

# Relationships Matter

GOD'S DESIRE FOR A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS



Part of the 'Growing Together'  
Discipleship Stream

Solihull  
Christian  
Fellowship



# Our Call to Shine

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Paul Belcher

**Relationships Matter**

GOD'S DESIRE FOR A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

## Old Covenant Reminder

- A people called out from slavery by the blood of lambs
- A people called to freedom in order to serve Jehovah
- “The Law” given by Jehovah to form a distinctive people
  - Worship: holiness, cleansing, blood-purity, no images
  - Community: how to live and conduct relationships
  - The “Presence” in the glory cloud
  - To be a witness to the nations
- Jehovah rejected – “we want to be like the other nations”
- The promise of God’s servant, the Messiah (Christ)

**R e l a t i o n s h i p s   M a t t e r**

GOD’S DESIRE FOR A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

## New Covenant Reminder

- A people called out from slavery by the blood of **Christ**
- A people called to freedom in order to serve **Father**
- The **Spirit** given by **Christ** to form a distinctive people
  - Worship: holiness, cleansing, blood-purity, no images
  - Community: how to live and conduct relationships
  - The “Presence” in the glory cloud
  - To be a witness to & **make disciples of all** the nations
- **Father embraced** – “we want to be **just like you Jesus**”
- **Return of Jesus Christ and a new heaven and new earth**



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## Our Call to Shine

Paul declares, Ephesian 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> *in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

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## Our Call to Shine

Paul prays, Ephesians 3

<sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— <sup>19</sup> to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; *that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

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## Our Call to Shine

How do we cooperate with Holy Spirit to make this an increasing reality in our experience ? — *that you / we may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

- **Unity / oneness** - Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.  
Ephesians 4:1-6
- **Purity** – put off...be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22-24
- **Speaking** – be filled with the spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks... Ephesians 5:18b-21

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# Our Call to Shine

## **Unity / oneness**

Given – one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all...Ephesians 4:4-6

Gifts – but to each one of us grace was given...apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers...Eph4:11 (also 1 Cor12, and a fuller list Rom 12)

Growth – for equipping for ministry, for edifying of the body, unity of the faith, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:12-13



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# Our Call to Shine

## **Purity**

Put off...wrong thinking, speaking and bad behaviour particularly in regard to finance, sex and relating to others. Eph 4:17

Put on the new man created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. Eph 4:22-24

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Eph 4:30 but “Be imitators of God as dear children” Eph 5:1



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# Our Call to Shine

## **Speaking**

“Be filled with the spirit, **speaking** to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks...” Ephesians 5:18b-21

When the disciples were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost “they spoke with tongues” in a public place where a multitude heard and responded saying “we hear them **speaking** in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” Acts 2:1-11

Always be ready to give a defense [**speak**] to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you 1 Peter 3:15



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# Our Call to Shine

## **Jesus said...**

“You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:14-16

“I am the light of the world, he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. John 8:12

**Thought:** Jesus in me is the light



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# Our Call to Shine

An illustration:

## The “Vermont” LED Lantern

Thought:

Jesus in me is the light. So what might hinder that light from shining?

Typical reasons:

- Persistent sin
- Faulty beliefs
- Fears
- Disconnection

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# Our Call to Shine

Freedom and Liberty Seminar – September 2018

## Testimonies

- Davinder W
- Daniel Cole
- Stephen

NB: Second seminar 9.00 to 12.00 Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018



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# Our Call to Shine

## **Conclusion**

In connection with protecting ourselves against false teaching Paul says,

<sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Eph 4:15-16 ESV

You belong, you are gifted, you are needed – don't allow yourself to be robbed because you and we will be the poorer and the light dimmer.



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# Our Call to Shine

## Questions for Home Group or Personal Reflection

- 1 In what ways were God's people under the old covenant distinctive from the nations around them?
- 2 In what ways are we, as disciples of Jesus to be distinctive from our community?
- 3 Consider Eph4:15-18 and give some examples of the positive effect one person can have on the whole congregation.
- 4 Give examples of where dealing with restricting issues in your life has brought about positive change to you and others.
- 5 Why is unity and purity without words insufficient? What hinders us from speaking about Jesus?



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# Our Call to Shine

## A Corporate Response

### Confession

- For a low view of what the local church is intended to be
- For believing my relationship with you does not affect the local church either for bad or for good

### Forgiveness

- I choose to forgive those in any church either local or world wide that have hurt me or let me down, especially church leaders.
- Please forgive me for being unwilling or afraid to give myself and my gifting first to you and then to this church



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# Our Call to Shine

A Corporate Response – Adapted from Ephesians 3:16-19

Lord Jesus Christ, grant that according to your riches in glory, we may be strengthened with might through the Holy Spirit in our inner man, and that you may dwell in our hearts through faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that we may be filled with all the fullness of God and so become a shining light in this community.

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