

Rooted in Community - Pt 1

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I. Overview

A. The last month we have been in a series on the power of the gospel. It's been a powerful time as many have shared how they have had family members and friends who have softened to the gospel. Others have testified of friends and family who have either prayed to receive Jesus for the first time or have rededicated their lives to the Lord.

B. In our services over the last month, we have seen approximately 70 people come forward to get saved or rededicate their lives to the Lord. It's been a special month.

C. We want to maintain our emphasis as a spiritual family on sharing the gospel with others, motivated by love. We never want to lose this emphasis. At the same time, we're going to shift our preaching emphasis to a discipleship focus.

D. The next two months are going to be extremely important for our whole spiritual family. If you are part of GateCity or if you are new here or new in your faith or have recently come back to the Lord, this series is going to be especially helpful for you.

E. We're going to take this next season and talk about what it looks like to be connected to community, and in a month, we will be launching our new small group emphasis: **Rooted**.

II. Introduction

A. God created people to be connected to one another. Consider what God said when He created Adam regarding Adam's community and relational connections:

It is not good that man should be alone...

- We often focus on this passage as a foundation for the marriage relationship and rightly so.
- But there is a broader principle embedded here: humanity itself was created in a relational context.
- The first human was not meant to live in isolation, and neither are we. Even though Adam was in Eden, uninhibited by sin, dwelling in God's presence, life shared with others was still an essential part of God's design for humanity.
- Lives shared through relationship with God and others is at the foundation of what it means to be human. The experience of shared life is at the foundation and core of our existence. It's not just good for us to be connected, it is vital.
- If it is not good for man to be alone, it follows that it is good and right for man to live in relationship with others.

B. We are born physically into a physical family; we are born again into the family of God. We cannot thrive in isolation; we are meant to thrive in community with others.

C. I think it's important to recognize that relationship and connection with others is not a post-fall of man adaptation, it is a pre-fall of man design. Before the church was born, before Jesus went to the cross, all the way before the fall of man, God's design in humanity was relational.

D. This brings us to a foundational idea for evangelism and discipleship: because relationship was God's design from the beginning, it's also the framework for how evangelism and discipleship happens.

- This is why Jesus came as a friend to seek and save the lost.
- And this is why He called twelve guys together to be His disciples and love one another as He had loved them (John 15:12).

E. And so, it follows that spiritual growth primarily takes place in

community not in isolation.

- There are no disciples made as “Lone Rangers.”
- All of the personal interactions afforded by living in close community create the context by which we grow in the Lord the most.

F. I believe Covid set us back and put us into a deeper place of spectator Christianity. We got used to tuning in online and imagining that listening to the Sunday morning message equals living in community and being a disciple, it's just not the case. If you've been on the bench, it's time to get off the bench and get back in the game.

III. In Christ, members of one another

A. With these thoughts in mind, let's consider Paul's explanation regarding spiritual transformation for the believer:

But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory...

—2 Corinthians 3:18

B. We are transformed together and this brings us to a surprising and shocking thought: We are part of one another.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

—Romans 12:5

C. It's a wonderful and confounding idea that we are literally part of one another in Christ. In Christ we are interdependent on one another while each believer is still a distinct person, with unique gifts and personal responsibility. We all carry a shared identity as well as an individual responsibility.

D. Paul expounds on these ideas in 1 Cor 12 and Ephesians 4, describing how we need each other because we are part of one another (1 Cor 12:21, 26) and that

each part requires the other parts so that we can all grow together (Eph 4:16).

IV. Life Together

A. When you take it all in and then objectively look at the scripture you find that

much of our lives as believers is meant to be lived and walked out together. Our sense of independence, mostly born from western mindsets, tends to resist this ideal.

B. Let's consider more fully the biblical basis for all that we are called to do together. Pay close attention to the words, we, ourselves, they, themselves, together, etc....

1. Live Together

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship... breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts."

—Acts 2:42, 46

2. Behold God Together

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed...

—2 Corinthians 3:18

3. Encounter God's Love Together

That you... may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of God's love].

—Ephesians 3:17-18

4. Study the Word Together

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another...

—Colossians 3:16

5. Worship Together

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...

—Ephesians 5:19

6. Pray Together

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer...

—Acts 1:14

7. Serve Together

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another...

—1 Peter 4:10

8. Give Together

No one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own... there was not a needy person among them.

—Acts 4:32, 34-35

9. Evangelize Together

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two...

—Luke 10:1

10. Contend for the Faith Together

Striving side by side for the faith of the gospel

—Philippians 1:27

11. Suffer Together

If one member suffers, all suffer together...

—1 Corinthians 12:26

12. Rejoice Together

...if one member is honored all the members rejoice

—1 Corinthians 12:26