

The Church Commissioned

17092023 Ps Graham

I want to take a moment today to exhort, encourage and remind us of who we are as Christ's body.

Ephesians 1 Message Translation.

3-6 How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.

7-10 Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. *Abundantly* free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need, letting us in on the plans he took such delight in making. He set it all out before us in Christ, a long-range plan in which everything would be brought together and summed up in him, everything in deepest heaven, everything on planet earth.

11-12 It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

V20-23 All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but *forever*. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Of all the things which plague the human condition most, the worst must be our inability to see things as they really are.

So often, we see *a thing not as it really is, but as we are.*

The offended see offence. The bitter, see bitterly.

Even Gods chosen spies, said they were grasshoppers in their own eyes - when all along the enemy saw it exactly the opposite way.

Paul's letter then, to the Church in Ephesus is amongst other things, a check list; to see if as believers in Christ, are really seeing things as they really are

- *Our calling*
- *Our purpose*
- *Our salvation*
- *Our value*
- *Our part to play, through what Christ has done.*

I can illustrate this dilemma, 3 different ways.

(1)

My daughter is dating a young guy from Wellington.

If navigating your Childs potential future love life isn't tough enough, he is also a hurricanes supporter. Added to this, is the dilemma that he supports the Spring Boks, as his parents were from there. He has never been to South African.

And I have tried everything I can to make him see his folly.

But to no avail. I guess if he ever asks for my daughters hand in marriage, I can ask him to sign a contract then?!

(2)

The second is a *tale* which I pray is true. There was a man who worked in a mine for 20 years. After every shift, he would carry out a wheel barrow, piled with straw which was left over material from the days work. The security guard at the mine asked him, "what is in the straw?" He said "nothing. It's left over and I use it in my garden." The guard searched in the wheel barrow and - couldn't find anything- and let him go. This happened day after day - as he wheel-borrowed out this left over straw.

On his last day of work the same security guard who was perplexed all these years, asked him - "right, tell me - I know you have been stealing from the mine. This is your last day - what have you been taking? What have you been hiding?"

And man - now officially retired - answered him - "you are right, I have been stealing", the guard said "what is it?" The man answered *wheel barrows*.

(3)

The 3rd example is a *true* example and of that, a sad example.

It was **zero degrees** as I ordered an Uber at Christchurch airport. The app selected a driver for me, and as it did - showed me this would be his 10,798 trip!

My first question when entering the car was always going to be - "*Sir, you have done more than 10,000 trips?*" He confirmed. 7 years ago he began ubering - part time. 4 years ago full time.

"What did you do prior, sir?" I asked.

"I worked in mental health at Hillmorton Hospital" He answered.

"Why did you finish that work?"

"I felt like I was becoming crazy, working there. There are so many people with issues - and yet *what we do didn't help them*. In fact, over the years that he worked there - he noticed how the issues were getting worse - the number of patients increased - all the while younger people were filling wards."

As we drove, I thought how sad it was that a trained mental health practitioner would resort to driving Ubers, so I took my thought and opened my mouth:

Q: Do you know what the scriptures say about hopelessness?

I asked

There was a man named Solomon who said
“Without vision, people perish”
“They cast off all restraint”

Because I had started, I felt like I really should keep going.

I added that this Hebrew wording for vision, referred to **prophetic** vision - spiritual vision - not just a 5 year plan.

Having God in our lives, having truth as our foundation, knowing who we are and where we are going - is that prophetic vision.

And I asked if he thought this could be true, based on what he saw?

His answer was no surprise.

Whilst acute mental health is complicated - what is not - is if you see no purpose, no source of *identity*, no *reason* for your existence no *future* hope - **‘you’re going to be in trouble’**

Eugene Peterson translates it this way:

Proverbs 29:18 MSG If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what He *reveals*, they are most blessed.

And why do I share this with you today? Why so many stories? Couldn’t there have been something more upbeat? Something a little more joyous? No, there couldn’t-have been.

I believe so strongly, that God is wanting us to see the churches divine

role in this seeing. To be reminded again, that one of the reasons why the world doesn't see, is because the Church forgets it is co-missioned and authorised to show 'this prophetic vision' for life. That we are the image bearers of His Reality, and if we don't bear the vision - the world will never get to see it

Ephesians 1:23 MSG The church you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which **he** speaks and (he) acts, by which **he** fills everything with his presence.

Its vital we see 'Christ', 'His Church' and 'Our Role' correctly - because that's is what he is using to reveal Himself to the world - The world never gets the vision, unless His people, carry the vision

This is what we need to see:

1. The church is centre stage

'The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church.' Eph 1 MSG

Peripheral means outside, on the outer edges.

S: Do you remember being picked for sports teams at school? If you were anything like me, I wasn't the first-choice pick. I was usually, 2nd to last or last. I didn't really mind that much. Maybe just a little. Fast forward many years, as a pastor and leader, now God entrust me and others to 'select' those who he is using. To empower them and raise them up.

How different being on the inside feels!

Sadly, so many believers feel the exact opposite. They feel like the world is the centre and they are on the outter. They feel defeated and outcast. Nothing could be further from the truth. The King of Kings call you his own. He has set his seal upon you.

We are centre stage because we are chosen by God
A holy priest hood
A chosen people

What would happen if you truly believed that?

What did Jesus say after he rose again? 'All authority in heaven AND on earth has been given unto me' so go' Matthew 28

You have authority.

You have the-Fathers-seal of approval

So dear believer, do not feel like you are forgotten, or insignificant - but crucially, understand 'the world is indeed outer and it is our role to bring them in. 1 life at a time.

'1 John 4:4 greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world'

Never give way to victim thinking

Be renewed in your minds to be on mission

Embrace those who need to come into the centre of Gods love

The second thing we need to see:

2. The church belongs to Jesus Christ

'The church is Christ's body, Eph 1

We are not a 'club'

We are not 'a cliché'

Nor a clique'

We are not just a 'bless me up' club

We don't belong to the pastors,

Nor to power brokers.

We are not irrelevant, or in disarray

We are Christ's own body and He loves us

'You are not your own' 1 Cor 6 says.

'You are were paid with a price.'

When you believed, you were adopted into One Flesh.

A supernatural work ties you and me together - along with every other believer around the *world* - past and present.

Jesus did not say 'I will build **your** church'
 He said I will build **my** church
 He takes full and total responsibility and care for us.

AND this is why when people have tried to mess with it, discredit it, malign or divide it ~ when people attempt to destroy it, squash it, crush it or kill it - the church of Jesus Christ not only remains; but its cells **multiply** and spread with great force and life!

Why is this? Because its Christs-body. And what happened when they crucified Christs-body? Resurrection took place and spread throughout the earth.

So remember this - we belong to Jesus! (And not just on Sunday!)
 He will not only take care of us He invites us into a banquet of His Grace.
 He will complete whatever he started IN YOU, because he always takes care of what belongs to Him. So trust Him completely today.

And finally, the 3rd thing we need to see correctly

3. We are on commission with Jesus Christ himself

Eph 1:23 MSG The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

People might ask, where is God today? Where is he speaking, where is he moving? And where is his presence in the earth today?

The answer is shocking: look around - you are looking at it.

Christ has co-missioned us, to be on co-mission with Him.
 If we speak, then he speaks. If he speaks, then we speak.
 We best not be silent then! *Otherwise people who need to hear him, may never hear his voice.*

Story: Janes Sister in law.

Every time you open your mouth, The Lord has a voice!
Ok, what's he saying then? Gosh, what a challenge.

Is it time to give God back his voice?
Is it time to speak truth to powers?

**If Christ acts through us, moves through us,
then we ought not to be idle.**

And Jesus wants to fill everything with his presence 'and we ask' Lord when will you do this? And he asks us, whenever and wherever *you* go.

Didn't Habakkuk say that 'the knowledge of the Glory of God would fill the whole earth?' Salons, supermarkets, street carts. school, universities, shopping centres. Hospitals, homes, culdesac and sports fields. Go-head - fill the earth with your presence Lord! As we go into the whole world for you.

And may the Holy Spirit, meet us with power.
To be your body, to be your people, to see things correctly

May the world not be starved for a vision of what Our Saviour and King looks, sounds and moves like. Show us Lord, who you are sending us to. Disrupt and disturb us, so we know our divine partnership and role in you. Help us to love those near and far and to give the world a vision of 'what you see'. Hallelujah.

So, Mairangi Bay Community Church
Open your eyes to the wonder of your calling.
May the Lord Jesus move you, to see the partnership you have.
May your tongue be loosed, may The Spirit manifest as He ought to. May you know 'this church is centre stage for a move of God like never before'
- in Jesus name.

Amen.