

## VISION DAY: TOGETHER AS ONE

Good morning, CVCHURCH. I welcome you back home. If you are our guest this morning we're thrilled that you are here. We are a multi-cultural and an intergenerational church. Today is an exciting day for us because it is our annual VISION DAY. You're going to hear what God has done over the last two years and what we believe He wants to do in and through us for the remainder of this year and 2018. Our theme today is TOGETHER AS ONE. I am hearing people say lately that what is going on in our country, our state and in many people's lives is division. That our country and relationships are being torn apart. But it doesn't have to be this way. The Bible has some very strong things to say about division, harmony and unity. Would you please read out loud with me Psalm 133:1-3. Let's begin, **"How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in harmony! 2 For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe. 3 Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountain of Zion. And there the Lord has pronounced His blessing, even life everlasting."** This Psalm is known as an ascent Psalm because David wrote it as Israelites from all over the country and the world would gather in Jerusalem to gather at the temple to worship God together. David was overcome with the incredible sight of seeing all of his brothers and sisters descending on Jerusalem to celebrate their God. This was a moving sight as David watched his people gather together as one to come and worship, adore and praise their Father God together. He delighted in the unity, joy and togetherness he was seeing as they came from all over. David stated that harmony, unity and people loving each other is pleasant, precious and delightful. The feelings that come from harmony and unity are love, joy, excitement and anticipation of what God wants to do and will do as we commit to guard, protect and fight for our unity together. Unfortunately, harmony is not always found in the church as God wants it to be. People disagree and cause division over unimportant issues. Believe it or not, I have witnessed, in my 30 years of being a lead pastor, that there are some people who actually delight in causing tension by discrediting

others. But God says to us that unity and harmony and learning to live together as one people is important for at least 3 reasons. **1) It causes us, the church, to become a positive example to the world and helps draw others to the Lord.** Jesus said in John 13:34-35 **“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples.”** Peter, one of Jesus’ Apostles, wrote in 1 Peter 4:8 **“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.”** In other words, a local church that is truly committed to loving Jesus and loving one another is able to forgive one another more rapidly and thoroughly when minor and major issues arise. When we truly love each other it covers our disagreements, and it causes us to create the kind of environment that our guests, and those who don’t know Jesus and this kind of love will be drawn to us. **2) It helps us cooperate as a body of believers as God meant us to, giving us a foretaste of heaven. 3) It revitalizes ministry because there is less tension to sap our energy.**

David uses two examples of a local church that lives together in harmony and unity and why it is so wonderful and pleasing. David likens unity and the preciousness of harmony to the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron’s head. What does that mean to us? The anointing oil symbolized the unity of the nation as they worshiped God under the Holy Spirit’s leadership through their spiritual leader. The anointing oil symbolized that Aaron was set apart, consecrated and dedicated by God to lead them. It was their unity in following the leadership of Aaron and David that God appointed leaders that set them apart as they worshiped God, and it set them apart to God. Friends, when we give ourselves to Jesus and Spirit-led leadership it creates an atmosphere where God can do miracles in our midst. That is what the anointing oil stands for. It is a symbol of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and He wants to do miracles in our lives, but He can’t use us to the degree he wants to when there is dissension, anger, gossip and deceit.

The second example David gives of the power of harmony and unity among the local church is the dew from Mount Hermon. The dew of Hermon was heavy

and it symbolizes how refreshing and invigorating unity and harmony are. As we content to live out our lives together as one, it creates the environment for true growth to take place spiritually, emotionally, relationally and numerically. Division, arguments and bad attitudes impede and can stop growth, but harmony, unity and working together lead to healthy, vital growth.

**Jesus says in John 17:21 & 23, “I pray that they will all be one just as You and I are one--as You are in Me, Father, and I am in You. And may they be in us so that the world will believe You sent Me.” 23 “May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that You sent Me and that You love them as much as You love Me.”**

Church, this should take our breath away. Jesus’ prayer for His disciples and for us is in our love for Jesus and for each other we would experience the same kind of oneness that Jesus experienced with the Father for the purpose that our unity with Jesus and each other would be proof to the world that the Father sent Jesus to the world. Craig Keener writes about these two verses, **“The way believers treat one another is an essential component for proclaiming Jesus to the world. Indeed, if one compares this prayer with Jesus’ earlier prayer in 11:42, one finds that the unity of believers provides the same kind of witness concerning Jesus’ origin as Jesus’ raising of Lazarus from the dead.”** The leading characteristic of a life-giving, growing church is the commitments each of us make. This next statement is one of our leading statements being a purpose driven church. Please read it out loud with me:

**A GREAT COMMITMENT TO THE GREAT COMMANDMENT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION WILL GROW A GREAT CHURCH.**

**“‘<sup>36</sup>Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the Law of Moses?’ <sup>37</sup>Jesus replied, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>40</sup>The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.’” (Matthew 22:36-40)**

**“<sup>18</sup>Jesus came and told His disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20).**

Making the commitment to order your life around God’s five purposes for your life is how you become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus says you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the purpose of **WORSHIP: You were planned for God’s pleasure.** Ephesians 1:5 says, **“God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure.”** Our 2<sup>nd</sup> purpose is **MINISTRY: You were shaped for serving.** Jesus said the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment is equally important to the first. **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** Church, this is amazing. You would think that loving God should stand alone, but Jesus said loving your neighbor is as important as loving God. In other words, Jesus says you cannot truly love God without loving others. 1 John 3:16-19 says, **“We know what real love is because Jesus gave up His life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? 18 Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. 19 Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God.”** Our 3<sup>rd</sup> purpose is **EVANGELISM: You were made for mission.** Jesus tells us in the Great Commission, **“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations.”** Once you surrender your life to Jesus Christ, you are to be on mission 24/7. Every person you meet by how you respect and value them you can be building a bridge to one day share the Good News with them that Jesus loves them, has a plan for their life and died so that their sins would be forgiven, and they can have a relationship with

God that will last forever. Our 4<sup>th</sup> purpose is **FELLOWSHIP: You were formed for God's family.** I will close my time with you in a few moments and speak more in depth about how we live our **TOGETHERNESS AS ONE.** Our 5<sup>th</sup> purpose is **DISCIPLESHIP: You were created to become like Christ.** Jesus tells us to **“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** As we each choose to live out a great commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, we will grow a great church together. I want to close by focusing on the purpose of fellowship, which is practiced through becoming a member of this local church. How can you make sure that you're living your life in harmony and unity together with your CVCHURCH family. How can we stay on mission and fulfill God's call on each of our lives and together as the CVCHURCH family? Let's look quickly at four commitments that will ensure that each one of us will contribute to the deep sense of togetherness as one that will produce true harmony and unity here at CVCHURCH. **(VIDEO: The Last Ship)**

## **I. I commit to protecting the unity of my CVCHURCH**

### **A. By acting in love toward other members**

1 Peter 1:22 says, **“You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.”**

### **B. By refusing to gossip**

Nothing creates more confusion, division and suspicion than gossiping and slandering other people in our church family. Proverbs 11:13 says, **“A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.”** Proverbs 20:19 **“A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers.”**

### **C. By partnering in the vision, mission and leadership of CVCHURCH**

You can do this by committing wholeheartedly to God's five purposes for you personally and for our church. If you haven't taken out membership here yet, I encourage you to sign up for our next LD 101. Get around the bases by going to all four of our **Life Development Seminars on Membership, Maturity, Ministry and Mission.**

**D. By going to the person I have a problem with in private**

Jesus teaches us in Matthew 18:15, **"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back."** If we all will follow this simple but powerful truth, much of the brokenness in our relationships will be dealt with.

**II. I commit to sharing the responsibility of my CVCHURCH**

**A. By praying for its growth - SERFVIP and salvations**

**B. By inviting the unchurched to attend**

**C. By warmly welcoming those who are our guests**

**III. I commit to serving in the ministry of my CVCHURCH**

**A. By discovering my gifts and talents**

One of the best ways to do this is to get around the bases of our Life Development process. This is what our LD 301 is all about. Discovering your God-given shape, and then start serving out of your **SHAPE**. 1 Peter 4:10 says, **"God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another."**

**B. By being equipped to serve by the ministry team leaders**

**Ephesians 4:11-12 “God gave some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”**

**C. By developing a servant’s heart**

**Mark 10:43-45 “But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

**IV. I commit to supporting the testimony of my CVCHURCH**

**A. By attending faithfully**

**Hebrews 10:25 “And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another.”**

**B. By living a godly life**

**Philippians 1:27 “Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together, with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.”**

**C. By tithing and giving on a regular basis**

**Deuteronomy 14:23 “The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your life.”**

