



Session 2: Leaders see a vision of what could be

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,
do more and become more, then you are a leader."*

- John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States

Leaders see something! They perceive and 'see' what could be, but may not yet be. They 'see' when they pray and when they serve in love. Vision is the lens through which we see life, purpose and priorities.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

"Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion." (Bill Hybels)

"A knife cuts because it has a narrow focus" (C Keith)

What are you passionate to give your life to – your 'holy discontent'?

- People going to a lost eternity in hell without Christ.
- Local and global poverty, hunger and homelessness.
- Injustice such as racism, sex trafficking and exploitation.
- People caught in addictions, abuse and cycles of hopelessness.
- People caught in the stigma of mental health issues - afraid to be honest.
- Orphans without a home or those who are lonely going unloved.
- The environment being destroyed by man-made greed.
- Children and youth not knowing the basics of the gospel.
- Prisoners abandoned and left without hope or care.

I would encourage leaders to read about people with a big kingdom-vision.

When I have read about revivals in history it so inspires and challenges me.

People like Martin Luther, John Wesley, Amy Carmichael, Jim Elliot, Charles Finney, David Brainerd, Evan Roberts, William and Catherine Booth...

- "Give me Scotland or I die" (John Knox) – My map of UK
- "Souls at any price and under all circumstances." (Charles Finney)
- "Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not whether they be clergymen or laymen, they alone will shake the gates of Hell and set up the kingdom of Heaven upon Earth." (John Wesley)

Vision: How to get it and grow in it.

1. Seeing a vision of God as He really is.

- All vision has to start with God Himself.
- So important to think rightly about God. To see God as He is!
- “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” (AW Tozer)
- Not seeing God in our own image. Our own version of God.
- God’s holiness, goodness, faithfulness, justice, wisdom, mercy, grace, love, sovereignty and judgements. This is what shapes us and ultimately, vision comes from our call to “follow” Jesus and make disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Vision comes from encountering God. This was true of the prophets, priests, kings, apostles and disciples in scripture.
 - The importance of repentance, consecration, holiness, faith and love. This gets us right with God and puts us in touch with His huge and broken heart for the world around us.
 - We need to repent and believe in order to ‘see’.
 - Jesus used this language in Revelation 3 as he counselled the church to buy eye salve to put on their eyes so they could see. Revelation 3:18
 - My times of deepening vision have come most from engaging with the Bible (such as Psalm 51 or Psalm 126), from seeking God in prayer alone on my knees and thus opening myself to His heart and will. Vision starts with knowing God Himself!

2. Seeing a vision of the world as God sees it.

- What does the Bible say about the need in our world?
 - Luke 19:10, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Our world is lost without God.
 - Matthew 23:37, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.” Jesus had vision concerning His people and he wept over them.
 - 2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” - God longs for people to be saved

- Isaiah 1:17, “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.” - We live in a broken and hurting world.
- We need a vision of **eternity**, the saving and transforming power of the **gospel**, for God’s **kingdom** to come, for **justice** to flow like rivers, for the world to believe in Jesus and come to know fulness of life in Him.
- A God-given vision always comes with a **burden** for the lost, the poor, the unloved - the nations. The last, the least and the lost!

*Oh! for a heart that is burdened!
 Infused with a passion to pray;
 Oh! for a stirring within me;
 Oh! for His power every day.
 Oh! for a heart like my Saviour,
 Who, being in an agony, prayed.
 Such caring for others, Lord, give me;
 On my heart let burdens be laid.
 My Father, I long for this passion,
 To pour myself out for the lost -
 To lay down my life to save others -
 "To pray," whatever the cost.
 Lord, teach me, Oh teach me this secret,
 I'm hungry this lesson to learn,
 This passionate passion for others,
 For this, blessed Jesus, I yearn.
 Father, this lesson I long for from Thee -
 Oh, let Thy Spirit reveal this to me.*

Staff Captain Mary Booth (Daughter of William Booth)

3. Seeing a vision of the church as God intended it

- There is so much more. Read the New Testament stories of church life and stories of revivals through history.
- Seeing our amazing identity as the people of God and great commission to a dying world.
 - We are born again—through the living and everlasting word of God – 1 Peter 1:23.
 - We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ to do good works that He has prepared for us to do – Ephesians 2:10
 - We are joint-heirs with Christ – Romans 8:17
 - We are ambassadors for Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:20
 - We are part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation – 1 Peter 2:9

- We are redeemed—forgiven of sins and made clean—through the blood of Christ – Ephesians 1:7
- We are to live holy lives by the grace of God and to declare His praise in the world – 2 Timothy 1:9
- We are greatly loved by God – Ephesians 2:4, Colossians 3:12
- We are strengthened with all power according to His glorious might – Colossians 1:11
- Seeing the possibilities of a church community saturated in the power of the Spirit and proclaiming and living out the full gospel.
 - Acts 2:42-47, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”
- **Have you ever stopped and really taken time to pray over our church vision and values?** This vision carries a real heart for revival and is for everyone. The values call us to deeper discipleship, kingdom lifestyle, radical love and Jesus-shaped evangelism.
- When you try to be still, pray and read the vision and values – what do you see when you pray and reflect?



- ENCOUNTERING GOD
- LIVING FOR THE KINGDOM
- LOVING DEEPLY
- SHARING JESUS

- Write it down here...

4. Please lead with vision and grow in it

- How to get and grow in vision?
 - Get right with God, **repent** of anything doubtful or sinful.
 - **Pray** and ask God for Him to give you a vision.
 - **Put yourself in the way** of vision – start serving, praying for people, exploring ideas etc.
 - **Identify** what, by God’s grace, you want to see happen?
 - **Keep going** in praying, asking, depending and acting. It is not static. Vision is like a river that flows and adapts.
 - **Make a plan or strategy** to put it into action. “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:14-26) See also Proverbs 15:22 and 16:1
 - **Setting goals** after planning is a good way to help move you forwards. They can be very simple and must be realistic. They are simply the vision broken down into smaller pieces.
 - **Share** your vision with others – remembering God calls us diversely as a body. Not everyone has your vision, but some will.
 - Stir up the vision, **write it down**, continually submit it to God; wait and persevere. See Habakkuk 2:2-3
 - Share the vision and **build a team** of like-minded people to encourage one another.
 - Share your vision with church leaders who may be able to bring support, advice, encouragement and healthy **accountability**.

- What does having such vision do in a leader?
 - **It breaks your heart, with what breaks God’s heart.**
 - Jeremiah 9:1, “Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.”
 - **It helps you wait on God, trusting and in dependence, to see Him move. Vision needs lots of patience and perseverance.**
 - Psalm 40, “I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry.”
 - **It makes you want to give your life away and while you count the cost; the sacrifice is worth it.** Vision is sacrificial and gives the pain a purpose.
 - Philippians 3:8, “What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.”

- **It helps put your life-priorities in order and stirs you from indifference.**
 - Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you aswell.”
- **It promotes a simple lifestyle, as pursuing other the things of this world take a back seat.**
 - Matthew 8:20; “Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”
- **It calls us to serve others in love so God gets the glory.**
 - We live to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21)
- **It offers real hope even in impossible situations.**
 - Exodus 3:16-17, “Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.”
- **It keeps us flexible, adaptable and malleable to God.**
 - 1 Corinthians 9:20-22, “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law... I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.”
- What are some barriers to growing in vision?
 - **Pride** – when we think we have all the answers and take the credit for accomplishments or blame others for things not working out.
 - **Fear** – trying to please people more than please God.
 - **Disappointment** – the desire to quit when things get tough, you face opposition or people don’t agree.
 - **Comfort** – people without vision live take the path of least resistance and aim for comfort and ease.

Leadership Bible Characters: Simeon & Anna – leaders who saw what God was doing.

Each week, we will look briefly at the life and character of Bible leaders. This week it is the not so well known Simeon and Anna from **Luke 2:22-40**.

The reason for choosing them is that **they were ordinary Israelites who saw something!** They had vision and they waited for it for a long time – they were older people who had lived in God’s presence. Then one day, their vision came into glorious fulfillment.

Luke 2:25-38 - ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss^[c] your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

³³ The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.^[d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Some insights for leaders from Simeon and Anna:

- 1) They were some of the first Israelites to recognise Jesus as Messiah
- 2) They kept faithful to old age – they were holy and devout people.
- 3) They had a vision – “the consolation of Israel” through the Messiah.
- 4) They were living with the Holy Spirit upon them.
- 5) They were prophetic – sensitive to the leading of the Spirit.
- 6) They had not given up hope, even though it must have felt hopeless.
- 7) They were not up-front leaders, but behind the scenes had a vital ministry of prayer, devotion, fasting and waiting upon God.
- 8) They gave a witness to Jesus. They were quiet, but not silent.
- 9) Their ministry was incredibly sacrificial – never left the temple, worshipping, fasted and prayed night and day!

Questions for Group Discussion

- Where does vision come from?
- Do you have a vision? If so, what is it?
- What do you want to see happen?
- Have you asked God for vision?
- Where is God leading us at the moment?
- How do Simeon and Anna challenge and encourage us to live and lead?