

## Being the Church at Brentwood

### Working Together with God

Psalm Ps 50:1-6 & 2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10  
(Hymns – 358, 478, 489, 490)

February 19, 2012

As we have been reflecting on and conversing about the text from Paul's correspondence with the church at Corinth this week, being ambassadors emerged as a major theme.

Working together with God in and through the church is really being an ambassador for Jesus Christ in the world.

It's a powerful image  
and I want to explore it a bit with you this morning,  
sowing some seeds for further reflection  
as we continue to grow in our insights and abilities  
to be the church here at Brentwood Presbyterian.

Interestingly enough, the Greek word is *presbeuo* –  
from which we get the word *Presbyterian*.

It's literal meaning points to one who is venerable and wise,  
someone who knows and represents well the heart and mind of God.

It is someone who is sent as an envoy or emissary,  
someone who speaks for the one who sends  
with the sender's authority.

In this passage Paul presents himself  
as the one sent by the God who reconciled the world to himself in Jesus Christ.

He has been equipped and empowered to speak for that God  
and assure his listeners that God has made them his friends in Jesus Christ.

Through Paul's mouth as an ambassador,  
the God who came in Jesus Christ and remains active through the Holy Spirit  
speaks his word of reconciling grace to the depths of our souls.

He speaks God's word of Love into the core of our beings  
where all that we feel and think and do originates.

If that soul, that central processing unit of our being,  
is filled with, energized by, and vibrates with God's love in Christ,  
then the Holy Spirit is free to inspire the kind of  
purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness  
that makes us powerful and persuasive ambassadors for Jesus Christ  
in everything that we do.

Let's look at each of these gifts a little more closely.  
It's a shorter list than we find in Galatians 5:22-23,  
so it's easier to remember.  
Here's a little memory trick to help you:  
it's PKPK or PK<sup>2</sup> – purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness.

These are the gifts God has given us in Jesus Christ  
in order for us to work together with God in everything that we do.  
That's what the church is all about.  
It's gifted people working together with God to bless the world.

As we look at each of these elements, remember they are gifts.  
They are qualities of character that we get to express rather than have to earn.  
Let go of the anxiety about whether you have these gifts.  
Welcome the urge to use them,  
because that urge is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for *purity* is rich in meaning.  
It points to a sense of awe in being cleansed by the power of the light.  
I found myself remembering sheets drying on the clothes line  
on a hot summer day in the hot summer sun.  
They were bleached and cleansed by the power of the light,  
just as we are cleansed by the power of God's light in Jesus Christ  
that keeps shining into our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is a gift we get to express rather than have to earn.  
Let go of the anxiety about whether you have the gift of *purity*.  
Welcome the urge to use it,  
because that urge is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for *knowledge* is rich in meaning.  
It points to understanding that is grounded in love and leads to service.  
Our brain is a pattern-making organism.  
The basic Christian pattern is love God, love neighbor, and love self.  
To have knowledge is to live this pattern,  
day in and day out, in everything you do.  
It's to see the world through the eyes of Jesus Christ.  
If we realize that we are in Jesus Christ,  
looking at the world through the eyes of Jesus Christ,  
then we will be Jesus Christ for ourselves and others.

Here's a quote that I got this week from a former coaching student  
that captures this approach to education:

*... a true teacher is one who reaches hearts. The behaviour of those who touch*

*hearts is full of love, respect, creativity and inclusion. To be around someone like this is to feel my heart opening to allow new learning in. Only when newness is invited in will I change, only then will there be real learning.*

That the kind of knowledge Jesus Christ teaches  
and the kind of teacher he is.

This is a gift we get to express rather than have to earn.  
Let go of the anxiety about whether you have the gift of *knowledge*.  
Welcome the urge to use it,  
because that urge is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for *patience* is rich in meaning.  
It points to a spiritual resilience that gives us joyful endurance.  
That's what much of this passage is about.  
Paul describes for his friends in Christ in Corinth  
how these gifts from God  
have given him the resilience to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ,  
to speak of God's love with authority and authenticity.

This is a gift we get to express rather than have to earn.  
Let go of the anxiety about whether you have the gift of *patience*.  
Welcome the urge to use it,  
because that urge is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word for *kindness* is rich in meaning.  
It points to the love of God that is seen in Jesus Christ  
and spread with abandon by the work of the Holy Spirit.  
It works itself out in friendliness with God, ourselves, and others.  
It's a welcoming smile, a gentle word of encouragement,  
a helping hand, an encouraging act of support.

This is a gift we get to express rather than have to earn.  
Let go of the anxiety about whether you have the gift of *kindness*.  
Welcome the urge to use it,  
because that urge is the influence of the Holy Spirit.

PKPK or PK<sup>2</sup>, then, is the pattern of being an ambassador for Jesus Christ –  
purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness.

Pay special attention to that pattern this week  
as you encounter the opportunities God is giving you to be ambassadors.  
They are right there in front of you.  
As Paul urges, don't waste them.

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