



northminster presbyterian church

2400 old alabama road
roswell, georgia 30076

09-Jul-2006

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 48 2 Samuel 5:1-5,9-10

SERMON: Cloudy Or Clear Vision? Factor (Rev. Susan Haynes)

One Sunday morning a pastor got up in the pulpit and apologized for the band-aid on his face. He said, "I was thinking about my sermon while shaving and cut my face." Afterward, he found a note in the collection plate, "Next time, think about your face and cut the sermon."

During today's service we will claim the promises of God in the Sacrament of Baptism and we will ask God's blessing upon those who will be working with the children during Vacation Bible School this week. So... *today I'm going to cut the sermon.*

If you have attended worship on a regular basis since we began our "David: King Con?" theme, you've probably gotten the idea by now that David was a person of destiny.

- *David, not the oldest but youngest, son of Jesse is anointed by the prophet Samuel as the next king of Israel*
- *The shepherd boy David kills the Philistine giant Goliath with a slingshot and stone.*
- *Although David is maniacally hunted by King Saul to kill him, David survives and ultimately leads Israel in mourning the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan.*

Now David has been anointed king over Judah and Israel.

David certainly sounds like a person of destiny. The last verse of today's scripture reads: "*And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.*"

Was David a person of destiny or simply someone who acknowledged his dependence upon God and someone who was willing to be a part of God's vision for Israel?

Since fall of last year, the Officers and staff of Northminster have been working to discern God's vision for this church, in this place, at this time. We have looked at scripture. We have prayed. We have discussed. We wanted something short, something we all can remember, something that can be displayed in the narthex as a constant reminder of what God would have us do here and now as a way of sharing with those who visit us what we believe God is calling us to do.

We have created a preliminary statement, the one printed on the front page of the Church Family News and below:

*Called to Trust Jesus Christ and to Glorify God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
We at Northminster Presbyterian Church commit
to being a faithful community of:*

- *Worship and Welcome*
- *Growth and Outreach*
- *Care and Compassion*

This is not necessarily the final version. We are giving it a trial run. It has not been approved by the Session yet.

But why do this? Why create a statement that summarizes God's call upon our mutual lives here at Northminster Presbyterian Church?

Why? Because we need a constant reminder that we all, each one of us [*Susan mentions several members of the Congregation here*] has a part to play in God's vision for Northminster. Just as Jerusalem became the focus of a new vision of God's presence among the people of Israel, perhaps this new vision statement also can be an ever-present reminder to us that God is constantly present here at Northminster, encouraging, comforting, dis-comforting. God is constantly present here at Northminster so that we will answer God's call to do those things that will hasten the day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess and there will be war no more. Just like David, when we seek to listen to God, as we are seeking to do through this vision statement, and when like David we respond, that is when we are faithful.

However, when we, like David, allow our selfish interests to get in the way of pursuing God's vision, and shortly we will be reminded of David's self-serving behavior, that is when the way becomes cloudy and we are apt to lose our way. The fog settles in around us and not until we can see the light of the sun again will the fog begin to dissipate.

For us, of course, the light of the sun is the person of God's own son, Jesus Christ. *Only* when we maintain our relationship to God through the son, Jesus Christ, does the vision become clear again.

But it is so easy to allow ourselves to get enveloped in the fog. To worry when someone who has been a part of this church family isn't present and wonder what we have done or not done to facilitate their absence. To worry when we borrow money from our savings to supplement our operating budget. In our worry, we don't need to take the easy way out like the New and Improved "Lite" Church of the Valley. Here is their vision statement:

We are the New and Improved Lite Church of the Valley.

We have 24% fewer commitments.

We trim off guilt as we are Low-Cal... low Calvin, that is.

We feature a 7.5% tithe and a 35 minute worship service with seven-minute sermons. Next Sunday's sermon is on the Feeding of the 500.

Our vision statement will require a lot of us. I submit to you that if we invest our energies in pursuing our mutually discerned vision, many of our worries, like the fog, *will dissipate*. And while we, like David, do not know where God's vision is taking us, we do know, as did David, that God will give us what we need to pursue that vision. God would not call us to do something for which God has not equipped us. Present in this body known as Northminster Presbyterian Church is *everything we will need to accomplish what God asks of us*.

Perhaps the words of Mother Teresa sum it up for us: "What I can do, you cannot. What you can do, I cannot. But together we can do something beautiful for God." *May our vision be clear and our faith equal to that vision! Amen.*

Psalm 48

1Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God. His holy mountain, 2beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King. 3Within its citadels God has shown himself a sure defense. 4Then the kings assembled, they came on together. 5As soon as they saw it, they were astounded; they were in panic, they took to flight; 6trembling took hold of them there, pains as of a woman in labor, 7as when an east wind shatters the ships of Tarshish. 8As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God, which God establishes forever. Selah 9We ponder your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple. 10Your name, O God, like your praise, reaches to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is filled with victory. 11Let Mount Zion be glad, let the towns of Judah rejoice because of your judgments. 12Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers, 13consider well its ramparts; go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation 14that this is God, our God forever and ever. He will be our guide forever.

2 Samuel 5:1-5,9-10

1Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. 2For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel." 3So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5At Hebron he reigned

over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. ⁹David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inwards. ¹⁰And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

The New Revised Standard Version, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.