

Community Part 1

One Another

Genesis 12:1-3

Memory Verses: Genesis 12:1

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

The community of the local church is extremely important. It is important for a couple of reasons. First, it is the primary vehicle through which the world will know Christ. Second, it is the main way the world sees the love of Christ. Third, if we do not have community with one another in the church then we have no chance of showing community to the world. Over the next four weeks we are going to be looking at our community with one another as a local church body and how we can reclaim our mission to reach the community around us.

Today I want us to begin, as we begin a new year, with a reminder of why we exist as a church. Today I want to remind you of the reason why God has allowed us to be a church here at Stone Creek. And I want to awaken us from the inevitable slumber of apathy and routine that we often fall into in order to help us once again focus our hearts and minds upon the vision and mission to love one another and reach the world with the Gospel. We have been given a purpose. We have been given a mission. We have a vision for carrying out a plan to fulfill this mission. And we need all hands on deck. Otherwise we will simply exist. **We can have a church that simply exists or we can help one another grow into a community of God glorifying transformation!** It's as simple as that. So without further ado, let us look into the reason for our community here at Stone Creek. We exist for one another!

Look with me at a passage this morning that I believe has much to say symbolically and practically about Stone Creek; **Genesis 12:1-3**. Abram was told to go from his country to another land. **After 100 years God told this church to uproot ourselves from Third Avenue, to leave our building, our community, even our name behind, and move to the land that he showed us 25 years ago. We moved with the hope that the church of Stone Creek would be blessed and the name of Stone Creek Church would be made great only in the sense that it would make the name of Christ greater. We re-established ourselves as Stone Creek Church so that we would be a blessing to the community of North Danville / the R&L Smith Area / the Stone Creek Community. And we came here with the hope that God would bless everyone who ever came onto our property, whether through a Sunday morning worship service, an Easter Egg Hunt, a Friends and Family Sunday, or simply to play Soccer. Perhaps through our small church all the families of this area**

would be blessed. Do you see the similarities? Do you see the mission? The main point I want us to focus on this morning is this... **Stone Creek Exists To Glorify God By Being A Blessing To One Another!**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see is that... **We Bless One Another Through Dependence on Christ**. Community means three things. The church community, the global community, and the local community! This week we will address the church community! Look again at **verse 1**. Notice that when Abram left his kindred he wasn't leaving his wife. He was leaving his Father's family! Sarah and his children were clearly his first ministry. They were his first community. If Abraham didn't seek their blessing first he would've been a poor example of a leader. You see, ministry begins at home.

Stone Creek doesn't work if we don't start with the community we have right here. This is why our vision statement begins with us. It states, "Depending on Christ." We, as a local church of Covenant Partners, must depend on Christ. If we don't begin by depending on Christ as a local church community nothing else will matter. First our community is made stronger when we depend on Christ by standing on His Word. We believe the word is the infallible, inerrant, inspired word of God. It has no error and has all we need to live the life Christ has called us to. As a local church community we read the word together as it is. We study the word together as it is. The word of God is the standard of this church and the foundation of all we do. Our community is built upon the word of God!

Secondly, our community is made healthier when we depend upon Christ in prayer. Prayer is the language of faith and when we pray together we hear the heart of God and we connect with the will of God! When we pray together as a local church we will be united in God's design and desire for our church. The more we pray for one another in intercession the more we grow in our love and care for one another. You can't pray for someone and hate them at the same time! Prayer increases love for one another. This is why prayer is our first response and not our last resort!

Third, our community is made more secure when we depend upon Christ in worship! When we live lives of authentic worship with one another we build bonds that cannot be broken. We grow in our love for one another as we grow in our love for Christ together. The more we fight the good fight of obedience together, the more we learn to joyfully obey. A church that finds joy in worship is a church that cannot be defeated.

The point is this... **when we depend upon Christ first, we are equipped to help one another be transformed into the likeness of Christ!** **Stone Creek Exists To Glorify God By Being A Blessing To One Another!**

The second thing we need to recognize today is that **We Bless One Another Through Discipleship**. Our vision statement also ends with our church community in mind. Depending on Christ we will see lives completely transformed. We are a church that is dedicated to seeing lives completely transformed. If you aren't transformed by the teaching of the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in your life then I, to a certain degree, have failed you as your Pastor and Elder. But not just me. We as a church have failed to lift you up in the discipleship process.

We believe that transformation doesn't just simply happen out of thin air. And it doesn't happen best in a lecture format. In fact, transformation happens best in church community! **The local church exists to transform one another into a community who loves Christ as Lord and each other as family!**

The end result of real community discipleship is family! Our hope and prayer is that we would become like family! We would see each other as our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers. That we would live for one another, journey with one another, and bear with one another in every way possible! Only as a family can we truly complete the mission God has for our church. **We need to recognize that if we aren't being transformed through the word, prayer, worship, and intentional discipleship within the local church, we will be worthless in reaching the community outside the local church. When we become a family here, we will be able to reach families out there. When we are transformed here, we can be vessels of transformation out there. It starts with us. Stone Creek Exists To Glorify God By Being A Blessing To One Another!**

Application

The Bible has more than 100 "one anothers" for the local community to see one another transformed by. Here are a few. John 13:14, "you ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:34, "you should love one another just as I have loved you." Romans 12:10, "love one another with brotherly affection." Romans 12:16, "live in harmony with one another." Romans 14:1, "do not pass judgment on one another." Romans 15:7, "welcome one another." Romans 15:14, "instruct one another." 1 Corinthians 7:5, "do not deprive one another." 1 Corinthians 12:25, "care for one another." 1 Corinthians 13:11, "comfort one another, and agree with one another." Galatians 5:13, "serve one another." Galatians 6:1, "bear one another's burdens." Ephesians 4:2, "bear with one another in love." Ephesians 4:32, "be kind to one another, forgiving one another." Ephesians 5:21, "submit to one another."

And there are many more. Hopefully you get the point! The church exists to build up one another in the faith so that we can be transformed and fit for the mission of God! To glorify God with our lives!

Conclusion

I am thankful for Stone Creek Church! We have done this and we will continue to do this. So, in celebration of how we have loved and cared for one another this year, let us **conclude by watching our year in review video for 2023 and see just how God has blessed us this year!**