



who we are.

SERIES: WHO WE ARE – CHURCH VALUES

WEEK 2: BELONGING

SPEAKER: PASTOR CRAIG VERNALL

SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Craig shared an honest and hopeful message about the value of belonging in the church community. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 2, he reminded us that Christian faith is meant to be lived together, not as consumers or spectators, but as contributors—a body made up of many parts.

Belonging starts with God—through Christ we are brought near, made citizens of God’s Kingdom, and members of His household. But belonging also takes courage: to show up, to be vulnerable, and to invest in relationships. Craig reminded us that church is a gathering of imperfect people—not a perfect program, but a grace-filled community where transformation happens as we connect and grow together.

OPENING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for calling us into Your family. As we gather today, help us reflect on what it means to belong—not just to a church, but to You and to one another. Grow our desire to be part of the body You are building. Amen.

ICEBREAKER

Can you remember a time when you felt like you didn’t belong? What helped you eventually feel included—or what would have helped?

DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

1. BELONGING: DONE WITH, NOT TO OR FOR YOU

- Pastor Craig said faith can’t be done to you or for you—it must be done with you. What do you think he meant by that?
- Why do you think some people prefer to remain on the sidelines of church life rather than engage in community? What do you think holds people back from connecting more deeply in church?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

2. BODY OF CHRIST: ALL PARTS MATTER

- Paul uses the metaphor of a body to describe the church. What stands out to you in that image?
- Have you ever felt like a part of the body that didn't matter—or that someone else didn't? What shifted your perspective?
- How does understanding ourselves as interconnected parts of a body affect the way we treat one another?

3. BEING BROUGHT NEAR BY GRACE

- Read Ephesians 2:13–22. What does this passage say about the kind of belonging Jesus invites us into?
- What did Paul say we should remember? Why do you think Paul wanted his audience, and us today, to remember our former alienation from citizenship in God's kingdom?
- Craig said, "God says, 'I love you, and there's nothing you can do about it—except respond.'" What does it look like to respond to that kind of grace?

4. RISKING BELONGING

Craig asked the question of "Where is your third place of belonging?" The first place is home, ideally a safe and nurturing environment with family. Our second place would be our workplace or other spaces that you occupy like school, neighbourhoods etc. But for a Christ follower it would be, could be, and should be a church – a place where you have come to belong, your spiritual home. But often-times that third place gets squeezed out with other things like social groups, sports teams, pleasures, busyness etc.

- What group of people do you feel the strongest sense of community with? What is it about that group that makes you feel so comfortable?
- What "step forward" might God be prompting you to take in terms of belonging to your third place – your church community?
- What are some small but meaningful ways we can help others feel seen and included in our church community?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Belonging is initiated by God's grace—but it grows through intentional connection.
- We are all essential parts of the body of Christ—no one is unnecessary.
- Church is not about perfection, but about people growing in grace together.
- Belonging takes risk and participation, not passive attendance.

APPLICATION FOR THE WEEK

- Reflect: Where in your life are you showing up, but not truly connecting?
- Pray: Ask God to deepen your sense of belonging and show you where you can help others feel included.
- Act: Make a deliberate effort this week—invite someone for a coffee, say hello to a new face, or commit to being present in your group.
- Challenge: If you're not in a Life Group or ministry team, ask God whether it's time to take that step into deeper connection.

PRAYER & CLOSING

- Thank God for adopting you into His family through Christ.
- Pray for courage to be known, loved, and connected in community.
- Ask that your group would be a place where people feel safe, welcomed, and supported as they grow in Christ.