



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

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Confirmation

1 Timothy 4:14

Jeremiah 6:6

~ Brent Russell ~

- Folk tonight I am really preaching to these young people sitting in front
- I want you to listen to because what I have to say to them applies as much to each and every one of us as it does to them
- Angelique, Ayesha, Bernard, Candice, Gareth, Geoffrey, Keathelia, Luan, Nathaniel, Paul, Terence and Wendy
- You are children
- If you try to go to a bank without your parents you cannot open an account
- If you tried to open a cell phone contract they would not let you because you are still children
- If you wanted to get married, no matter how much you loved the person you would still have to get Mom and Dad's permission before we could legally marry you
- You are still children
- Life's tough isn't it!
- It's great being older now
- I am not answerable to my parents or in fact anyone for what I can or cannot buy
- Or for what I can or cannot do
- I just have to ask my wife first

- You are still children
 - But luckily Jesus is not as finicky as the world outside is
 - Jesus says let the children come to me
 - And because of this the church even allows small baptized children at the communion table
 - But more importantly Jesus is ready to call us adults far sooner than the world is
 - When others may think you young, reckless and irresponsible
 - Jesus sees your heart and is ready to give you everything
 - When others may think you are still a child, Jesus give you all the responsibility of an adult
 - Tonight you are no longer going to be children in this church
 - You may still be called a youth or a young person
 - But tonight you become adults in every sense of the life of the church
 - Tonight you are made full members of this particular part of the body of Jesus Christ
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- Someone once told me we need young people in the church because they are the church of tomorrow
 - Well I think they're wrong
 - Young people like you are the church of TODAY
 - It is young people like the 12 of you who have the responsibility of the future of this church in your hands
 - It is not up to those who have grey hair or who are balding
 - It is up to you to help lead this church forward
 - You are the church of Today
 - Our very survival depends on young people like YOU

- Sounds quite intimidating doesn't it
- Quite terrifying
- Well there is a young man who found himself in a difficult situation
- Feeling immature, and perhaps insecure
- He was young and inexperienced and felt perhaps he had nothing to offer
- An older friend who was a great minister wrote him this in a letter

"Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed--keep that dusted off and in use. Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes! Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation.."

- The Minister was the great apostle Paul
- And the young man was Timothy
- It is another translation of the text I read in the beginning
- Paul writes to Timothy about a whole lot of aspect of his ministry
- And right in the middle of it all he gives Timothy 5 things to set an example in
- Five aspects of his life not only as a leader but simply as a believer in the body of Christ
- I want us to really look at vs 12 tonight
- "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity"
- Paul suggest five things that young Timothy ought to be an example in
- speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity"
- Five areas of Timothy's life in which he could be a witness to those around him
- Ways in which this young man of God could be an example to other believers

- And tonight I want to charge you like Paul charged Timothy
- Set an example for us, Be an example to the believers
- Show us with all your youthful excitement, passion and energy
- Use all the exuberance of your young lives to set an example for us to follow
- Sometimes we all need young people like you who are excited about Jesus to show us the way
- When we have become set in our ways
- Or sinful outlooks have become well-established we often need young excited believers like you to show us the path
- Let us talk about these five areas

Be an example in Speech

- We could sit tonight and talk about all the foul language on TV and in the movies
- The cursing that happens on sport fields, schools and even the church
- We could sit and come up with a multitude of places where we should not be using such language but yet we are
- In your common language let your speech be a witness to those around you
- Let your language be so pure that others would follow your example
- But not only in not swearing that we allow our language to set a bad example
- *James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*
- It is so easy to use our language to insult, belittle or degrade others
- It is easy to in our language to exalt ourselves above others
- However in the same way that you praise God use your tongue to praise those around you
- Use your language to build up and inspire others around you
- Use your language to build up, to edify and to encourage others

- When they hear you speak let it be a fresh spring of water that flows from you
- So that you would stand out in masses of young people in the world
- Let them see in you something of the holiness of Jesus

Be an example in Life – by loving

- But we can do even more than just that
- Our speech can be pure but we may still have a way to go yet
- Our very lives need to be witnesses to God's love
- The love we have received from him needs to shine out to others
- Without love we cannot expect our lives to be an example
- Listen to this pearl of wisdom from *1 John 3:18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth*
- We need to be careful that our Christian speech does not become empty
- We need to guard that we don't proclaim love with our mouths and deny it with our actions
- In so doing our speech and our Christian witness will become hollow, insincere and ineffective
- Let your lives exhibit the abundance of Christ love in you
- Let the overflowing love, compassion and grace that you have in your heart wash out of you
- Let others be prompted into service by your talking the talk but also walking the walk
- Let your actions speak louder than words
- Illustration about crisis centre rape and help
- It was because of the LOVE of Christ in the LIFE of a young woman that this testimony is given
- Let your lives be witnesses to Christ
- Let Jesus love so permeate your lives that people will walk away from you knowing that they have met one of God's people

Be an example in Faith

- There is a bumper sticker I saw that says "If you are calm when all around you are panicking clearly you are not aware of the situation"
- Well there will be times in your life when others around you may be panicking
- They may be in places of spiritual fear or bondage
- They may be fearful and frightened for whatever reason
- Panicking

- Or they may have allowed their faith to be eaten away until all they have is a deep cynicism
- Instead of being positive and excited they have degenerated into a negative cynicism that destroys

- Let your calm deep faith be a strong pillar that others can lean on in times of difficulty
- Though you may be young, you folk have a very real faith
- A faith that can help others
- You exhibited that in the service two Sundays ago
- People were touched by your faith and the sincerity with which you led the service

- When things are looking grim and people look to you
- Let them see your faith
- Let them see your love and relationship with Jesus
- Be an example in faith
- Be an example to them inspiring and encouraging them, strengthening them and restoring them when they are in times of doubt

Be an example Purity

- Keep yourselves pure
- You are young, good looking young people
- You are healthy young men and women with veins pumping all sorts of hormones
- You have many temptations that will come your way

- Mark my words because they will come
- Not just sexually but in all areas of your lives
- We all desire wealth, power and a host of other things
- The evil one will distort areas of our lives to bring us down if he can
- Keep yourselves pure in all the areas of your lives
- "Be Holy because I am holy"
- Don't let sin ensnare you
- You may be able to break the back of one sin but when many sins saturate your life in numerous areas sin becomes so strong as to hold even the strongest in it's clutches
- Keep pure
- Don't tolerate sin in your lives
- Be on your knees in repentance and seeking Jesus forgiveness
- Break sin as it begins not before it is deeply entrenched

- In this be an example so that others may see your holiness and desire to be holy themselves
- That in your lives people may see the purity you have in Jesus
- Not self righteous façade but a repentant purity in Jesus

Conclusion

- Paul tells Timothy these things so that he may be an example to the other believers
- "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity"
- It was so that Timothy could become part of the Christian heritage
- Let me close by returning to the Jeremiah passage
- *Jeremiah 6:6 says "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."*
- What we have passed onto you is not new
- Our understanding of God and his astounding creation is not new
- The understanding of Jesus as our Lord and savior is not new
- Our concepts of the Holy Spirit and his action in our lives is not new
- They are not new ideas
- They are ancient paths
- Paths that are full of ancient wisdom
- Ways that are paved with goodness
- We learned them from others
- And they in turn learned these things from others still
- And they from others yet still further in the mists of history
- And so we have passed them on to you
- We have given you a great deal of theological knowledge
- We have helped you to know how to live your lives
- Tonight you take your part in that heritage of faith
- Tonight as you become members of BPC you are taking on yourselves that same duty
- The responsibility of sharing God's love, of caring for His people, of bringing Him glory
- Of being an example to others in speech, life, love, faith and purity
- so that others too may follow you in the heritage of faith in Jesus Christ
- So that you may be an example to others