

IMAGINE

Ephesians 3:20

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or IMAGINE, according to the power that works in us,"

If I have ever preached a God message for this church... I am preaching it today. In my spirit, an awakening occurred as I worked on it and prayed over it. God is showing me things about our future. I will share some of those things today.

Recently, I read a book by Pastor Tony Stewart that really spoke to me. I thought it might speak to you, so I'm making it our curriculum for Wednesday nights in 2024. Last week when I met with Danielle to review the book, I saw again the title of Chapter 3 ... **"Can you see it?"**

Can you see it? Is it possible to ***imagine*** a future for our church where God favors us and we grow? Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Paul prophesied to the church, ***"[God] is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond what we can imagine."***

The word imagine means to 'form a mental image of' (something not actually present to the senses). In other words, you can see it even though it's not there.

Jake Schmelzer said it like this ... *"Most people don't have the ability to see what doesn't exist. Over 60% of the population are "present" thinkers. In other words, they think in the moment and have trouble thinking ahead. That's why leaders exist! To paint the picture of a preferred future. To lead people from here to there."*

Today I will strive to help you develop a mental image of new possibilities. We view the world through the lens of our own experience and perceptions. We regularly interpret the information we receive, and we each choose different ways to respond to it. The writer Anais Nin was right when she said, *"We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are."* In effect, often we see only what we choose to see.

Imagine a dusty street in ancient Jerusalem. A man sits in the shadows, unseeing eyes turned downward, ears trained to the sound of passing feet and whispered judgments. He's heard them all his life - the debates about his sin, his parents' sin, the divine punishment that must have caused his blindness.

The religious leaders had written his story before he could speak his first word. Their theology was clear: suffering equals sin. Simple math, they thought. The crowds accepted this equation without question, and over time, perhaps he did too. How could he not? When everyone tells you the same story about yourself, it becomes the lens through which you view your own existence.

But then came a day when different footsteps approached. Jesus stopped before him, and for the first time in his life, someone saw him - truly saw him - not as a theological puzzle to solve

or a cautionary tale of sin's consequences, but as a person created in God's image, worthy of wholeness.

In that moment, something profound shifted. The man's physical healing was miraculous, yes, but perhaps even more remarkable was the healing of his identity. When brought before the Pharisees, he stood tall, his voice clear and confident: ***"One thing I do know, I was blind, but now I see."***

The irony wasn't lost on those present. The man born blind could now see clearly, while the religious leaders, despite their perfect vision, remained spiritually blind. They had constructed their reality so rigidly that even a miracle couldn't penetrate their certainty. They saw what they expected to see, what they needed to see to maintain their worldview.

This ancient story whispers a truth that echoes through the centuries: When we change how we see, we change what we see. The Pharisees chose to see sin; Jesus chose to see possibility. The man chose to see hope; the crowd chose to see scandal. Perception changes everything.

Pastor Tony Stewart said, *"Perception is powerful. It's the way you see things – your awareness, your view – your insight to situations and circumstances and life itself. Your perception greatly influences how you think, how you speak, and ultimately how you act. It will either paralyze you or propel you. It can fill your heart with fear or great anticipation or something amazing just around the bend. That's why it is important to periodically pause and ask yourself, How am I seeing things?"*

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

God told Abram in **Genesis 15**, to ***"Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them."*** That vision planted the seed for Abram's future. God told Abram to **LOOK**. Get a picture in your mind. God reveals things to us through thoughts or in the form of visual images.

Consider other Biblical visionaries like Caleb, Joshua, Aaron, and Moses. They could **see** the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. It was the place God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They could envision the people of Israel inhabiting that land. This was their positive picture of a preferred future.

By nurturing that vision, they eventually achieved victory. Their dream became a reality, and **the possibility became the possession**. Empowered by God's vision, they conquered! The journey towards a purposeful destination begins with a compelling vision.

I want you to see the vision because SEEING IS BELIEVING. It is my prayer that you look beyond what "is" and consider what "could be." I am asking you to imagine with me what "could be" at LifePointe Church!

1. **Imagine a church** where God's love hits you like a tidal wave the second you walk in. We're talking next-level, can't-ignore-it kind of love that makes you feel like you've come home before you've even found a seat!
2. **Imagine a church** whose people are so fired up to serve, they're practically arm-wrestling for the chance to make a difference. They're out there turning the community upside down with God's love!
3. **Imagine a church** in which age is just a number. Where the seniors are dropping wisdom bombs and the youngsters are bringing the heat, and everyone's growing together!
4. **Imagine worship so real**, so powerful, it's like God Himself showed up and said, "Let's do this!" We're not talking about going through the motions - we're talking about encounters that'll wreck you!
5. **Imagine leaders** that don't just teach the Word, but they live it so hard that every member becomes a walking, talking billboard for Jesus. They're not just talking the talk; they're walking the walk - and everyone's noticing!
6. **Imagine a church** where folks are busting out of its four walls! We're talking about a mission that's got no off switch, reaching the people everyone else forgot about!
7. **Imagine a church** within which broken lives get put back together again. Not just a spiritual quick fix, but total restoration - mind, body, and soul!
8. **How about a church** that's pumping out leaders like a spiritual assembly line? We're not waiting for Superman - we're creating an army of world-changers right here, right now!

This is the kind of church that doesn't just change Sunday - it changes every day. It's not just a building; it's a revolution. What does it take to have a church like this? In one word ...

partnership! Bishop Mitch Corder said, "Partnership is the currency of the Kingdom."

FIRST, WE PARTNER WITH GOD

The "**Him**" in **Ephesians 3:20** is God, and He ***"is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or IMAGINE..."***

Praying in faith and professing God's Word is how we partner with God. It involves finding scriptures that are relevant to your life and speaking them out loud.

- Take control of your finances, family, and church by speaking life over them.
- Stop describing your circumstances! Instead, speak God's Word over your situation.
- Take in God's living, breathing, active Word so that your mind has a firm foundation!

Make a list of the verses and phrases that you will proclaim today that will persuade your heart that God's promises are true for you.

SECOND, WE PARTNER WITH EACH OTHER

Paul wrote a letter to the Christians in Phillipi and said something profound, ***“you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.”*** *Philippians 1:5 NLT*

To bring this vision to life I need your **partnership**! I need you to see what I see, and I need you to believe what I believe ... because I can't do it without you! When Nehemiah shared his vision to rebuild the walls, the people gave of their time, talent, and treasure. They believed in the vision enough to go all in. The Bible says that ***the people had a mind to work***. Together we can achieve everything we've imagined!

Can you see it? I can see it. If you are having trouble looking past what “is” to see what “can be,” then I will see it for you until you can see it yourself. That's what Elisha did for his servant Gehazi. Gehazi could not see it until Elisha prayed for him. That's what I'm doing. I'm praying for an Elisha anointing. I'm asking the Lord to allow us to see everything he wants us to see.

The truth is, there's more to life than meets the eye. Beyond the natural is the supernatural ... a dimension of the spirit that is far more real than what you can see. You can have perfect 20/20 vision in the natural but be totally blind in the spirit. A pair of glasses alters the way you see. I am asking God to give you a new set of lenses that will alter the way you see! I want you to see the way God sees. Because...

IT'S VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HIT A TARGET YOU CAN'T SEE

Every church without a vision is blind! Every ministry without a vision is blind! Every leader without a vision is blind! Every person without a vision is blind! You have an idea of where you want to go and what you want to achieve, but without a clear vision, you'll wander aimlessly and never reach your destination.

On the contrary, when you have a vision, it's like turning the light on! It's that moment when hazy becomes clear. The haze dissipates and you can now SEE the target. And once you can see it, you can focus on it with all your energy and determination. All you need is a target. You need something to take aim at. Something to point to. Something to point others to.

Henry David Thoreau said, *“In the long run men hit only what they aim at.”*

CLOSING

Before we receive communion, I want to share a quote and a scripture:

Our quote is from Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho:

"I liken the heart of man to a painter's canvas. What a man dreams and envisions is the paint. If the Christian takes the brush of faith and begins to paint on the canvas of his heart the pictures that God has revealed to him, those revelations become reality."

In ***Isaiah 43:18-19*** we read, ***"But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland."*** NLT

IMAGINE: Seeing Beyond the Present

Ephesians 3:20

Key Kingdom Principle

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us."

Understanding Vision

1. Power of Perception

- We see things as we are, not as they are
- Vision shapes reality
- Perception either paralyzes or propels
- Spiritual sight transcends physical sight
- Our view determines our future

2. Biblical Vision Examples

- Abraham counting stars
- Caleb and Joshua seeing the Promised Land
- The blind man receiving sight
- Moses envisioning deliverance
- Nehemiah seeing rebuilt walls

Church Vision Elements

Imagine a Church With:

1. Overwhelming love and welcome
2. Passionate service mindset
3. Intergenerational unity
4. Powerful, authentic worship
5. Living-word leadership
6. Beyond-walls mission
7. Life restoration focus
8. Leadership multiplication

Partnership Principles

1. Partnering with God

- Pray in faith
- Profess God's Word
- Speak life over circumstances
- Stand on scriptural promises
- Build on firm foundation

2. Partnering with Each Other

- Share the vision
- Contribute time, talent, treasure
- Work with unified purpose
- Support leadership
- Maintain collective focus

Keys to Vision Achievement

1. Clear Sight

- Look beyond what "is"
- See what "could be"
- Focus on possibilities
- Maintain target focus
- Embrace supernatural perspective

2. Active Response

- Paint vision on heart's canvas
- Take aimed action
- Move with purpose
- Expect new things
- Participate in God's work

Remember

"It's virtually impossible to hit a target you can't see." Vision provides direction, purpose, and possibility. When we change how we see, we change what we see. God is "about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

