

## VISION TRINITY: August 2022

### Acts 1:1-8

#### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you this morning. For those of you that are guests with us today, whether you are in the room or joining us online, we say a very special welcome to you. My name is Chris Wigley, I have the privilege of serving as one of the Pastors here at Trinity. And on behalf of our church family, and our staff team, we welcome you.

We would love the opportunity to be able to connect with you. You can let us know you are here in a couple ways. You can text the keyword, "TBCMP," that stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you do that, a reply text will be sent with a link you can click on. That will direct you to a form that will then provide us with basic contact information to follow up with you.

Or you can stop by the information center in the lobby area. We have a gift we'd like to give you there. Again, we look forward to connecting with you.

#### VISION SUNDAY:

A couple times a year, we like to take a Sunday to focus, or refocus, on our vision as a church. To talk about where we are and where we're headed. And in the church world, we approach our year in much the same way as school districts. Today kinda marks the beginning of the church calendar year. So, I think it is the perfect day to talk through our vision.

Now, I hope you have come to realize that it is our heart that Trinity reflects the New Testament Church. It is our desire to follow the lead of Scripture. So, I want to frame, quote, "Vision Sunday" in the context of the New Testament. So, I want to invite you to take your bibles and turn with me to the Book of Acts, chapter 1, as we look at verses 1-8.

#### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Movie Cliffhangers**

How many of you have a favorite movie series? Any Star Wars fans? Lord of the Rings fans? Avengers?

My favorite movie series is the Bourne series? Anyone else? Bourne Identity, Bourne Supremacy, Bourne Ultimatum and then Bourne Legacy. The thing I

love about that movie series is that at the end of each movie it leaves you asking questions. "Is there more? What is Jason Bourne going to do next?" That is what is called a cliffhanger. Something that leaves you on the edge of your seat waiting for the next movie to come out.

In much the same way, our passage of study this morning is a cliffhanger. It is a development in God's Redemptive Story that leaves the disciples wondering what's next. Acts 1, verse 1.

#### BACKGROUND:

*"<sup>1</sup>In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach..."* The Book of Acts was written by Luke, Dr. Luke. The indication that there was a first book implies that Acts is a sequel. The mentioning of the name, Theophilus, is a repeat of Luke 1:3. This is what ties Luke and Acts together. The Gospel of Luke is about the life and ministry of Jesus, His death, burial and resurrection. There is a 40-day overlap between the close of the Gospel of Luke and Jesus' ascension into heaven. That's verses 2-5 of Acts 1.

*<sup>2</sup>until the day when he was taken up (that being Jesus' ascension), after he had given commands [that's important] through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup>He presented himself alive to them after his suffering [that is His crucifixion] by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and [He was] speaking about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

So, Jesus' earthly work was complete. He was crucified, buried, and resurrected. He then spent 40 days teaching his disciples. Following those 40 days, Jesus ascended into heaven. And while Jesus' earthly work was complete, His total work is not. He issued commands for the apostles to follow and that is to be continued until His second coming. Acts is what Jesus started, what He empowered and what He continues to do. Verse 6.

*<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they (meaning his disciples) asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* The disciples were wondering if the outpouring of God's Spirit was the fulfillment of Ezekiel 39. Is that what is next?

Now, I want to call your attention to the word “restore.” The disciples knew that the world they were living in was not reflective of God’s original, perfect, design. Something was broken and God was working to restore that which has been broken. Most believed that the restoration involved the Messiah, Jesus, in political rule. While they understood the need for something to be restored, they were just confused as to how that was going to be accomplished. So, Jesus, here, redirects their view of how God was going to restore the brokenness.

Jesus replies, *“It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.”* In other words, restoration is happening, just differently than you are thinking. The Holy Spirit is coming to birth the Church and that’s God’s plan.

Jesus transitions the disciples thinking from their view of the Kingdom of God being a political restoration to it being spiritual. Look at the first word in verse 8. **“BUT.”** This highlights a transition in thinking.

Look at the second key word in verse 8, *“But you...”* Three times in the course of one verse the term “YOU” is penned. So, the restoration of what is broken is not political, it is spiritual, and it involves Jesus’ disciples, you. Now, here’s the key thought for us this morning. **We must see that the mission of God involves us, you and me.** The same kingdom that God assigned to Jesus is the same kingdom that Jesus assigned to the apostles in Acts 1 and the apostles have passed on to us today. Jesus’ command given to the disciples in Acts 1:8 is the same command given to you and me.

When you read Acts 1:8, I want you to replace the word “you,” with your name. *But you [Chris] will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...* God has empowered us, by the indwelling of The Holy Spirit, at the moment of our salvation, for a very specific purpose. What this tells us is that God’s plan, all along, to redeem brokenness, involves you and me. And God has empowered us for that task.

Verse 8. *8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, [for what reason?] and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”* God has placed two callings on our lives. First, He has called us to Himself. That’s salvation. And second, He has called us to be a part of His plan. God has empowered us to be His

witnesses in our community, our area, our nation, and the world. This is what The Church is to be about.

### **MISSION, VISION, STRATEGY:**

So, in order to be a Church that is modeled after the New Testament Church, we have to realize that we have been given a mission from God, we’ve been burdened with a vision for our church, and we must strategize to accomplish that mission and vision.

### **ILLUSTRATION: Good Organizations**

Most really great organizations and companies have a mission statement. Something that drives them. The same is true of The Church.

Mission tells an organization what it must do. Vision tells an organization how it does what it must do. And strategy is the feet that helps an organization to accomplish it. Mission, vision, and strategy. Let’s talk about that for Trinity Baptist Church in Mt. Pleasant, Texas.

Our mission, what we must do, is the same mission that God has given to every bible believing, Christ exalting Church. We don’t have to make it up. Jesus gave it to us. It is The Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20. *18And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations** [same as Acts 1:8], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Jesus, in Acts 1:8, is actually repeating Himself. If the one that has all authority, repeats himself, it’s important. Therefore we must embrace this because it’s our mission. We must make disciples of all nations. It’s what we must do.

Now vision differs from mission because it tells us how we do what we must do. We have created a vision statement. Our vision is that, **“We exist to become a Gospel-centered community redeeming brokenness through hope in Jesus Christ.”** Let’s say it together. “We exist to become a Gospel-centered community redeeming brokenness through hope in Jesus Christ.

When we look at that vision statement, there are two parts. There’s the what we must become, and then what we believe we will see when we become that.

So, we must do the hard work of becoming a Gospel-centered community, founded upon and modeled by the Scriptures, so that we can see redemption of brokenness through hope Jesus Christ.

Listen, everything we do, we do because Heaven is real and because Hell is real. I've heard it said that, "we want to fill heaven." We are not here to build the name of Trinity. We are here to build the Kingdom of God. And we do that by pointing people to the hope that is found in Jesus.

So, we've determined our mission, to make disciples of all nations. We've received our vision, to become a gospel-centered community so that we can see the redemption of what is broken through hope found in Jesus. That sounds great. But the question is, how, specifically, do we do all that? That's where strategy comes into play.

It is not enough to have a mission and vision statement. We want to organize our church to accomplish the mission and the vision. We have developed a three-fold strategy in order to become a gospel-centered community. That strategy is, trusting Jesus through worship, transforming lives in community, and telling others by living on mission. Trusting, Transforming and Telling.

In the time we have left, I want to take each of those strategy points and describe them to you, talk about where we are and where we are going in each of those areas.

### 1) **Trusting Jesus through Worship.**

We've talked about this before. That worship is both private and corporate. It is much more than a worship service. It's how we honor God with our lives.

We have continued to make our corporate worship services here vertically directed and horizontally connected. That means Jesus is the hero (that's vertically directed) and we proclaim that together (that horizontally connected).

We must continue to make worship a priority and we must continue to enthusiastically worship alongside one another. When we come into this place, it is not to be a spectator. We are to be participants together. To sing together, to respond together, and to be challenged together. Why is that important? Well Psalm 22:3 says that God inhabits the praises of His people. That is He

dwells among praising people. When we praise, God makes His presence known. And we all need God's presence.

Now, we have continued to grow in our worship attendance. And we are needing to posture ourselves to create space for guests, especially in the 11:00 service. So, I'm asking for your help, moving forward. 11:00 is crowded. The 9:30 not as much. So, as your Sunday morning schedule allows, please consider attending the 9:30am service so that we can provide more space for others to attend.

We also continue to invest in our online worship experiences. And I want you to know the impact that has had. In 2022, we have actually seen a decrease in numbers of people tuning in online. I think that's because we have come to a new normal following a pandemic. But the impact of that smaller number of online worshipers is immense.

We now have people, and churches, that join in every Sunday from all over the globe. I have mentioned before about Pastor Rashid in Pakistan. And we have gotten to know Bianca, who we baptized earlier this year, as she faithfully joins us from Germany. But we have now received communication from a sister church in Kenya that joins in regularly. So, while our online audience is decreasing in numbers it is increasing in global impact. We desire to come alongside those churches and equip them and their pastors. So, moving forward, we will continue to invest in our online worship experience. But if you are in the area, it is far better to be here in person than online.

We have also accomplished several other things regarding the strategy of trusting Jesus through worship so far this year. Our Kids Ministry created FaithFinders. This is a group of 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders that lead their peers in worship every Sunday in Kids Church. Our Student Ministry has put together a Student Worship band that leads periodically on Wednesday nights. Our preschool worship, on Sunday mornings, is the best place to be! Watching them lift their hands in worship will bless your heart beyond all measure.

Another small way we have worked to fuel your private worship is by revamping our Church Library and Resource center. It is located in the hallway on your way to the Kids Ministry area. There are books there that will help you grow in your faith. There's a section called "Pastor's Picks" where you can see recommended resources from me. All that to help you in your private worship.

Moreover, our technology team of volunteers is exploring further development of our church's presence on the YouVersion Bible App. That is something that we are working to roll out later this year. There you will be able to follow our church, work through recommended devotionals and even follow notes from sermons. Be on the lookout for that.

I am also excited about the preaching plan for this fall. Next Sunday we will be kicking off a teaching series we are calling, "Real Questions, Biblical Answers." We fielded questions from you throughout July and I am looking forward to developing messages that I pray will answer your questions. We will be addressing topics like knowing God's will, dealing with doubts, why prayer is important even though God already knows what we are asking, why struggle with sin, and many others. You are going to hear from a good friend of mine, Professor and Author, Dr. Travis Dickinson, on the subject of doubt. I'm telling you it's going to be awesome!

So, that's where we've been and where we are headed in the area of trusting Jesus through worship. Second strategy point...

## 2) Transforming Lives in Community.

God wired us for relationships. He desires His Church to build relationships that in turn challenge us in our faith journey. This is called discipleship. The main discipleship arm of our church are our small groups. If you are not connected in a small group, you need to be.

We believe so strongly in this that we have attempted to make it as easy as possible for you to find a group. Today, on your seat when you came in, there was a flyer listing all our Adult Bible Study Groups. Pastor Jeff has set up a table in the Fellowship Area this morning to be available to visit with you about a group that is right for you. You can also check our website.

Hear me, as we grow larger as a church, we must grow smaller in groups. And I know the thought of trying out a small group can be daunting. Will I fit in? Is that group already tight with one another? Will they make me pray out loud? Listen, I get it.

We have worked hard to create a culture in our church of being welcoming and friendly. This is a place where it is okay to not be okay. And our heart is that you are known, you are loved, and you are cared for.

One of the successes of this year in creating that environment is the development of our Host Team ministry. Each week, when I follow up with our guests, I hear time and time again about how friendly our church is. We have worked hard to create that environment and we are intentional in doing so. How many of you enjoy seeing teenagers greet you with those signs?!

We also had Family Fun Night a few weeks ago. That was a blast to get to hang out, eat snowcones, and to allow your Pastor to dominate at cornhole. We are working to do that again this fall. But that was intentional. We want to continue to create environments that are not threatening so that you can build relationships with one another. We believe wholeheartedly in this!

We are launching new groups all the time. That is to create more touch points for you to get connected. I'm really excited about the launch of a young singles group this fall. And we also have groups for engaged and newly weds, parents of preschoolers, parents of elementary kids, parents of teenagers, single moms, men's and women's, and even multi-generational groups. We have a place for you to get connected.

We're going to continue to highlight groups, talk about their importance, and challenge you to get connected. Next month we plan to launch a group connect focus. You will hear testimonies, see social media highlights, and have opportunities to get plugged into a group.

We are also in process of revamping our New Member Workshop class. I realize that name is confusing. Is that for new members? Is it for people who want to be members? Do I have to become a member if I attend? We are renaming that workshop, "Starting Point." If you want to get further connected to our church, that workshop is your starting point. You are not obligated to join our church by attending. But, if you would like to join our church, that is how you do that. Again, trying to make it as easy as possible for you to get connected. By the way, our next New Member Workshop will be on Wednesday, August 24. See myself or Pastor Jeff for more information.

We've talked about trusting Jesus through worship and transforming lives through community. The third strategy point is...

## 3) Telling Others by Living on Mission. Acts 1:8, *"you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

God has invited us to be a part of His redemptive story. Therefore, it is our responsibility to get in the game. There are three ways you can be a part of this in our church. On the campus, in our city, and around the world.

You and I get involved in telling others by living on mission on the campus by serving in a ministry. We cannot do the ministry we do without volunteers that serve in those ministries. We cannot tell preschoolers how much God loves them without volunteers that are willing to help out. We cannot lead boys and girls to accept Jesus as Lord without volunteers teaching them. Teenagers crave someone to love on them, serve them, come alongside them, and show them the love of Jesus. Our incredible worship team is lead by volunteers. And there are other ways to serve on the campus. We are committed to training our volunteers to help them feel confident in their role. In fact, tonight at 5:30pm is our Leadership Training. If you are a volunteer or you are interested in volunteering, please be here at 5:30.

We are also committed to having an impact in our city. The question that haunts me, and I pray haunts you, is, "If we were to close our doors, would the community notice?" It is God's desire that His Church have such a profound impact on the community that they are in that they are needed. We have worked to become that church.

In April, we began a partnership with The East Texas Food Bank in hosting their mobile pantry. We serve, on average, food to over 300 families each month. That is not possible without volunteers to coordinate traffic, compile food boxes, and interact with people coming.

Our church supports 8 local ministry partners in our city. We have several groups that have adopted a local ministry partner and serve them on a monthly basis. We are committed to furthering that. We are asking every Adult Bible Study Group to identify a Missions Coordinator that will plan and coordinate monthly mission initiatives for each group. Can you imagine the impact we can have on our community when our church is mobilized?

We have, as of July, onboarded a new position of Missions and Mobilization Minister. Brittany Burns is already doing a fantastic job. That position expresses our desire to be a church that impacts our city and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our preschoolers and kids have even gotten in on the game. Preschoolers have brought money and supplies to give in their worship time that have in turned been a blessing to one of our local ministry partners, Expectant Heart. Our kids ministry raised almost \$1,000 at Fun Camp that in turn has assisted Rhute Haven, a ministry to the homeless.

Our missions team continues to meet and explore more ministry initiatives by identifying additional partners and exploring ways we can serve in foster and adoption ministries. Those meetings have already begun and I'm looking forward to rolling them out later this year.

So, we've talked about telling others on the campus and in our city, but also around the world. We are committed to providing both local and international mission trips. If you have never been on an international mission trip, you need to this year. It will change your life. We are working to identify additional partnerships that will mobilize our church to more touch points globally. More challenging regions and work. We want to be a part of starting new churches, both in the United States and around the world.

We are working to increase communications with you about each of our mission partners. We will be identifying a space where you can learn more about missions and the missionaries we support. We are also working to launch a missions fair where you will be able to interact with our partners and learn about the impact you are making. We are serious about missions. We increased our missions budget to 10% of total budget. When you give 10% goes to support mission initiatives!

**CONCLUSION:** invite band to come up.

Listen, our time is short. My prayer is that today you have come to understand what we are all about. What God has called us to be. And I hope that excites you as much as it does me. And we've only scratched the surface today. There's so much more.

I said earlier that we do what we do because Heaven is real, but Hell is real, too. If you don't have a relationship with Jesus, we want you to know Him today! God love you. So much that He created this thing called Church to preach and teach all about Him. That you would come to understand that even though you are a sinner, God loves you and sent His Son, Jesus, for you. That

if you believe, with all your heart, in Him, that you will have eternal life. And that you can be a part of other knowing eternal life, too. [PRAY]