

**Sermon Study Guide Based on
Pastor Glen Weber's Message of September 13, 2009
"New Hope in 2019"**

[Today's message focuses on the future mission of New Hope – what it will be like and how we will implement it.]

[Topics: Mission; Vision; Make Disciples]

Excerpt: Today's message is called "New Hope in 2019." That's ten years from now. And it will be here sooner than you think. So we need to be thinking and praying about the future of New Hope. If we're not careful these next ten years will sort of happen to us. And nothing will be much different ten years from now than it is today.

We need to think about our vision for the future. We need to think about how we are going to pray about the future of New Hope and what we might be praying to God to show us. This came up in our senior's Bible Study this week – a request that will be placed in the bulletin called "Pastor's Prayer Points." These will be specific things that we need to pray about for our congregation as well as our denomination. This will probably be done once a month to give focus to our prayers.

So are we praying for the vision of New Hope for the next ten years? And if so, what does that look like? Sometimes, we don't even know how to pray because our vision isn't big enough to know what is going to happen. We usually don't know what our lives will look like five years from now, so we don't know what to ask for. If we're not careful when we pray to God, we'll just ask him to bless New Hope. Now that's pretty generic. But what are some of the specific needs we have?

At the "Journey with the Master" conference out in Glendora a couple of weeks ago, Greg Williams who was doing the presentation asked the question, "What is the mission of the church." Now what was really interesting, the entire San Diego youth group in unison and spontaneously said the mission of their church. Boom, just like that they instantaneously called out the mission of their church. Now they knew the mission of their church. And the reason they know it is because every week Mark and Ann Stapleton say their mission at the benediction.

We are now concluding the last 2 years of our strategic plan, which was updated 2 years ago. It will end at the end of this year. So we need to re-think our strategic plan. We've also had a change of pastors. So what does our future look like? Where would God have us go? And what does he see out there? So we need to be thinking about it and discussing it together.

First, let's think about the sermon two weeks ago where we talked about the Father's mission was that he sent Jesus. And then Jesus sent others. Jesus said, "**As the Father sent me, so I also send you**" (John 20:21). It is the Father's mission to reach mankind, to draw people into the kingdom of God. Jesus brought that mission to earth

and instituted it into the church. And for the last two thousand years, the church has been carrying that mission – sometimes effectively and sometimes not so effectively.

So what is New Hope's mission? What is our mission to help fulfill the Father's mission? And what is our vision look like for doing that as we step into the future?

So now, what is current mission statement of New Hope? It is: *New Hope Christian Fellowship is a family of hope for all people.* Now it's a great statement. And let's hope that we all live up to that. Now, we have people make comments about the encouragement that they get here.

But the question we need to ask ourselves is this. What does this statement tell us about tomorrow? And five years from now? And ten years from now as to where we will be? What is the action verb in the sentence describing our mission? There isn't one. While this is a statement of who we are, it doesn't tell us who we need to be – or where we are going or what God is calling us to do.

Now here is New Hope's vision statement.

The vision of New Hope Christian Fellowship is to grow into a close, loving family of men, women and children who honor God with all our hearts and are committed to personal growth through worship, prayer, and Bible Study.

We teach and model God's grace by confidently sharing our faith in Jesus with others while remaining faithful to the unchanging truth of Scripture. We seek to become like our Savior, Jesus Christ, in all our relationships.

We strive to be wise stewards of all the resources God provides. We promote leadership development, help the members to identify their spiritual gifts, and use our physical and spiritual assets to serve the community. We live in the joy of the Spirit with a hopeful expectancy for future eternal life.

Now depending upon what we come up with on our new mission statement, the new vision statement would need to reflect that. We will also need to come up with some goals as to how we get there.

Pastor Glen wants everyone in the congregation to think about what our mission statement should be. We need to keep in mind the messages we've heard these past few months about how we are participating in the ministry of Jesus Christ, that he sent us into the world to make disciples and to equip people. What should those things look like?

Some of you may be excellent mission statement writers. It's our mission together, not just pastor Glen's. Everyone is encouraged to put down some ideas on paper as we think about things and pass them on to the Advisory Council members or the Pastoral Team members.

We, as a congregation, need to ask God – "What is our mission?" What does the next five years look like? What does the next ten years look like?" Do you know what? God may really give us big things. Pastor Glen hopes our mission and vision statements are

so big that we can say that it can only be accomplished by the power of God working in us. If we can do it on our own, then it's just our vision. So Pastor Glen hopes that we all pray about it and ask God to show us just what it should look like.

In the Church Next Training program, we have a definition for vision that we use. Vision is: "A mental picture of a preferred future." Now we hope it's God's preferred picture of the future. What is this mental picture going to look like for our youth ten years from now? What's it going to look like for our senior citizens and our families and our marriages? What will all this look like as we move forward? And what part can we play in that?

Maybe you are at the far end of life and you are looking at how you can leave a legacy. And if others are at the other end of the spectrum, they should be thinking about what they can add to what God is doing.

In **Proverbs 29:18**, we read, **Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.** Revelation is something God gives us of what's going to happen. And when we don't have that vision or that revelation of what God wants us to do, we tend to get kind of discombobulated.

Now in the old days, many of us had a vision of "this is the way it is." We cast off everything. We gave up jobs, our kids weren't in sports, etc. because we had a vision of the future and we had more important things to do. Now sadly our vision wasn't correct. Nevertheless, when you have a clear vision, it helps you make decisions. You had to think whether this activity or that event fit the vision.

And now we've gone about 15 years without a clear vision. Pastor Glen has observed that some of us are running ourselves into the ground. We've lost the ability to say, "You know what? We're doing too much." When there is no revelation, we lose some focus and we get our kids into absolutely everything. We're doing this and we're running there. It's like we don't have time to stop and think.

Pastor Glen believes that it was due to the fact that our denomination didn't want to cast too much of a vision so that local congregations could find out what their own vision was. But now if we do cast a vision, so many of us are so busy that we won't have the time for it.

What is the most important thing in your life? When you decide to do this activity or that activity, what do you base that decision on? Just that it's good? But there's enough good out there to bury all of us. But what about the best? We should tune in on a vision of what's important and make our decisions accordingly.

It was a pain to plan Vacation Bible School (VBS). We planned it this year during church because it made it a whole lot easier for everyone. The other problem was who could be at church five weeks in a row in the middle of summer?

Now part of what this verse in Proverbs says that when we have a clear revelation from God of what's important in our life, it helps us make some of those decisions about our families. It helps us make some of those decisions about our congregation; how we set the budget, how we get out into the community.

When we talk about getting out into the community, many of us get starry eyed and say when are we going to find the time to do that? That's because we are swamped, aren't we? So a revelation from God gives us focus, doesn't it? We need to ask God what will our mission look like for the next five years or ten years and how do we get there?

A revelation from God gives us focus. It gives us focus on how and where we spend our money. And God's revelation comes by all of us seeking him together, by us praying together, by us spending time together, by us talking together. That's the reason for this sermon.

We should be talking among ourselves for the next few weeks and asking questions like, "What's New Hope going to be like ten years from now? What is God saying to us?" Pastor Glen's hope is that we will spend time in prayer – praying and asking God, **"What is it you want for us?"**

If we don't plan it now, ten years will be here and we won't have done it. It won't have happened. We have those things we want to do but if we don't nail them down and say that's what God wants us to do, we'll have a hard time doing it, won't we?

So we need that revelation from God to tell us what it will look like. As we begin to seek God as a congregation, we need to ask him to show us what he would want us to accomplish and what would be some of the goals we should set to accomplish that.

There was quite a buzz in the congregation last week when we had the six church planters standing up here talking about how they are willing to give up everything in the Philippines if they can come over here and be a part of planting a church.

They created quite a buzz because their vision created some excitement. Do you think they could make that decision without a vision from God? Would they be willing to leave their homes and their country to plant a church in America without a vision from God?

Now the church in Jerusalem was told to go into the world. They didn't go. There's the Scripture that says when persecution hit Jerusalem everybody left except the apostles (Acts 8:1). The apostles got stuck in Jerusalem and couldn't get out even though Jesus personally told them to go.

It took 70 AD and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple for the apostles to leave. The original church got stuck there in Judaism and they could not release themselves from the Temple. They constantly wanted to meet in the Temple Courts. Meanwhile Antioch has come alive and we read in **Acts 13:1**:

"In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul."

2) "And while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting," This example is why pastor Glen wants us to be praying about our mission. He's even thinking about setting a week aside in October when we all could fast one day seeking God's direction.

2) "And while they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,"

Now how did the Holy Spirit speak? The Holy Spirit had to speak to them somehow. It had to be a revelation outside of Scripture, because there is no Scripture that says, "Send Paul and Barnabas." So somehow the Holy Spirit had to speak to this congregation. He spoke to them in a way that they all knew that they had been spoken to by the Holy Spirit. Probably God began to speak through various ones who talked about sending Paul and Barnabas. And they knew that the Holy Spirit had spoken.

Pastor Glen believes that the way the Holy Spirit will talk to us in New Hope is that as we begin to pray about it and fast about it and ask God, "Where do you want us to go? What do you want us to accomplish? What are you doing in this area that we can be a part of?" we will receive answers.

"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

The Holy Spirit had a vision for Saul and Barnabas. He had worked out what he wanted them to do. Remember Ephesians 2 talks about how we are all saved by grace and we are called into good works, "which God has prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:8-10)?

That means God has a vision for us concerning the good works he wants us to do. He has a mission for us and he wants us to become a part of that and become a part of his creative work. Just as the Holy Spirit had a plan for Saul and Barnabas, he has a plan for us, collectively and individually. We need to seek God's revelation about it.

3) "So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off." Now they send off two of their prominent leaders of their congregation into the world of Gentiles to preach the Gospel. We knew that Paul had been given a mission earlier when he was knocked down off his donkey on the road to Damascus.

God told Ananias in Damascus that he was to tell Paul that he's God's man for the Gentiles and that he has a job to go do. Paul responded and kept going and going. Paul tried going over here and the Holy Spirit said you can't go there but go over to Macedonia. So Paul went to Macedonia and did everything he could do there. And then he would go back to Jerusalem.

In Romans, Paul says he wants to come to them so that from Rome he could use them as a launch point and go to Spain. Paul knew he had a mission to the Gentiles but he also had these temporary goals where he wanted to go to Jerusalem, for example, to deliver the offering to them. Paul kept going and kept pushing. He wanted to cover all of Europe.

Now he made it to Rome, but he ended up in chains because he ended up arrested when he went back to Jerusalem. Whether Paul ever got to Spain we don't know. We do know that he was released for a couple of years and he might have gone there.

But the point is that all along, the Holy Spirit had a plan for Paul and kept moving him on and kept moving him on. And the Holy Spirit spoke to him when necessary.

And pastor Glen believes that the Holy Spirit will speak to us today and say, "Move here or move there." You will probably keep have a particular thought come to mind while

praying and so you should write it down and bring it to the pastoral team and tell us what you keep hearing as you pray about our direction. And others will tell us what they have been hearing.

And we will put together all the thoughts and ideas to get a picture of what God is saying to our church. And we will get together and pray about it and fast about it. And together as we pray, we will ask God to talk to us and show us, because he clearly did that in Antioch and other places.

This is how God moves his people forward. There's no specific Scripture that says. "New Hope – here's how to reach Eagle Rock and Pasadena." We have to seek the Holy Spirit and ask what are you doing here? And how are you doing it?

That's why the Filipinos went to San Diego, here to Eagle Rock, down to Orange County. This week they've been to San Jose, San Francisco and even to Seattle. And they're going to do some more looking. They're driving around and meeting Filipino people in the various neighborhoods. They also talking to the others asking where are the Filipinos that need help? They are listening to the Holy Spirit to see where he is opening doors.

So what is the Holy Spirit showing us where we'll be 10 years from now? Many are telling pastor Glen that they are hoping to leave the area. Let's hope that God gives us such a big vision that we can't stand to leave.

There's no reason that this congregation can't make a huge impact in our community – even a greater one than we've already been doing. We're already involved in Bad Weather Shelter, Union Station, and Prison Ministry. But what more would God have us do?

What's going to be the action verb in our mission statement, as we participate with God in what he is doing? Let's pray about it. Let's contemplate about it. Pastor Glen is asking us a congregation to take this very seriously.

Pray and ask God what our mission statement should look like and to show us what are plans should look like for the next few years. Ask God to speak to us. Jot down things as they come to mind. Bring them to the pastoral team – Pastor Glen, Larry, Cella or Fred. After that we'll talk about it and put some things together. And we'll put some meat on the bones. We talk about what do we need to set as goals to accomplish our mission.

God has a vision for us. He has things he wants us to do. He doesn't just want us to be a family of hope for all people. That's who we are. But, as a family of hope for all people, how are we moving forward to reach more people, so they can become a part of a family of hope?

Key Scripture: Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint."

General Group Question: What is the purpose of New Hope, or any congregation for that matter, to plan for a mission and a vision statement that projects out into the future?

Additional questions for the entire group or in groups of two or three of the same gender (15-20 minutes). If appropriate, please pray for each other's needs afterwards.

1. Should our mission be tied into the Father's mission that he gave to his Son Jesus? Briefly explain why or why not.
2. What is missing from our current mission statement? Does it talk about the future? Should it? Why or why not?
3. Based on your experiences in life, if you don't have concrete plans about the future, do you tend to accomplish your wishes or desires? Or do they just fade away? Briefly explain your answer.
4. How important is it to seek God's revelation concerning our mission and vision statements? Briefly explain.
5. What key question or questions does pastor Glen want us to ask God as we pray about our new mission statement?
6. Does having a concrete vision for your family help you to personally make better decisions concerning what you and your family do and accomplish?
7. Do you feel that you and your family participate in too many activities, just the right amount, or too few activities? What are you willing to do if you decided to add an important activity into your already busy schedule?
8. What examples from the Church at Antioch (Acts 13) are we encouraged to imitate in New Hope?
9. How have we been asked to participate in coming up with a new mission and vision statement?