

Beyond 20/20 Vision 3 - ALIVE

Alive is ATTRACTIVE, COMPELLING & IRRESISTIBLE.

The pretty strong and simple message is, if GOD is IN it, it will be ALIVE (1 Corinthians 15:22, Ephesians 2:4-5, John 10:10).

→ *What does 'alive' mean to you? What about 'dead'? Have you ever been in a church that was moving in the wrong direction from alive towards dead, and if so, what do you think was causing that?*

→ *What are the signs that a church is alive? Where would you like to see our church becoming more alive?*

4 THOUGHTS ABOUT CHURCHES THAT ARE ALIVE

1. Alive churches have a VISION of life

- * If you can't SEE it, you won't PURSUE it.
- * Without VISION, people PERISH, GROW STALE & DIE on the inside (Proverbs 29:18, Habakkuk 2:2).

→ *Why is vision so important? Why does vision need to be repeatedly reinforced?*

2. Alive churches contain ALIVE PEOPLE

- * Churches come alive because of the LIVELY INFLUENCE of ALIVE people.
- * People come alive when they attend a CHURCH that's ALIVE.

ALIVE CHURCHES (and living organisms) are:

- i) RESPIRING ii) MOVING iii) GROWING iv) REPRODUCING
- v) SENSING vi) EXCRETING vii) FEEDING

→ *Who at the Barn rubs off on you positively? What is it about them?*

→ *How do those physical processes operate in a spiritual sense?*

3. Alive churches DO ALIVE THINGS

You can do the SAME activities, but for one person they're DEAD and for another they're ALIVE.

- a) Dead is RELIGIOUS; alive is RELATIONAL.
- b) Dead is trying to RESUSCITATE old things; alive is instead GIVING BIRTH to new things.
- c) Dead is TICKING a BOX; alive is JUMPING out of that BOX.
- d) Dead is just SINGING a SING; alive is using that song to SEEK JESUS' FACE.
- e) Dead is hearing a MESSAGE preached, but not a CALL given (Hebrews 4:12, John 6:63).

→ *What activities / programmes are life-giving to you? Which do you find life-sapping?*

→ *Why is that the same activity can be alive for some and dead for others? What's the difference in attitude or perspective? How do you turn a 'dead' activity into an alive one?*

4. Alive churches PLUCK OUT DEAD THINGS

- * If we want to be ALIVE, we have to RESIST DEADNESS: CONFRONT it, PREACH into it & set up structures against it.
- * We need to MOVE INTENTIONALLY TOWARDS whatever brings life & AWAY from anything that SQUEEZES it out of you.

→ *How do you 'pluck out' dead things? Have you ever had to do that? Are there any dead things in your spiritual life right now that need to be 'plucked out'? What do you do if a spiritual activity starts becoming dry or stale?*

WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE CHURCH MORE ALIVE?

1. OPEN our HEARTS as wide as possible

- * A PHYSICAL action can either MASK or EXPEDITE a SPIRITUAL desire.
- * "Too much church takes place in the PEW & not enough at the ALTAR"
- * Once FLESH has been BYPASSED, SPIRIT can be ACTIVATED (Jn 6:63).

→ *"Part of your spiritual battle is the Enemy trying to get you to close / harden your heart." How does he do that? To what end? How do you win that battle?*

→ *What does it mean to say, "Too much church takes place in the pew and not enough at the altar." How does that apply metaphorically? Does it apply physically? Does that statement apply to you, do you think? What does it mean by 'going to the altar' and what are the benefits of doing so?*

2. Submit to the PRUNING process

- * If any parts of your spiritual life are DEAD or DYING, toss them on the FIRE of the Holy Spirit & let them BURN.
- * Old & dead need to be STRIPPED AWAY to MAKE ROOM for new & alive.

→ *Why does old and dead stuff need to be stripped away? What happens if it isn't? How do you actually do it? What could happen if you do?*

3. Ask, how can I be a SPARK?

- * What FUEL can I throw on the fire, if I want to see it burn hotter & brighter?

→ *"It may not be a roaring fire right now, but what would happen if we all contributed our little spark?" Discuss!*

→ *What does it mean to be a catalyst? How do you think you could help catalyse worship in our church? Or prayer? Or service? How about being a spark in your Connect Group?*