# Vision 2018 – Part 1

**Hebrews 11:4-16**

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1. **Introduction (Jeremiah 29:11)**
   1. **AD 2018 is just 5 weeks away!**
   2. **Let me ask you all something: Where do you see yourself in a year…, in five years…, in twenty years?**
      1. Some see themselves finally married, others see themselves on a new job, or pregnant, or financially secure. Some see themselves successful in a business, and others see themselves still in the same old place, living the same old way. Some see themselves healthier, and others only see the TV!
      2. Let me tell you… Some will leave this earth, and enter into the presence of the Lord Jesus!
      3. While SOME of you will enter hell, kicking and screaming, for all eternity! Regretting living the devil’s lie that you can live as you please, and God is dead, and hell doesn’t exist!
      4. Where WILL you be? What will YOU be doing in a year?
   3. **Here is a more important question: Where does GOD see you?**
      1. When Jesus died on the cross, He saw you and I without hope and without God
      2. And so He set out to change your and my future! (Jer 29:11)
         1. Jer 29:11 *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*.
         2. He changed our “END” by taking the place of each and every one of us, under the righteous wrath of Almighty God for our sins (CROSS)
         3. He changed it by offering it to EVERY sinner who would ever be born, inviting “whosoever” to just fully trust that what he did was eternally enough to forgive you and save you for ever!
         4. And 37 years ago, believing on Jesus as a 17 year old teenager, Christ changed my life, and my future!
      3. How does God see your life NOW?
         1. As still like an unsaved man or woman?
            1. Living, talking, thinking like you always have? Is that how He sees you?
            2. Then you surely are NOT born again
         2. Maybe rebellious against the will of God, and fighting His work in your heart? Then surely you will never be happy and know the fulfilled life of a yielded Christian!
         3. Or maybe He sees a tender heart, yearning to be more like Jesus, serving others, and making a difference in our generation!
   4. **Don’t you think you ought to find out where GOD wants you, and what He wants you and I doing?** (Read Jer 29:11 again. Then Psalm 37:23,24)
   5. **It would help to have a God-given view of the future – don’t you think?**
      1. Not a career plan; not a dream; not a hope; but a vision
      2. Not a self-made vision either – that is the big thing these days – SELF-INSPIRATION! No!
      3. A VISION! A God-given, Holy Spirit inspired, Bible based vision for yourself, your family, for this church, and for our nation!
   6. **Today is Vision Sunday!**
   7. **Let’s catch a vision of what our lives, and our church should be like, both tomorrow, and all next year!**
2. **Background (Hebrews 11:4-12)**
   1. **Notice the people listed in Hebrews chapter 11…**
      1. Abel (11:4)
      2. Enoch (11:5)
      3. Noah (11:7)
      4. Abraham (11:8)
      5. Sarah (11:11)
   2. **These people, all had a vision – they all could see something, no one else saw**
   3. **Same with Moses (11:27)**
   4. **They could see what they were supposed to be, instead of only what they were**
      1. Abel (11:4) – saw what worshipping God really was – through the substitution of a lamb
      2. Enoch (11:5) – saw no death in his future (AMEN)! And so he walked with God every day!
      3. Noah (11:7) – saw a coming flood, and so sacrificed EVERYTHING so he could save his family
      4. Abraham (11:8) – saw children and grandchildren numbering the stars of the sky
      5. Sarah (11:11) – saw her old frail frame of a body, getting pregnant and carrying a child, and giving birth to that promised son at 90 years old!
      6. Moses (11:27) – endured! And saw the Promised Land!
   5. **We need their vision** 
      1. We desperately need their way of seeing things!
      2. Because ONLY God-given view of the future enables us to put up with suffering, troubles, to endure failures, disappointments, and especially delays!
      3. That’s why God wrote every page of this BOOK!
3. **Message**
   1. **What Exactly is a Vision? (Hebrews 11:13-16)**
      1. By definition: **Vision is Foresight, a Sense of Purpose, a God-inspired Plan for everything from this moment forward! That is a vision!**
      2. The Bible describes a Vision in Hebrews 11:13-16 as:
         1. Something we can see ONLY by faith – by believing what GOD says is true (11:13)
            1. THAT is the testimony of ALL who have ever gone before us – “By faith” “THROUGH faith”, etc!
         2. Something that is far off
            1. Not instantaneous like microwave pop-corn, but something that might not even all happen in our lifetime!
            2. But, something way off on the HORIZON!
            3. Somebody once said, “Vision is the gap between the present and the future!”
            4. And to get all of us across that “gap”, we all need a God-given vision OF the future
         3. Vision is Something that hasn’t happened yet – but you know it will!
            1. It is not the fulfilment of all that God has for us right now, but the confidence that we HAVE it yet to come!
            2. A Canadian pastor named Mark Buchanan (New Life Community Baptist Church) tells a story of a time he went camping with a friend:
            3. It illustrates exactly what a Christian’s vision and confidence is like…
            4. “One spring weekend” Mark writes, “a friend and I took our sons and two of their friends camping on the west coast of Vancouver Island in Canada. It turned out to be one of the wettest, coldest weekends of the wet and cold season. We hiked down the muddy trail in slanting gray rain, arriving at our site sodden and chilled. We set up our tents on the beach, between the edge of the forest and the tide line, tucked in behind a rough windscreen of driftwood. But the wind and the rain swooped in on us anyway, merciless. We huddled around the meager warmth of a fire that sputtered in the heavy downpour. The wetness and the sand found its way into our tents, our food, our clothes, our sleeping bags, crusting and drenching everything. We spent most of our time scratching and shivering and trying to stay warm.
            5. And dreaming. Dreaming of our homes: the clean hotness of bath water, the comfort and warmth of dry clothes and beds, the tastiness of food that wasn’t damp or gritty or burnt. We were, sure enough, miserable. But how much more deplorable our lot would have been without a clear vision of the homes to which we would soon return. There we would peel off our damp, clinging, scratchy clothes, dance in a hot shower, dress in fleece pajamas, and rest beneath a down quilt, our heads on a soft pillow. What made the camping experience bearable – light and momentary – was knowing what awaited us at home.
            6. A lot of people, even “Christians”, only enjoy God in the here and now, and when things get rough, they quit! They have NO vision – no confidence in the home they are going to when this life is all over!
         4. A God-given Vision is Fully Persuaded / CONVINCED by the promises of God
            1. It is something GOD shows us to do, and motivates us from the inside
            2. If God can’t convince you to live for the Lord in 2018, nobody can
            3. I preach my heart out, and pray, and labour in this Book, only to watch countless families, and individuals live day after day the same! Still smoking, still drinking, still addicted to their TV and Netflix and never handing out a soul-saving Gospel tract, and NEVER reading through their Bible!
         5. Embracing those promises – means embracing, holding onto what you see *way out* on the HORIZON instead of the few “trinkets” you may have here right now!
         6. Confessing that this is not our life – our world – our home - We are just a passing through. As the song “This World is Not My Home” says:
            1. This world is not my home - I'm just a-passing through
            2. My treasures are laid up - Somewhere beyond the blue.
            3. The angels beckon me - From heaven's open door
            4. And I can't feel at home - In this world anymore.
         7. Yearning for another world, another country – a city in heaven – the NEW Jerusalem
            1. MY affection is anchored in another city than Cork or Ballincollig
            2. MY home is a mansion over there!
            3. I yearn for the day I will walk on those streets of gold
            4. And especially for when I will bow at the very feet of the One who loved me and gave Himself for me on that cross so long ago!
            5. I look forward to home folks! HOME!
         8. Only THAT view of things pleases God
   2. **Vision is more than WHAT we can see. It is HOW we see (Eph 1:18)**
      1. The apostle Paul specifically prayed for the Christians in the city of Ephesus that they would be able to see well beyond any suffering, and struggles, and see all the riches in Christ that we all have as believers!
         1. You see, Pain, obstacles, enemies, disappointments – all usually cloud our view of God
         2. But a right vision of Christ, of heaven, of and of Christian suffering clears up our view of Pain, obstacles, enemies, and disappointments!
      2. How do you see your life?
         1. Either you will see God through your sufferings
         2. Or you will learn to see your sufferings through Christ Jesus! Which is FAR better!
      3. I will talk more about this tonight in Part 2!
   3. **Vision is NOT Enough**
      1. Seeing the goal post, the plan, the direction that we should all be going, is NOTHING unless we are all striving FOR that future.
         1. Most everyone I know can point to the goal line, and the finish line
         2. But so few actually GRAB THE BALL so-to-speak, and head for the goal!
      2. So, Love what’s on the Horizon! (Rom 8:18) – yearn for what’s ahead!
      3. Stay the Course (Philp 3:13,14)
         1. No matter how hard, or what it costs! No matter the setbacks, disappointments, hardships
         2. Believe me, it is going to cost more and more to follow Jesus Christ! To believe the Bible. To try and live pure and good!
      4. And especially, Finish the Course – so few ever finish
   4. **Every Christian Needs a God-Given Vision (Acts 14:19,20; 2Cor 4:16-18)**
      1. The ability to see beyond bills, troubles, storms, and see the CALM, the destination, the Purpose of everything happening!
      2. Without a look beyond the bills, the struggles, the stress, the schedules, the job, the lack of a job… Without an ability to see beyond all that…
      3. You will lose hope – full stop!
      4. But WITH a vision of what we are supposed to be doing
      5. We will just keep on going (Acts 14:19-20) – Paul was STONED and left for dead! When he “woke up” he went right back into the very city that had stoned him!
         1. How can Paul say that his affliction was light (2Cor 4:16-18)? Prison, beatings, shipwrecked, starving, abandoned, misunderstood, falsely accused, just about naked…
         2. Only because he could see the invisible!
         3. Not a made-up, make-believe world of fantasy, and virtual reality
         4. But a place that is eternal (2Cor 5:1) – a way of life that is spiritual
         5. A future that is laid out by God
   5. **What is OUR Vision as a Church for 2018?**
      1. It is time we build!
         1. The next generation – not just letting then “find their own way”
         2. Godly men and women – they don’t just come naturally!
         3. Godly Families, who love God and serve together!
         4. Churches all across Ireland and the world
         5. Our own church building – something like this place as our very own
      2. We will learn about it from two men in the Bible – Ezra and Nehemiah
      3. That’s what 2018 and beyond is going to be about!
      4. Working together – not just a few of us either
      5. Putting our money, our time, our talents, and our efforts where our vision is!
      6. Evangelising our city and surrounding areas more than ever with the soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ
         1. “The Supreme Task of the Church is the Evangelization of the World.” Oswald J Smith
         2. There is nothing more important than THAT!
         3. A pastor friend of mine named Jim Preston said this, “If the Great Commission is true, and it is, we need a bigger vision.”
4. **Invitation**
   1. **Tonight, Part 2 – The Responsibilities of a Church’s Vision**
   2. **But right now, Will YOU Catch My Vision?**
      1. How do I get you to sign up?
      2. I signed up 37 years ago when a man named Richard Lewis asked, “Who can SEE the multitudes as they really are? Lost! Who can see a world in need of saving? Who cares what happens to people’s souls without the Gospel? WHO WILL GO?” And I said, I will!
      3. I have never got over that vision!
      4. I have never regretted surrendering my life, my plans, my future into the sovereign hands of Almighty God!
      5. Will you commit to building your family, building this church, and our ministries by the Bible? ALL this next year, and beyond?
      6. Stand with me
      7. Or maybe kneel with me
      8. Let’s dedicate 2018 as the year this church BUILDS like we have never built before!