Own the Vision - Part 2



Finishing His Work **(John 4:31-34)**

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. I am so glad that you’re here to worship with us this morning as we celebrate the Word and the presence of the Living God. I am hoping and praying that you’ve come with the same expectation as I have, that we’re gathering together to worship and celebrate our God who can do anything and that we are about to see the miraculous played out in our lives.

This morning, we’re continuing our message series entitled “Own the Vision” as we consider our shared relationship with Jesus, what he’s calling us to be, what he’s calling us to do, and how he’s building our faith as we come together as the Church. And so,

today we’re going to start in John chapter 4 and we’re going to talk about “Finishing His Work”.

We’re going to pick up just moments after Jesus had encountered a woman at a well. This well was known as Jacob’s well, it was outside a town called Sychar in the district of Samaria; and it was there that Jesus had offered her Living Water and suggested that she go back to town to get her husband. At this point the disciples returned from town and were amazed that he was talking to this Samaritan woman. Well, she seized this interruption, this opportunity and hurried back to town telling everybody, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” And so, as Jesus and his disciples were resting at the well, the disciples saw a crowd coming from town and they were concerned about Jesus’ well-being. They wondered if he might be a little bit hungry, and so in verse 31, “His disciples urged him,

"Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about” (John 4:31).

His disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him a Big Mac while we were away? You know, did somebody give Jesus something to eat?”

And Jesus replies, saying something so powerful and so important for us today in verse 34, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

In other words, Jesus says, “My food, my nourishment, what satisfies me, is to pour myself into the lives of others, to do the will of God and to finish the work he sent me to do.” And so, he was concerned about ministering to others, but his disciples were concerned about themselves, so they urged him to eat something. They were worried about the team, what they would eat, and they wanted to make sure that he was okay; but Jesus wasn’t concerned with himself, because he was concerned about contributing to the lives of others. It was that which he could do for others that actually nourished him in a way that goes beyond our human nature and beyond our ability to understand.

You see, the reality is that we’re consumers, by nature we’re self-centered and selfish, and it starts at an early age, because you don’t ever have to teach a child how to be selfish. You don’t ever have to teach a two-year-old how to have a temper tantrum and scream “mine,” you just don’t, because their nature and our nature is to be self-centered and selfish. It’s just as the Bible tells us in Psalm chapter 58,

“Even from birth …from the womb we’re wayward…” (Psalms 58:3).

But we see that Jesus had a higher calling; not only were his ways higher than our ways, his thoughts higher than our thoughts, but was he born without sin, born without an earthly father, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And the Bible tells us in Matthew chapter 20, that Jesus didn’t come to be served… “but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

So, Jesus encourages us, telling us, “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (1 Corinthians 10:24).

Basically, what he was saying is that, “I have a higher calling than just thinking about myself. I want to contribute and make a difference in the lives of others.”

Now, those of you around my age, grew up walking into a certain restaurant, ordering a burger, and what you’d get would be, two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, a pickle, and an onion on a sesame-seed bun. And that’s exactly what you got every single time, until something happened at another restaurant across town that literally changed our way of thinking.

It began with a simple slogan, “Have it your way,” and suddenly when you wanted a burger, you were in control. And so, now when you walk in, if you don’t want cheese, mayonnaise, or pickles; whatever it is, you’re in charge, because you’re the customer, you’re the consumer, and it’s all about you.

Suddenly, we became a consumer-minded society, where it’s all about me, it’s about what I want, because I want to have it my way. And unfortunately, that consumer mindset has permeated our culture so much that it’s infiltrated the church. Nowadays, people actually go church shopping, they’ll look for a church they like, a church that fits, a church that meets their needs, because that’s our cultural mindset today.

But you and I are no longer “Playing it Safe”, because we’re “Finishing His Work”. We’re no longer going to be consumers, but now we’re going to be contributors. We understand that as followers of Jesus, that he is in us and our food is to do the work and the will of God. And it’s that which nourishes us, because as followers of Jesus, we recognize that we’re the Church and we exist to bring the light and love of Jesus into this world.

And so, here’s what I want to do, if you’re not here every time the doors are open, if you’re not serving in at least one area, if you’re not praying daily for your church and your leaders, if you’re not bringing guests all the time, if you’re not involved in missions, and if you’re not representing God in some capacity in the community; then this message is really designed to speak to you, because I believe that God wants to stir you to something greater in your life. He wants you to “Own the Vision” of this church.

The first thing I want you to own and make yours personally is that if you’re a follower of Jesus, you’ve been called and set apart to use your gifts to make a difference in his Church. And so, as we’re “Connecting God and Community” together, God has called you, number one, to serve with your gifts.

## 1. Serving with Your Gifts

The problem today is that most people think of the church as being a building, but God never intended for the church to be a building. As a matter of fact, the church has never been a building. When Jesus said, “I will build my church and all the powers of hell won’t overcome it” he wasn’t referring to strapping on a toolbelt and building a church with a steeple. He was talking about you and I, like living stones, being built into a spiritual house, serving and offering spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Peter 2:5).

In fact, several decades after Jesus resurrection, in 70 A.D., the temple in Jerusalem was actually destroyed by the Roman government. And it wasn’t until three hundred years later that with the approval of the Roman government that church gatherings and church ownership of buildings was even allowed. And so, we need to realize that the church is not just a building, it’s not just a place or an event, but in its very essence, the church is a body of people living their lives together with Jesus Christ at the center. We are the body of Christ, we’re the church, and we’re here for the world. It’s Jesus dwelling within us, here as Lord, God, and Savior, who’s connecting us together. He’s the one who’s changing lives, he’s the one who’s empowering us and working through us, so that we’re blessed and more people get to meet him.

Today, you and I have the privilege of serving Jesus, serving the body of Christ, because he’s has given each one of us a specific unique spiritual gift to use for his kingdom. The apostle Peter describes it to us this way in first Peter chapter 4,

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ…” (1 Peter 4:10-11).

And so, if you’ve trusted in Jesus Christ, and you’re following him, the Holy Spirit will not only give life to your mortal body, but he’ll also empower you to minister to others and make a difference in this world. You see, our God can and does still heal and perform miracles, but often, many times and in various ways, God prefers to work through his people. As a matter of fact, Hebrews chapter 2 tells us, referring to the good news, that it was first announced by the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard him, and then verse four tells us,

“God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will” (Hebrews 2:4).

And the apostle Paul tells the Church, “I don’t want you to be without knowledge of spiritual gifts” and he says in first Corinthians, chapter 12, in verse four,

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

And so, Paul describes the fullness of God, the manifestation of the Spirit, as that divine power involved in the giving, the administration, and the application of spiritual gifts. It’s through the Holy Spirit that Christ works in all people in his Church for the common good. And so, each believer receives a spiritual gift that’s useful for the kingdom of God, that’s to be used to build up the body of Christ, and to further the proclamation of the good news.

Paul continues in first Corinthians to describe nine of the gifts that God has for the church, but I want to jump over to Romans chapter 12 as we see how God wants us to use our gifts in the church. Looking at verse six through eight, Paul says,

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully” (Romans 12:6-8).

Now, Paul lists seven more spiritual gifts and there are many more, but if you’ve received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and you don’t know how you’re gifted, I pray that you’ll take the next step to discover what your spiritual gift is. And so, I’m going to give you some passages of Scripture to look at, I’ve recorded them in the bulletin so that you can study them and pray about them later. But I want to encourage you to seek God, to seek your spiritual gift, because God wants you to use your gift in the Church to serve people for His glory.

Now there are many places where you can discover individual spiritual gifts, but there are four specific passages of Scripture where they are listed. These are:

1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28

1 Peter 4:9-11

Ephesians 4:11-14

Romans 12:6-8

I want to encourage you in this, because Jesus said, “I am going to send you what my father has promised” (Luke 24:49). And that was the promised power of the Holy Spirit, power to be witnesses of Jesus (Acts 1:8). And so, we’ve been called and therefore we should be stirred up and motivated understanding that we don’t just go to church, but that we are the church. We’re not consumers, but we’re contributors, and God has called us to make a difference.

Today, you need to know that if you’ve been saved, you’ve been purchased by the blood of Jesus, and God has given you a gift to use in his Church. In other words, he wants every single person in the Church to be active, and making a difference in the Church. Paul says it this way in first Corinthians,

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

And you and I are that body, we’re unified around the gospel, we’re coming together with one purpose, and as we’re empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit, we’re the hands and feet of Jesus. That means there’s something for everybody to do, and so, if you’re not doing anything in the Church, then there’s something that God wants to be done that’s not being done.

God wants His Church to be full of people using their gifts to make a difference in the lives of others. And God has called you, if you’re a follower of Jesus, to serve in the Church to make a difference. And so, thought number one: God calls you to serve with your gifts, and number two, God calls you to let your light shine in the world.

## 2. Letting your Light Shine

Not only do we serve in his church by building one another up, but you serve as his Church for his glory by letting your light shine in the world. This is what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, verse 14 through 16, speaking to his followers he said,

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

In other words, Jesus said, “Let your light shine into the darkness. Let it shine into all the world. Let it shine so that they see your good deeds. Let it shine so that they see your commitment to Jesus. Let it shine so that they see that you’re different. Let it shine so that they see that you care. And let it shine so that they see that you love them.

We need to let our light shine before the world so that they may see our good works and be drawn to the God we serve. Maybe asking you, “Why are you so different? Why do you care about me?” And so, you’ll want to let them see your good deeds, to let them notice your involvement in the church, let them consider your love, your interest in their lives, and your concern, so that they’ll glorify God in heaven.

You see, we’re not only called to serve in the Church, but we’re called to serve in the world as the Church, and I believe with all of my heart, that the church is the best equipped organization to meet the needs of the world today. As a matter of fact, it’s happened before, we can read about it in Acts chapter 2, when a group of people saw themselves as the church, they saw a need, and they did something about it. Verse 45 says, “Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.” And so, when we truly become the Church Christ called us to be, using our gifts, letting our light shine; can you imagine how many suicides will be prevented, how many marriages will be saved, and how many people will be born into the kingdom, all because we got involved?

You see, when we understand God’s calling to be contributors in this world and not consumers, the world will see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven. When we Own the Vision that God has for his Church, we’ll love others more than we’ve been loved, serve others more than we’ve been served, and give more than we’ve received. And I believe, that as we do that those people in our circle of influence, our neighbors, our community, and our workplace, will become so overwhelmed with the love of God that they will want to know the God that we love and serve.

You see, I have a vision for our church that is so much greater than what I see today. I see the Church as the body of Christ and every single person, every single member, recognizing that they’re his church, they’ve got gifts, and they’ve got a calling, not to come and consume, but something so much better. To contribute, serving, loving and always pointing others to Jesus who will forgive, and heal, and make them new. Jesus who said in John chapter 4,

“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” (John 4:34)

And so, God has called us to be contributors in the world; we’re the light of the world, we’re the church, and we exist for the world. This morning, we have food that many people don’t understand and what fills us, what satisfies us, is to do the work of God impacting the lives of others. As we close, I want you to “Own the Vision” and let’s pray that our church would make a difference because of you.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ's Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

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[www.cccemmitsburg.org](http://www.cccemmitsburg.org/)

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