

LOVE. JESUS. SIMPLE.

LOVE. JESUS. SIMPLE. - LOVE THE CHURCH

Community Group Study Guide - Week of August 8, 2021

Introduction

- At Mosaic, LOVE is our motive, JESUS is our message and SIMPLE is our method.
- The sum of Christianity is that we love (God and neighbor) because God has first loved us.
- The question that we're wrestling with in this sermon: If Jesus Christ loved the church with everything he had, so much that he gave his life for her (Ephesians 5:22-27), how much more should we love the church, especially a local body of believers?

The Church is: 1. Gathered

- Gathering/assembling ("ekklesia") as a church is an essential expression of our love for God and thankfulness for what he has done for us in sending Jesus Christ. It is not merely what we do, but who we are.
- What is the universal church? All Christians of all time. Upon repenting of sin and turning in faith to Christ, a person becomes a member of the universal church. Hebrews 12:23.
- Local churches are displays of the universal, spiritual, heavenly church. Scripture assumes this.
- In the Old Testament, we see that God saves a specific people for himself, assembles his people to receive his law with Moses, centralizes worship (sacrifices, festivals, reading of scriptures and musical worship) at the tabernacle in the wilderness and temple in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament (NT), at the day of pentecost, we see the Holy Spirit anoint the apostles and fill them with the Spirit to establish the first local church body. Christ is still building his church and the spiritual forces of evil will not prevail against him/it.
- It's very important to maintain, as Scripture does, that God (Christ) establishes (Acts 20:28) and ends churches (Revelation 2:5).
- The local church is the net expression of Christianity in the period of the NT age. The NT assumes the expectation that all Christians become covenant members of a local church. The NT epistles repeatedly suggest that it was always clear who was "in" and who was "out" of the church family.
- So what is a good definition for a local church? A group of people whom God has saved through the blood of Jesus Christ who covenant together (Acts 2:42-47) for the worship of God (singing of God's word, preaching of God's word and prayer on the Lord's day), and the right practice of the ordinances (baptism and communion) and church membership/discipline.
- The Book of Revelation writes about the return of Jesus Christ for his bride, the church. It ends with a great reception party with the groom and his bride.
- A lot of people want a decapitated Jesus; they want the head, but not the body. 1 Corinthians 11:18 assumes that Christians come together as a church.
- Hebrews 10:19-25: We gather to preach Christ because our hope is in him.
- The NT shows clearly that Christians didn't just worship together, but helped each other fight the good fight of faith in daily life (Matthew 18:15-20). We encourage one another, speak hard truths to one another and engage in church discipline in order to show true love to one another.

The Church is: 2. Family

- In Christianity, individuals matter and so does the whole in the church. God loves his individual sons and daughters, and his family as a whole.
- Christians need to understand the balance between God's love of the individual and the whole. We should avoid spiritual individualism on one extreme (the "I don't need the local church to be Christian" mentality) and institutional Christianity (the "no salvation outside of the local church and its practice of sacrament rituals" mentality of the Roman Catholic church) on the other extreme. Conversion to Christianity is an individual experience that is intended to

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand why and how we love others as Christians

Heart

To trust that showing love in the way that Christ modeled and prescribed is the best way to show our love for God and neighbor.

Hands

To show our love for Christ by loving the local church and laying ourselves down for others in it (and not yet in it).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next **Baptism Seminar** will be held on September 12 after the 11:15am service (~1PM). Meet Pastor Andy in the Temple basement.

Mini Mo and Sunday Operations Teams still need volunteers!

These teams are always in need of new team members. Fill out an online connection card to submit interest in these teams.

We're desperate for volunteers who can **pick up coffee** starting August 22. Email admin@mosaicboston.com.

become a congregational reality.

- Every church needs emotional and volitional love in order to glorify God and function at full strength.
- We don't have a choice over who God chooses as our Christian siblings, and should be careful not to just seek believers who are just like us. We need to love those in the church who are different from us and appreciate the perspective and loving critique that they provide (1 John 3:10).

The church is: 3. Temple, Body, Bride, Flock, Army

- One should look at each of these Biblical categories through the prism of why we exist as a church at Mosaic. At Mosaic, we exist to love Jesus, love those who love Jesus and love those who do not yet love Jesus.
- Church as a Temple (1 Peter 2:4-8, Ephesians 2:19-22): We're a part of a larger collective body/building with responsibility to depend on stones below us and next to us, and serve the stones above us. We love Jesus by fulfilling our appointed role, and are inter-connected and inter-dependent on the stones around us.
- Church as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27): Christ saw himself as the church (Acts 9, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"). How we engage, serve and think about the church is how you engage, serve and think about Christ. We're all gifted differently as different parts of the body, and are dependent on other parts of the body to function at full strength in their specified roles.
- Church as the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-27): Jesus Christ loves the church as a groom loves his bride. He gives all of himself for her salvation, purification and flourishing. We should seek to be a pure bride in the local church and be amazed that he committed himself to us while we were an imperfect bride. We should heed his concern for us when he transforms us and cleanses us by telling us loving, hard words.
- Church as the Flock of Christ (1 Peter 5:1-5): In the church, we're all sheep with Christ as the head shepherd. Good sheep know their shepherds voice, develop a concern for wandering sheep in their flock and invite lost sheep into the flock.
- Church as Army of Christ (Ephesians 3:7-10): By worshipping, loving God and loving others, we wage war with the spiritual forces of evil fighting against us. This is why evil forces and totalitarian regimes always make policies that limit the gathering opportunities of the local church. Our marching orders are to gather with the local church to engage the enemy, and to follow the Great Commission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Ephesians 5:22-27

1. Can someone summarize the main sections of the sermon?
2. What does Ephesians 5:22-27 teach us about Christ's love for the church?
3. What is the difference between the universal church and the local church?
4. What are the essential marks of a local church?
5. Did any points in the sermon help you understand covenantal church membership better?
6. Pastor Jan talked about the need to exercise both emotional and volitional love among the church family. How would you explain these two kinds of love to a person who was new to the church?
7. **Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.** What is new to you or sticks out freshly to you in these verses?
8. Which Biblical category for the church (Temple, Body, Bride, Flock, Army) was most helpful for you to learn about?
9. "At Mosaic, we exist to love Jesus, love those who love Jesus and love those who do not yet love Jesus." In which of these areas do you need to seek improvement?
10. After hearing this sermon, are you inclined to engage the church body at Mosaic, or our CG differently in any way?