

**Becoming an authentic Jesus community**  
**Made for community (slide)**  
**Luke 10 vs 25-27**

We have been focusing on experience fullness as God intended. We now want to move to God's intended design that we don't go on this journey alone. It was always meant to be done in community. Being part of a healing community is what makes the journey sustainable.

**Genesis 2 vs 18**

**<sup>18</sup>The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (slide)**

We were made to be in community. It's one of our core longings, to belong. In these next few weeks we want to focus on why it's so important to be in community and how to be an authentic Jesus community. Today I want to get to what community relationships I need to ensure a healthy, vibrant, growing spirituality.

**Luke 10 vs 25-29** On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (slide)

Not a good move by this guy...we will get to that

Jesus sums it all up in two commands. "Life in me is vertical and it is horizontal"

**1. Following Christ is vertical and horizontal (slide)**

Vertical vs 27

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'"

I think He means everything and you (any language)? Has He left anything out...heart, soul mind and strength...

Paul's version of the same verse

### **Galatians 2 vs 20**

**<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (slide)**

Is there any wiggle room? Is how we live for Jesus up for negotiation? Its everything. We will work through the meaning of this many times in the future. This is a desired life verse for me and a measure of my journey to maturity. In every context I ask myself, who is alive? Who has Lordship of me? Who makes the decisions? Is it Him or is it me? Make the necessary change.

### **Horizontal**

**'Love your neighbor as yourself.'**

These are the two pieces to life in Him.

So often we measure spirituality by the vertical, yet notice the timing of God's words to Adam.

Adam had not yet sinned. He was in perfect union with God. God still said, **"It is not good for man to be alone."** Life as God intended is incomplete without the horizontal relationships. So, experiencing God is not just about me going to some uninhabited place or my closet to find Him. Many time we define spiritual retreat as going away and being alone and isolated. There is place for that but is it possible to find Him in each other? When I go away with some close brothers and we go deep together, is that any less spiritual? They both play an important role in my spiritual development. As we will see in the coming weeks, I don't possess all the gifts which is why I need to belong to community. There are ways that I can experience God as your exercise your gift. If I am not a part of community I can't experience God in these ways.

We also find Him in each other as we do life together. What name given to describe the church? THE BODY of CHRIST. If I am not in His body, experiencing community, I will not experience all of Him.

Martha from Phillip Yancey

Make today count, ALS, 3 months, love, Reba place, 16 women

## **2. Loving God manifests itself in loving my neighbor (slide)**

It's not possible to love God and not love my neighbor.

### **1 John 4 vs 21**

**Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (slide)**

Loving God----manifests in my relationships with mankind. If I love God I will love my neighbor. It's not possible to say I love God and then treat you with disdain, that makes me out to be a liar. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just get on with loving God?

So, who is my neighbor? Who must I love?

Always dangerous to ask Jesus a question. I would have left it open ended so I had options. Why did he have to ruin it for the rest of us. Jesus tells a story where the Samaritan is the hero. When his Jewish audience hears the term "Samaritan" what are they thinking? Hatred and disdain (half breed mongrels who had compromised their culture and religion through intermarriage and religious practice).

Hurricane – Trump supporter is stuck in their car. A republican rides by why didn't they head the warning, serves them right. A Hilary supporter swims to the car and helps rescue them.

What would happen to the two of them?

Who is your neighbor?

Jesus says "Think of the person in your world (someone near) that you detest or like least and start there...then work backwards. The term love is agape here which means the kind of love that has its origin in God. A motivation for action, a sacrificial love, not the feeling "in love". This is the kind of love has an attitude of benevolence, with no conditions and does not require a reaction. It flows out of the love the I have found in God. All other forms of love require a reaction. This is the story of the Samaritan. I can only AGAPE others when I am first filled with His AGAPE. **"Love one another AS I have loved you" John 13 vs 34 (slide)**

Loving the person I like the least is testimony to my experience of His agape. It's this kind of love that lies at the heart of community life in the Body of Christ and which we want to see experienced here.

Love as you love yourself. We love ourselves without reason and so we love others without reason. The most natural thing is to think of myself first every day and make sure I am being well served and taken care of. **Do to others what you would have them do to you.** It takes an experience of the AGAPE love of Christ to be different.

Can there be such a thing as private faith?

Is it possible for a follower of Jesus to say, "My faith is private"? I pray and do rituals and religious ceremonies. What does He say here...love your neighbor...Make Disciples? What is private about these commands? When I am awestruck what is the first thing I want to do? Tell someone... "You should have seen" "you know what happened today?" Did you see the eclipse? That touchdown? We also need to get a to a place where we agree with Paul in Galatians 2 vs 20. It's no longer I who live. So that means when I love my neighbor who does he see? When I love the stranger who does he see?

Everything about the gospel and our future in heaven is about community. When you are gathered at the throne there will be a lot of people next to you.

### **3. The vulnerability of dependence (slide)**

I would like it to be just the vertical. Far safer...can't it just be me and Jesus? Herein lies the challenge to engage in true community. It's risky (I can get hurt) and takes being vulnerable and yet it is grounded in the unconditional love of God. When I am grounded in His love I develop an unshakable faith.

"love one another as I have love you". It has to start with being grounded in His love.

Trusting Jesus with the unknown and my tomorrows is the key to vulnerability and learning dependence – me with Lynn and others (what if they abuse, what if they let me down, what if they leave me). No matter what happens relationally or circumstantially I know He is with me and will see me through—TRUST. We must be careful not to take that which belongs to God and put it on ourselves. To experience true love and acceptance I have to become vulnerable. BUT we fight it. I want to be self-sufficient and independent to protect myself...sounds great but it makes you alone which is not good. More money higher walls...less money greater community. The world is fast

becoming an interdependent global village whether we like it or not. Harvey---SA taxi price, N Korea –gold price. Global events and decisions effect our daily lives. Natural disasters affect my independent world. Do I live in fear of what might be or trust in Jesus who has my tomorrows? A heart level trust in Jesus helps me to become willing to depend on others and begin to experience the riches of the Body of Christ. I experience Him. This is what a crisis does.

#### 4. Healthy relational spirituality (slide)

I would like to end with a very practical measure of healthy relational spirituality, following Jesus example and the way He did it.

1. **Perfect union** with Father and Spirit - The Father and I are One. I do nothing on my own but only what I see the Father doing. The Spirit. He would go away on His own. In the same way, we are in the Vine where apart from Him we can do nothing. John 15 vs 5
2. **Inner circle** - Many times, we see Jesus focused on a few. Peter was key (on this rock...) He spent quality time with Peter, Discipling him and developing him. Andrew, James and John...transfiguration. He focused on a few and went deeper with them. This is Discipleship for you and me. Matt 28 vs 18-20
3. **Bigger group** – the 12. This was where most of His time and ministry happened. They did life together and became the foundation for a radical church planting movement that would change the world. Smaller interest groups, or focused groups. Sinners, women, tax collectors, Pharisees, Samaritans. Hebrews 10 vs 25 “Don’t give up the habit of meeting together”
4. **The temple.** Jesus was often found at the temple – Mark 11 vs 17 “My Father’s house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”. There was something about the bigger place of worship of the saints. A larger gathering. There is a place for the larger gathering of the saints for worship.
5. **The nations/world.** He spent most of His time with sinners, the sick, the unchurched, the unreached “I didn’t come for those who are well but for those who are sick” Matt 28 vs 19

I need **relationship and community** at all these levels to live out a healthy, vibrant faith

#### Response

Fill out your circle. Be intentional where there are gaps.

Join a community group (slide)

Communion

Offering (slide)