for your life? Because if we don't have a vision for our life, yes, we can just kind of roll with circumstances. Yes. But I do not believe that that's the most powerful version of us.

I believe that, when you know who you are and you know what your vision is for your life, then you can actually accomplish so much more than just going with the flow. And I know from a spiritual point of view, there's a whole train of thought that says, "Just go with the flow"; I got it, right? Does that work? If you're a type B personality! But I'm talking to my type A's today. [Congregation laughs] How many of you know that you kind of lean toward being a type A personality?

Now, if you know you're a type B personality, and you're just a flow kind of person, you may want to say, "Well, he just hasn't spiritually evolved as far as type B personalities are." [Congregation laughs] And that may be the case! I'm willing to argue that point.

But I want you to talk about, I want to talk about: If you really know who you are, I think you actually get more done. Have you ever had a day where you had a "to do" list and you were committed to getting through your "to do" list? Did you do more or less on that day than when you just kind of get up and see how it's gonna roll? I think we get it done more!

Proverbs 19:18 says, *"Where there is no vision, the people perish."* Well, I don't know if they perish, but they spend a lot of time at Starbucks. Right? [Congregation laughs] They do! Like, if we don't know what we're committed to in our life, we are just looking to be entertained. We're just wanting to go with the flow and see what happens. And there's nothing wrong with that, right?

But when we know who we are, and we feel an inner calling to make a difference in our world, there's something that happens within us. And I want to challenge you tonight to create a vision for your life, a vision for this year. A vision for what you want to accomplish this year. And not only just who you want

to be, but what is Spirit calling you to accomplish this year? The rest of your life? I want you to have a vision. vision for that!

Because I believe that when you have a vision, not only does Spirit give us the vision, but Spirit gives us everything that we need to accomplish that vision. But without a vision, we just kind of leave it in neutral for a long periods of time. And I don't think we're as effective spiritually as we could be.

So if you know who you are, what do you feel God is calling you to do with the rest of your life? What is the impact Spirit wants you to make on the world? And can you be conscious of that? Can you get up every morning and know what you're being called to do that day?



There's a slide. Can they see that? Can you see that slide now? There it is, right? Desire; problem. I want you to see that, once you have a vision, interesting things begin to happen. Because the bigger your vision is, you actually then begin to create a path for yourself. Okay?

Now, you would think, *“Well, if I have a vision, then I shouldn't have a problem. Like, God should take care of all those problems, because I have a vision and God is responsible for taking care of all that stuff. So it should just be a little walk in the park as I get from where I am today to where God's calling me to be. There shouldn't be any issues, any problems, any challenges. There would be no learning or growth or anything being caused to disrupt the apple cart. It should just be a lovely walk.”*

That's not the way I've experienced it. The way I've experienced it is: Desire and problems are two sides of the same coin. That every time you have a desire, it -- in and of itself -- creates a problem. And that problem isn't a problem, it's actually for your highest good, but it actually creates circumstances, situations. People will come in and out of your life. It creates things for you to overcome as part of your soul evolution to move into your vision.

And we don't like this part, right? We just want to have a vision for our life and we have a desire. We want God to hand it to us. We want to, *“Thank you very much, and what am I going to do with it the rest of the day?”*

It doesn't work that way. Every time you have a desire, it comes with problems. And the other side of the coin is every problem reveals a desire. Every problem reveals a desire. Even if the desire is, *“I don't want to do this again.”* Right? [Congregation laughs] But every problem reveals a desire.

And we actually need both! The bigger your desires, the more you're inviting issues, problems, challenges that will actually expand your soul and make you a greater individual, because you'll actually be able to hold more God than ever before. That's actually not a problem.

And what I want us to be very clear on tonight is: If you're going to have issues ... [Laughs] And just look ... [Feigns other person speaking:] *“I don't want issues!”* If you're going to have issues, would you be willing to have a vision that's big enough to justify that? If stuff's going to come into your life, you might as well get the biggest bang from it!

Like, if you're going to do it unconsciously, right? You can do it unconsciously. But when the bang comes into your life -- because it will! -- you're not going to see what it's here to reveal, because you didn't know what you were after.

Once you set a course for yourself; once you set a direction for your life; once you want an accomplishment ... It doesn't matter what it is: it could be an impact; it could be anything. It could be a

job thing, a family thing, it could be a community thing, it could be a church thing. Once you have a vision for your life, it's going to bring things to you to heal your soul. And we actually need that.

"Thank you, God, for all my stuff."

Together: [with congregation] *"Thank you, God, for all my stuff."*

Now, case in point: this week we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He had a vision for us. He had a vision for in his time that would transcend his time. And it's a vision that we fully have not lived in this time. One of his greatest speeches that I read at least annually is the "I Have a Dream" speech. And if you've never really given yourself permission to sit down and just read it -- or better yet -- just there's many versions of it that you can just listen to, it is profound. Because he is a visionary leader and he's instilling a vision on the world that we have not fully yet fully embraced. But it's a vision, right? And that vision was that we could live in a world that would be closer to the kingdom of heaven.

And so I'm going to read just a snippet of it, just because it's so good:

"So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. I have a dream that one day, even in the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with a heat of indignation, sweltering with the heat of oppression, that we will be able to transform it into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right down in Alabama little Black boys and Black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning: My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let

freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last."

Sometimes a vision [knocks on podium] requires more work. That takes longer. And sometimes it's harder. And yet, the visions that we are committed to – the visions that make a difference in our life and in our world – are those visions that we go into with all that we are. Where we put everything on the line.

See, I believe each and every one of us can live a greater life. But oftentimes, it takes a vision to move us out of the life that we know into a greater possibility that allows us to experience what God has for us. But if we keep living from that small idea, the small possibilities, the limited expressions, we miss out on the glory of God that truly is all around us.

So you are created in the image and likeness of God. That's no small thing! And yet, because you have the fullness of God within you, you were called to do more than you've ever done before. And as you hold the vision of possibilities, then we actually bring forth the glory of God into our lives, into our world in a way that establishes, I believe, God's vision for our world.

The dictionary defines vision as *"an act of power of anticipating that which will or may come to pass."* Vision gives us direction to make our goals and purpose a reality. It defines what we can impact in our life. A vision defines the possibilities out of the infinite possibilities.

So today, if you had to write a vision that was worthy of your spirit -- that was worthy of the glory of God; that was worthy of your spirit, of who you've come to be -- could you create a vision that was bigger than the vision that you lived when you walked in here? Because a breakthrough vision isn't always easy, but it is transformative.

You know, I read a lot in *Ink Magazine*. I really like *Ink Magazine*. I think it's inspiring. It just ... I like what they have to say about a lot of things. And this was from an article in *Ink Magazine*:

"What about a vision for your life?"

And he's talking about a vision for their company and organizations, because most of us believe that companies and organizations ... that everybody should have a vision for their company and their organization. But this author said:

"But what about a vision for your life? We often don't think about our life's vision the same way we do a company vision – but they really are the same. That, when you have a vision, it becomes a foundational piece that organizes everyone in your organization, that brings people together from different points of view into a common vision."

And what I believe to be so is that I need a vision every day for my life. Because every day I get up and it's a different me who crawls out of bed. Are you ever surprised by how you show up from moment to moment to moment? And so every day I look at my vision and I have this opportunity, when I look at my vision, to really have an opportunity to change, to move to another step.



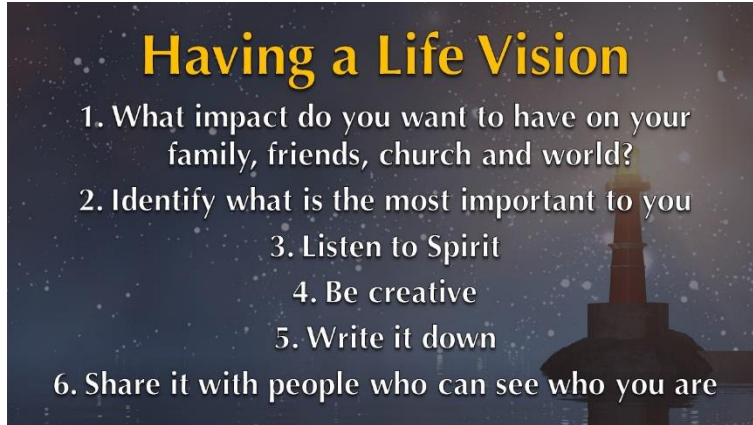
So let's look at the next slide. Can we get at that one over here?

So step one in this process is to define yourself, right? We've covered that, right? We worked on that for two weeks. Step two -- let's go to that one: What is your vision for your life?



And I want to make sure if you're going to have challenges and problems, problems with whatever your vision is, that you make your vision big enough to be worthy of the problems. Right? Small visions don't mean you're not going to have problems. It's just you're not going to get a big bang from them. You're not going to really unleash the fullness of God.

But bigger visions: not only does Spirit step in and provide the way, but it creates a greater vortex -- a greater power structure -- for your next level of good.



And let's go to three. Let's go to this one. "Having a Life Vision." Can you read that? From mine, it's a little small. Can you read it? Oh, you can read it? Good. Okay, so having a life vision. Let's look at this. I can't see it. I have notes; it's okay.

So the first one is: What impact do you want to have on your family? friends, church, and the world? I would love you to spend a half an hour answering that question. What impact would you

want to have on your family, friends, church or the world?

Two: Identify what's the most important to you. What is it? When you look at your life, what is the most important thing to you?

Three: Listen to Spirit. It's amazing to me that God has a vision for you whether you want it or not. That God has a vision for you! And all we have to do is really open our mind and heart and enter and allow the vision of God to speak to us, and have the courage to write it down.

Now, does it take courage to listen to Spirit and ask Spirit, "*Spirit, what's your vision for my life?*" [Laughs] Yes! Right? Because at that moment, we are letting go of control and we're turning our life over to a Power that actually has a bigger possibility than we could ever create.

So the third one is: Listen to Spirit.

Four: Be creative.

Five: Write it down. Because if we don't write it down, we lose it. It's like, "*What was that vision again?*"

Six: Share it with people that can see who you are. This is not something that you should share with people who see you as small. This is not something you share with people who don't believe in you. You share your vision with people that can see you the way that God sees you. And on those Tuesdays when

it's hard for you to believe in your vision, you call them and you say, "Do you remember what my vision is?"

And they say, "Of course I do, this is your vision; this is what you're about."

And you go, "And you still believe that that's possible?"

"Yeah, I do. I believe absolutely you're the one to make this happen."

And in that moment, it renews your faith. It gets you back up off the floor. And you begin to do that which you're called to do.

No matter who you are, no matter where you are in this life journey, I believe that each and every one of us could and should have a vision for the rest of our lives. It doesn't have to be ending world hunger, but it may be. It could be something that is just so important to your soul that you want to be about it in small and great ways every day. It could be a spiritual thing: a spiritual vision for your life. It could be loving or teaching or helping others. But I believe that each and every one of us is called a vision for our life that will, in fact, heal the world.

So, you ready?

So step one: Do you know who you are? Right? Do you know who you are? Do you know yourself in greater and greater ways every day?

And two: What is the impact that your soul is being asked to have on the world?

Can you just hold that? So every day you see who you are, and every day you see your vision for the world. And then at least one act every day that moves that vision forward. One act. One thing. It can be little; it can be great. But one thing every day that moves that vision forward. You willing? Pinky swear? [Congregants laugh]

Let's pray. I want you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. That there is but one Presence and one Power right here, right now. And we are the presence of giants: spiritual giants that surround us; and unfold us; and guide us; and direct us; and whisper in our ears that our world needs you to be about the most important thing. Our world needs you to be your best self.

So today we recommit to not only who we feel called to be, but our impact in the world. Holy Spirit, I am ready! I am ready every day to take tangible steps toward a vision that works, toward the kingdom of heaven. In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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