

Running with **VISION**

*“Write the vision; make it plain on tablets,
so he may run who reads it”*

- Habakkuk 2v 2



Session #4: VISIONS OF CHANGE

Peter and the rooftop revelation

Acts Chapter 10

Sladebrook Evangelical Church

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Introduction and Aim of this Teaching Series:

If we are seeking after New Testament Christianity today, pursuing a biblical vision for the church is essential. Yet vision is not merely a case of conjuring up new ideas to combat spiritual malaise. Nor should it ever become a knee jerk reaction to the need of the hour, the whim of the people, or the constantly changing culture.

David once exclaimed “*I saw the Lord always before me...*” (Ps. 16v 8). Biblical vision is just that: constantly looking for the Lord to lead with a passion to be in His presence, a desire to serve His purposes and an expectation that He will always make the difference. When we genuinely *look unto Jesus*, faith starts to rise, vision forms and the road becomes clear. Ironically, *pursuing biblical vision* requires not so much that we come up with a new way of doing things, but that we return to the paths already found in Scripture, and rediscover their rewarding route.

In this new teaching series we will be ***Running with Vision***, looking at what happens when God grants heavenly revelation to His people. Each week we will study a specific God-given vision from the Bible and apply some key questions: *What was happening at the time? What was the vision like? What was God saying to/expecting from His people? How should Christians respond today?*

As we explore this collection of God-encounters, the aim is to see how these amazing visions communicated God’s purposes to people who so desperately needed to embrace them at the time. May we also seek to be obey the heavenly vision of all that God reveals to us, that we might pursue a brave, biblical vision for our own lives and church in this generation, embracing all that Jesus intends for us today.

Running with VISION #4: VISIONS OF CHANGE

In the book of Acts we read how the message of Jesus spread. On the back of persecution and due to the costly commitment of faithful witnesses, many souls received new life in Christ. One way in which the Gospel broke new ground came as a result of several key visions.

*Until now the Apostles' preached mainly to a Jewish audience. Despite the radical nature of grace and the open invitation Jesus Himself extended to all, the boundaries of blessing remained distinct. However, once **Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion received an angelic vision**, (Acts 10v 1-8) things were about to change. But before that could happen, a rather more prominent character was to have a rather unusual vision in a rather unlikely place.*

*Whilst he was waiting on a rooftop, Peter fell into a trance. It was there that "heaven opened..." (v11) **Whenever God grants revelation a remarkable interface takes place between heaven and earth:** The unseen becomes clear; heaven breaks in and the spiritual becomes a tantalisingly tangible possibility. As Peter watched, an indelible image accompanied by an audible voice interrupted his lunch break!*

*Peter didn't question the vision of unclean animals descending on a large sheet, or the invitation to "kill and eat." as anything other than of God, but he still resisted it. His protest; "Surely not Lord!" betrayed a cautious concern: **Even though God Himself initiated this divine encounter Peter was reluctant to embrace it:** It questioned everything he knew, everything that was right. Peter's comfortable convictions were being challenged! This vision of change alarmed him, yet God reinforced it three times causing Peter to wonder what it all meant.*

*The outcome of this vision caused the word spread: Gentiles had received the word of God. **Attitudes and expectations were changing as well as lives.** God was on the move; not limited by time or tradition; not constrained by man-made boundaries or theologies. **Peter's rooftop revelation exploded with Gospel power within the Gentile world.***

***A vision of change is a vision of what might be.** We must seek God not to recreate the past, or simply hold on, but to forge forward anticipating what may yet be. There will be surprises, challenges and, sadly, resistance. But ultimately **when God makes such a vision clear, it is down to his people, like Cornelius and eventually Peter, to run with it** and to imagine what far reaching impact He alone can make.*

Read: Acts Chapter 10 verses 1-48

- Vision reveals a supernatural reality: v1-16
- Vision removes barriers between God's people: v27-33
- Vision reminds us what the gospel can do: v34-48

Running with VISION:

Discuss:

- *Do you think Cornelius was saved before or after Peter spoke?*
- *How would you compare his faith in v2 with that of v46-48? What made the difference? Which Cornelius is more like you?*
- *Why was Peter resistant at first to the vision he received? v14*
- *Why can we be resistant to accepting visions today?*
- *How can we test a vision to see if it is from God?*
- *What is the main point in this passage of Scripture?*
- *How open are you to new teaching and to doing things differently?*
- *How does this passage challenge us to embrace new things in our Christian faith?*

Pray:

Pray about any religious barriers you have erected that are not of God. Ask Him to reaffirm what is of Him and pray for courage to confront any old habits that hinder progress in your Christian life.

Respond:

How has your Christian life changed? Think back and record some of the major watersheds. Include what happened and how each thing changed you. How can you measure to see if you've grown?