

Where's Our Vision?

Acts 16:9-10 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

The word "Vision" means spiritual understanding. It is the work of the Holy Ghost in the life of the believer to give him understanding of the Word of God. So if you get anything out of the message tonight it ain't because of me, it's God the Holy Ghost doing the work!

I want to weave a true story, as an illustration into the message tonight, much like I did Sunday morning. I think when you leave, you shall be more enlightened, encouraged and hopefully endeavoring to do the Will of God. This true story begins some 1,629 years ago in the year 386AD. It began in Scotland in a little town called Dumbarton where **Maewyn Succat** was born to Calpurinus and his wife. Calpurinus was a deacon in a Baptist Church, and his father, Potitus, was the Pastor of a Baptist church in a neighboring town. All was well with this God-fearing family, or so it seemed...

1. To Have Vision We Must Have The Word In Our Youth

- a) Youth Ought to be exposed to God early on. Plant the seed in them.
 - i. Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.
 - ii. 1 Samuel 3:1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.
 1. The word child in the Bible can refer to one under the age of 20. That being the case, Samuel – serving in the Tabernacle, while privately – would not have been a wee lad of 4 or so, the historian Josephus says Samuel was 12.
- b) Notice the Training in the Word:
 - i. 2 Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. 2 Timothy 1:5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.
- c) Youth ought to serve as an example, not “well they're just in that stage of rebellion”
 - i. 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
 - ii. Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
 - iii. Psalms 119:9 BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.
 - iv. Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

So many are deceived, “My children are in church, they'll be okay.” Not today. Statistics say 17 out of 20 children that have been raised in church, will leave the faith in their first year of college. That means that a Church youth group of 60 (that could mean a church of about 150-200 members?) within 20-25 years would retain 9 of those former youth. See, Maewyn, had a Godly Heritage, his Grandfather was a Baptist Preacher, his Dad was a Deacon, they obviously went to

church, but just sitting in church, just listening to the preaching, just going through the motions won't save you or make you any more a Christian or saved than I would becoming a machanic by standing inside Chris Robbin's RS-Speedy Lube – Oh I might learn a thing or two no doubt, but I wouldn't be able to take apart a motor, diagnose the problem and make it right. Well, that was Maewyn's problem. No doubt this young 16 year old did NOT take hold of the Word of God, but rather he more than likely hated being dragged to church by his parents. He endured the preacher's roaring and would probably have agreed with Jeremiah's in 12:8 “Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.” Indeed biographies of Maewyn tell us that he was “vile and wicked” until he was 16....

2. Others Vision Can Help The Word Grow

- a) I remember helping Daddy in the garden (when I wasn't playing in the dirt clods or making a mess). I also recall while at Chase High School in Johnny Bradley's Horticulture class learning about how some seeds won't germinate until they've been scared out of their wits!
 - i. See. the seeds of many plant species are often impervious to water and gases, thus preventing or delaying germination. Any process of breaking, scratching, or altering the seed coat, through chemical or thermal methods to make it permeable to water and gases is known as scarification.
- b) Jesus spoke of the Sower and his seeds that were sown:
 - i. Matthew 13:19-23 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
 - ii. Note the word understandeth is our Old Testament Word for Vision!
- c) When the Seed of the Gospel and the Word has been sown, sometimes the Devil, the Cares of this world strive to destroy, steal and crush the seed.
- d) That's when we believers have got to PRAY! Pray for SCARIFICATION!!! There's a song that speaks of a Mama's prayers. Many a man, woman, boy and girl has been touched no doubt by their parents prayers! Oh that God would give us more praying Mamas and Daddies! Not boozing folks, druggy folks, rich folks, smart folks, not gimme-anything-I-want folks, but God-fearing, Church going, praying folks!
 - i. One day in an old country church house, I heard mother pray for me there
She prayed for the Savior to guide me, To the beautiful altar of prayer
She walked down the aisle there toward me, The tears then came to her eyes
She said son I've been praying for you, For fear that in sin you might die
Chrous: Oh the beautiful altar of prayer, I know mother prayed for me there
She prayed for the Savior to guide me, To the beautiful altar of prayer
My soul has been saved by the Master, On the dark road of sin and despair
And I'm thankful to my dear loving mother, And the beautiful altar of prayer
- e) Remember that the young preacher Timothy's seeds had been planted by his Mama and Grandmaw. There are countless other times in the Bible: Moses, Sampson, Samuel and others that had Godly influences from their parents.

Now, back to Maewyn Succat, when he was 16 in the year 402AD, a band of Scotch-Irish pirates raided his hometown. He was working on his father's farm when those pirates captured him and several others and came to the shores of an island where he was sold to a man named Miliucc. Soon the man made him a shepherd and sent him out day in and day out near the slopes of a long-defunct volcano called Mt. Slemish. Maewyn wrote in his autobiography:

I used to stay out in the forests and on the mountain and I would wake up before daylight to pray in the snow, in icy coldness, in rain, and I used to feel neither ill nor any slothfulness, because, as I now see, the Spirit was burning in me at that time. Some 6 years passed. He was no longer called Maewyn, but servant boy. He had a new name. Slave boy. He kept sheep and slopped pigs. Some called him Pig Boy. His praying parents had long since given him up for dead. But those seeds of God and Faith had been scarified and now began to germinate, for he recalled his Godly heritage and began to fast and pray and one night while he slept he had a dream, he said:

One night in my sleep I heard a voice saying to me: 'You do well to fast: soon you will depart for your home country.' And again, a very short time later, there was a voice prophesying: 'Behold, your ship is ready. Shortly thereafter Maewyn put his Faith in Jesus Christ.

3. To Have True Vision We Must Believe On The Lord Jesus Christ.

- a) We hear Bro. Brian sing the Old Ship of Zion
- b) Indeed beloved we have to have the vision of Faith to step on board the Old Gospel Ship!
- c) Remember that unless you are saved you cannot hope to understand the Word of God or have the proper "vision."
 - i. 1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

So it was that once Maewyn got saved, he truly believed that this vision was of God and so he informs us that: ***...shortly thereafter I turned about and fled from the man with whom I had been for six years, and I came, by the power of God who directed my route to advantage (and I was afraid of nothing), until I reached that ship.*** That ship was over 200 miles away and he walked all those miles and found a ship he'd never seen before, met people who were strangers, and they would not let him on board. Maewyn was puzzled!

Hearing this I left them to go to the hut where I was staying, and on the way I began to pray, and before the prayer was finished I heard one of them shouting loudly after me: 'Come quickly because the men are calling you.' And immediately I went back to them and they started to say to me: 'Come, because we are admitting you out of good faith; make friendship with us in any way you wish.' ... I continued with them, and forthwith we put to sea.

Maewyn continued his story and tells us his shipmates had a new name for him: "Christian": ***And after three days we reached land, and for twenty-eight days journeyed through uninhabited country, and the food ran out and hunger overtook them; and one day the steersman began saying: 'Why is it, Christian? You say your God is great and all-powerful; then why can you not pray for us? For we may perish of hunger; it is unlikely indeed that we shall ever see another human being.'***

In fact, I said to them, confidently: 'Be converted by faith with all your heart to my Lord God, because nothing is impossible for him, so that today he will send food for you on your road, until you be sated, because everywhere he abounds.'

And with God's help this came to pass; and behold, a herd of swine appeared on the road before our eyes, and they slew many of them, and remained there for two nights, and they were full of their meat and well restored, for many of them had fainted and would otherwise have been left half dead by the wayside. And after this they gave the utmost thanks to God, and I was esteemed in their eyes, and from that day they had food abundantly.

You remember what Jesus said about the seed? Matthew 13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side." Well the devil sure tried to get Maewyn's seed plucked out of his soul. He was the son of a Deacon, the grandson of a Preacher. Why was this slavery stuff happening to him? Does this not remind you of Joseph in Genesis? But before the wicked one could steal that seed within his soul, Maewyn got saved and now he was following God, believing the Lord and trusting those precious Words hidden in his heart when he was a child. Now he was clinging to those seeds put there by his parents and now he was seeing fruit borne as Matthew 13:23 says: "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Those seeds would bring forth fruit for the Lord but how much remained to be seen.

Finally, after a time, he finally arrived back home. His parents were overjoyed that he was alive and back home, but also were so joyul that their son had become a Christian. Not long after he had gotten home, he had another dream. He tells us about it in his book:

In a vision of the night, I saw a man whose name was Victoricus coming...with innumerable letters, and he gave me one of them, as I was reading the beginning of the letter I seemed at that moment to hear the voice of those who were beside the forest of Foclut which is near the western sea, and they were crying as if with one voice: 'We beg you, holy youth, that you shall come and shall walk again among us.' And I was stung intensely in my heart so that I could read no more, and thus I awoke. Maewyn had what we call a Macedonian Call!

4. We Must Have A Vision For The Lost!

- a) Paul heard the call in Acts And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.
- b) Without that vision – Proverbs 29:18a Where there is no vision... the people perish:
 - i. The Vision (Understanding) of the Gospel & Sound Doctrine Matthew 20:19a Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,
 1. Maewyn had already led people to the Lord.
 2. He knew the proper Doctrines.
 - ii. The Vision (Understanding) of the Church Matthew 20:19b baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
 1. He understood how a Church was organized (from his Grandfather & Father)
 - iii. The Vision (Understanding) of Discipleship Matthew 20:20a Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:
 1. He had learned the Word and could disciple others.

Lovingly, dismissing his family's pleas, what did Maewyn do? Around 410AD of his own free will, not by the Order of the Pope – Celestine – I mean, Maewyn wasn't even known to the Pope – because this young 24 year old man was a Baptist – so being called of God to be a missionary, he boarded a ship and sailed straight back to the Island where he had been a prisoner and a slave for 6 years and resolved to do one thing: Preach Christ and Him Crucified.

Upon arrival a local pagan met him and thinking him to be a pirate almost killed him. Maewyn began preaching, baptizing and planting churches. From his own writings and books written about Maewyn Succat, we know that Maewyn believed and did the following:

- He Baptized Only Professed Believers, he never baptized infants.
- He Baptized By Immersion Only, he never sprinkled.
- He believed the Lord's Supper was symbolic of the work of Christ, not the actual blood and body of the Lord. Therefore he did not perform the Mass.
- He set up Churches that had a Pastor and Deacons
- These Churches were Independent from Creeds, Councils, Popes, etc.
- He believed in Eternal Security of those Saved.
- He believed in the Trinity.

His vision for the Lost and his love for the people who formerly enslaved him eventually saw a hundredfold harvest for the Lord's Work. By the end of his life, Maewyn, had planted 365 churches on that Island, Ordained 365 Pastors, 3,000 Deacons and saw some 100,000 – 200,000 Islanders attending those churches.

You say, preacher what a wonderful story! I've never heard it before! I think you've heard some of it before. You've just not heard the Rest of the Story. Maewyn Succat is said to have died at the age of 120 (around 506AD) while some debate that most agree he died on March 17 (yesterday) the Island people were the Irish of the Isle of Ireland and they called Maewyn: The Father of the Citizens, which is translated into English as PATRICK. The Catholics claimed him as theirs and made him a Saint. Well, you've seen that Maewyn Succat or Patrick was a saint like you and I are for if you are saved you are a saint. Indeed Patrick preached the Faith which lines up with our Baptist Doctrines NOT Catholic Dogma. Thus Patrick preached as Jude 1:3b states: “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” He used the Shamrock (3-leaf clover) to teach the Trinity to the Irish.

So St. Patrick's day ain't about the Wearin o' the Green, drinking green-beer, or kissing because one's Irish. My 49-Great Grandfather – Natheh was actually baptized by Patrick, so the faith he believed, is the same faith my Daddy and I believe today. So forget all this secular stuff about Saint Paddy's day, and 4-leaf clovers? Maewyn would surely preach against that! Try trusting Jesus instead of luck!!

Now beloved you can say you now know the True Story of Maewyn Succat the Baptist who was kidnapped after his death by the Catholics and turned into the snake-banishing Saint Patrick. Now let me ask you: Where's your vision? Do you know Jesus as your Saviour? Are you praying for the Lost? When was the last time you cared for anyone other than yourself? How about when people are mean to you Christian? How do you respond? Do you have proper vision or understanding of the Word? Where's your vision? Look at how God used Maewyn, the same God wants to use you too.