

## Service Overview

**Speaker:** Reuben

**Sermon Series:** At The Table With One Another

**Message:** Seeing The Other

**Scripture Reference:** 1 Corinthians 12: 4-14 & 13: 8

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## **Service Welcome** *Speaker: Worship Team*

Good morning. Welcome to Parramatta Baptist Church. We're going to start the service with worship, so let's all stand up and praise God.

## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** This Is Amazing Grace by Jeremy Riddle, Josh Farro, Phil Wickham

**Song:** Great Are You Lord by David Leonard, Jason Ingram, Leslie Jordan

**Song:** Build My Life by Brett Younker, Karl Martin, Kirby Kaple, Matt Redman, Pat Barrett

## **Post-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Ben*

Heavenly father, we stand in this place knowing who you are. You are the one who authored all of creation into existence. You spoke everything and it happened. You made this very day. And so Lord, we join together in your name. We rejoice for this day, and we give you praise in love for everything that you have given to us, the very breath in our lungs, the life in our bodies, we return to you in praise.

Would you be glorified in the way that we gather in your name? Would you be glorified in the way we sit under your word? And would you be glorified by the worship that's on our lips? We exalt you and give you all the praise in Jesus' name, amen.

## **Introduction, Announcements & Upcoming Events** *Speaker: Ben*

**Ben:** Well, good morning. Feel free to grab a seat. It is wonderful to be here with you this morning. We have a really exciting week in the life of our church coming up, and that is our 'Cosmic Catastrophe', which sounds scary, but it is awesome. It's our kids holiday program, which runs from July 9-12. Everyone who's in Kindergarten through to Year 6 are invited to come and join us. If you're a parent, make sure you sign up young people for that. I think we've got 47 signed up at the moment. So make sure you jump in quick.

And this is also an awesome opportunity to invite other friends from school, from sporting teams, or other young people who are in that age bracket to come along to our kids holiday program. We share the gospel during this week, and so there's opportunities for people who are in your sphere of life who actually could come and hear about Jesus. So, I encourage you to ask those people if they want to come and join us, we'd love to have them.

From a volunteering perspective, we've got small group leaders all lined up, so thank you for those who put their hands up and are coming to serve in that way. We do want a few more helpers in the parent cafe. And so if you're an adult, and you actually want to come along to that week, down in the bottom part of car park, in the seminar room, we just host a little cafe. Any parents can come and join us for a coffee or for a snack. and we like to use those moments to just kind of grab them and say, "hey, welcome them to our church site," but also to talk about Jesus if they have any

questions about him. We just want to be that warm connection as people jump into our church community for the first time. So the invite is there if you to be part of our parents' café. The parents' cafe is a really great space to be connecting with people from our community. So if you are at all interested, you don't have to come for every single day in the week in order to be on our parents cafe, if you can spare a morning or two mornings, we'd actually really love you to be a part of that and just have conversations with parents of young people.

There have been in the past parents who have been searching in faith, curious about who Jesus is and what Christianity is, and also families who are just curious about what church looks like. While they have faith and will know what Christianity is, sometimes they don't know what like being church actually looks like, so this is their first taste. So if you are interested in helping out for a day in the week or multiple days in the week, please do come and have that conversation.

Now this Wednesday night on June 12 is our worship night. So I just want to put that on your radar if it's not already, the invitation is to come and join us. We're going to be in this room, and we're just going to be worshipping God together. There's going to be space of us singing some songs and we're going to be offering prayer and blessing for anyone who wants to come and receive that from our prayer team. Honestly, the invitation is open, so come and join us.

If you haven't been before, I encourage you to come and experience it for yourself. We're going to lead the space really intentionally. Wherever you are at in life, honestly, I think worshipping God is just something that we're called to and is also something that we actually meet God in, and he moves in really powerful ways. And so if you have spare time on that day or if you want to create it, we would love to have you here with us worshipping together.

Now we're really conscious that, as a church, there are things that go on behind the scenes or structures that might exist for our church to function in the way that it does, that may not be very visible, especially to people who join us for the first time. This morning, we just want to unpack one of those spaces or one of those kind of structures. And that is prayer. How do we do prayer here at PBC? We do have a handout that's on our website, and I think it's out in the foyer as well, if you want to like read about it.

But here at PBC we believe in the power of prayer. Like Paul's final words to the church in Philippi, in his letter to them, he says, *"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

We believe that as we petition God, as we bring our requests to God, he moves in powerful ways. And so as a church, we create a few intentional spaces and the means for us to be praying for one another, to be interceding for the needs and the lives of the people who are also in this room and also in our other congregations.

We have 3 really key spaces that we create to pray for people. I'm going to invite Bob\* up to talk about one of our key spaces, which is after service prayer.

**Bob:** After service prayer is one of the critical times in our lives. We've listened to the gospel, we've sat in God's presence, we've worshiped him, we've opened ourselves up to him. And there is no need too small, no need too great, that you cannot bring before any of the after service prayer people that will be along the front of the stage here, that God cannot be involved in, that God cannot answer.

If you've been up before and nothing seems to have happened so far, persist. Come again and again until there is absolute breakthrough underneath and the need is met. Just remember there's no need too small, no need too great. Give God the opportunity to be glorified through answered prayer.

**Ben:** Thanks. So at the end of each of our services, some people will stand up at the front here, and we'll invite you to come forward at the close of the service and to receive prayer from a team, and maybe that's a familiar phrase. We believe, no, we've *seen* God work in really powerful ways in that space. And so if you've never come forward to receive prayer after service, I just want to put that invite before you, to come forward and to do that. Our prayer team met together last weekend, just raring and so keen and excited for what God is going to do in that space.

So that's one of the really intentional spaces where we see God moving through the prayers of his people here. We also have two other spaces. One of those spaces is prayer appointments. And so these happen throughout the course of the week, where a group of our prayer people, our intercessors, meet up with a person and pray for that person (or people) into specific needs or specific areas of their life. And now the invitation is, if you actually really would want a prayer appointment, come and have a conversation with a pastoral team member, or you can fill it out on our response cards. There's also a spot for you to do that.

And the final one, which a lot of our church family are actually a part of, is our email prayer chain. We send out email updates throughout the course of the week. And they have prayer requests from individuals in our church community. And so if you ever have a need in your life that you actually would love people in this church to be praying into, just share it with the pastoral team, and we will then share it with the church and the prayer chain. And we will be praying for you in that.

So the invitation is, if you have something you would love prayer for from the prayer chain, share that with the pastoral team and we'll share it. But also on the flip side, we are all actually able to pray. So if you want to be a part of the prayer chain, if you want to receive those emails and then be praying for those people, then actually come and have a conversation, we'd love for you to be a part of that as well.

So we're really conscious of these things happen behind the scenes, and we don't want them to be ignored or diminished or not found out about because they're just behind the scenes. We want these to be things that people lean into. We believe God moves powerfully through prayer, so why don't I pray as our band comes back up and then we'll sing another song.

So, heavenly father, as we as we gather in your name, as with every single time, Lord, that we thank you that your presence is among us and dwells in every believer. And Lord, we thank you for the redeeming and the restoring and the healing work that you are doing in this place and in our lives. And Lord, as we continue to bring ourselves before you, we are conscious of our brokenness and our imperfection, and also conscious of the reality of life.

There are times that are trying, there are times that are hard, and Lord, we pray that in those seasons we would lean on you first. Would you be the one who we run to in times of joy and thanksgiving? Lord, would you be the one who receives all of our praise? We give you the glory in Jesus' name, amen.

## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** Jesus Messiah by Chris Tomlin

## **Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-14 & 13:8 (NIV UK)**

*1 Corinthians 12: 4-14: There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.*

*7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.[b] 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

*12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptised by[c] one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.*

*1 Corinthians 13: 8: Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

## **Sermon: At The Table We Find Restoration** *Speaker: Reuben*

Good morning. For those of you who don't me, I'm Reuben, and welcome to PBC. And a big, warm welcome to those who are joining us online, it's great to meet people that are just tuning in. Some people have tuned in for six months before they actually rock up, and it's really special.

I just want to talk about the theme that we've been talking about this year, about being at the table. We started in March, talking about being at the table with Jesus. And, in the last two weeks, we've been talking about being at the table with each other. 2 weeks ago, Colleen shared about our identities and how we belong unconditionally at the table, because God has made us his children. We belong. And last week, Steve spoke about following the example of Jesus, like following his example of having the posture of a servant, how he acted in humility, in dependence and in faithfulness.

And this morning, I'd just like to talk about the posture of seeing each other as we sit at the table. Before that, I'd just like you to watch a really short video.

**Video Audio:** *An event seen from one point of view gives one impression, and seen from another point of view, it gives quite a different impression. But it's only when you get the whole picture you can fully understand what's going on.*

So, for the benefit of those who may not have been able to see that as clearly, who was the person that the video started with? This was from 1986 and this was an advertisement from the Guardian newspaper in the UK. The person was a skinhead. So, essentially, you could say the person featured was a rough person. And the first scene shows him running towards a man rather aggressively. And when you look at the next angle, it really looks like he's going to push him.

But in the third frame, you see that he was pushing him out of danger. And I just want you to remember that as we talk about seeing each other as we sit at the table with each other, do not assume anything until you've got perspective. And so I want to share this morning about the most excellent way to see each other.

And so I'm going to introduce you to Quentin the alien from outer space. So Quentin has just got saved. He's been reading the Bible with, you know, someone at PBC. Let's not go into the theology of that, okay? This is just an example. And he wants to really become part of the PBC family. You know, he's desperate, but he's absolutely clueless about church. What is he supposed to do during worship? Any clues? Close your eyes, raise your hands? Sing as if you know the song, even if it's a new song, right? Must you close your eyes when you pray? How do you know that? Who told you? If he notices a newcomer in the foyer, what should he do? Well, welcome them. Who told you that? If his whole family is sick, what could he do? Ask for prayer. And if he lets people know, like someone could actually cook a meal for him.

So the question was, how did you know all these answer? Did someone tell you? And I think part of the answer is that we have culture in this church, whether or not we know it. We often talk about 'talking to a fish.' And if you ask the fish, 'how's the water?', the fish goes, 'what's water?' Right. It's something that's invisible. It's something around us. But I want to remind us that it's forming us. It's shaping us. Things that we don't even realise. Things that we don't necessarily identify. It is forming us in our culture.

And in this season, we really want to pay close attention to culture because, as you know, God's been doing amazing things in people's lives. We've had people walk into church saying, "God has been talking to me. What do I do now? I don't have a church background." Almost alien, right? This culture can be quite alien. So we want to be intentional as we've noticed that the numbers are increasing. We're going to see an increase in diversity in people. And when you have more people in the room, it can feel less personal.

In really large churches, you can slip in and slip out and no one will know. And we don't want to ever lose that in this church. So, it's really important to start identifying things about our culture that we really want to grow. And maybe things that we might want to do a bit less of so that we maintain the family.

And I also want to remind us that we are not simply about resisting the culture of today, but instead we need to look a bit higher, we need to look above, and we need to look at what God says about what is good. Have you heard the analogy? If you aim for the moon, you might hit an eagle. Have you heard that one? Okay, so anyway, I just want us to look as high as we can to get God's perspective on a beautiful picture of culture.

And so what, was read earlier was from 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 13. 1 Corinthians 13 is really famous and we're going to read these verses together. *"Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It does not dishonour others. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."*

Can we demonstrate love in this way? Can this be our culture? I truly believe that when we choose love as our highest goal, God will bless us with the gifts that we need across anything that we face. And I used to read both chapter 12 and chapter 13, as if just choose love, love is so much more important, as if love and gifts were opposites.

But what I would like to suggest is that gifts need to operate in love, because we need all the help that we can get to face very complex times. And so, we're going to look at 1 Corinthians 12 first, just to understand what was going on. Why was Paul writing about these topics? I'll share four things about 1 Corinthians 12.

The first is that many of the early believers, they were really impressed by powerful public spiritual gifts, and many came from pagan backgrounds. So you'd be observing people who just had words of knowledge, people who knew what was happening without anyone telling them. There were miracles, healings, prophecy. There were apostles, teachers and prophets. It was all really impressive.

But what I want to remind us is that having a gift is not a measure of spiritual maturity. It's not just a character and it's not an expression of your personality. Having a gift is not your identity. It's a gift for the common good and to really serve others. So if I impress you in the sermon today, please realise that that's not a measure of my spiritual maturity.

But there is a little bit of a mindset today that the most popular preachers in the church, the most popular personalities in the world, they exert greater influence because we start to believe they've got it all together. And I assure you, it doesn't work that way. So we have a celebrity culture today.

And one of the dangers of that is that when people have a big platform, they can choose what they want to show you. And you know that they're really good people. And a word that's overused is authenticity. It goes around on social media, in the videos that we watch, videos designed to make you cry and feel something, and when people just start giving money on video. Have you seen those? They just start giving hundreds and thousands of dollars away on the street. Is that authentic? Right. They're making money from your views. I have a Facebook version of my life too. How come my kids are always smiling in my Facebook photos? Because you haven't seen the 97 photos of them crying and trying to get out of the frame and not wanting to take a photo.

So it's pretty superficial, but I think something I've struggled with is that I've stood at the front of a church for a big part of my life, and people who hold a mic are often regarded as more together, more holy. And that's absolutely not true. We are all equal and we face the same challenges. So I just hope to put it out there that, you know, standing here does not elevate you, and that it should also not deter you from using your gifts to glorify God.

So let's talk about assumptions. *(A photo of an average-dressed family with hiking backpacks is shown on screen)*. Who do you see? Who are they? Are they related? You would assume that, but let's not assume anything. When I used to train people in the airline industry, I once saw a family like in the photo shown walk into the first class suites, which would be \$10,000 to \$20,000 per plane ticket.

If a family like this was dressed poorly, they could still have a lot of, money, and if they dressed very well, they may not have any money. So it's not about money. Just don't assume based on what you see. The same thing happens when we see someone walk into church. If they walk in alone. Have they left family at home? Is their family sick? We just don't know.



We need to connect with people, but very much like a lifeguard, you know, in a very busy place. As this church gets busier, we need to train our eyes to look out for those who are silently drowning. How long does it take to drown? A child can drown in less than 20 seconds in a few centimetres of water. And I feel like in our hearts, in the same way, there could be people who are really struggling around us. We need to really train our eyes to see, but don't assume right?

On the other hand, from the people who could be invisible, there are people who really stand out a lot. I think one of the observations in Sydney is that there has been a lot of rejection, whether it's within a family or an organisation. And sometimes people learn in life that in order to get attention, because of all the rejection, they have to act up or do things to get our attention. And so I believe there are other people who are gifted in dealing with and loving these people. Well, can you see how we need gifts to work with people like that? And so I want to just want to say, to repeat, that one of the main indicators of spiritual maturity is love. It's not your gifts. It really comes down to love.

So the second thing in 1 Corinthians 12 is that there are many different gifts, many different forms of service, many different paths that people go through to connect with God. Many, many different manifestations of the Holy Spirit for the common good. But we are all part of the same body. There are many parts of the body, right? There are many gifts, different kinds of service, different ways that God works in us. And regardless of all of this, we are one body. We are the body of Christ. Even if you feel that someone else is not right, God has made us all different on purpose.

In verse 17, this is what I think of when it says if the whole body were an eye, we might not be able to hear so well. But to go further with that, sometimes we think that unity looks like we need to all talk the same, dress the same. If I were to write a song and I made all the notes the same, how would the song sound, if they're all identical? In music, we rely on lower notes to keep the structure and to keep the beat. The middle notes give us repetition and harmonies that just hold a song together, like glue. And the high notes, they pierce the ceilings of our imagination and they make us feel emotions. So if you see a musical note that's different to you, remember that they are really important too. Because as a body, we really need one another. So much to be said about that.

And the third thing that we see in 1 Corinthians 12 is that even the parts that are less honourable, we honour, we treat them specially because we are equal. It really goes against the culture of today, of 'what's in it for me.' I just want to describe relationships, right? So we've got 'A' on one side and we've got 'B'. If you have a mathematical or maybe an engineering brain, the most straightforward way to get from A to B is to draw a straight line. Have you ever been in a relationship?

*An image is shown on screen of a long, winding and roundabout line from A to B, circling around a few extra text symbols.* This describes a lot of life, right? It could be education, could be your character. I'm just saying that it's not a straight line. It's wildly inefficient. Are there people who value efficiency around here? Some of the engineers in the room? I'm not sorry. I've got to break it to you, but that's

how it happens. Relationships are wildly, wildly inefficient. And this is what we're going into. But people will feel seen when we when we listen to them and when we give them time, because a house that's built on love will always be full.

Here's another shout out to the Park Ministry who serve the homeless in Parramatta. Every Sunday we serve those who are overlooked in our society, or even in our own foyer. I love watching a few people who will always spot newcomers and just give them time. Let's keep on doing that if you're new, you're alien to this place, and you want to make this your family.

That's what we do here. We look out for those who are new, and we invite them in. I also love how children are welcome and honoured in this church. My kids now love coming to the evening service because they feel so accepted and loved by people much older than them. It's just amazing. And so you remember how Jesus asked us to have faith like a child to come to him? Or let the little children come to him? That's what it's about.

And the last point, from 1 Corinthians 12, is that we should have equal concern for one another. If one part suffers, all suffer because there should be no division in the body. In verse 25, it says that we rejoice together, we suffer together, because we are the body of Christ. If another person goes through a crisis, we hurt for them. If another church goes through a crisis, we hurt for them too. And if people do well, we celebrate with them. If another church really has a big win and they do really well, we celebrate too. And so one of the values I've observed at PBC is that we do not speak poorly of other churches or movements because we are part of the same body of Christ. So let's keep that up.

It's interesting because, you know, I've been here 2 years and I'm still finding the words for invisible things, and those are some of the reflections. And so more importantly, how do we bridge the gap of the culture that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 13 in the most excellent way? So I've just got three things about the most excellent way.

And the first thing is that is something that anyone and everyone can do. We can choose to love through our actions. Invite someone for a meal, walk across the room, break that comfort zone that you're in, get involved with Hospitality Sundays (that's a 10:45 thing that's happening next week). But why not just invite someone to your house, get involved in serving others on rosters ready for the next term? If you see a need, be the answer, right? You are the answer. You are the answer to some of the problems that we see.

The next thing is about empathy. Do you guys know what empathy is? "Your pain in my heart." That's a brilliant description. It's also been described as stepping in the shoes of someone else, stepping in their moccasins and walking many miles in them until you feel what they feel and to see what they see, what can be learned. If that does not come naturally to you, you can learn it. And on the other hand, if you have too much of it, you need to tone it down and not feel every burden.

And that leads me to the second thing that we can do. We need the Holy Spirit. We need to be filled. If not, you're going to be rushing to every fire to put it out. If you've got too much empathy in your heart, you're going to burn out. You have to be led by the spirit. It's non-negotiable. If you are in Christ, you are a new creation and we have access. We are filled with the Holy Spirit. It is not a competition of good works. And how do we be filled with the Holy Spirit? In John 15 it says we abide in him. We are one with him. So don't burn out.

The third point is that we absolutely need the gifts because we live in a very complex world. There are impossible situations. We need wisdom. We need the gift of insight. We need discernment to know what to do in really tricky situations. There's no way we would know what's going on in someone's life. We need the Holy Spirit to lead us, and we need the gifts for that healing. We absolutely do need healing in impossible situations. So I, like I said before, I used to read chapter 12 and 13 separately, as if I chose love over gifts.

But how about we use gifts in love? They are not separate. They are all together. I just want to share something. In 2019 I was driving along in Singapore, and I felt God drop words into my heart. I'm not sure if that's ever happened to you. It bypassed my brain and the words that bypassed my brain were this: 'I want culture more than community.'

And because the words bypassed my brain, I wasn't thinking about it. But immediately there were tears dripping down my cheeks and I slowly started to understand that God cares so much more about how we are shaped and how we are formed by culture. He cares more than the programs or the groups that you could be part of that change us. Community is really important because we sit at the table with each other, but culture is imprinted on your heart.

And if the programs change, if your church changes, if you move to another country, you take that culture with you wherever you go. So don't get me wrong, community is important, but culture is really what God cares about. That's that becomes our identity. It becomes how we know what is upside down and what is true and what is false.

And so I believe that our church is really coming into a time of unprecedented unity, even as we grow in numbers and diversity. But we need to keep an eye on the culture. It's not just this invisible thing of how people know what to do without being told, and we need all the help we can get. We need to choose love. We need to be filled with the spirit. And we do need gifts that operate out of love. And so I believe that, to really bring it together. When we choose love as our highest goal, God really will bless us with all the gifts we need to see each other in the way that he sees us, and to really let people be seen for who they are.

For the past two nights, God's been giving me this picture of someone who has actually managed to escape and walk away from a very challenging circumstance that is even linked to crime. I know this is pretty out there, but I feel that God wants to minister to you this morning. So we're going to have

a prayer team at the end of the service, out the front. And if that's you, do come forward. But for everyone else, if you have difficulty seeing other people or if you yourself feel not seen, if you feel invisible, or lonely in this place, I just really want to invite you all at the end to come forward, because I know that God is doing something powerful, something transformative that's beyond our own abilities. This is the season, and we really want to do it.

Can I pray for us? Father, our hearts are yours. We truly desire to reflect the perfect love that you are in our community, that lives will be transformed as we are led by your spirit. Won't you help us, Lord, as we are vulnerable, as we put ourselves out there out of love and not out of pride?

Lord, enable and empower us to be the light, to be the salt, and really to be your hands and feet as you empower us in ways beyond our wildest dreams. Lord, that we will really bring you glory because you deserve all the glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Worship Singing**

**Song:** This Is Our God Reuben Morgan

## **Post-Worship Prayer** *Speaker: Stephen Bates*

So, father, by the spirit would you enable us to live in such a way that brings glory to you? We just ask that again. You would fill us with your Holy Spirit and allow him to shape us into the likeness of Jesus Christ? Lord, as you do that in our lives, would you also continue to be at work in us as your body here at Parramatta Baptist Church, seeking to build and to maintain a culture that honours you, a culture of love, of encouragement. To be a place where we see one another and not step over them, but reach out in kindness and generosity.

Father, we want to be a place where people experience just a taste of your goodness and your grace, and come to a knowledge of your love for them. So, father, in everything that we do, from the smallest to the largest of tasks, the smallest and the largest of decisions, may we do so with that gracious love that you've given to us. And for your glory, Lord, we ask this. Amen.

## **Conclusion** *Speaker: Stephen Bates*

As Reuben has said and has been said before, I welcome you to come and receive prayer. There are a number of people at the front, and we'd love to pray for you. Feel free to continue the conversation over here in the auditorium at over morning tea. Just continue to encourage with one another.

**Online Outro** *Speaker: Kathy Bates*

Hey, thank you for joining us online today. We pray that you have been blessed and encouraged. And if there is something from today that you would like us to pray into with you, don't hesitate to let us know.

If we haven't met you, we'd love to hear from you. And you also welcome to come and join us in person as well. To know more about our church, please go to our church website and you can also find more details about who we are through our newsletter. And you can subscribe to that through our website as well.

God bless you and may you have a great week.

*\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*