

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (September 18, 2022)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

This morning we begin a seven-week sermon series asking the question, “Why Church?” Each week we will take seriously the thought that is on many minds, “I connect with God by myself, why do I need church?”

Making a commitment to a church community is not for the timid, especially in our current cultural climate.

For generations church was an acceptable and respectable place to be seen. Even those who did not believe what the church stood for added their names to the membership roles because doing so increased social status and business success. Not anymore.

Today, while a large percentage of Americans still self-identify as Christian, more and more believe the church is unnecessary. Some even see the Christian Church as a hinderance to social progress, hate-filled, a place to be avoided. Those are conclusions reached by those who misunderstand the Church, and God’s intentions for the Church. Is the Church, including Grace of Christ, imperfect? Yes! But the Church, Grace too, is still God’s chosen organism to bring the hope and love of Jesus to a world desperate for real truth, love, compassion, and community.

This series is not an act of desperation. It is not an attempt to beg, badger, or argue, in order to convince people to come back to, or begin to attend, church. It is meant to be an intentional, scripture-based, communication of God’s desire for the church and our part in it. The entire story of God creating us, rescuing us, calling us, into a relationship with Him, is about “we” not “I”. Christian life is contra-American individualism. Christian life is an invitation to community.

Why Church? I Can Know God on My Own (1 Corinthians 2:1-16)

¹“2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers (and sisters), did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

⁶Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this

age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”

¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. In this passage what does Paul (the writer of this letter to the Corinthians) say about human wisdom?
2. How does a person come to understand the things of God?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. Why is Paul concerned about “lofty speech or wisdom”?
4. What does Paul mean by the “hidden wisdom of God”?
5. Discuss, “the natural person does not accept these things.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. What are the qualities you look for in a preacher/teacher?
7. What potential problems are there with preachers and teachers known for their eloquence (lofty words)?
8. How much can you discover about God on your own? How do you know that what you know about God is true? Explain.
9. How would you describe the “Church” to someone? Are you fully committed to God’s Church? Your church? Discuss.

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural, easy, and empowering, part of your day. Prayer is talking to God and hearing Him talk to you. Pray for wisdom and understanding from the Holy Spirit. Pray for the Church. Pray for your church. God will speak to you because He loves you.