



Spring 2017 – **ProVision – Serving**
(1 John 3:1-3, 19 February 2017, Paul Langham)

Note

If you are a member of the church family and have not yet done so, please collect your ProVision pack on your next visit. Thank you.

Reading

1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1 John 3:1-3

Introduction – recap

Today is the last in our 3-week mini-series on ProVision: we've looked at

- Financial Giving
- Growing
- Today = serving

On 5 February, I spoke about financial giving ...

... in fact, I spoke mainly about vision, because giving always follows vision

God's Vision, as expressed in scripture, is always both individual & global – 2 examples

Abraham – *1 The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2 'I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'* Genesis 12:1-3

The disciples – *'... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'* Acts 1:8

Our Vision

**is to play our part in growing the Kingdom of God
in Clifton, Bristol and beyond**

I spoke about the Kingdom of God and we saw that the Kingdom comes wherever Jesus is present.

And that people pursue him for that reason.

So today, we pursue him for the same reason. Pursuing the presence of Jesus (individually and corporately) is the number one means by which we play our part in growing the Kingdom.

God's design is that the Kingdom within us becomes the Kingdom around us

Kingdom Living ...

We saw that this happens when we, like Jesus, are filled with the Holy Spirit ...

I spoke about turning vision into reality, with 4 practical steps we are taking to do this in 2017

1. Daniel's Windows
2. Kingdom Living
3. The Spire Coffee Shop
4. The appointment of a full-time youth worker

I spoke about our response

For 2017 the PCC has set a faith budget of £638,000, an increase of £90,000 compared to 2016. Big ticket items in this budget include

- increasing our Diocesan Parish Share contribution to £210,000 (an increase of £28,000 compared to 2016) and
- the appointment of a full-time Youth Pastor (salary circa £25,000 pa).

To meet this budget we are looking for the church family to increase giving income for 2017 to £420,000 (this is an increase of £34,000 compared with what was given during 2016).

Generosity

I'm using the same scripture today as 2 weeks ago.

Then, the focus was on our core value of generosity – most churches would speak of love ... but we asked the question, what does love look like ...?

1 John 3:16 gives us the answer.

God's response to vision was to give. His vision was to redeem an entire humanity and to transform a cosmos. To that, he gave his only Son, Jesus.

We have the same vision – what will we give?

As vicar, I know nothing of what people give – only 2 or 3 ever see details of giving. But I am told that around 75% of those who give regularly to Christ Church have not increased their giving for the past 4 or 5 years. If that is you, may I urge you to pray about that this year. If everyone made even a small increase to their giving, the impact would be wonderful.

Some of you are members here but haven't yet started giving. May I invite you prayerfully to respond to our Vision with your giving?

No one will ever try to tell you what to give – only the Lord can do that. I firmly believe that as we pursue the presence of Jesus, he will show us how to respond.

We acknowledge that there are some for whom giving financially is difficult. Please do not feel under any human pressure to give financially – all we ask is that you pray and ask the Lord what he wants you to do.

We'd be grateful to have your **ProVision** forms back as quickly as possible – whether you are increasing or decreasing your giving, or leaving it the same, our finance team need all the information they can get, to help them plan and steward our finances faithfully.

Serving

So today I want to talk about serving ...

2 weeks ago, I underscored the shift in emphasis in church life around the globe with regard to its outward vision. Bluntly, the church God is reawakening has taken its focus off building itself to growing the Kingdom. It has raised its vision from simply securing the individual salvation of a fortunate few to the transformation of communities and cities, the evangelisation of the nations ...

A similar transformation is occurring in the way we view our interior life as churches

1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1
John 3:1-3

Where 2 weeks ago, I drew out the core value of generosity, today I want to consider God's invitation

- into family
- into life
- into discipleship

1. The invitation into family – that ultimately provides us with all we need for healthy motivations for service.

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

John is here detailing God's invitation into family. It's why we talk of being a church family.

This gives us our identity and authority come from our relationship with the man who has become king and who one day will return to be revealed fully as king of kings and lord of lords.

Some people's experience of human family can leave them feeling jaded at this analogy.

Kris Vallotton ... the global move from denomination (where people group because they agree and divide when they no longer agree) to family (where people group because they recognize that the Lord calls them into relationship which can survive disagreement)

Model of the Trinity ... it provides us with an example of perfect, serving relationship.

Our core value: One in heart and mind ...

Unhealthy motivations for serving ...

2. The invitation into life. Service is life, the whole of life and that was the posture Jesus served from.

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:9-10

3. The invitation into discipleship. Serving is all tied up in discipleship and it's our response to the 'Follow me' of Jesus that opens up a world of discovery and adventure. It is here that we unveil passions and inspiration ...

25 Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' Matthew 20:25-28

Healthy Serving

- Gift
- Passion
- Time

Opportunity – stalls / Invitation

On behalf of the whole leadership here at Christ Church ...

... Thank you!

Questions

1. Have you settled your response to giving with the Lord?
2. What, if anything, needs to change in order for you to pursue the presence of Jesus, as an individual follower and as part of the family here at CC?
3. Do you know where your gifts lie?
4. What's your passion? What fires you? What fills you with joy?
5. Are you already serving? If not, how can we help you find your place?

Paul Langham, February 2017