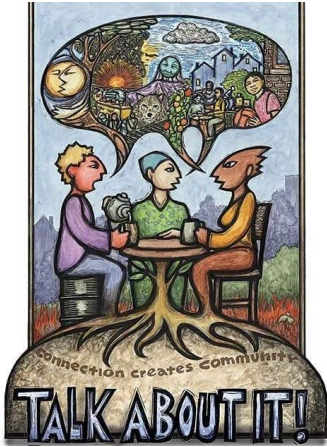


# Brian's Sermon Text at Collaborating Churches Worship

Sunday, June 7, 2020

## Our Real Identity

(Psalm 8 and 1 Corinthians 1:1-9)



To the church of God that is in Corinth,  
to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus,  
called to be saints, ...

(1 Cor 1:2a)

### Word to Ponder = Saint

**Congregational Wisdom = mothers, redeemed, incredibly good person, teachers, cruciform, born again, peacemakers, church, forgiveness & distance of time, makes change for humanity, selfless**

Corinth and Metro Vancouver have some intriguing commonalities.  
Both are relatively new cities – somewhere between 100 and 150 years old.  
Both are commercial hubs with great diversity among their populations.  
Both are prosperous, with the usual ups and downs of economic cycles.  
And both experience great disparities in the distribution of that wealth.  
There are deep divides in social, religious, and political loyalties.

Into this city comes yet another way of being in the world,  
another perspective on living together well.  
It's a movement that has its roots in Jerusalem among the Jews.  
It claims that a Galilean peasant teacher and preacher  
was the Creator of the world in human flesh  
initiating a new phase of this world's history  
in which love for all the creation  
would be the guiding energy of the future.

A leading spokesperson for this movement  
was an educated Jew now named Paul  
who had had a dramatic encounter with this Galilean peasant prophet  
who the Romans and Jews had executed as a traitor  
but who had risen from the dead  
as the first fruits of a new humanity  
that would remake the world  
as a place of justice, kindness, and humility.  
Paul, collaborating with others who Jesus called into this missioning,  
was convening conversations that generated communities  
that advocated for this way of seeing the world and its future.

That's what been going on in Corinth prior to these letters being written.

The letters, as we shall see, make pretty clear  
that the creation of this community is not going all that well.  
Traumas and tensions are dividing the community.  
They are what one might expect  
when people from such diverse backgrounds  
with such diverse interests and priorities  
try to collaborate together to make something new happen.

We're going to spend the next year here at Brentwood  
exploring more deeply than most of us have done before  
the dynamics involved in understanding more fully  
God's way of bringing us together for God's purpose.  
Paul, whose voice we hear most clearly in these letters,  
is convinced that it has to do with imitating Jesus Christ.  
Further, he is convinced  
that the Creator, in Christ, through the work of the Spirit,  
invites and enables us to do that.  
So, rather than focusing on accusing the Corinthian Christians  
of doing everything wrong,  
he advocates for a trust in and loyalty to  
the forgiving and reconciling love of God  
that is the redemptive energy at work in God's beloved world.

That's why he begins with this powerful salutation  
that reflects both the sovereignty of the God and dignity of humans  
that we heard in Rick's reading of Psalm 8.

We are all saints, sanctified in Christ,  
called to be advocates with the triune God  
for the faith, hope, and love that is saving the world.

This is the steadfast love of the Lord that never ceases.  
Sung and Dan will be conveying that reality  
in our music for reflection  
taken from a passage in the Hebrew Scripture's book of Lamentations.

It is a reality that many still reject or resist.  
That has been brought to our attention once again  
in the lamentable examples of systemic racism  
that have confronted us so forcefully over the past couple of weeks.  
Paul starts his advocacy for God's reconciled relationships  
with the way God sees all people.

This is so crucial in moving beyond our current turmoil and traumas.

See every other human being as sanctified in Jesus Christ,  
a saint sent to collaborate with you  
in advocating for a world of justice and peace,  
a world where faith, hope, and love are cultivated  
by all in all.

This mission continues in us, those saints God has gathered at Brentwood,  
nourished in that vision of a peaceable kin-dom  
and sent into the world as ambassadors and advocates  
of living that way together.

We do it, as we mentioned last week,  
through every conversation in which God engages us.  
We do it through the respectful love we have  
for every other human we encounter,  
respect that arises from the way God sees them,  
from the way God enables us to see them.

All those sanctified as saints  
are treasures in earthen vessels  
through whom God has chosen to work  
to bring life to all of creation.  
We are all such saints, by God's grace in Jesus Christ,  
through whom God has chosen to give life.

May that life-giving grace fill all of your conversations this week.

## My Notes

## My Prayers



## Prayers of the People

**[spoken or written into the service]**

Come Sunday, again, dear Family.  
We get to go to the meeting house.  
We get to ponder as family your Gospel.  
We get to sense, and feel, and see, and hear  
the impact your good news of forgiveness and reconciliation  
as souls are nourished to flourish  
in the gratitude that flows from your grace  
through us to all of your beloved creation.

Of particular focus are those who have not received  
the abundance of that grace that you intend.  
You nourish us in every encounter we have with you,  
every conversation we engage in with you,  
to be advocates for their flourishing in your family.

Of particular concern are those who have prevented that receiving,  
who have constructed systems of living together  
that abuse our need for security,  
manipulate our need for acceptance, and  
usurp our need for power.

The security you offer to meet our needs is your SHALOM.  
The acceptance you offer to meet our needs is your LOVE.  
The power you offer to meet our needs is SERVICE.

That's what we find around the family table come Sunday.  
That's the nourishment we feed on, dear Family,  
supplied by an intricate system of interdependencies  
that flows from seed, to sustenance, to support.  
Send us into your world as advocates for your grace.