

Pastor Daryl Diddle

WFMC Vision: A Redeemed World

September 25, 2022

**Isaiah 11:1-16 (NIV)**

*Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot – yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. <sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup> He will delight in obeying the Lord. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay. <sup>4</sup> He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited. The earth will shake at the force of his word, and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked. <sup>5</sup> He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment.*

*<sup>6</sup> In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all. <sup>7</sup> The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. <sup>8</sup> The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.*

*<sup>9</sup> Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the Lord.*

*<sup>10</sup> In that day the heir to David's throne will be a banner of salvation to all the world. The nations will rally to him, and the land where he lives will be a glorious place. <sup>11</sup> In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to bring back the remnant of his people – those who remain in Assyria and northern Egypt; in southern Egypt, Ethiopia, and Elam; in Babylonia, Hamath, and all the distant coastlands.*

*<sup>12</sup> He will raise a flag among the nations and assemble the exiles of Israel. He will gather the scattered people of Judah from the ends of the earth. <sup>13</sup> Then at last the jealousy between Israel and Judah will end. They will not be rivals anymore. <sup>14</sup> They will join forces to swoop down on Philistia to the west. Together they will attack and plunder the nations to the east. They will occupy the lands of Edom and Moab, and Ammon will obey them.*

*<sup>15</sup> The Lord will make a dry path through the gulf of the Red Sea. He will wave his hand over the Euphrates River, sending a mighty wind to divide it into seven streams so it can easily be crossed on foot. <sup>16</sup> He will make a highway for the remnant of his people, the remnant coming from Assyria, just as he did for Israel long ago when they returned from Egypt.*

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We're in Isaiah, Chapter 11, if you'd care to turn there with me. Isaiah, Chapter 11. Hold that spot and we'll get there in a couple minutes.

As you see on the front of the worship folder, in these next two Sundays we're reviewing our church's Vision and Mission.

We used to do this every fall. A few years ago, we got out of that rhythm for some reason, but I hope today and next Sunday gets us back into that pattern.

A lot of ink has been spilled about vision and mission through the years – making carefully refined statements and all that, but the honest truth is, no vision or mission is worth anything unless they're actually lived out.

Any church, any business, any family, even a person can have a vision statement or a mission statement. Some people call it their life principle or perhaps they have a life Scripture verse.

Others are more comprehensive statements.

And you can post it on the wall, you can print it – like here (on the worship folder.) You can have it on your letterhead or in your company logo or whatever.

But if you don't live out what you say, it's really all but worthless.

On the other hand, people can very thoroughly live out quite excellent personal or corporate visions or missions *without them ever being formally articulated.*

Given a choice between the two, the latter – living it without articulating it, is the way to go. But – if you *can* both *say* what you value and then faithfully *live it out*, well then, all the better.

We'd like to be a people who do both.

So – what do we value? What is our vision and mission as a church family?

Let's define the terms first, since different people use different definitions for these words.

When I say "*vision*," I simply mean where we want to go. What we want to achieve.

If the future were ours to write, how would we write it? What is success to us? That's vision.

When I say "*mission*," I mean how we get to where we're going – how we reach the future, the vision, success.

Vision is *where* we want to go.

Mission is *how* we intend to *get there*.

This week, we're talking *vision*.

Our statement, developed a number of years ago, is both simple and Biblical. It's right there on the front of the worship folder.

The future we want is "*a community that reflects Jesus' vision and values*."

That's what we want to be, what we want to see, and where we want to go.

Let's expand it just a bit.

First, a "*Community*."

Community starts with the person, moves to the family, spreads to church, and then to our friends, neighbors, towns and nations.

As our spiritual founder, John Wesley, said, "We look upon all the world as our parish." We realize that

we bear some responsibility for all the communities of which we're a part.

So, *community* starts here and then moves outward. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth. That's Jesus' idea—so that person by person, family by family, neighborhood by neighborhood, town by town, the *community* grows.

So, when we say "community" we're thinking way bigger than just us.

We want to be and we want to see *a community that reflects...*

We fully realize that we are not good in and of ourselves. God makes us good. Any good thing in or about us comes to us from God the Father through the ministry of His Holy Spirit, and we depend on Him to make us increasingly like Jesus.

So, we want to be and to see a future where every person—and every community: family, neighborhood, town, nation—reflects Jesus in all His winsomeness and goodness and attractiveness and holiness, such that all around come to want Jesus for themselves—and then become, themselves, part of His community.

So we want to be and to see a *community that reflects*, first, *Jesus' vision*.

Jesus looked upon His world with the eyes of God the Father. He saw those persons and situations around Him with love and compassion, but also with a firm understanding of truth, divine priorities and an eternal perspective.

Jesus sees and understands with both the *comprehension* and the *compassion* of God.

So, through the study of God's word, through Jesus' example, and through the guidance of His Spirit, we work toward a future where more and more people understand persons and circumstances with divine eyes—the eyes of Christ.

Our vision for the future is *a community that reflects Jesus' vision and Jesus' values*.

Jesus is holy as God is holy, and He lived out all those godly values that make life actually work in our world—and as He did, He moved all around Him, to the degree they would follow, toward good and righteousness and wholeness and richness of life.

Jesus, while He was on earth, did not do one single thing to contribute to the world's brokenness.

On the contrary, through the way He saw and the way He lived, Jesus' life contributed to our world's healing—to that increase of health and peace that is rooted in God and His will and way.

And we want to do that too—and we want our families and church and neighborhoods and towns and even our nations to do that.

By the power of Christ, we want to live—and help others live—as God created us to live:

to do as Jesus does,  
to value what Jesus values, and

to prioritize what Jesus prioritizes; so that *we*—and more and more around us—can be, like Jesus, a force for *good* and *right* and *justice* and *truth*.

So, we can be a force for healing, and not harm, in our world.

If we were to define success—if we could paint the future—we would paint a picture of

*a community* (starting with us and moving out wider and wider)

*that reflects* (by the Spirit's power revealing to those around)

*Jesus' vision* (how Jesus saw and understood His world)

*and values* (Jesus' priorities, morals and standards.)

Our aim is a transformed world—a redeemed world—full of people who love and follow Jesus.

That's the future. That's success. That's our vision.

Why is that our vision?

Because that's God's vision. That's Gods' aim. It can be worded a little differently here or there, but that's where God is, and has always been, heading.

A redeemed world.

You can find one expression of that there in Chapter 11 of Isaiah.

Isaiah, Chapter 10, ended with an image of the great powers of his world lying as fallen trees on the ground, which will always happen, sooner or later, to those in our world who try to force people to do things that are contrary to the way God made this world to work.

Ungodliness leads to death. It always does.

Morally, sexually, economically, relationally, physically, no matter what: if you chase after ways that are not God's ways, they all, eventually, lead to death.

In Chapter 10 there, those that shake their fist at God, verse 33 says, "*the Lord will lop off their boughs—the lofty trees will be felled—the tall ones brought low.*"

Those who challenge God and His ways: sooner or later, they will come to death.

But then, this chapter, Chapter 11, begins with the description, you see, of a new "shoot." A new tree rising up among the fallen.

A new ruler is on the way.

And the description of this new king is so far beyond any ordinary human, He could be no one else but the Messiah, which is why scholars through history have known this to be one of several of Isaiah's prophetic words concerning Jesus.

He would come from the kingly line of David, and though He would arise from an insignificant beginning, He would branch out to become the most powerful ruler the world would ever witness.

He would be empowered by the Spirit of the Lord, Isaiah says, which, by the way, Jesus declared about Himself in Luke 4:18, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*" quoting Isaiah 61.

And, Isaiah says, He would embody the spirit of wisdom and understanding and counsel and power and knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

This is the person and character of the Messiah—the King to come.

And when He reigns here, verse 3, decisions will be fair and just—not based on mere appearance or hearsay.

*This King, Isaiah says, will wear righteousness and truth.*

Unlike so many earthly leaders of days past *and present*, the Messiah-King will see and understand *correctly* and He will *always* do what's right.

And so, what kind of world will this sort of King produce?

Isaiah describes that next, and to do that he uses the image of a restored Eden. He says, "Remember what the world was like in Eden—what the world looked like before sin entered in? That's the picture of the world to come again under the Messiah's reign."

Today, wolves, leopards, lions, bears and cobras—Isaiah names them all there—are all deadly enemies of lambs, calves, goats, cows and even children.

But in the reign of Jesus, God says there will be peace for all.

Is the world ready for that or what?

In the reign of Jesus, all will do right. No one will ever seek to destroy someone else, or to take advantage of someone else—not even among the animals.

The weak will be protected.

The needy will be cared for.

The truth will always prevail.

No bullies. No liars. No injustice.

That's what will happen when, Isaiah says there in verse 9, "*The earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord—just as the waters cover the sea.*"

In other words, the sin of Adam and Eve, who wanted to be as wise as God: the vestiges of that sin will be gone, and all the earth will know that God alone is God. Everyone will bow to Him. Everyone will do things His way—happily and gladly and reverently.

And the whole earth will rejoice, because the world will work again just as He made it to work in the first place.

All of that will happen (v. 10) when this "*root of Jesse*," the great Messiah-King whom we know as Jesus, "*will stand*," Isaiah says, "*as a banner—and all the nations will rally to Him.*"

David McKenna gives the illustration, "Like when a climber ascends Mount Everest and plants their nation's flag at the top of the world," Jesus Himself will be that banner—the One who reigns undisputedly over all. All will know Him. No one will overlook Him. No one will ignore Him. No one will contradict Him.<sup>1</sup>

The whole world—every part of it—will be re-created in the truth and justice and peace of Eden.

That's what's going to happen: a redeemed world.

That's success to God. That's God's vision for the future—which is why that's *our* vision for the future.

It's not reality yet, but it will be.

And so, in the meantime, that's the reality that we pray for and work toward.

A redeemed world.

Listen, I need to tell you:

If a redeemed world is not your vision for the future,

if success to you is not a community that reflects Jesus' vision and values,

if your life and energies are somehow aimed in some other direction,

then you need to know you're not on the same path as God, which means you're not working with Him.

You're actually working against Him.

That's why the work of God's people—the work of His Church—is to do all we can to make ourselves as available as possible to bring this future to be.

How do we do that, specifically?

Well, that's our Mission—the mission of the Church.

Remember, Vision is where we're headed.

Mission is how we get there.

Now, to some degree, mission will be a little different for everyone, since God's Spirit directs us in the finer points, person by person. He uses us in different ways.

But generally speaking, as a church family, we do share in mission simply by being, you might say, in the same car together.

We'll talk more about how we get there next week.

But there's no doubt about where we're going.

We want to be, ourselves, and what we want the world to be: *A Community that Reflects Jesus' Vision and Values.*

A world where Jesus is planted firmly in charge.

Now, here's the thing though—we'll never really help Jesus become in charge of the world *out there*, if He's not really in charge of our world *in here*.

For every person, a redeemed world begins with their own redeemed soul.

So, is He in charge of your world today?

Here's how you can know: when you encounter something in His Word here, or when His Spirit says to you, "I want to be in charge of *this* in your life, or *that* in your life, or *this other over here*," how do you respond to Him?

Do you let Him? Or do you argue with Him, or maybe ignore Him?

There are lots of people doing that today—arguing with Him, or even ignoring Him. That's what many of our world leaders are doing, just as they did back in Isaiah's day.

<sup>1</sup> McKenna, David. The Communicators Commentary. Isaiah 1-39. Word. 1993

And they fell, you see? They were cut down like trees in a forest.

God doesn't want to do that, but no one who stands against God will last.

No one who stands against God will see the redeemed world—the Kingdom of Jesus to come.

Only those who share His vision and values will be a part of that.

So, do you? Will you?

Will you receive Jesus and all that He wants to do in you and through you to help build a community that reflects His vision and values?

He hopes you will, because that is the future.

Closing Prayer:

What a blessing is ours, Father, to work with you in your plan to redeem, to recreate, your world. We

invite you, Holy Spirit, to do whatever you need to do in us:

- so that Your vision for the future becomes ours, and Your definition of success becomes ours;

- so that we might work with You, and never against You;

- so that our whole world will become a community that reflects Jesus' vision and values.

Closing Song: *O God Our Help in Ages Past*

Benediction:

May the Lord help us to see the future that He sees, so that we will be, ourselves, and help all around us to become *a community that reflects Jesus' vision and values*: a redeemed world, under the Lordship of Jesus the King, all for the glory of God, the Father. Amen.