

“I Vision”

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**First Presbyterian Church
Wilkes-Barre, PA
I Samuel 3:1-10
Proverbs 29: 18a**

Does anyone here have an iPhone with them? Would you hold it up?

- Beautiful. Aesthetically pleasing. Sleek. Simple. (I have an Android – but that’s another story.)

How the iPhone, iPod, iPad have changed our lives; ...Introduced increased imagination, possibilities, and vision!

Q: Why is the Apple still reporting record profits?

A: Because iPod users are just as oblivious to the looming recession as they are to the people around them!

Q: How many Apple iPod touch, early adopters does it take to change a light bulb?

A: 3001. One to do the work and 3000 to go online and gripe about the lack of obscure features!

Q: What is written on Steve Jobs’ tombstone?

A: iCame, iSaw, iConquered, iLeft, iCameBack, iThinkDifferent, iMac, iPod, iTunes, iPhone, iPad, iCloud, iRIP

I am sure you all know the creator of Apple – Steve Jobs – died of pancreatic cancer on October 5th at age 56. Jobs was indeed a visionary! He helped bring into being the era of personal computers and led a cultural transformation via music, movies and mobile communications! His estimated financial worth – \$8.3 billion.

- He had trouble in college
- At one point he was fired from his company.
- He developed pancreatic cancer
- He died too soon! But, he fulfilled his vision and it remains!

Steve Jobs was not a hardware engineer, nor a software programmer. He thought of himself as a technology leader. (He was by all means a child of the 60’s). What he did was take “his vision” and then chose the best people possible. He would encourage them, push them (sometimes extremely hard) and he would always make the final call on product design.

One cannot argue with the beauty in Apple’s product line! That was vintage Jobs. You know the logo – the Apple with a bite out of it. It’s been reported that he chose the apple, due to his dietary habits. I wonder.

His iconoclastic philosophy may have had something to do with the bitten apple – a traditional Judeo/Christian Edenic story, of the fall. Instead of curse, the bitten apple implies the opening to creativity on the human scale.

Jobs may have meant this as a “worm” in the religious apple story, but his very interpretation is not new.

In early Christian theology, the bitten apple was also seen, as the adolescent beginning – of the developing human race.

His commencement address at Stanford is worth watching – perhaps on your iPad.

This visionary shares; “You have to trust in something – your gut, destiny, life, Karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life... The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle.”

This very human person, with his own foibles, believed that we all need a vision. He certainly caught a deep, and universal piece of reality. In fact a major piece of reality. The human drive for purpose, for a vision of what can be and should be!!

From the ancients to today: From High School students to those more “mature” (I don’t want to say “old”); this axiom continues to ring loudly – “Without a vision, the people perish!”

Hear that, in all its power, and challenge!!

Know this – you need a vision! A forward view of life, and where you are going. This comes in stages; fits and starts – but work on it. Do not neglect it. It is needful! For you personally, and for the greater community.

We need a vision – a national vision, a civilizational vision. Make no mistake, without a basic shared vision we will perish! We (you/me) must work on this – as we experience fracturing within our cultures.

I’m reminded of the great and inspiring story of the call of young Samuel. (He turns out through his vision to be the King maker of Israel.) He was born in an era of fracturing and civilizational confusion. The clue to this breakdown was... “And the word of the Lord was rare in those days.” In other words, they were in trouble, and in need of a vision.

So here we are – back a few thousand years. The early Israelites are forming from the 12 tribes. They do not have a federal government yet. No King, only sporadic charismatic warriors to lead them, and priests and prophets to instill vision. But, it is a low time.

Corrupt politicians and religious leaders are failing their callings. High Priest Eli (a good man) has not so good sons. But, there is a ray of hope – a young boy – Samuel is Eli’s apprentice. This teen, Samuel is asleep in the Temple of God, where the sacred ark of God was kept. (This is before Indiana Jones got involved) Samuel is young. His vision is just beginning to form. (Of course, one needs a strong foundation for this developing vision. What better place, than the Temple of God – the place of learning, laws, tradition, and inspiration.

In the middle of the night – he is awakened by a voice. Is he hearing things? What’s going on? “Samuel. Samuel” “Was that Eli? Does he need me?” Samuel gets up and goes over to Eli, “Here I am, what do you need?” Eli, “I didn’t call you, Samuel. Go back to sleep.”

Samuel goes back to bed. Falls asleep. And once again, “Samuel. Samuel” Back he goes to Eli. “Here I am again.” Eli, “Huh? Go back to sleep. Take some Sominex” (a new translation). After several repeats, finally High Priest Eli realizes something important is taking place. Young Samuel is hearing from God. He is getting the beginnings of his vision for his life, and the life of his people. Eli tells the teen – “The next time you hear this voice, respond with ‘Speak, for Your servant hears’”

The “I Speak” begins! Something new is about to take place! Judgment and hope - proceed.

Young Samuel is willing to act on his vision, and his life and his people are forever changed!

“Here I am”

“I am here”

The voice of God comes in many guises. Be open to that voice.

Secular Steve Jobs recognized the prime importance of trusting “something.” – “God!” There is a transcendence that captures the human imagination, mind and heart.

Be open and willing to pursue your vision – “I am Here.” The iVision for your Life! “With a vision – you will flourish!”

Amen.