

## Sermon for May 25, 2014: Common Vision

---

**Prior to the start of the sermon, 1 Corinthians 12:3b-12 is read**

**Myrna:** Hey Kelly, Blair just sent me an email and asked if you and I would do the service on May 25 because he and Sophia will be at Conference. I'm insanely busy and don't see a time to meet face to face to discuss it? Do you have time to chat now so we can give an answer?

**Kelly:** Yeah- I got his email... What do you want to do? I took a look at the scripture to see if it was interesting or easy to speak about- it's the one about spirit given gifts. I can almost guarantee people are tired of hearing about their gifts. They think it's just a way rope them into doing more work.

**Myrna:** I know... but there has to be a part of this scripture we can talk about and really mean it. I'm taking a look at the scripture again so I'm putting you on speakerphone.

**Kelly:** I'll look too, give me a second to google it... It's not long, but what if we just focus on the middle part of it – the part about God being at the center of it all. You know- remind them that God is at work in all of us?

**Myrna:** who's reading? I think it is Marion, we could always ask her to read it a second time, but just do that center bit again.

**Marion reads just verses 4-7**

**Myrna:** Are we sure that we all have a common understanding of what God is calling us to do as the work of the church?

**Kelly :** I think that is where our faith statements inform us- In the national church, the song of faith speaks of a community bound together using the Christian voice to serve the world. Lynn Valley United has created both a mission statement and purpose to guide the work of our congregation, but they're really wordy and hard to remember...more recently, the congregation developed the core values- these are really simple and are easy to identify with.

The core values are actually more accessible than the faith statements because they use plain language that speaks to members of the church and those who have no connection with church alike. Our core values of active hospitality, relevant spirituality and vital community relationships continue to how we want to show up as a faith community in Lynn Valley.

Because each of us comes to this place with our own unique understanding and relationship with the Spirit, each of us has our own understanding of these statements of faith.

Differences in opinion of what the work of the church looks like, means we sometimes have to compromise. Kind of what you and I are doing to do with this church service.

**Myrna** : Oh Kelly – I don't think Compromise is what we want to strive for. We need to collaborate. There is a huge difference between those two words and the state of mind that goes with them. I am going to send you an email with a diagram to illustrate what I mean.

**Kelly**- alright, let me open up my mail...what- you just happen to have THAT exact diagram?

**Myrna**- This diagram shows how people differ in the way that they approach problem solving and working with other people. One axis represents motivation to achieve an objective or goal and the other represents relationship. Above the line is a strong focus on maintaining relationships. To the right of the center is a strong focus on achieving goals. When people collaborate together, they work to maintain relationships AND achieve common goals. You used the word compromise. To compromise means that someone gives up something - sometimes you end up with a win/win situation but often end up with a lose/lose situation.

**Kelly**- but collaboration takes sooooo much time. And everyone has to be committed to the goal and to each other in order to listen and learn. And consider the very best solution taking everyone's ideas into account.

**Myrna** - You and I work collaboratively really well -being family we have a commitment to each other and we respect each other's opinions and each other's strengths. Right now, with this conversation, we are highly motivated to be successful in putting together some kind of sermon...

**Kelly**- well it helps that we like to work together, it's not the same in all families...

**Myrna**- but we could point out that this is what the consultant that the Board is going to hire will help our congregation learn to do.

**Kelly** : That's good- we should do that. I think the bigger question is how we do we get everyone working for the common vision, especially when some people are very angry and others can't see that there is a problem to begin with?

**Myrna** - Kelly, we have been planning a huge move, at the same time asking questions about our future as church as a whole. This makes people very nervous and they need time to process the changes that are starting to come to fruition. They need to go through the process of grieving to come to terms with some of the changes that are seen as a loss.

I was talking with Mom the other day and she was talking about how difficult it was to watch Aunt Inez grieving Uncle Don's death for the past month. Mom learned about the stages in her own grief counselling sessions and was reminded about the 5 stages of grief by watching her sister going through them... I've just googled them so I can say it correctly- the stages are Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and finally Acceptance.

When you said that some people in our congregation are angry, that is one of the steps. You also mentioned that some people don't see that there is a problem to start with, that is denial. It seems to me that

**Kelly** – but you can't just line people up and say "okay- today we're going to go through the stage of denial" Grief, and conflict for that matter, looks different in every person, with each one working through those stages at different rates, some even in different order...and then some people get stuck and need help in order to move on. How can we come together to support one another when we are all going through our own grief?

**Myrna**- The plans for this congregation are moving forward regardless- This building is coming down next January. That means that we can no longer deny that changes are happening. We need to focus on nurturing and caring for all the members of our congregational family to help them identify and deal with their own personal sense of loss in order to have everyone reach a stage of acceptance.

**Kelly**- so conflict resolution kind of looks like the stages of grief? Interesting... Perhaps that is God's work for our congregation?

**Myrna** : hmmm. Let's look at the scripture again to see it with that thought in mind.... And maybe we'll see if Marion could even read it again.

#### **Marion reads just verses 4-7**

**Kelly** : I can understand that the Spirit works in each of us differently depending on our upbringing , culture, life experience and the strengths we have to offer but I can also see that these differences provide a wealth of wisdom.

God is working in us, even when it feels like we are in conflict. Conflict is rarely easy to navigate without discomfort, but when I look at that chart you sent, I notice that those who avoid conflict end up sacrificing relationships and not achieving goals

**Myrna** - and Working for the common good means working collaboratively, which sometimes takes more time.

**Kelly-** you know what?... I think we're doing a sermon!

**Myrna-** This has been a great conversation, so I guess we do have something to say, I'll tell Blair we'll do it.

**Kelly** – ok... hey Myrna... what do you think about the idea of using our talk today as the basis for the sermon?

**Myrna-** hmmm- that's an interesting idea... what would that look like

**Kelly** –it could be just like the conversation we've just had

**Myrna-** I think that would work... let's do that

Amen!

**Kelly-**