

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Alvarez
Where: St John UMC, Prospect
When: Sunday, 07 2024
Sermon 1: "Embracing God's Timing"
Scripture: Habakkuk 2:2-4 (NIV)

The Lord's Answer

² Then the Lord replied:
"Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald may run with it.

For the revelation awaits **an appointed time**;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.

Though it lingers, wait for it;
it will certainly come
and **will not delay**.

⁴ "See, the enemy is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness —"

Introduction:

Prophet Habakkuk exhorts us with powerful words of trust and hope in God's perfect timing: "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay Habakkuk 2:3, NIV. Today, we will delve into this scripture and reflect on its profound lessons about embracing God's timing in our lives.

David, the example in preparing for a significant project like building the temple with patience and trust, David, in 1 Chronicle 28:1-3, embarked on a spiritual journey, revealing his heart's desire to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD. However, God instructed him that he wouldn't be the one to build it due to his history of warfare. This illustrates trusting in God's perfect timing and aligns with the concept of visionary faith.

Context: Church Challenge

When faced with the project of building the temple, David prepared himself, his son Solomon, the leaders, and the nation of Israel for the challenge.

As a pastor, I have asked the pastoral staff, and now you as lay leaders, to capture **"the vision."**

— to feel it, hear it, and have it in your heart just as I have it in mine.

I need each of you to be **"vision carriers"**— taking the dream to the entire congregation and now I need each of you to be vision carriers – taking the dream to the entire community and the world.

VISION NEEDS TO BE VISIBLE

Trusting God's Sovereignty

Habakkuk's words remind to trust in the sovereignty of God's timing. The appointed time for revelation is part of His divine plan, and it will come to pass without delay. Our faith is strengthened when acknowledge that God's timing is perfect and aligned with His greater purposes. As we wait for His revelations, we can find assurance in His unchanging faithfulness and wisdom.

****Change**** Can be defined as the process of becoming different. This could involve a shift in personal attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors or a transformation within an organization or society. Change often comes with growth and development but can also involve loss and the unknown, which makes it a complex concept with emotional and practical implications.

****Obstacles to embracing change** can be boiled down to three main factors:**

- 1. **Fear of the Unknown**:** Humans are comforted by what's familiar. Change introduces uncertainty and unpredictability, leading to anxiety. The uncertainty about the outcomes of change can make people hesitant to step out of their comfort zone.
- 2. **Loss of Control**:** Change can make people feel that they have lost control over their environment. Having a routine or a status quo gives a sense of security, and change disrupts this, causing discomfort and resistance.
- 3. **Habit and Comfort**:** People create systems and habits that provide stability in their lives. Change disrupts these patterns and requires extra mental and physical effort. The natural preference for an easy, known path over a difficult, unknown one can lead to inertia.

Understanding these obstacles to change is crucial in mitigating them. Open communication, support, clarity about the benefits of change, and gradually implementing changes can help reduce resistance.

VISION NEEDS WILLING VESSELS

Trusting in God's Perfect Timing: David's experience reflects the importance of trusting in God's timing, even when our own plans may not align with His. This resonates with the message of Habakkuk 2:3-4, highlighting the certainty of God's timing and the need to trust in it.

Patience and Perseverance

The prophet's exhortation to "wait for it" emphasizes the virtue of patience and perseverance. During seasons of waiting, we are called to remain steadfast and resolute in our trust in God's timing, even when delays seem prolonged. Patience becomes a testament to our faith, as we hold on to the assurance that God's promises will fulfilled at the appointed time.

VISION NEEDS TO BE VAST

Encouraging Hope in God's Promises: The story of David passing on the vision for the temple's construction embodies the encouragement of hope in God's promises, despite the delays and unexpected outcomes.

Hope in God's Promises

Habakkuk's prophecy instills hope in the certainty of God's promises. Regardless of circumstances, we can anchor our hope in the unwavering faithfulness of God. His word will come to fruition according to His perfect timing. As we wait, we are encouraged to cultivate hope that sustains us and strengthens our faith, knowing that His promises will be fulfilled without fail.

Remaining Faithful in the Waiting Season: The account of David and his desire to build the temple, despite not being chosen, portrays the necessity of remaining faithful during waiting times.

What is our Vision as St John for 2024?

Seven essentials for our journey to become a Disciple-Making Church:

The Mission: Making a Difference by Following Christ, Offering Hope, Serving Others, and Loving Everyone.

A. God has burned in my heart the priority of being bound for “our Jerusalem.”

B. God has impressed upon me the imperative nature of the **Great Commission** and our part in fulfilling it.

II. The Vision

A. What are the spiritual imperatives that drive us in 2024 and beyond?

- The Building: The Trustees Team: The Roof, Painting.
- Landscaping, Pressure Washer, Signing Exterior and Interior Updates.
- Building Cleanup Day.
- Ministry Team Leadership Meeting. January 21st 1:15 – 4:15
- Ministry Fair 10:30 am Say Yes! Sunday.

B. What do you see, feel, and hear?

III. The Project “Open House” Relaunching St John as a New Church.

A. Will it be nice to have, or is it absolutely vital?

B. Remember: People won't sacrifice for something nice. It must be seen as something worth sacrificing for.

IV. The Spiritual and Financial Campaign

A. There is a clear biblical blueprint for our stewardship campaign.

B. Our campaign is not a novel concept. It is rooted in biblical history and in the practice of believers for millennia.

V. The Partnership

- A. One of the key factors in our success will be true teamwork.
- B. There is undeniable value in bringing in partners to help accomplish the project and fulfill the mission.

VI. The Lessons

A. If you study all the “building project” strategies of the Bible, you will see that **they failed or succeeded based on their leadership strategies, not their resource strategies.**

B. The Scripture teaches us that “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (**Proverbs 29:18**)

- “People don't lose their vision first; leaders do.”
- The people of Israel failed to cross over Jordan into the promised land because a group of leaders said it would be too costly and hard because of what they perceived as insurmountable obstacles—giants and strong-walled cities.

VII. The Challenge

In June 2023, you asked, “What do you want me to do as a leader?” Here is my answer to that question:

- A.** I want you to ask God to burn this vision in your heart.
- B.** I want you to be responsible as a Disciple of Christ—not only to give but also to serve here at St John.
- C.** I want you to be a vision carrier of the dream.
 - Use your influence as a St Jonner in meeting this challenge.
 - Use your influence to advance the cause of the kingdom.
- D.** I want you to join me in leading others on a spiritual journey, asking God to speak to our hearts through His Word and the counsel of wise people around us.
- E.** I want you to believe the “**Relaunching St John, Open House**” project is essential and vital to our future.
- F.** I want you to partner with me in prayer and action over the next several weeks. Begin by reading **Habakkuk 2:3-4 and 1 Chronicles 28-31.**

G. I want you to come to a decision to commit sacrificially based on one key question:

Is God pleased with what I offer Him in terms of Time, Talents, and Money?

Call to Action:

- 1) I believe God to do something unusual, something remarkable.

- 2) In this Rethinking St John campaign, if we are to go above and beyond human expectations, we must not just partner with one another. We must partner with Him.
- 3) Leaders show in their eyes, in the nod of their heads, in their body posture, in their words, in their time, in their talent, and in the giving of their treasure that they are examples of what the term stewardship is all about—faithful, responsible, trustworthy stewards of the Kingdom.
- 4) **1 Chronicles 29:6** says that the leaders “**committed wholeheartedly.**” That is exactly what we must do—commit wholeheartedly. A halfhearted effort just won’t get this job done. We must give it our whole hearts.

Quote:

"Patience is the companion of wisdom." - Augustine of Hippo.

Conclusion:

Habakkuk's timeless message invites us to embrace God's timing with patience and hope in His promises. Let us hold firm to the understanding that God's timing is part of His divine plan and will culminate in fulfilling His promises. As we reflect on Habakkuk 2: -4, may we find comfort and encouragement in embracing God's timing, knowing that His faithfulness endures, and His timing is always perfect.

Prayer:

Gracious Lord, help us embrace your timing and trust in your plans for our church. Grant us the patience and discernment to navigate the changes ahead. Fill us with hope and a deepening faith that we may be faithful witnesses of your love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Benediction:

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you unity and hope as you embrace the changes that lie ahead. May you walk in faith, trusting in His perfect timing and resting in His promises. Amen.