



CHRIST CENTRED • SPIRIT FILLED • BIBLE BASED

BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

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The church as a community

Acts 17:10-12

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Galatians 5:13-15

~ Brent Russell ~

- BPC has as it's vision /mission
 - know your gift
 - use your gift
 - enjoy your gift
- And we have been doing quite a bit of teaching on these gifts through out this year
- Talking about the various aspects of them
- What they are
- How they have been designed to be used
- I have been running for the last two Wednesdays and one more to go wit some small groups
- A course on the gifts...finding out how God has wired us to work in the church
- The spiritual gifts are given to us to help us serve
- The gifts are all about action

- They are verbs - doing things
- That are about what we are to DO as a church
- But as important as what we are called to do
- Is what we are called to be
- The gifts tell us what we are to do

- But what are we as a church supposed to be
- There are in fact many answers to this
- But three of them are found on the letterhead of our church
- Christ centered, Spirit Filled, Bible Based
- It is these three things that BPC has decided some time back are of importance to us
- They tell us what we want to BE

- So with this in mind I want us today to look to the scriptures

Acts 17:10-12 - scriptures

1 Timothy 1:12-17 - awareness of sin

Galatians 5:13-15 - servants

- The church is a community
- A community that has a special character
- A community that has a certain ethos
- A community that is aware of certain aspects of themselves

A community of scholars – Bible Based

- We read in the passage in acts about the church in **Berea**
- They were more noble than the others because they **searched the scriptures** to see if what Paul was telling them was true
- These people understood that the **scriptures were going to be the standard by which they were to stand or fall**
- It would be the **scriptures that would guide** them
- **Leading them on the path** that they needed to walk
- **Psalm 119:105** tells us that the scriptures are a **lamp** for our feet, a **light** for our path
- I always remember when I was at Durbanville we had a minister for some months
- **Phineas Dube**, a wonderful man from Zimbabwe
- He shouted at the congregation one morning as they were trying to find a book in the Bible
- **This is the textbook and there WILL be an exam!**
- Whilst I am not sure about us having an exam the Bible is of utmost importance to us
- In **Hebrews 4:12** we are told of the Bible being living and active, sharper than a two edged sword
- **Judging** the thoughts and attitudes of the heart
- By the power of God's Holy Spirit the Bible will show us where we are doing well
- it too will show us where we need to improve
- If BPC wants to follow the straight and narrow path
- If we as a church want to move where Jesus wants us to move
- **We are going to need to be a community of scholars**
- The root of the Greek word **disciple means to be a learner**
- **If we want to be disciples of Christ we need to be learners**
- **Students of God's word**

- Not to get to some point and then to stop
- It needs to be a lifetime attitude
- You need to always remain a learner
- Even those who have known Jesus all their lives
- We need to remain at heart people ready to learn about God as He reveals himself in the scriptures

A community of servers – Spirit Filled

- I have mentioned our focus
- **Know your gift, use your gift, enjoy your gift**
- Perhaps the most important concept about these gifts is that **we ALL have them**
- Every person who has been given the Holy Spirit has spiritual gifts
- Whether you are nine or ninety
- Whether you have loved Jesus for 70 years or 7 days
- If you have been given the Holy Spirit you have been gifted to **SERVE**
- **1 Corinthians 12:7 to Each on the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good**
- **1 Corinthians 14:12 Try to excel in the gifts that build the church**
- **Clearly the gifts given to the body of Christ have been given to us so that we may serve**
- At our church we have been serving a **bereaved family** who are not members
- We did the funeral for the child who died, we supplied some meals, we have been counseling
- And at some point the father who is not a Christian asked "Why do you do this"
- He had realized something extraordinary was happening as we served
- As we Loved Them because Christ loves us they where seeing Jesus love in action

- A church where every member serves is a church that will grow
- A church that serves is a church where those who do not know Jesus will feel his love for them
- A church that is a spirit filled community of servers is a church that acts like Jesus acted

A community of sinners – Christ centered

- The final principal is that a healthy church is a **community of sinners**
- A church where **failure is OK**
- **We must desire to do the best**
- **We as a church must expect the best from our members**
- **But we must be gracious in failure**
- A church full of people who are aware that they are sinners is a church full of people who really understand Jesus love
- **1 John 1:8-10 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.**
- A church full of people that do not understand that they are sinners is a horrible place
- **When we forget we are sinners we become judgmental of others who fail**
- **When we forget we are sinners we become arrogant**
- **When we forget we are sinners we have no need for Jesus in our lives**
- If BPC can always be a place where people know that they are sinners
- **Then BPC will always remain Christ centered**
- **If we know that we need a savior then we are always aware of Jesus presence**
- **Of his forgiveness**

- **Of His call to obedience**
- **We remain a people who are always aware of Jesus grace given to us**
- **If BPC members continue to always acknowledge their sin they will be gracious to others because of the grace that they continue to receive**

Conclusion

- The church is a community of **servants**.
- It is a community of **sinner**s
- It is a community of **scholar**s
- Every church member is called to **study**
- Every church member is called to **share**
- Every church member is called to **serve**
- **If we have no questions to ask, no sin to admit and no service to give then we have nothing**
- But if we have these then we shall be **something special**
- BPC will be a place where **people will be accepted**
- Where people will **understand Jesus love**
- Where people will **learn to KNOW Jesus**
- **BPC will grow up to be a giant in the faith**
- **A pillar of the community**
- **a place where people can find refuge from the storm**
- **A place where Jesus love is poured out to those who need Him**