



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship – 22 April 2018

Theme for the Year: "King Jesus Must Reign" (1 Corinthians 15:25)

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	11 - <i>All Glory, Laud, and Honor</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Hymn	TP 19:7-14
Tithes & Offering	
**† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Acts 26:24-32
Hymn	380 - <i>I Love to Tell the Story</i>
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"Two Madmen"
*Closing Hymn	546 - <i>Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken</i>
*Benediction & <i>Threefold Amen</i>	
Silent Prayer & Postlude	
Announcements	* <i>Congregation standing</i>

†Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

††Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 10:00 am
at 47 Davis Road, Attadale, Western Australia

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Cultivating Christian Unity

In 1 Corinthians 1:10, Paul exhorted the Corinthians Christians not to have divisions - that they would speak the same things and be of one mind and judgment.

He had to do this because the church was divided. Every church will struggle with division from time to time.

We even observe it in the superb Philippian church. Two sisters - Euodias and Syntyche - were at odds with one another. And everyone knew.

Even ministry workers were at odds - Paul and Barnabas split over Mark. It was obvious and unpleasant.

So it's no surprise that there were divisions in the problematic Corinthian church. Some were for Paul, others sided with Apollos and Peter.

And there were those who would side neither, but said they sided with Christ - as if Christ can be divided from his people!

Basis of Unity

The basis of unity is threefold.

Firstly, unity already exists among God's people (Ephesians 4:1-3). We believe in the same God, same Savior, and share the same Spirit.

Secondly, unity is based on continued repentance and self-examination. The early church was proof. The early church came together to partake in the Lord's Supper.

As they did so, they celebrated their redemption and examined themselves. As such, they continued to confess their sins. They judged themselves.

Thirdly, unity exists when we believe the same things (1 Corinthians 1:10).

While it is impossible to be uniform in all convictions, enough agreement among Bible-believers on fundamental convictions exists to foster unity.

Complete uniformity in doctrine and practice doesn't always produce unity. Paul and Barnabas are proof of that.

But these three things are the basis of unity.

Six Ways to Cultivate Unity

But if unity is to continue, it has to be preserved, promoted, and cultivated.

True, full-blown unity is rare. This is why the Psalmist marvels at its beauty (Psalm 133:1).

There are many ways of cultivating it. But here are 6 ways.

Firstly, if there is unity in the important things, then we shouldn't sweat the small things.

There are many things that Christians disagree on that aren't gospel related, such as child-rearing techniques, choices in jobs, leisure, food, etc.

If they are all done with the aim of glorifying God (1 Cor 10:31), taught by the Word, why are we so bothered if others differ from us in them?

In ministry, people also do things differently. The musician may have a different style, or a teacher uses a different pedagogy, or a preacher may have a different speaking style - are these things so important?

When we forebear with these differences, unity will be cultivated.

Secondly, and related to that, is seeing each other as equals.

In Matthew 23:8, Jesus addressed some Pharisees who believe that they were better than others. He told them that there was only one master - the Christ - *"and all ye are brethren."*

All are equal. If we feel look down on others, if there's no mutual submission, there will be disunity.

Thirdly, we must go beyond thinking of ourselves as equals. We must prefer one another and forgive one another (Romans 12:10).

When we look down and judge others for their faults, we are not better. Jesus characterized those who are truly great as those who truly serve and forgive.

Fourthly, the thought life is important. Disunity is caused when love is not exercised. Love is always hopeful in others and thinks the best of them (1 Corinthians 13:7).

As sinners, we are naturally prone to suspicion. But love gives the benefit of the doubt.

We will control what we think. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us to guard our heart because it will affect every other part of our lives. An uncontrolled thought life leads to uncontrolled speech. "*Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh*" (Matthew 12:34).

Unity is cultivated when we actively control our thoughts and speech.

Fifthly, unity is preserved when there is mutual accountability.

Others will sin against us and we against others. We will see others sin. But all the good thinking and love won't cultivate unity if we keep silent.

Romans 15:14 instructs us to be filled with goodness and knowledge so that we can admonish one another.

Galatians 6:1 speaks about gently and humbly helping a person who has been overcome by sin.

Just as God constantly pursues us in love, we ought to pursue others in love.

Sixthly, unity is preserved when we follow the due processes in Scripture.

When there are issues, we speak about them - to those the issues are with and then along with others who can help (Matthew 18:15-18).

Paul asked the church to come alongside of Euodias and Syntyche to help the women in their disagreements. Apparently, the conflict had become well-known.

And often, this is a result of the all too common practice of complaining to others. This is backbiting.

Conclusion

Unity is a difficult thing to cultivate.

While it already exists through same beliefs, the same spirit of repentance, and because we worship the same God, there are many things that would tear it apart.

If we sweat the small things, look down on others, are quick to judge others, don't suppress our suspicious thoughts of others, nor listen to the admonition of others, and complain to others; we will always find a reason to be unhappy.

This is what we naturally are. All of us.

But if we were to overlook the small things, esteem our equals better than ourselves, think lovely thoughts of them, hear godly counsel, and learn not to backbite, we are a step closer to cultivating unity.

May the Lord help us to grow and mature in Christ.

~ Pastor



Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 13. Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q. 14. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Worship Service Roster

Service	This Week (22.4.18)	Next Week (29.4.18)
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Jacob Woo	Chris Budiman
Pianist	Valerie Lee	Edward Lim
Welcomers	Kim & Jesslyn Leow	Josephine Austin & Wendy Gong
Offering Stewards	Ken Hong*, Johnny Orchard* Ian Read, Kim Leow	David Pang*, Yen Fye Yap* Eugene Lim, John Tan
Ushers	Angela Yap, August Ng	Dolphin Wai, Joyce Ng
Kitchen Duties	Merilyn Woo*, Carmel Sriharan Vincent Chiu	Lisa Lim*, Jemima Ng Ken Hong
PA Duty	Ken Hong	Jacob Woo
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>27 April 2018</i>	<i>4 May 2018</i>
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Ian Tay	Eugene Lim

Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshipers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. Next week's message: "Safe Through Shipwreck" (Acts 27:1-44).
3. Next week's Junior Worship message: "How the Spirit Makes Us Understand Our Sinfulness" (Acts 2:37-41). Speaker: John Tan.
4. Church 8th Anniversary Dinner. North Lake BBQ Restaurant: 406 North Lake Road, Bibra Lake. Date: 28 April 2018 (Saturday). Time: 6:30pm. Subsidised cost: \$20/adult, \$11/child (4-12 years). **Registration closes today.** Please see Jacob Woo.
5. Training on Teaching Children. Date: 28 April 2018 (Saturday). Time: 1.00-5.00pm. Trainer: Ms Lorita Lim. All are welcome. More information on the fellowship hall notice board. Please register today.

Appointments for the Week	Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance
<p>WED 10:00 am Craft Group</p> <p>FRI 7:30 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting</p> <p>SAT 1:00 pm Teachers' Training</p> <p>SUN 9:00 am Sunday School</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">10:00 am Worship Service</p>	<p>General Fund - \$4,445.75 (*DD - \$200.00, #787 - \$600.00, #786 - \$200.00, #788 - \$212.50). Missions Fund - \$230.00. Building Fund - \$300.00 (*DD - \$300.00). Total Tithes & Offering - \$4,975.75. Attendance - 152.</p> <p><i>*DD: direct deposit</i></p>

Building Fund to Date & Bank Account Details			
Available Building Fund	\$90,440.90	General Fund:	BSB: 036-031 A/C: 316942
Last Week's Collection	\$300.00	Missions Fund:	BSB: 036-031 A/C: 316950
Total	\$90,740.90	Building Fund:	BSB: 036-031 A/C: 316969
<i>Outstanding Loan</i>	<i>-\$380,000.00</i>		
<i>Amount Still Needed</i>	<i>\$289,259.10</i>		

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.

Deacons: **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682. **Jacob Woo** 0421 212 206. **Vincent Chiu** 0417 929 149.

Two Madmen
Acts 26:24-32

Christianity has always been ridiculed and Christians have always been mocked. Ancient Rome - "Alexamenos worships his god." Blog - "[Christianity] is the story of a cosmic zombie who was his own father..." Non-Christians hate the gospel message because it is a foolish idea and a stumbling block. The way of the world is to work for one's salvation and to prove one's worth.

1. The Gospel Is Foolishness
 - a. He responded with disbelief
 - b. He responded with firm belief
2. The Gospel Is Stumbling
 - a. He responded with unbelief
 - b. He responded with experienced belief

How mad are we to trust the gospel? Believers proclaim the gospel but find it hard to apply it daily. We trust it for salvation, but we struggle with taking up our cross and denying self. Are we mad enough to entrust our lives to Christ and lose ourselves in the process? When we lose ourselves, we gain Christ. When we mourn for our sins, we experience salvation's joys. When Christ defeats us, we have victory over our sins. This is the wisdom of Christian madness.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How much madder have you been in trusting Christ and denying self the longer you have been a Christian? How have you experienced the joy in doing that?
2. How will resisting the gospel in your life as a believer delay your sanctification? How have you experienced the frustration of this in your life? Does the lack of progress in self-denial disturb you?