
OUR VISION

“The Glory Of Christ Among All Peoples”

ISAIAH 66:18-20

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AT A GLANCE

In this message, we declare the vision of Wildwood Church: the glory of Christ among all peoples. From Old Testament to New, Scripture reveals that God’s driving purpose in history is to make His glory known through His Son to every nation. This sermon invites our church family to unite around a vision that has compelled God’s people for millennia and will culminate in the worship of Christ by all peoples.

WHY THE CHANGE?

In September I wrote an article for our vision guide in which I spoke about our vision and mission statements and possible changes to them this year. With the help of our mission’s committee, I came to recognize that what had mobilized Wildwood and created a healthy missional culture was now threatening to impede our progress. I’m referring to the vision statement we developed years ago – *Every Member A Missionary*. You likely have the t-shirt, and it’s boldly displayed on the wall in the main entrance.

Two years ago, I attended my first Cross Conference in Louisville. I proudly wore my “Every Member A Missionary” t-shirt one day. It happened to be the day that one speaker took the stage and declared, “Not every Christian is a missionary.” I later asked Pastor Andy, “Is this going to be a problem?” motioning to my shirt. Turns, out words matter.

This year, John Piper took the stage and said the exact same thing. This time, the folks with us at CrossCon breathed a sigh of relief knowing our vision statement is changing.

The truth is, every Christian is not a missionary. Every Christian has a responsibility in the mission of God. But we’re not all missionaries. These words mean something.

As I said I would in the vision guide last August, I commissioned a team and we met several times this fall to discuss these things. With the help of our staff and elders, the Lord graciously supplied a compelling vision and mission statement that we believe communicates the heartbeat of Wildwood and, more importantly, the heartbeat of God.

VISION

Let’s begin today with the vision of Wildwood Church. Vision is a picture of the future that compels us forward. I’m pleased to say that what compels Wildwood Church has compelled faithful people of God for millennia. It’s nothing new; it goes back to the Old Testament.

Let’s read **Isaiah 66:18-20**

¹⁸“For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory, ¹⁹and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations. ²⁰And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD... Isaiah 66:18-20

HIGHEST OF ALL AIMS

The highest priority of all God’s works—what governs everything He does—is His glory. And rightly so, for there is nothing higher, better, or more worthy of exaltation than the glory of God. It is the highest thing. And it is the culmination of all human history.

In the Westminster Catechism, the very first question is: What is the chief end of man? Answer: To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

This is not only man’s chief end. It reflects God’s own eternal purpose—to glorify Himself by making His glory known. A quick survey of the Bible reveals:

God created us for His glory - Isaiah 43:7

He refrains His wrath for His glory - Isaiah 48:11

He delivers His people for His glory - Ezekiel 36:22–23

He rescued His people at the Red Sea for His glory - Psalm 106:8

He predestined us for adoption for His glory - Ephesians 1:5–6

He does all things for His own glory. It is why He created us and why He redeemed us. It is why He executes judgment and why He dispenses amazing grace.

BACK TO PROPHECY

Let’s return to Isaiah’s prophecy: **verses 18-19** ¹⁸...**the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues...** ¹⁹**the coastlands far away**. During our Advent series, we first heard this term **coastlands** in Isaiah 51.

This was a way of speaking of all people unknown to them at that time; people in hard-to-reach places. **Far away**. Asia and Oceania. Europe and Africa. North America and South America. Isaiah speaks of a global mission, far beyond the Jews.

For what purpose? ¹⁸**And they shall come and shall see my glory...** these people ²⁰**that have not heard my fame or seen my glory**. To what is all human history building? To whom is it all pointing? The glory of God. That peoples from all over the planet will see the glory of God.

But not just to observe it like a beautiful sunset. No, those who have seen it will also ¹⁹...**declare my glory among the nations**. And the effect will be: ²⁰**And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD**.

Seeing the glory of God leads to declaring the glory of God **among all the nations** which in turn leads to others seeing the glory of God and then declaring it, and so on and so forth.

GOYIM = PEOPLES

In Hebrew the word **nations** is *goyim*. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, this word is *ethne*. The word *ethne* is used in the New Testament to speak of peoples, not nation-states, but groups of people. Tribes, languages, etc. Chief among those references is Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. There He told His disciples to make disciples as they go into all *nations*.

Isaiah 66:20 *goyim* => Matthew 28:19 *ethne* => nations / peoples

What Isaiah saw in prophecy, Jesus now gives us in commission—making disciples among every people group on the planet. And notice this: Isaiah calls those gathered from all nations, presented as an offering to the Lord, **your brothers**.

I want you to close your eyes and envision, see with your mind's eye, your brothers and sisters living in unknown (at least to you) parts of the planet. Or, because of the nature of our world today, people who have moved here from unknown parts of the planet. And just to be clear, the United States of America as we know it today, was a coastland to Isaiah. Thus, your fellow native born Americans are part of this vision, too.

I want you to imagine you presenting your brothers and sisters **as an offering to the Lord**. I want you to see this. This is our vision. This is what compels Wildwood Church forward. This is what has driven faithful people forward throughout the history of redemption. One day people from all nations – all peoples – will be gathered and we will see the glory of God!

Although Isaiah does not yet name Him, the New Testament reveals that the ultimate sign God set among the nations is His Son—lifted up for the life of the world. Thus, because God is glorified most fully in Christ, and because Christ is the clearest revelation of who God is, the glory of Christ is our vision.

THE VISION OF WILDWOOD

And more specifically still, the vision of Wildwood Church is: The glory of Christ among all peoples.

This is what Isaiah saw.

The glory of Christ among all peoples is what God prepared before the foundation of the world. (cf. Ephesians 1:3-10)

Christ's glory is the beginning of spiritual life for everyone in the church – *"In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* 2 Corinthians 4:4–6

If you are a Christian, it is because God has "shone light in your heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." You have personally come to behold His glory, just like Peter, who said...

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'" Matthew 16:16-18

Beholding the glory of Christ is powerful and effective. It is upon the confession of Christ's glory, namely that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that Christ established His church. It is that which unites every believer around the world.

This is what Jesus revealed to John in Revelation 7. *“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”* Revelation 7:9-10

Imagine this, you, along with every born-again believer of all time, every faithful saint of the Old Testament – Abraham, David, Esther, Samson – along with every believer in every tribe on earth will be united around one single thing: the glory of Christ. And that will be the culmination of human history.

“And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.” Revelation 21:23-26

Does this not compel you? I pray it compels you because it compelled Jesus on the night He was betrayed. Please turn with me now to **John 17**. I’d like to close today by simply reading for you the final prayer of Jesus before He went to the cross. Hear Him. Hear the voice of the good shepherd, your good shepherd, who laid down His life for His sheep.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

⁶ ‘I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

²⁰ ‘I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and

these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Beside glorifying the Father, the thing that compelled Jesus forward to the cross, or in the words of Hebrews 12, “the joy set before Him,” is this... “*Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory...*” *John 17:24*

Jesus went to the cross to satisfy God’s justice and redeem His people, so that they might one day be with Him and behold His glory forever. He delights to reveal it to us forever and to keep us with Himself. Church, the glory of Christ among all peoples compelled Him to go to the cross.

The glory of Christ among all peoples compels me! Does the glory of Christ among all peoples compel you?

THE GLORY OF CHRIST COMPELS ME TO...

If so, to what end? What does the glory of Christ among all peoples compel you to do?

For some, it compelled martyrdom.

For others, it compelled decades of unseen obedience.

For most of us, it compels faithfulness where God has placed us, to “work as for God, not for man,” to “do all things for the glory of God.”

What does the glory of Christ among all peoples compel you to?

- Pray intentionally for the nations
- Give sacrificially
- Go (short-term or long-term)
- Welcome the nations God has brought here
- Live faithfully where you are as a witness

Some of us will cross oceans. Most will cross only streets. But we will all live for Christ’s glory—and that life, whether radically costly or seemingly insignificant, will not be wasted.

Perhaps as we move into our time of response this morning, you should simply remain seated as you consider the answer to that question and write down your response.

God’s driving vision is His own glory, and that glory is most fully revealed in Christ. The glory of Christ among all peoples is the culmination of human history and it compels Wildwood Church forward. This is our vision. Amen?