

So, our visitors from Arizona have gone – High 41, low 28
Talk to some of the people who were involved in their visit and see how it went.
Etta, Jan and Kenny

Raw is an interesting word
when used of talent it can mean not quite ready, or full of potential – depending on
your perspective.

Raw vegetables are either hard and underdone or healthy, depending on your
perspective.

Usually it's not a good word: raw nerves, raw skin

One of the things I was reminded of this week was that we live in a world of raw
human need and it's all around us – people struggling with addiction; domestic
violence and abuse; poverty; loneliness.

Where will they find help?

With that raw human need touching us every day

The church can scarcely afford business as usual

In practice many traditional churches view their mission

As holding Sunday services

Satisfying the members and doing a little good here & there

Such churches are on the way out

Within a few years they will be dinosaurs

Not because their doctrine is bad but because they lost their mission

Only churches serious about rescuing the hurting will survive and make a
difference...

I dream of a church like that. I dream of a healing fellowship where the
raw/broken/beaten/ and hurt can be healed and restored. I dream of a place where the
discouraged can be lifted up – a place where people looking for love, can find the
unconditional love and grace of God. And I see that we're learning to do that –
people are being fed, and accepted, and loved

Video clip – Welcome to church

Someone told me that those of you who are a bit older think the congregation is really
only for young people and I'm sorry if that's an impression you have formed or that
has been given. I don't believe it's true. For me this church is for anyone and
everyone – and the truth is that the more you put in the more you get back. We've
heard how those who were involved with the Americans were blessed – note the
words were involved. I suspect that if you're sitting here today saying 'I don't get it.
I don't know why they came.' It's because you didn't get involved. You didn't
come to any of the things that were on and you didn't get involved – you missed out
on the stories and the sharing – you missed out on the blessing of Christian
fellowship.

John is writing to churches that are struggling with false teaching about Jesus and he wants to reassure them. The second half of ch 1 and the first half of ch 2 is where he sets out his position that the credibility of the message cannot be separated from the lives of those who proclaim that message. That lifestyle includes: walking in the light; confessing sin; growing in holiness; keeping God's commandments; loving one another; and, hating the things of the world. He says in v3 what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may have fellowship along with us. That's what we have been doing over these last few days – sharing what we have experienced of God in our lives and learning what God has been doing for them. We have been sharing in fellowship through the common bond of faith in Christ.

Each year we give our different reports of the congregation to Presbytery and it's mainly to do with numbers. That's how the C of S chooses to measure everything. That's fine but it's only one way of measuring things. Wouldn't it be something if we had a measurement or a chart that would say this week we were up in abounding love; faith was overflowing; people had given their lives to Jesus. We have increased by seventy percent in fellowship over last week. What if we could measure these things?

How important it is that we sense this aspect of deepening fellowship. Maybe we cannot measure it tangibly, but people know when there is true fellowship. It's not about having a cup of tea together, although that's a fine place to start. It's more about what we talk about over the tea; how we live out faith together; how we restore the broken. Fellowship comes through our shared faith in Christ but also the shared practise of Christian living.