

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Healthy Things Grow! The Centrality of the Word of God**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - May 4, 2014**

Northwest Friends Church, Pastor John Hinshaw  
Community in Christ, friends just west of our old location on 82nd, Pastor Jason Rogness  
Arvada Mennonite Spirit of Joy at 59<sup>th</sup> and Miller

*Someone recently submitted an interesting question to an online knowledge expert, "If someone from the 1950s suddenly appeared today, what would be the most difficult thing to explain to them about life today?"*

*The pundit replied, "I possess a device, in my pocket that is capable of accessing the entirety of information known to man. Science, literature, art, philosophy, theology, all at the touch of a finger. I use it to look at pictures of cats and get in arguments with strangers."*

How is it possible that we could use an instrument so powerful as this computerized phone and the vast resources of the internet for trivial, even immoral or illegal purposes? Actually, this kind of waste and obscenity has been going on for thousands of years. The Word of God is infinitely more powerful and life changing than the internet but for most, the Word is unexplored and even mocked and marginalized. It is misquoted and misapplied for insipid purposes by political groups and educational systems. Sometimes the family Bible sits quietly on a shelf not bothering anyone or perhaps is used to help to balance the uneven legs of an old coffee table. It would be like using the winning lottery ticket for a bookmark. What's the point?

Last week we made the point that the church is the last, best and only hope for the world. It is the most powerful entity on earth and will outlive and out influence every nation and leader and institution ever birthed or formed by humankind. The church has been given the authority of God under the headship of Christ. We move and speak for Him.

The church however is not infallible. It is filled with fallen and broken people that have been saved by grace, not to perfection on earth but to a restored relationship with God. So with the understanding of who we are, it is fair to ask, "Are we healthy and growing?" Are we growing deeper in Christ and further in mission? We have to ask ourselves are we using God's counter-cultural criteria for defining healthy which is looking for spiritual fruit that remains rather than the world standards or butt, bricks and bucks (attendance, buildings and dollars). These have meaning but not so much as we might imagine. God's definition of healthy and missional are very different from this falling and failing world.

Our family of churches, the Evangelical Covenant, believes we must strive to be vibrant and healthy. The worst possible condition we might find is when we say about ourselves "We're fine. I like us just the way we are. I don't want to change a thing." This so called 'stable church' is approaching the dangerous place of self-contentment. I never want to be that pastor that is just trying to fill time in before I can retire. I hope you never have a pastor like that in your lives. I hope you are never like that. There is no power in that holding pattern. God cannot work with that kind of tool.

So we have identified what are called the missional markers of a healthy and missional church. They are as follows and we will be exploring them over the next few weeks:

**The Ten Missional Markers**

- Centrality of the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
- Life transforming walk with Jesus (John 3:3, 30; Phil. 1:6)
- Intentional evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Transforming communities through compassion, mercy, and justice (Micah 6:8)
- Global perspective and engagement (Acts 1:8)
- Compelling Christian community (Acts 2:42-47)

- Heartfelt worship (Psalm 138:1a; John 4:23)
- Sacrificial and generous living and giving (Romans 12:1-8)
- Culture of godly leadership (Hebrews 13:7)
- Fruitful organizational structures (Exodus 18:13-26, Acts 6:1-7)

Our topic this week is the *Centrality of the Word of God*— what a huge topic. I think we could spend a year of Sundays and not get close to plumbing the depths of this subject. But just saying it that way has a specific meaning – the *centrality* of the Word of God. What would you use for a synonym for centrality? Necessity? Maybe Fullness or Completeness? Maybe more like the ‘supreme life changing unparalleled power’ of the Word of God. That’s kinda long.

Our thinking is that a healthy-missional church makes the Word of God central to its culture and values and decisions and purposes. By measuring our commitment to placing the Word at the center of our lives, we go a long way toward healthy growth in the best of ways.

### ***Dealing with the truth***

I said last week that the church has the corner on the market when it comes to truth and love – the two most in demand commodities in the world today. Our being able to speak the truth in love defines our greatness.

Truth is more than our subjective reporting of a car crash or an opinion on the election. It has objective existence. It has universal application. Truth is true – even if no one knows it.

Truth is true – even if no one admits it

Truth is true – even if no one agrees what it is

Truth is true – even if no one follows it

Truth is true – even if no one but God grasps it fully

We know that this Word is true even if no one but God can fully understand it. The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us and that person said of himself I am the way and the truth and the life. Truth in living flesh. In His person there is no lie or hint of untruth. He has left nothing unsaid and there is no exaggeration in Him. When we pursue the Word of God we pursue Jesus Christ Himself. When we open these pages we are reading the diary of God. The personal hopes and the intimate thoughts of Jesus Himself.

We have a document that summarizes the essentials of our doctrinal standards, it is called the Covenant Affirmations and the first criteria for Christian excellence is to hold dearly and correctly to the Word of God for every nuance for our spiritual faith and practice. It says . . .

“It is essential, then, to the life of the Church that it be a company of people who desire their lives to be shaped by the powerful and living word of God. The alternative is clear. Not to be shaped by the word is to be shaped by the world. On every side attractive and persuasive voices urge us toward conformity to the spirit of this age. There is no escaping from these pervasive influences. Only the church that hears and responds to the word will be able to be a prophetic voice in this wilderness and bring healing.”

*Covenant Affirmations*

Let’s turn our attention to a verse right out of Paul’s letter to Timothy for a clarifying text. Paul is in prison as he writes these words and his dying hope is that his friend Timothy will hold to the centrality of scripture – everything is riding on this next generation of the young church holding fast to the Word of God. So Paul challenges Tim:

### **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to

make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

So when we speak of the Centrality of the Word we are saying that we will stand for the truth and defend it and promote it. This passage tells us that the Word of God is breathed by Him; Inspired.

### ***God's Word is inspired by God***

The Bible is the end result of over forty authors, writing 66 books over a period of at least 1,600 years on three different continents that consistently unfolds the story of God's redemptive activity in the lives of mankind. There is no other book like it. In stating Scripture is inspired by God, Paul is setting the Bible apart from all other books... it is complete. There is nothing to be added to it and nothing can be retracted from it. (Rev. 22)

"If there is to be any good in us, it must be brought about by God. To this end the word of God is the powerful means, since faith must be enkindled through the gospel. . . . The more at home the word of God is among us, the more we shall bring about faith and its fruits."

*Philip Jakob Spener, 1675*

### ***God's Word is Useful***

In Kathleen Norris' book *Amazing Grace*, she tells the story of how she and her husband were visiting a man named Arlo, a rugged, self-made man who was facing terminal cancer. During their visit, Arlo started talking about his grandfather, a sincere Christian. The grandfather gave Arlo and his bride a wedding present: an expensive leather Bible with their names printed in gold lettering. Arlo left it in the box and never opened it. But for months afterwards his grandfather kept asking if he liked the Bible. Arlo told Norris, "The wife had written a nice thank-you note, and we'd thanked him in person, but somehow he couldn't let it lie, he always had to ask about it."

Finally, Arlo grew curious enough to open the Bible. And when he did he took that Bible out of the closet and at the beginning of every book he had placed a \$20 bill ... over thirteen hundred dollars in all. So when we read ". . . profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" I don't think it means that kind of profitable.

**Teaching** (shows us what's right) – setting a new direction

**Reproof** (shows us what's wrong) – telling us when we get off course

**Correction** (shows us how to get right) – creating insight and improvement on the way

**Training in Righteousness** - This is the application piece so that we live well on the way

### ***God's Word is Powerful: Alive to transform!***

The Word of God is useful not only in teaching us what to believe and how to live, it is also useful in teaching us what not to believe and how not to live. The Psalmist says the Word of God is a lamp for his feet and light for his path.

Illustration: Seeding clouds – "Introduction of a substance such as silver iodide, which has a crystalline structure similar to that of ice, will induce freezing nucleation."

### ***Hebrews 4:12***

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

What seems obvious to us perhaps is that the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit goes hand in hand. We cannot read the scriptures with eyes to see unless God opens our eyes.

The effective power of the scriptural word is inseparably associated with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit never works independently of the word, and the word is made effective through the Holy Spirit.

***Covenant Affirmations***

***"This Book [the Bible] is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet."***

Warren Wiersby spoke of life in Christ as a growing tree. A tree has roots. The most important part of your life is your "root system." Don't be like the ungodly, who are like chaff ([Ps 1:4](#)). Chaff doesn't have roots. It is blown away by every wind that comes along. Your root system is important because it determines your nourishment. It also determines your stability and your strength when the storm comes and the wind starts to blow. People can't see your root system, but God can. Praying and meditating on the Word of God will cause your roots to go down deep into His love.

God delights in blessing His children. But we must prepare ourselves for His blessings by appropriating the resources He has given us. Delight in the Word of God and feed on it. Make it your source of spiritual nourishment, and God will bless you with strength and stability.

"Read it much, read it often, brood over it, think over it, meditate over it—meditate on the Word of God day and night. When you are awake at night, think of a helpful verse. When you get up in the morning, no matter how you feel, think of a verse and make the Word of God the important element in your day. The Holy Ghost wrote the Word, and if you make much of the Word, He will make much of you. It is through the Word that He reveals Himself. Between those covers is a living Book. God wrote it and it is still vital and effective and alive. God is in this Book, the Holy Ghost is in this Book, and if you want to find Him, go into this Book." ~ A W Tozer

This is the inspired word of God. Eat this book.