**c.h.c.c. COMMUNITY ESSENTIALS**

**May 25, 2014**

**Pastor Wayne Driedger**

Intro this is a year-end celebration. Sunday is the last Sunday of our church year. AGM to follow. Last Sunday before sabbatical. Stay for soup and hear a few stories about this past year as people have engaged in community.

New start June 1

Coast Hills COMMUNITY church. Geographically we are on the coast. We want to be a city on a hill. Up on a hill the light shines out to help people who feel the darkness.

Jesus is the artist. The community of believers called the church. It is not just in a file somewhere that God pulls out from time to time….it is the central work. It is all about the church.

Illustration: Church as a masterpiece

80% of North Americans say that they can be a good Christian and not be part of the church.

We study what the church should be so that we can get to know Jesus.

Lower case chcc because it is about Jesus and the church is universal. You can’t be vaguely part of the universal church and not be tied in to a local church. Well the church/Jesus community is important to me but I am not part of a church. We have to talk in tangible terms. Build community….it is what Jesus did. He took his 12, his 70 his 120. He added 3000 to the church in Jerusalem. You actually can’t grow to be like Jesus without the church community. Cause Jesus body is the church.

Good News about Jesus spread from Jerusalem to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch…distances…church got formed in Antioch.

**Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen’s death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord. When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw this evidence of God’s blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.**

**Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.)**

**During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and predicted by the Spirit that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.) So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could. This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.**

**Acts 11:19-30**

**COMMUNITY ESSENTIALS:**

1. **UP CLOSE CHRISTIAN LOVE**

**“…believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching…large numbers of Gentiles believed…It was in Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.”**

There were 18 different communities within Antioch. They had walls between them.

1. **STAYING POWER**

**“Both of them (Barnabas and Saul) stayed there with the church…”**

Life Group application. I will stay Ministry application – we have 23 ministries everyone is an entrepreneur...nobody wants to stay with it. Get things started and stay with it.

1. **LIVING FOR THIRD PLACE – 1st Jesus 2nd Community 3rd You**

**“Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch.”**

We want to be the quarterback. The Diva. Canada as a world psyche does not see itself as the greatest. BC? The greatest place on earth….really? Canada doesn’t come here to be 2nd. Anything less than gold is a failure. Jesus said, he who wants to be greatest must be servant of all. I just want to go to Sochi and get a bronze…I will be so happy. Happy Gilmour. I will give up my spot for the betterment of the team. I love it….people buy me beers…there is joy…they call him Happy Gilmour…he placed himself third. Canada, the skating team, himself.

1. **SPIRIT DIRECTED ACTION**

**“… Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and predicted by the Spirit …(they) decided to send relief…everyone giving as much as they could…entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take…to Jerusalem.”**

Share a Chair. We want to be thinking about the next person who will come and be introduced to Jesus.

You might not feel the spirit but the community is….go with it. Not a big ask – buy a $20 chair for yourself and one for someone else.

So in this passage we find that people were reaching out with the great news that you can win in life because someone has won for you. Winning is…being on track with God, experience his blessing and joy in life, have a power in life have a freedom and hope for the future in an uncertain world. This is great news and so it became natural for people to reach out to their friends and tell them about what had happened. When you hear great news…you tell your friends. Your email list…

But some people said…this is so good…even people I don’t connect with need to know…People from Cyprus and Cyrene Cyprus is that little Italian island…Cyrene is present day Libya in North Africa.

1. REACH ACROSS like a Cyprian, Cyrenian or Libyan.

Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen’s death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. 20 However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. 21 The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord. Acts 11:19-21

Christianity was most understood by the Jewish people…they got it one way or another because culturally they grew up with the Old Testament and they knew that a messiah had been predicted. So when a certain group of Christ followers said…Jesus Christ is it…people got it – or were offended by it. So it was pretty understandable.

But to explain it to a gentile – a Greek or roman – now you were crossing some pretty big barriers. First of all they were different, they had different customs and traditions, spoke a different first language. They were often times hated…there was racism. If they didn’t feel racist to them, then it was more like – that isn’t the bird of my feather. But the Cyprians and Cyrenians…they just walked over to that side of the room and reached out to people that seemed like “NO, they would never be interested. No, they have some pretty big obstacles to Christianity…they just went and did it and …you know what it says next…”the power of God was with them.

Application:

As a Christian, if we are honest, there are people in our worlds that we just don’t even think about reaching out to. It actually may be someone who is very familiar to us but they seem like they have got it together…we don’t even see them as needing God.

Might be very familiar but we know it may make things awkward…

Might know quite well but they have a whole religion that they follow…seem to be quite content with that. Interesting that now, 2000 years later, Libya is predominantly Muslim…they need to know that there is a God not just of power and wrath but has a son who would love us so much as to die for us. They need to see the mercy and the relationship with God.

Illustration: North African run out of Sudan and into Egypt.

Testimony from Nadine

Who is it that God would want you to reach across to? What is it you may have to come across to see the power of God get to? Maybe they have only seen religion but need to know relationship…

Kidz Camp is an opportunity to do that. Don’t just take your kids…load up the van with neighbour kids.Invite the family to a preview service. Maybe you don’t have kids but you know someone who does…you reach across into their world of kids and invite them.

When people reach across…God’s power is there. People talk about seeing miracles and God’s power…nothing is more powerful than a person coming from darkness to light. From bitterness to forgiveness. From going from my timing to God’s timing.

Things die and get old when there is an exclusive…you have to fit or live up to our expectations…when it is…Everyone is welcome to the party…the commonality is Jesus.

How to live for kingdom wins?

1. ENCOURAGE like a Barnabas.

When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw this evidence of God’s blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord. Acts 11:22-24

You can underline the words encouraged to stay true. I love this guy Barnabas. Jerusalem was the mother church. Heard what was happening, some people would have been late adopters…every change has early adopters and late adopters. This was a big change…the Jews had always been separate…different…they kinda prided themselves in that…they had so many traditions…it was killing them. To be okay with Greeks and Romans joining their winning team…what was that? I can see some really raising their eyebrows and others going “this is great!” How did they resolve the tension…they picked out the most solid trustworthy guy they could find. Everybody knew that Barnabas was a GOOD man. This is the only guy in the bible that is described with that term. He was the guy they chose because he was a guy with character. It says nothing about his gifts, his success, his credentials in the way of skills – he was just an encouraging guy. So they chose him for ministry. He got to go on the road trip.

You might wonder what you can do to help the kingdom win. What is it that I can do? You can encourage. You read that the name Barnabas meant “son of encouragement”.

You can be a positive person. In fact, you may have all the talent in the world and be incredibly gifted but if you are kinda down and discouraging…others don’t want you around. This isn’t about being fake but it is about appreciating what has been done for you, Barnabas got it. It is about a perspective…Barnabas looked around and saw blessing and grace…that makes you a positive encouraging person. Also… It says he was strong in faith…that is what makes you a positive person. You know that God is with you and has a plan in everything. You have a personal relationship.

Testimony: Jordan Scott.

You have a card in your program about getting involved in ministry…if you know how to encourage…you can do ministry.

Illus: Uncle Harv

Two things that we find Barny doing: Remains solid…tough times come, pressure arises but you just stay the course…Solid

Second is to stay connected - remain in Jesus.

Getting kingdom wins?

1. FIND HELP from another Christian.

Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.) Acts 11:25-26

It’s about teamwork. Barnabas looked around and said, we got some great things going on here but what would make it better. We need a guy who understands the Greek roman world and has a gift of teaching. We can do even better. You can get kingdom wins when you get someone else to track with you. Do you have someone you talk regularly about Jesus with? Just another Christian you connect with. You got to look for it…Barnabas looked for Saul. You may be so close to winning spiritually in your life but you just need that one person to tip it over for you.

Canucks felt like they were so close but need a little extra edge…they went for excellence. Aquillini and Mike Gillis got a nutritionist in. Not many people hear about the nutritionist. You find a partner.

At Coast Hills we are looking for another member of the team…you will notice a card in there with Staffing written on it.

You may not find another twin but you can definitely find another Christian to grow with. Barnabas looked around and said…this Antioch team can grow. We just need another person in the mix.

They developed a brand name…they were known as something. We are all Canucks…yet a car dealership gets nailed for putting the brand on them.

Christians…it`s a name to hold proud to. We drive around with Canuck flags…fly the flag of being a Christian. Brian on CBC everywhere we go to disasters…the Christians are there first. Christian or right wing may be termed scary…there are people who fly the Christian flag that we don`t say yes to…Canuck fans who vandalise….that`s not us. People can see that if they know you…so that`s what a Christian is like. Flying the flag is more about being a Barnabas or Saul kinda guy.

How do you live for kingdom wins?

1. GIVE like an Antiochian.

During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the meetings and predicted by the Spirit that a great famine was coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius.) So the believers in Antioch decided to send relief to the brothers and sisters in Judea, everyone giving as much as they could. This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem. Acts 11:27-30

You find the Antiochan church a year later having received from the mother church and guy like Barnabas. The church in Jerusalem would have missed him…then they got Saul…now they find out that the church they had received so much from was in need…they gave back generously. They thought beyond their own walls.

They gave according to what they had…you may think you don’t have much…you may have a lot. Everyone gave…

Everyone giving…we can do that individually…but together they gave to make it possible.

When we got started as a church…we received huge gifts from New Hope Church and Gracepoint. People and screen…

They could have held on tightly…I have seen it…”we don’t need another church do we…it’s only 10 minutes away. We need to look after ourselves…”

Instead they invited me on stage and said…if anyone here wants to join this new church…they gave us Barnabas’s and Saul's and a whole lot of stuff.

We have always set out to be a generous church. We started giving into a fund for church planting… we wanted to reach across different groups. We brought in Mike and Jana for a year and sent them out with a group of 30 or so. Now Mike is battling cancer and we are in the wings saying if you need anything, let us know.

You cannot out-give God.

Illustration. Real Life has always wanted to bless new churches…Church planting BC said that there are two guys wanting to plant a church…

We want to be in a position of strength. We want to give generously to our other churches and to church planting. There is another church getting started called Crossridge.

Let’s build so that we can keep giving. There is a generous giving card in your program.

We have to look after the growth in our own church. Our plans are to keep blessing the churches in our area. We believe we are can best be generous by blessing these churches. Each week we meet at the ministry centre for Real Life and Emmaus…they use our stuff for free – our photocopier, our tables, our grill, our staff at times…I have volunteered to preach or help with ministry stuff there. Let’s keep being generous. We want to be a strong, stable mother church with growing believers…that’s why we are bringing another staff person in…we want to grow our teens and our adults in faith. We can grow our church to two services here. We want to see another Alpha happen in the fall. It takes resources to keep these ministries growing.