



Have you ever thought about your enduring qualities? Said another way, what is so important about you, what is so intrinsically interwoven into your essence, that if “it” were removed, your very essence would change, you would no longer be recognizable? Great companies, organizations and churches think about this.

Walt Disney said imagination and wholesomeness would be two enduring qualities of their organization. Back in 1901, Nordstrom, decided that service to the customer, even to the point of subservience, is a way of life.

Jim Collins said companies that enjoy enduring success have enduring qualities, core values that remain fixed while their business strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world. The dynamic of preserving the core while stimulating progress is the reason that companies such as Hewlett-Packard, 3M, Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble, Merck, Sony, Motorola, and Nordstrom became elite institutions able to renew themselves and achieve superior long-term performance.

All companies want to make a lasting impact like these companies because no company sets out to be mediocre. They want to be great. Churches want to make great change too; for different reasons, but the hope of impact looks the same.

Many of you were around last Sunday as the elders shared with us Vision 2020. That is our envisioned future for the next eight years. That vision follows vision 2010, which is fulfilled in us meeting here. Our envisioned future changes and evolves. But some things never change about a church or an organization. That’s what I want to talk with you today; the enduring qualities of Central Peninsula Church: Qualities and distinctions that characterize us to the very core of who we are. Values that we are so committed to that if you removed any of them, we would not be CPC.

We Value the Bible

This seems like a no brainer. We really believe that God has chosen to reveal Himself through His Word. So the teaching, reading, study and meditation of the Bible are essential to our relationship with God.

**The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making**

wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes (Psalm 19:7–8).

I remember at age 24, I was reading Genesis 12 where God instructed Abram to leave everything he knew and go “to the land I will show you.” And as I read these words, God gave me this thought, “I want you to go too Shawn.” Where? “I didn’t tell Abram and I’m not telling you. Just trust me.”

After about an hour of talking to God about it and God saying the same thing, I told him, “I will go.” Since I didn’t know my destination, I started by telling my school, my employer and my family that I was leaving. That didn’t go so well.

I obeyed God. I quit my schooling to become a pastor. My internship at a church naturally ended because I was no longer a student.

One year later I was living in Atlanta, working for two godly Christian men and I entered a 2-year period of time where my shallow, wanting character was exposed. God used my two years in Atlanta to pull back the curtain of my self-deception; transformation that I greatly needed.

All of this happened because God spoke to me through His Word. God speaks to us through His word when His eternal unchanging Word shows us how to live—today.

Central Peninsula Church has always placed the Bible at the center of our identity. We are fed by studying the Bible individually. We are fed together on Sunday mornings by expository preaching. We discuss it in Community Groups, Women’s Bible Studies, Men’s Bible Studies, in our kids’ classes and our classes for teenagers. Take it away and we are no longer CPC.

Part of Vision 2020 is to become a church of 5,000 people. 5,000 is a lot of people. And a church might water down the challenging parts of the Bible in order to attract more people, to make people happy.

We will never compromise the truths of the Bible in order to grow larger. In fact, we believe that as we preach and teach the Bible faithfully, God will supernaturally speak to people, just like He did to me from Genesis 12.

We Value Grace

Grace means a completely unearned, undeserving gift that Jesus Christ gives to us because he loves us.

Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:4–6).

Our church is a place where lost, hurting, and broken people are free to be authentic. So instead of acting like we have it together, when we really don't, we accept, like it says in verse 5, that "our competence comes from God." We accept that transformation doesn't happen overnight with any of us. This means that we are free to be transparent with one another because no one is punished for being in progress.

As a kid, I was angry. I'd slam the basketball with fury on the court when I'd lose in a game of Horse or scream when I'd make a mistake on the tennis court. I was selfish and insecure so I tried to put others down so I could feel better than them. Through His amazing love and grace, God saved me.

I had no competence in myself. I was not smarter than other 8-year-olds. I was not better than anyone else. I was simply on the receiving end of God's saving grace which is the only thing that gave me competence. We celebrate God's grace in our lives, not our feeble attempts at morality.

We Value Worship

We believe it is a privilege and duty for all Christians to worship and adore the great God of the universe. This worship engages our minds and hearts. Our worship style is culturally relevant while remaining theologically pure. We worship God by uniting in Sunday morning worship and cultivating a love relationship with Him daily.

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks (John 4:23).

This is a big deal to us because Worship is heart-level intimacy. The worship time at church can be an awkward time for some people. Some people don't like to sing because they don't like their voice. Some people think worship lyrics are a bit fluffy at times. Some people don't like the style of the music. Here are three pointers to help you get the most out of the worship time on Sunday mornings:

» Make the lyrics of the songs we sing a true expression of your own heart.

» Close your eyes.

» If there's a lyric that you cannot sing with authenticity, feel the freedom to not sing. But instead send a prayer up to God asking Him to change your heart.

If you do these things, you'll experience what Jesus was talking about when He said that true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and truth. You will experience a heart-level intimacy with God that will change your life.

We Value Community

We demonstrate this through relationships with each other. Not only on Sunday mornings but all the time. Our lives are interwoven with one another.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34–35).

Love is used four times: **Love** one another; As I (Jesus) have **loved** you; So you must **love** one another; If you **love** one another.

This one is a pragmatic challenge for us because we are busy people. But it doesn't have to be difficult to show love to someone else.

This value is very special to me because of how it affected my family. When I was eight years old, my parents decided to try out church. None of us were Christians. On our first Sunday, Gary and Jeanne Morris sat in the pew right behind us and invited us to a party at their house that night. That night my parents felt loved and embraced into their church community. Within six weeks, both my parents and I had given our lives to Jesus Christ.

Central Peninsula Church is a church that shows love to each other by making room for one another in our lives. We are not satisfied with being swept up in the frenzy to do more and sacrifice being together. This is why we have five new Community Groups starting in the next month. Your elders and Executive Launch Team believe in this and are all involved in living in community with one another. This is why Cassie and I have cut back on our kid's involvement this fall. Just this week, we cut a Wednesday night activity because we want to intentionally create space in our schedule so we can have all of you over to the house!

We Value the Leadership of Elders

We believe the Bible tells us that the church should be led by a group of mature elders.

To the elders among you ... Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve (1 Peter 5:1–2).

Jesus is the living head of the church; He alone is the Chief Shepherd (our Senior Pastor). At the same time, in shepherding His flock, Jesus has entrusted its care and protection to a group of mature elders. This is so healthy for our church because collectively these men have over 100 years of experience. On a weekly basis they give at least 10 hours serving you:

- » They bear the primary responsibility to set the direction of our church.
- » They will pray and anoint people with oil.
- » They will get involved in difficult counseling.
- » They bear the primary responsibility that the staff are mentally and spiritually healthy and supported.

What does this look like? I am not in charge. I am accountable to the elders. These men are so important to me because I don't bear the responsibility to lead alone. Sometimes the load is too heavy for me. Sometimes I feel weak. Sometimes I have no idea what should be done. And these men are right there with me carrying the load; supporting me; loving me; encouraging me; praying for me.

Let me give you a snapshot into the inner-workings of CPC leadership. Two years ago Cassie and I were interviewing with the elders to join the staff here. The maturity, seasoning and godliness of the CPC elders was a clear difference from any other church we interviewed with. We felt God was calling us to join the staff at CPC so that we could work alongside of these godly men.

This last week, I was having lunch with Neal Benson, our newly hired Campus Pastor at the Foster City Campus, and he said, "We felt that God was clearly calling us to join the CPC staff because the elders are amazing. We wanted to work alongside men like that."

We Value Evangelism

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. All authority has been given to me. Based upon His authority and power, he tells us to do something. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18–20).

Jesus says as you go and make disciples—we do this as we live our daily lives at work, in our neighborhoods, relaxing in our cities; everywhere we go—we have the opportunity to share about how good and loving Jesus is.

Just like it's natural for a cannonball to fly when gunpowder explodes, it's natural for us to share the amazing message of salvation when Jesus saves us. I believe it's a natural principle of life that we naturally talk about what we're excited about. Some misuse this by allowing themselves to get excited about problems, so they spend a lot of time complaining, venting and gossiping. They're doing this because they're excited about it.

Jesus wants us to be so excited about Him that we naturally talk about **Him**. That's what it means when Jesus says, as you go make disciples, talk about me.

I invite each one of you to consider joining us. To open yourself up to being loved by our church community. To hear God speak to you from His word. To experience the freedom of grace. To connect with God in heart-level intimacy through worship. And to naturally tell others about the exciting things God is doing.

It's not an accident that any of us are here today.

If you sense that God is leading you to join us, then come along. Your next step is pretty easy—start making friends and start coming weekly.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

© 2012 Central Peninsula Church South, Redwood City, CA
Catalog No. 1378 South

This message from Scripture was preached on Sunday, September 16, 2012 at Central Peninsula Church South
1005 Shell Boulevard | Foster City CA 94404 | 650 349.1132 | www.cpcweb.org. Additional copies available on request.