

WISDOM – TIME TO RESET GOALS AND CAST A RENEWED VISION

By Bob Young

Life is difficult. So wrote Scott Peck in the first line of *The Road Less Traveled*. A person who has to make every mistake for self, one who cannot learn from the experiences of others, will find life doubly difficult.

In Acts 27, the ship in which Paul was traveling had been in the middle of a storm for fourteen days. The sailors did not know where they were or exactly where they were going. They were being carried along by the storm. One night, the depth soundings suggested that they were nearing land. Paul urged them to stay together and to take nourishment. They had been through two weeks of worrying and eating little. By morning, there was enough light to be able to see a coast. They could not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, and they decided to drive the ship onto the beach (v. 39). From the moment that they realized that reaching land was possible, everything changed. They ate, they were encouraged, they made preparations, they worked together. Eventually, everyone reached the shore safely.

I see a lesson for the church. For the past two years during the pandemic, most churches have had a similar experience – being carried along by the storm, without a clear view of where they were and where they would end up. Even those churches that had a clear purpose and concrete plans before the pandemic often got swallowed up in the situation that changed almost daily.

The time has come to reestablish and redefine our goals. Now is time figure out where we are and where God wants us to go. The time has come to stretch forward to the goal, time to be renewed spiritually, pray, mobilize – spring into action.

Church leaders, especially preachers, have a key role in casting the vision for the church and describing the goals toward which the church is reaching. When a congregation does not have goals that are bigger than themselves, goals that reflect God's purpose for his people, they usually end up just "hanging out" together—somewhat like sailors of a ship to nowhere. The strengths available in the members are not used, because members do not see clearly what they are to do. They do not understand their role. If the church is not pointed toward God's eternal purpose and goal, members struggle to identify the goal and understand the importance of the goal.

Every local church needs a worthy goal—a goal that reflects God's eternal purpose, one worth fighting for, investing in, living for. What is your church poised to do in the next year? What vision are you hearing from the pulpit? What vision is compelling the leaders forward? What are your personal goals for your Christian life?