

Renewing a Vision for Shoreline Pt. 3 - Edifying the Body of Christ

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[0:00] Please put your Bibles to Ephesians 4, 1-16. If you need a Bible, you're welcome to take them off the back table and keep it as a gift to you.

I therefore, prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you be called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of despair and the balance of peace.

There is one body and one spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to the calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, the Father of all, who is over all and through all and through all.

The grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, when he ascended on high and led by a host of captives, he gave gifts to men.

In saying he ascended, what does it mean that he has also descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all the heavens.

[1:06] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to put the saints for the work and ministry, for building of the body of Christ.

Until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to measure of the stature of fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves, and carried about by overwind doctrine, by human cunning, by crafting the spikes and the sins, rather speaking the truth in love.

We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which this is equipped.

When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it fills itself up in love. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Heavenly Father, I come before you one more time here.

In this word here, from the Apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus, that we long for this to be the reality here, Lord, it is the reality here, by your grace, that we're seeing these supernatural things taking place among us, as this local body is being fit together, and is growing up into maturity, into the fullness of Christ.

[2:38] God, we have a long way to go, but you are here. You are among us. Your spirit is at work. Your word and your gospel are going forth. Hearts are being changed, and we just want to stop and thank you for this work that you've done, Lord.

It's not because of any of us. It's not because of any gifting that any of us possess, any eloquence, any skill, Lord. It's only because of the grace and the power of you.

It's only because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the work of the Spirit among us. God, we ask that you would continue that work among us this morning. God, that you would be exalted, your name lifted high above all names, that your people would be edified, edified, would be built up into maturity.

And God, that any that are here that don't know you would encounter the living God among us and be drawn to faith and to worship. God, all the spirit of glory we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Good morning, Shoreline. Good morning. My name's Mike, one of the pastors here. It's just so good to be with you week in and week out. So thank you for joining us this morning on

this special day where we're celebrating 10 years.

[3:52] So I do hope that you'll stay. Whether this is your first Sunday or your 500th Sunday, I hope that you'll stay afterwards and just take part in this celebration of what God has done.

And I heard a story of a man who developed a really tasty nutrition drink. And everyone that tried it loved it. And then a larger company caught wind of this drink and they told him that they would help mass market and distribute the drink.

And so they did. And people's response was underwhelming. Not at all the initial response of those who had praised this drink. And the man realized that the company, in its desire to mass market the product, had altered the ingredients of his drink.

And so the mass marketed, mass produced drink was really no longer his. And you know, this analogy describes to some degree what has happened with the church in the misguided zeal of many modern churches and mission agencies to mass produce Christians.

And they've been successful at attracting large numbers. But in order to do so, they had to make some changes. And one of those changes has been de-emphasizing talk or expectations of commitment and majoring on talk about belonging.

[5:16] But without commitment, you've by definition changed the thing that you're calling people to belong to. In terms of our vision categories, you know, many churches today might emphasize exalt, but without the call of holiness, they'll emphasize exalt, and then also expand.

Or in other words, they'll emphasize worship and missions, but they forget that Christ redeems sinners to belong to a body that he calls to build itself up in love.

And that call, that work of edifying the body is actually part of how we worship the Lord. And also, it forms a community that's actually worth exporting in the work of missions.

We exist to build up the body of Christ for the good of one another and the glory of God. You know, we're in the third of a four-week sermon series, *Renewing a Vision for Shoreline*.

And if you're new here, we normally preach through books of the Bible, one passage after another. But as we hit 10 years of public ministry by God's grace today, we're taking this month to step back and to consider where God is leading us as a church.

[6:32] And so in week one, we talked about, I'll pause here, their handouts were passed out as you made your way in. If you don't have a handout, there's some on the back table.

Tyler's happy to pass them out. If anyone needs one, just raise your hand. There are handouts in the back table so that you can follow along. In week one, we talked about how we have been established by God.

We exist by His gracious will, that is, by His Spirit, through the Word and through the Gospel. And because of this, we seek to be a church that is submitted to God's Word, that is dependent on the Spirit, that's centered on the Gospel and devoted to prayer.

And then last week, our second week, we covered exalt. The redeemed people that God establishes are first, a people of worship. We exist to worship Christ.

And because of this, we seek to be a church magnifying God's glory, treasuring Christ, and pursuing holiness. And so this week, this third week, we come to edify.

[7:36] The title of today's sermon is *Edifying the Body of Christ*. And the main point, which I've stated already, is we exist to build build up the Body of Christ for the good of one another and the glory of God.

For the good of one another and the glory of God. As we move from the theological foundation, which we've been doing each week, into the practical outworking in the life of the church, we're, again, going to be flipping around in Scripture.

So if you didn't already, please get a copy of God's Word in front of you. Now, the first part of this sermon, before we actually get to the three vision principles today, will be a little bit shorter than the past two weeks because so much of our time throughout 2025 has been spent on this very topic of building up the body of Christ.

Name scheme, all throughout 1 Corinthians. And so, and if you're new here, I just refer you to two sermons in particular that we preach on building up the body. 1 Corinthians 10, 23 to 11, 1.

There's one sermon you can find on our website. And then 1 Corinthians 12, 12 to 31, another sermon that I'd refer you to. But I do still want us to briefly survey the New Testament vision for the church.

[8:48] And so that's where we're starting today. Surveying the New Testament vision for Christ's redeemed community. And we're going to look at here four key passages.

There are so many we could turn to. We're going to limit this to four key passages. And the first one is John 17. And we were here a couple of years ago, I think last year, in our church.

So here in John, so go ahead, go ahead and turn in your Bibles to John 17. Let's all go there together and look at God's Word in front of us. Here in John 17, we are let in on a divine conversation between Father and Son.

Jesus is praying right before His arrest and trial and crucifixion. This prayer is known as Jesus' high priestly prayer because He's interceding for His disciples.

And not only the 11, but also all the disciples who would come, including us. And so this gives us here a picture of the kind of intercessory work that Christ is doing right now at the Father's right hand.

[9:51] He is interceding for the church. And so here we're given a picture of that. And the question is, what is Jesus praying for? What is on His heart? What does He desire?

One of the main things that He desires is the church's holiness. And we talked about that last week, so we won't touch on that today. But that's, if you pray it, the church would be kept in the Father's name and kept from the evil one and sanctified in the truth.

So that's the main thing. Another main theme in Jesus' prayer is the church's unity. Four times, Jesus prays, that they, that His disciples would be one.

The first in verse 11, and then let's look specifically at verses 20 through 23. Jesus prays, I do not ask for these only, the 11, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

The glory that You have given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them, even as You loved Me.

[11:09] So one thing that's just bursting out of Jesus' heart as He considers His death on the cross and what He aims to produce through that death and that subsequent resurrection is the supernatural unity of the Church, reflecting the divine unity of Father and Son.

Now we know Jesus is in part referring to the spiritual unity of all believers, that is, the universal church that spans the generations and spans the nations, but Jesus is also praying, for sure, for a unity made visible.

He's praying for unity that the watching world can observe with their eyes and with their ears and they would know then as a result that Jesus is truly the Son of God when they see among them a unified body of Christ.

They know that truly Christ loves the people that He died to create. fast forward several pages in your Bibles, turn to Acts chapter 2, Acts chapter 2, the very end, verses 42 through 47.

The question I want to pose here in light of John 17 is what does it look like for Jesus' prayer for the Church's unity to be answered? What does it actually look like?

[12:33] So here's the scene in which we find ourselves. Jesus has died. He has risen triumphantly from the grave. He's appeared to His disciples. He's given them the Great Commission.

And then He's told them to wait until they receive power from on high. And then, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit is poured out upon the disciples, filling them. And then Peter preaches the Gospel and 3,000 Jews convert to Christ and are baptized.

baptized. That's all in Acts 2 there. Then we read, look at verse 42, speaking of these new believers in Jerusalem, and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And awe came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

And day by day, attempting the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people.

[13:40] And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. So here we see the early church is living out that supernatural God-reflecting unity for which Jesus prayed.

And it looks like gathering corporately. It looks like having God's word at the center, praying with one another, eating with one another, which likely refers both to a fellowship meal and also the Lord's Supper.

It looks like living life side by side with one another, generously providing for one another. It also looks like missional advancement. But the emphasis here is on the redeemed gospel community of the saints building one another up in love, manifesting their divine unity which was forged by the blood of Christ and manifesting it in ways that the world can actually see and hear and touch and taste and smell.

Okay, we're going to go to one more passage. Please turn to Ephesians 4, which Nikki just read for us earlier. Ephesians chapter 4, Acts, Romans, 1st, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians.

As you're turning there, you're flipping past 1st Corinthians. And I just want us to remember, as we consider throughout 1st Corinthians, and especially chapters 12 through 14, how Paul labored to redefine spiritual maturity for the Corinthians.

[15:07] For Paul, spiritual maturity was not equal to gifting, not to knowledge, but to Christlikeness, right? To an upward, outward mindset that sought in everything to please others for the praise of God and the pattern of Christ.

You know, the repeated exhortation of Paul to the Corinthians was, with Christlike self-giving love, which he showed in chapter 13, the exhortation was, strive to excel in building up the church.

Over and over again, he calls the Corinthians to build up the church. Okay, I hope you're in Ephesians 4 now. We see a similar exhortation of Paul to the church in Ephesus in chapter 4.

Paul wants, verse 11, for the leaders to be equipping the saints. Verse 12, for the saints to be active in the work of ministry.

And why? Look at verse 13. Until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

[16:23] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, 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 life.

this is what membership in the body of Christ looks like. It looks like laboring in ministry for the good of one another.

Every member doing its part. Every member speaking the truth in love to one another so that we are together built up into the likeness of Christ.

This is, a phrase that we sometimes use, is every member all of scripture ministry. All the members wielding the whole counsel of God's word to edify the body of Christ.

When the body functions like this, as God intends building itself up in love, then Christ is manifested in and through the local church.

[17:28] And when that happens, the wisdom and the glory of God, Ephesians 3.10, that is manifested to the world and to the whole cosmos. God's glory on display in the redeemed community of the saints that are building up in love, building themselves up in love.

We exist. Church, the church of Jesus Christ exists. This local church exists to build up the body of Christ for the good of one another and the glory of God.

Okay, now flowing out of that are three key vision principles that we seek here to be increasingly embodied as a church.

And so, you can flip your sheets over. The first principle today and the eighth one overall is that we seek to be a church united in love. We seek to be a church united in love.

That is, we seek to be a church that puts Christ on display by loving one another as He loved us and guarding the unity that He died to create. Now, in light of how much we've talked about this specifically throughout the year and the passages we just looked at, I do want to quickly get into practical outworking.

[18:44] I just want to read one more passage that I think gets at this and that is Colossians 3, 12-14. Paul says, put on then.

After telling the church in Colossians to put off a whole bunch of things, he says, put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

And above all these, put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. We seek to be a church united in love.

So how does this vision work out practically then in the life of the church? We certainly can't talk about all the ways, but we're trying to cover the main ways. And the first is we strive here for meaningful membership and within that, commitment to the body.

Commitment to the body. So at Shoreline, we practice here formal church membership because among many reasons, we believe that commitment to the body of Christ is inseparably tied, inseparably tied to commitment to Christ.

[20:04] Because the thing about marriage, as in marriage, we don't grow in our marriages and then choose to commit. And that's the world's way, that's not God's way. We commit first and then that covenant commitment is the basis upon which the relationship thrives.

Loving unity begins with commitment. And the formal membership process underscores that reality. Another analogy to think of is think of membership as a wine glass, okay?

And all the one another's in Scripture are the wine. The glass provides the structure for the wine to be held. And so formal membership is the structure that helps us to live out God's vision for the church.

It helps us fulfill the one another's commands of Scripture. As we move through today, a lot of the other things are going to fall under membership, but I'm leaving out the meaningful membership part of it and just getting to the actual thing.

So the second thing, you've seen this one before, the priority of corporate worship, okay, and then also the aim of corporate worship, being a church that seeks to be united in love informs the priority of this gathering and what we do here, right?

[21:19] Now that the first commitment of members is to simply show up to church, it's to be here. That's our first commitment. And specifically, to show up with an upward, Godward mindset and also an outward, others-oriented mindset.

Now we talked about the last couple weeks, the priority of corporate worship because, first, it's where we meet with God, right? Here in this space, we are hearing from the Lord and we are responding to Him in worship.

Corporate worship is also a priority because it's where we meet with one another. It's where we meet with one another. In this place, our divine unity in the gospel is put on display in the most profound way of the entire week, right?

We're still doing that as we gather in community groups, as we have one another in our homes. We're modeling unity and how the gospel brings people together. But look around the room right now and see, like, this gathering happens once a week.

And most profoundly, we're displaying the unity that we have in Christ here in this space. When we get here, Hebrews 10, 24 to 25, to stir one another up towards love and good deeds.

[22:33] We're encouraging one another as we gather together. You know, within corporate worship, our loving unity is specifically displayed in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

baptism, it's a visible symbol portraying our union with Christ and as a result, our union with one another, with His body, the church.

Paul says, for in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Right? Similar to circumcision in the Old Testament, it is the right of entry into the covenant community.

And the Lord's Supper, as we partake of the fellowship meal of the Lord's Supper, we are renewing our covenant with both Christ and with one another. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

1 Corinthians 10, 17. And then, both within and outside of corporate worship, we seek to have a culture of gospel, grace, and humility.

[23:39] Culture of gospel, grace, and humility. You know, the saints, the church's radical love and unity baffled the Roman Empire. And it drew many into the church.

And that same reality has continued for the last 2,000 years. Right? This is a continual fulfillment of Jesus' prayer in John 17. And this love and this unity, it requires us to have grace and humility.

And that is born right out of the gospel. If we truly believe that we've been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, if we truly believe that it's only by Christ's merit and not any of our own that we have been forgiven by God and adopted into His family, then we will in humility count others more significant than ourselves.

Philippians 2, 4. That's the mind of Christ. I'll talk about it Philippians 2. Then we will be quick to extend grace and to extend forgiveness to others. Like Christ, we will patiently, meekly bear with one another even at cost to ourselves.

We seek to have a culture of gospel grace and humility. The last thing I want to mention under this is orders of importance. Now we talked about this in greater detail back in 1 Corinthians 1.

[25:00] But we need to distinguish between levels of importance when it comes to disagreements that we have. We're going to have disagreements. I mean, we would love if all of us had exactly the same perspective on everything.

But that's just not reality, right? And there are matters of primary importance. We talked about this. There's matters of core gospel doctrine. Those things affect salvation.

Primary importance. There are matters then of secondary importance. They affect how we actually worship. Whether or not we can fellowship one another as a corporate body. And then beneath that are matters that are not unimportant.

Double negative intended. They are still important, but they are of lesser importance. And they should not ultimately cause us to divide. Instead, we will bear with one another in our differences. We will love one another. We will guard our unity in Christ. We will continue to worship alongside each other and fellowship side by side.

[26:01] Welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us. You know, I talked about last week how we're kind of trying to take spaghetti and describe it by looking at individual rules in this vision series.

Before we get to the next principle, let's remember that the only reason our unity exists in the first place, the only reason that we have love for one another in the first place is because Christ loved us first.

He died to create this supernatural unity that we experience. God has established us as one body through Christ. And so Christ, the gospel, is the foundation of our love and our unity.

And as we remain centered on the gospel, as we remain treasuring and pursuing Christ, then we are motivated, we are empowered by the Spirit to pursue that love and unity for the glory of God.

And that's some delightful spaghetti right there. Okay, number nine, we seek to be active in ministry. We seek to be a church in which the leaders equip the saints and the saints are active in the work of ministry, exercising their spiritual gifts and service to the body.

[27:18] Now this vision principle comes right out of Ephesians 4, 11 and 12. You should still be there in your Bibles. Look at verses 11 and 12 of Ephesians 4. And he gave, talking about Christ, he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

the leaders are equipping the saints and that all the saints are doing the work of ministry, of service to one another.

Each member, it's called, verse 15, to be speaking the truth in love to one another, to be doing its part. And again, this was a theme in our study of 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Paul teaches us that we are together the body of Christ and individually members of that body. He teaches us that every single member is vital and indispensable to the whole and is uniquely gifted by the Spirit to serve and to build up the body.

And this Christ-like mindset of being active and doing the work of ministry, that has been shipped away within the church by our consumer-driven mentality that we have in this culture for decades.

[28:43] You know, we've lowered the bar in many ways as much as possible to being a Christian. But in doing so, we've perhaps called people into something other than biblical Christianity.

The call of Christ upon His followers is to deny yourself, to take up your cross, and to follow Him. And following Christ, Christ looks like replicating His cruciform life of self-giving love and sacrificial service for others.

In other words, Christians are called to be contributors, not consumers. At Shoreline, we seek to be a church in which all the saints are active in the work of ministry.

So what does this look like practically? The first thing is simply the leaders equipping the saints.

And so the elders of this church, we seek to be continually equipping all the members of the body for the work of ministry, and we're growing in our ability to do that.

Now that equipping, though, it happens in all kinds of ways. It happens both formally and informally, and at the most fundamental level, that equipping is a ministry of the Word and prayer.

[29:56] That's what the elders are called to be especially doing, a ministry of the Word and a ministry of prayer. It's preaching. It's teaching our equipping classes that we hope to become more regular in the days and years ahead.

It's community groups. It's hosting conferences or workshops. I'll make another plug for the Disciple Making Parent Conference in February. You should go to that. It's going to be awesome.

It's counseling. It's discipling. It's putting good resources in your hands, whether via the back table.

It's one of the reasons we ask for more money for that budget category because we want to equip the saints with good resources and working on figuring out what should be back there.

Or we sometimes give resources directly to people just based on the discipling or counseling needs. It's praying regularly with and for the members. We're doing, did you know that we're doing that?

I'm praying for you guys. We, the elders, are praying for you regularly. We do that as individuals and we do that with our families and we do that as elders. We're praying for you.

[31:02] It's identifying spiritual gifts and helping people use them in service to the body. See, it looks like a lot of things and be patient with us. You have been as we're growing in a lot of these ways.

Leaders equipping the saints. And the second thing is saints committed to service. Now this again is where formal membership is a help because it reminds Christians that that commitment to the church goes hand in hand with commitment to Christ.

And that to belong in the church is to be committed to the church. And so the call on every member is to be active in service to the body. Always looking for ways to build others up.

Always looking for areas of need that you could fill. And so you know we seek to be a church where it's not 10% doing 90% of the work but 100% doing 100% of the work.

And opportunities are bound. Just on a Sunday morning I mean we have people greeting out there. We have people setting up the coffee in the back. We have people that are here early to set this up and to practice and to lead us in musical worship.

[32:12] We have people serving Shoreline Youth and Shoreline Kids. And so I just want to thank you saints because we're not a church by God's grace. And because of your own commitment we're not a church where only 10% are doing 90% of the work.

And so thank you. You guys are pouring yourselves out in service to the body and that's such a blessing. And so we seek to only increase in that. All the members of the church doing the work of

ministry as they're equipped by the leaders.

And specifically under that we seek to have and we talked about this this year a few times probably a culture of relational ministry. Culture of relational ministry.

What do you mean by that? We mean that we seek to have a culture in which the saints all the saints are speaking the truth to one another in love. All the saints are serving one another.

They're doing intentional spiritual good to one another. And you know to connect this to the previous principle united in love we're after a culture in which these things are occurring amongst the whole body.

[33:20] As people who are different from one another different ethnicities different ages different life stages different upbringings etc. Where people who are different from one another model their supernatural unity and love for one another in Christ.

The gospel has power to unite across all boundaries all the ones I mentioned and more. So we get to make that gospel visible when we within the corporate body are pursuing one another for their spiritual good for one another's spiritual good.

Now this relational ministry occurs in two broad categories of discipling and hospitality. Discipling and we think discipling is so important it's part of the great commission that we've made it the tenth principle so we're going to talk about discipling more in just a bit.

For now we'll talk about a little bit about hospitality and again we've talked about this this year but at its core hospitality it's opening up our lives and our hearts to one another. It's Romans 15 7 it's welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us.

So when we think of hospitality I want us to expand our thinking because I think we typically think it only looks like hosting a dinner party with jazz music in the background and really great food and it definitely can look like that those things are awesome but it's so much more like hospitality it's also visiting a sick person in the hospital like you're welcoming that person into your life by you going to them and ministering to them and praying for them it's inviting somebody or a family to go hiking with you just on a random time you're inviting them into your life and walking with one another side by side doing intentional spiritual good to one another it looks like giving a brother or sister your undivided attention right here on a Sunday morning like making people feel like they're the only one in the room and welcoming them into your life welcoming one another so many different things remember 1 Peter 2 9 that we are a royal priesthood each blood bought disciple of Jesus

[35:36] Christ our great high priest becomes a member of this holy priesthood to render acceptable service to God through Christ and in a large part that acceptable service to God manifests itself in service to one another we seek to be a church in which all the saints are active in the work of ministry so we seek to be a church united in love active in ministry and the last thing today cultivating disciples cultivating disciples we seek to be a church laboring to help one another follow Jesus cultivating disciple making disciples of Christ in fulfillment of the great commission we saw from Ephesians 4 that all the saints are called to do the work of ministry and service building up one another into the image of Christ as we speak the truth and love to one another in other words the saints are called to help one another follow Jesus like that's discipling the saints are called to disciple one another the saints are all called together to carry out the great commission

Matthew 28 18-20 and Jesus came and said to them all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me Christ is Lord he has all authority in heaven and on earth Jesus Christ is Lord go therefore he tells his disciples go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and then there's this promise and behold I am with you always to the end of the age the first aspect of the great commission is to make disciples and baptize them this is the work of evangelism!

of missions the great commission here in Matthew 28 is the call of Christ upon his disciples all of his disciples yes the pastors the shepherds are called to lead the way but all the members are called to engage in this work so the great commission is the call of Christ upon his church upon all the saints one more passage Paul says to the Colossians Colossians 1 28 29

Christ we proclaim warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom why that we may present everyone mature in Christ for this I toil Paul says struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me and Paul here he's providing a model for the church to replicate Paul is pouring himself out that the saints might grow up into spiritual maturity in Christ and again he's especially calling the elders if you look at Acts 20 his farewell address to the Ephesian elders! He's especially calling the elders to that he's calling the whole church to that imitate me follow me as I follow Christ and so this this work here of pouring ourselves out so that the saints would grow up into spiritual maturity in Christ that is the work of discipling that's the work in which all of us are called to participate of this work Jay Garrett Kell writes this we make disciples by helping people who already know Jesus grow in their relationships with them he had just talked about evangelism missions so now he's talking about the work of discipling he says we purposefully do spiritual good to them we help them obey everything Jesus commanded we help people obey Jesus with their words their work their time their money their identities their sexuality and everything else you can think of Jesus is the Lord over our whole lives and everything we do should be aimed to pleasing him that's the work of discipling so how does this vision work out practically in the life of the church we want we're after a culture of discipling and again discipling at its core is simply helping one another follow Jesus and the church the local church ought to be a greenhouse for discipling relationships the local church is Jesus' discipleship program the local church is Jesus' discipleship program discipling can look like a whole bunch of things it can look like a time of structured prayer bible study and accountability over coffee and that's good it can look like that it should sometimes in certain seasons of our lives it can also look like a very unstructured hey why don't you come hang out with me at Aquatic Plains Park on Tuesday while we keep our kids from dying and we're going to talk about Christ and we're going to talk about what we're learning whatever it looks like every disciple of Christ is called to the great commission work of discipling others and that work primarily happens within the context of the local church and like last week

[41:35] I want to emphasize the word culture I said we're after a culture of discipling we're not against programs we have programs but what we're after chiefly is a culture in which people are intentionally pursuing one another for their spiritual good people are intentionally pursuing each other to help one another follow Jesus with or without some formal program in place we're after a culture of discipling now with that in place we have program like we have formal discipling that goes on we do think that there's value in having these more formal discipling spaces community groups are one of them community groups they help us narrow in our focus a little bit it would be awesome if we had enough time to know everybody in the church and help everybody follow Jesus but we're limited so community groups focus us in on a more particular group of people for the purpose of Christ's formation in us community group really it's a microcosm of the church it's a cross section of the church in which the gospel is the unifying factor brings a diverse group of people together to know and to love Christ and to know and to love one another we also have different men's and women's studies and so these are ways that we're delving into specific topics or specific books of the bible the goal again is to grow us in our love for Christ is to make us more like Christ but before I talk about programs for kids and youth

I first wanted to talk about this we seek to have here something we're growing in by God's grace we seek to have here an emphasis on family discipleship God has blessed this church with lots and lots of families and lots and lots of children amen right we give glory to God like that is this is a unique this is a unique demographic in that way and it is an awesome responsibility for us to steward as leaders for us to steward as a church and you know it's no secret that the family unit has been under attack in this country and yet like the church the family unit ought to be a greenhouse for discipleship and so you know fathers we are called to be the pastor shepherds of our home we're called to be a sanctifying agent in the lives of our wives and with the help of our wives bringing up our children in the instruction and the discipline of the Lord Ephesians 6 4 you know it's Chad Bettis who's going to come out here in February as he says the north star of parenting is the great commission the north star of parenting with our primary aim is

not to produce good little American citizens like we want to produce good American citizens that's not our primary aim our primary aim is by the spirit to produce disciple making disciples of Jesus Christ and in practice this will look like planned structured times of family worship of devotions of gathering the family around the word and the gospel and teaching our children it will also look like spontaneous and unstructured times all day long where we're seeking to bring the gospel into conversations we're seeking to model the gospel in our homes you know faith is both taught and caught right it's taught and it's caught and what a better environment for teaching and modeling the gospel than in the home but this is not just the job of parents the whole community of the church is responsible for discipling the whole community of the church and I think like you know we so often swing to different kinds of ones okay

I think perhaps a prior generation swung more to giving discipleship to the church and not emphasizing family discipleship but we could very easily swing the other way and say the church has no business discipling my children like guys it's both parents have primary responsibility and the church is also responsible and it's also a huge benefit for the church to be helping disciple other parents children and so all of us are called to help in various ways in various capacities in discipling the children that are among us and so that means that a woman whether married with kids married without kids or single could pursue someone else's daughter for one-on-one discipling like how awesome would that be if that's going on in our church and the men likewise you know we've all seen well maybe not all of us maybe you've seen Charlie Brown most of us have seen Charlie Brown and we all know the possibility of a parent's voice becoming nearly that wah-wah-wah in the background of their kids now Lord willing that's not going on in our families but look regardless there is power when a child sees other adults modeling the exact same faith as their parents right a child can more easily dismiss their parents' faith right and it's just their parents my mom and dad yeah that's just them that's what they're about when they see that same faith on display in the lives of other adults that they respect and they look up to that bears strong witness for the truth of the gospel with all that in mind we do think that there is benefit for having formal discipleship spaces for kids and for youth okay but first is what we have already said the Jesus is discipleship program is the local church okay it's the whole body and there is value in supplementing that along with family discipleship with these formal spaces shoreline kids shoreline youth and so you know we have shoreline kids because we think that it's good for other adults over there to be discipling our children with you know age tailored instruction and they're going to be coming in here we're preparing them to be a part of this body we think there's value in that and we know like not everyone has their kids over there that's fine like there's again matters of importance there is different perspectives and we uphold that like that's good we think there's value in having shoreline youth okay it adds supplementary value it's allowing again other adults within this body to disciple the youth and you know while we see both as valuable shoreline kids shoreline youth we're also hesitant to grow them into these large complex resource intensive programs as some churches choose to do so again we think that there's value we think that they are secondary in value to the discipling efforts of our parents the parents and to the intentional relationships that our children and youth can build with other adults in the church that's all

I'll say for now the last thing I saved this one for the end to throw you guys off a little bit the priority and aim of corporate worship it goes without saying and yet it is worth saying that when we gather here we are being disciplined all of us we talked about how that happens in you know informally in our time of fellowship but we're also we're being disciplined every single moment of the corporate worship gathering so from the opening call to worship to the scripture readings to the singing to the praying to the preaching of the word to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper and those remind us again and again of the centrality of Christ and the gospel and each element of gathered worship it's intended by God to form us increasingly as individuals and as a body corporately into the image of Christ we seek to be a church cultivating disciples we seek to be a church engaged in every member all of scripture ministry that the church is upbuilding in Christ so we all have a role to play in great commission gospel work we exist shoreline we exist to build up the body of Christ to be good of one another and the glory of God we seek to be a church united in love active in ministry and cultivating disciples

[50:30] I just want to pause and remind ourselves here as we talked about in week one that the power the power to effect change does not lie in our abilities or in our zeal I planted Paul says Paul is watered but God gives the growth God is the one who by the power of his spirit through

the word through the gospel brings forth life from the dead we cannot do that we can't bring forth life from the dead that's the Holy Spirit's job God is the one who takes that life that he formed and he grows it up into something beautiful for his glory and our good we can't do that only God can do that and so church we don't need to come up with some cutting edge jaw dropping ministry innovation no no we simply need to be faithful in attending to the ordinary means of grace that God has given us and watch him do the extraordinary jaw dropping work of building up his church in defiance of the gates of hell let's go before the Lord

Heavenly Father thank you for coming to the