

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

August 21, 2022 "The Unique You: How do I learn more about my divine uniqueness?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing, and you can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. School has started back and we'll be cranking up our fall schedule. Our children's area is expanding, and we've moved check-in into the lobby. We also have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can see all that through our newly upgraded app, and social media sites. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. If you're joining us online, we appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

This is the third Sunday in our series in which we're learning about our uniqueness, and how God has intentionally designed this world to express all of the infiniteness of who he is. We may feel isolated or even 'less than', when we fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to the people around us. But if we can find the purpose in our divine uniqueness, and seek God and his anointing of who we are, then there is this place and purpose we can fulfill that will make our lives meaningful. But it all begins with accepting ourselves and all of who we are. And that is a journey of acceptance and discovery. But...sometimes our uniqueness can feel and maybe even be so unique that we can't seem to find a place to belong. We may make others feel uncomfortable or hesitant to be close to us. We may have personality quirks, or even a lifestyle that just doesn't sit well with other people...especially church people. And even if we come to some understanding and acceptance of who we are, it feels like so many others are just unable to do the same. And so we feel alone. The church has been one of the worst places in not accepting others for who they are, and for this I apologize. I can't speak for every church. But I can acknowledge and say out loud the church has been front and center in its poor treatment of people who are different. And that we need to be front and center in doing the things that would address this very real, and I'll just call it evil, presence within the church.

A quick word before we move into the passage. Because often our uniqueness will make it more difficult to find a community to do life with, we all have a tendency to try to fit in. And basically the understanding of 'fitting in' is that we have to change who we are in order to find a group to accept us. We will adopt the beliefs, mannerisms, dress, language, and more, sacrificing our own divine uniqueness so we can have a group to be a part of. Fitting in is always a compromise of who we really are and we usually discover we don't really belong. Our belonging is conditional and dependent on our ability to keep up with the ever changing definition of what it means to belong. This was a long recap, but we wanted to make sure we understood what it really means to live in our uniqueness.

III Sunday.

Sunday was a shorter message because we wanted to save time for the lunch we had afterwards. This was an important part of growing our understanding of who we are and what to do with it.

The message was a practical look at what different elements make us unique, and how we can do the work to learn more about what makes us...us. We looked at a more inspirational passage than really instructional, as a jumping off point on this journey. So, read **John 10:7-10** and will talk about it a bit before we dive into the elements that make us up.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

What kind of life do you think Jesus was talking about?

What would this kind of life look like specifically for you?

Then there was a discussion about the different elements that make up who we are, and how we can learn about them.

B. Who are you? How are we made?

There are several general categories that if you do the work, will help you learn more about your divine uniqueness. To help you begin to get a basic understanding of giftedness.

1. Personality/Wiring. Who you are. These are your natural defaults of action and beliefs. Introvert. Extrovert. People orientation. Task orientation. Being out front. Being behind the scenes. Leading. Encouraging. It's how others experience you and who you are in multiple situations.

2. Abilities, talents. What you are good at. Early on we can see certain kids have a high functioning ability to do certain things. Organizing. Administration. Sports. Talking to people. Tech. Music. Math. These are abilities that come fairly naturally.

3. Passions. What you enjoy finding energy in doing. You may not be overly skilled at these at the moment, but these just feed you. Being around people. Repetitive tasks. Creative spaces. It's with passions, things that energize you, that developing practices to grow an ability work really well.

What are some aspects of each of these that you feel you can describe yourself specifically?

There are tests and inventories that you can take that can help grow your understanding in these.

4. Spiritual Gifts. How can you serve, help others. Lastly, this is where we're going to land today. This divine you of untapped potential and giftedness, that when unleashed, will absolutely change the world. Have you ever seen someone who was a perfect fit for what they were doing? A server at a restaurant, mechanic, beautician, etc. Spiritual giftedness is taking the above three; Personality. Abilities/Talents. Passions. And matching and infusing them with what we call an anointing. Not magic fairy dust. But a surrendering to allowing God to level you up in those three things. You can turn those into a super power.

IV Challenge.

This is the first step of discovering who you really are. Learning what your personality generally tends to be. What you're talented at. What energizes you. And then weaving all those together, and letting God supersize them to do great things. This is what helps us understand and accept our uniqueness. Because we can then see how we can use even the most unusual things about ourselves for good. This will be an action question.

What would it take for you to step out, find a community of faith, to help you begin to understand, and center God in using your unique 'youness' for good?