

# A Gospel People

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## VISION - Who are we?

### **Our Purpose:**

To Declare God's Praise

To Develop Christian Disciples and

To Demonstrate Christian Love.

### **Our Values:**

#### **A Gospel People**

<b>Grace</b>	We will be motivated by God's free gift of love in all that we do.
<b>One another</b>	We will be real as we care for one another and work together.
<b>Servant Hearts</b>	We will serve those in the local community and beyond with integrity and love.
<b>People</b>	We will share the Good News of Jesus with anyone who does not know him.
<b>Equipped</b>	We will identify, develop and use our God given gifts.
<b>Lifestyle</b>	We will be good stewards of our time, talents and possessions.

## **Our Vision:**

By 2010 Crawley Baptist Church will be a vibrant family of Christians where every person is:

***Stepping out in faith***

***Committed to growing partnerships across churches***

***Reaching communities with God's love.***

### Introduction

Today's sermon is the start of a new series, (Ian will be preaching on values in the next few weeks) so it is a good opportunity to take stock, to give praise to the Lord and to see as individuals where we need to get out of the boat again. We need to re-invest in a 'whatever it takes' attitude. We need to GO, and meet Jesus on the way. We will talk about the personal testimony of Vision, and how it helps us to keep our eyes on Jesus. Today we will be concentrating on a few key words.

### Vibrant Family

This is such a lovely word, what does it conjure up in your mind? The Dictionary's definition is : Something or someone that is Vibrant, full of life, energy and enthusiasm. What would God's definition of Vibrant be? Scripture gives us a big clue – "Love one another as I have loved you." How does that look in Crawley Baptist Church? Here are a few ideas:-

- Love is bringing about the highest good in the life of another person. Is that true for you and me?
- When Fear flows in love flows away, when love flows in fear flows away, it is as simple as that. The more love fills our hearts the less fear can take a hold. Perfect loves drives out fear. The more we know and accept and

believe that about love, the love God has for you and me, the less fearful we will be, and the more love we will have to give to others, as well as enjoying the freedom of that love for ourselves.

- Pray that love will be the reason for our living, that we can love each other as our God has loved us. As Individuals, fully, perfectly and without self-protection.
- Purpose for living is a loving involvement with God and a loving involvement with others.
- If we hold back from others, perhaps that means we can't trust God, which means we are effectively saying: "I won't, can't move to others because I don't know what to say, whether they will like me, whether I'm accepted by them." Surely by those actions we are saying to God "I have more confidence in my ability to protect myself rather than God's ability to provide for me!" Remember we are following his commands. Come on friends! He will come through for us, he will provide all that we need, he is the faithful God.
- Often we refuse to rise above our own pain and reach out to others, believing that our pain exempts us and excuses us from loving well. At such a time we are far from being the kind of disciple that Christ is looking for. Dear friends, let me suggest that there isn't one person on this planet that doesn't in one form or another, experience emotional, physical and spiritual pain. We read it time and time again in scripture – and it's no different today, God knew then when he said "Love as I have loved you."

So what challenges do we face as we continue to grow in this vibrant family:-

To name a few - (practical ways we can grow in loving)

- Ian's sermon two weeks ago, out of that no-one should be sitting on their own, and what is going on for your neighbour? Do you know? Let's love each other well with acceptance, care, compassion, let us carry each other to the throne of Grace. Let us give and not count the

cost, let us believe it is in giving that we receive. “By this, all men will know you are my disciples.”

- How do we respond to each other during the week, as we meet together at different times are our hearts open? Are we willing and looking out for the new face, the person who has been missing for a few weeks. Do our actions reveal our hearts attitude? I think so, do we save that seat and therefore not welcome the stranger, the lonely the fearful? I hear you say “No, not this church.” Friends, I was asked by a senior church member recently how can we move on in that, so I bring the challenge to us all, lets be open to that person who doesn’t quite fit. I often talk with Ian, asking how do we grow in our love and acceptance of those people ‘who don’t quite fit?’ It isn’t that they don’t fit in God’s kingdom, but you’d think so by our attitudes and behaviour. “Love as I have loved you.”
- Let us also Praise God for those times when we have seen and know something of that love at work within the family here.

For me

I’ve seen a new team of folk come with a desire to serve and care for our older folk, week by week as they serve in SPOT, in practical ways, offering transport, hands to serve, hearts to listen – may we see more and more that love work its way out in practical ways.

With the gifts God has given you, how can you practically serve? Why not serve on one of the many teams that serve Christ in his church in CBC through:-

SPOT

Children and Youth Ministry – needs those who are passionate about Jesus to share with the gift God has given us in children

Listening Ear  
Small Groups  
Premises

Finance  
Stewards  
Welcome

Rainbow Lounge – Frances is retiring – how are we going to take that forward?

Let us all be growing in prayer. God spoke to us very directly about that – the greatest way we can offer God’s love is praying for each other.

### Reaching Communities with Gods love

What communities are we reaching with Gods love, day by day as we go around in our everyday living. We can make a difference – remember Ian’s words “He has no hands but our hands.” How soundly is God asleep in you? We have been saved to serve.

Evangelism – has been described as ‘One beggar telling another where to find bread.’ Not to tell a hungry and starving world where they can find bread to satisfy their soul is criminal.

We have the opportunity everyday to share that bread.

Most rooms, most days of the week –Praise God – in this building are used, many by non-Christian groups; Well baby clinic; CCVS; sewing group; painting group; Southgate surgery; Weald Day ward; Stop smoking PCT; Slimming World; Loen, the community ward meetings; Rainbow lounge; parents and Toddlers; Holly Hedgehog; Parchment craft; scrapbooking. In the Rainbow lounge we see the parents coming down from the Parent and Toddler group especially on a Wednesday, they all say what a lovely welcome, what a lovely building, what a lovely atmosphere.... BUT the challenge is HOW ARE WE HELPING THEM TO FIND JESUS?

Do we interact with them?

Do we take the opportunity to find out what they are doing, Jesus met people where they were at.

I really believe it is through relationships that people find Jesus, not just using a building no matter how wonderful it is!

How can we grow in that?

- Join one of the groups?
- Look out for the 'stranger' on the premises and talk to them!
- Include these people in our prayer life.
- Invite them to the Rainbow Lounge.
- Invite them to Easter or Christmas services

Jesus has brought people to church, I believe, for us to share the good news about who Jesus is for me. The church in Thessalonica not only heard gospel but passed it on – it is the duty of every local church!

“I remember around the late 1980’s preaching one Sunday in a church on the South coast of England and after coming away saying to myself, ‘That is the deadest and coldest church I think I have ever preached in in my life.’ Years later I was invited back to that church, to find that it had been transformed

The service throbbed with life, the congregation were radiant with happiness, the place was crowded with young people, the music was wonderful and the presence of God most powerful. During lunch with the pastor I tentatively raised the issue of what was the explanation for the different atmosphere in the church compared to my last visit. “What accounts for this?” I asked. The pastor then told me this story:

‘Not long after your last visit,’ he said, ‘a tragic thing happened in our church that brought us to our knees in repentance. A young girl, heaving pregnant and without a wedding ring on her finger, came to our Sunday night services for a couple of weeks, but no one spoke to her or tried to befriend her. We didn’t see her any more for a while and then one night she threw herself off a cliff overlooking the sea, and in the morning someone found her body spiked on a jagged rock. When a photograph of her appeared in the local paper we remembered that she had visited our church for a couple of Sundays but what

sent us to our knees in deep repentance was the fact the newspaper reported that in her hand was a crumpled-up note on which were the words “nobody cared.”<sup>1</sup>

Oh God may that never be said of us as a church.

### Committed to growing partnership across churches and stepping out in faith

Partnerships with churches and stepping out in faith is no less important but I have (due to time restraints) taken reflecting on Vibrant family and reaching communities with God’s love. I can’t develop partnerships and faith fully but I guess the question for us all has to be – Is it happening? Can I suggest that most of what I talked about in Vibrant family will follow through into these two areas:

Firstly, in trust and understanding of who I believe I am in Christ. Secondly, what I believe and therefore live out in why I think God created me to live on this planet called earth.

I do praise God for being part of the family at Crawley Baptist Church, I do Praise God for the vision statement we have, and I pray that we will continue to grow in all that he longs us to be and that we will encourage and spur each other on in our journey of faith.

Some Questions to leave you with

What is your personal challenge / step of faith as we start this new series?

What is your small group challenge / step of faith as we start this new series?

What collectively as the family of God is the challenge and steps of faith God is asking of us as we start this new series.

Preached by Sandra Warner at Crawley Baptist Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2009

1. Extract from “Spoken from the Heart” by Selwyn Hughes, pg 155/156.

