

A Vision of Purpose

Ephesians 3: 20-21

The church at Ephesus was dear to Paul. His ministry among them spanned three years. The church there began with just twelve believers ([Acts 19:7](#)), but through faithful effort they experienced amazing growth. Knowing the success in Ephesus, Paul desired them to remain focused on the Lord, while maintaining their priorities.

Our text today remains relevant for believers in every generation. Regardless of where we are in our journey with the Lord, we too must keep our focus on the Lord. It is easy to allow various circumstances hinder our labor for the Lord. These hindrances may result from struggles, adversity, or even perceived success in ministry. Regardless of where we are, and what we are currently facing, we must maintain our vision as we strive to follow the Lord.

I want to examine the [details](#) of these familiar statements as we consider: [A Vision of Purpose](#).

I. The Source of our Vision (20) – [Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us](#). In case there was any doubt, Paul again reminded them of their dependence upon the Lord. He alone was their source of strength and wisdom. He had provided for their redemption as He died upon the cross; He rose triumphant from the grave for their justification and eternal life. The blessings they enjoyed had come from the Lord. If they were to remain vibrant in ministry, they must continue to rely on the Lord, being fully submitted to His will for their lives.

- We too must be aware of our dependence upon the Lord. He alone provides the resources we need to continue in the work we are currently engaged. Were it not for the Lord's strength and provision, we would have nothing to boast in. He is the source of our salvation, our hope for the future, and the strength of our days. Every blessing we enjoy comes from His gracious hand. Every victory we have experienced is the result of His grace and favor. The growth we have experienced at Fellowship is not the result of our wisdom or effort, but the result of the guidance and provision of our Lord and Savior. Were it not for Christ, we would remain desperately hopeless, without direction. We must never forget the source of our vision! [Rom.11:36 – For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.](#) [Col.1:16-17 – For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:](#) ^[17] [And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.](#)

II. The Strength in our Vision (20) – Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Paul well understood the limitations of men. Although the desire may be there to accomplish certain tasks, the ability to perform it was lacking. These bodies of flesh lack the strength and wisdom to accomplish that which is needful. Many of the believers desired to see great things among the church, but they were unable to accomplish their desires within themselves. Paul encouraged the church to recognize that they were not responsible to provide for and sustain the church alone. Where they were weak and lacking, the Lord was strong and able.

- This offers great comfort and assurance to me. I have a burden for our church to grow and become the light upon a hill the Lord desires us to be. I realize that if we are dependent on my efforts, or even those of this congregation, we would never reach our potential. Thankfully the church does not rise and fall on our ability. I am not trusting in the strength or wisdom of myself or others. I am resting in the supernatural ability of our Lord. If the Lord is in it, He will perform it. **Matt.16:18 – And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** **Rom.4:21 – And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.** **Phil.1:6 – Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.**

III. The Sufficiency of our Vision (20) – Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. The church in Ephesus faced many challenges. No doubt many of them desired greater things for the Lord. There were countless needs that were impossible with man. They could not change men's hearts, deliver from sin, heal broken lives, or offer unquestionable wisdom. The challenges they faced were daunting, and doubt and despair were certain if they depended solely upon their abilities. Paul encouraged them to rest in the sufficiency of Christ. He was able to accomplish more than they could possibly dream. The Lord was not lacking in any area, and He would provide. With Christ at the helm, nothing would be impossible.

- Let's take a moment to break this down and examine it closely. Christ is able to do exceeding – *to surpass; to go beyond any request; to overcome and do anything.* He is able to do abundantly – *to overflow and to do more than enough.* He is able to do above – *to go over and above, beyond any need.*ⁱ Christ is able to do above all that we ask or think! Consider that for just a moment. I am certain there have been occasions in life when we have all desired to meet a certain need or experience a particular outcome, but we lacked the ability to make it happen. That is never the case with our Lord. There has never been a need that He was unable to meet. He has never lacked the resources necessary to meet any need or request. Paul in essence declares that the Lord is able to meet and exceed our wildest dreams. There is not one circumstance we could ever think of that our Lord would be unable to provide. When it is impossible with us, it is possible

with Him! 1 Cor.2:9 – But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Are you burdened for a loved one? Do you desire continued growth for our church? Is the Lord leading you down a path that seems impossible? Through our abilities, each of these are unattainable, but through Christ, nothing is impossible. Dream big spiritually, and trust the Lord to provide!

IV. The Strategy in our Vision (20) – Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Paul emphasized the truth that these abilities are available through the Holy Spirit working in us. That is amazing and impossible to fully comprehend. As we come to Christ by faith in salvation, the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us. We are never alone. The Spirit is with us wherever we go, and in every circumstance we encounter. We have the third Person of the Trinity abiding within.

- As I studied this passage, I came across an interesting thought from Dr. Adrian Rogers: "We can't do it without Him; He will not do it without us." Is that not an amazing and sobering thought? We lack the ability to perform anything apart from the Lord, and yet He desires us to join Him in the effort. He provides the resources and the power through the Spirit that is working within us! God doesn't just want to hand out blessings and provisions; He wants to work through us to accomplish His divine will. He offers us a glorious opportunity to engage in the work of ministry, while experiencing His awesome power at work through us, and around us! John 15:4-5 – Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. ^[5] I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. The Lord desires great things for us individually and corporately. He has a divine plan for each of our lives. He wants us to join Him in the work, bringing forth much fruit. We cannot simply expect God to meet every request we make if we are unwilling to join Him in the effort. I want to join the Lord and experience His power at work in my life!

V. The Scope of our Vision (21) – Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. Paul desired the church to understand the purpose in all of this. Their dependence on the Lord, and the work being accomplished through them was for one purpose – bringing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. That was their main purpose in life; it was the reason for the church's existence.

- We need to embrace this great truth and strive to fulfill it within our lives. I fear the Lord has been reduced to some sort of mystic Santa Claus for many. They take their desires to the Lord, fully expecting Him to meet their needs. Often when He does, many receive those blessings and yet fail to glorify the Lord. The church does not exist so that the membership might bring their

grocery list of expectations to the Lord. I am thankful for His blessing, and I am not advocating that we shouldn't seek the Lord to meet our needs. However, we exist to bring glory and honor to the Lord who paid our ransom, saved us from sin, and promised eternal life. We must be willing to offer praise and honor to the Lord when He provides for us. If our church sees continued growth, it will be the result of the Lord's working in our lives. If our loved ones are saved, they will experience salvation through the convincing of the Spirit. The Lord can and does use us to witness for Him, but He alone saves from sin. If we experience anything of eternal value in our lives, we must offer praise unto the Lord. [Rev.4:11 – Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.](#)

Conclusion: Are you excited about the unlimited possibilities before us? Have you embraced the vision God has for our future? Are you fully trusting Him to meet your need? He is more than able to exceed anything we can imagine. If you are burdened today, bring that need to Christ and trust Him to provide for you. As you do, don't be surprised when He uses you to bring about the solution you desire.

The saved by grace have access to unimaginable power and resources. The grace of Christ is sufficient to meet any need. Those who have yet to receive Christ in salvation lack these provisions. If the Lord has dealt with you regarding salvation, I urge you to respond by faith today and come to Him for salvation!

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.