

## Think Small – Living Intentionally Together

8.18.22

Hebrews 10:19-25 | Acts 2:42-47

Sunday AM

Have you ever heard the kid's poem, *If I were in charge of the World*, by Judith Voirst – it's a classic! She also wrote, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

*If I were in charge of the world, I'd cancel oatmeal. Monday morning allergy shots. If I were in charge of the world, there'd be brighter nightlights, healthier hamsters, and basketball baskets 48 in. lower. If I were in charge of the world, you wouldn't have lonely, you wouldn't have clean, you wouldn't have bedtimes, or don't punch your sister, you wouldn't have sisters. If I were in charge of the world, a chocolate sundae w/ whipped cream and nuts would be a vegetable, all 007 movies would be rated G, and a person who sometimes forgot to brush. And sometimes forgot to flush, would still be in charge of the world.*

**I wonder**... If you were in charge of the world, what would you want for? I'd want for no child to ever have a special need. I'd want for every person to receive the grace of God. I want for GT to beat UGA in every sport, every year. And I'd want to change people's involvement/opinions of the church?

If you're just joining us, we're in a series entitled, *Think Smaller*. *Think Smaller* is the year-2 initiative of our *Aim Higher, Dream Bigger* focus as a church to be all that we can be for the glory of God.

To *Think Smaller* is a call to live **intentionally relational** in every essential relationship in our lives – our relationship w/ God, our families, our church, and the world around us. It's an invitation to reprioritize connection w/ people. To forgo the hustle/bustle of life that tears us away from others to zoom in, lean into, and dig deeper into the people our lives intersect daily.

In week 1, we discussed how to live *intentionally relational* w/ God and how it's the springboard to all other relationships. Last week, using the acrostic T.I.M.E., we talked about how to live *intentionally relational* in our homes. Today, I want to talk about the importance of living *intentionally relational* in our spiritual relationships w/ other believers.

*Since we have the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God w/ a sincere heart and w/ the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed w/ pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* Hebrews 10:19-24

In this text, believers are encouraged to do (3) things.

- 1 – Believers are to **DRAW** Near to God
- 2 – Believers are to **HOLD** Unswervingly to Hope
- 3 – Believers are to **SPUR** One Another Along

To **draw near** to God refers to our daily responsibility to live submitted under God. B/c of the finished work of Christ that lives in us thru the ministry of the H.S., we're enabled to live in pursuit of God's will for our lives – yet not in our ability, but only thru Christ in us. Meaning – God's calling is that we *walk in the Spirit*, instead of in our flesh. Yet to do this requires we live in the active pursuit of surrender w/ God's Word/will.

*W/out getting too deep into the weeds of soteriology* – this means that out of the transaction of salvation where we were saved by grace thru faith – where God changed our identity from lost to found, and from sinner to saint – God has called us to live out our faith responsibly thru our trust/obedience to His leading.

Next, out of our intimacy w/ God, He challenges us to *hold unswervingly to this hope we profess*. Hope that is based on the veracity of Jesus' work of the cross, hope based on the promise of His presence w/ us in this life, and hope in the promise of His return.

And finally, we're called to the necessity of spurring one another along in the faith thru a genuine love for one another – that is, we're called to true *koinonia*.

**koinonia** – is intimate, transparent communion w/ other believers where each person does all w/in their ability to help each other walk in the Spirit and thrive in honoring God in every area of their lives.

The key to koinonia is this calling to *spur one another* along in the faith. To spur means to stimulate, incite, or sharpen. IOW – we need one another to encourage and motivate us to the way, Word, and will of God. I'm to be in the business of your life – and you in mine – to help each other thrive w/ God.

Sadly though – the avg. church is too much like a bag of marbles – where we scratch against one another and make a little noise, yet we seldom affect each other. Yet the church should be more like a bag of grapes that meshes together, producing a sweet-tasting juice b/c of our genuine love/interaction w/ one another. *unknown*

I think to fully appreciate this calling/responsibility, we need to appreciate the origin of the church.

On the day of Pentecost, when all heaven broke loose and the H.S. descended empowering the (12) – Acts 2 tells us that Peter began to speak boldly the truth of Jesus – and 3,000+ people put their faith in Christ unto salvation – and this event **initiated the church**.

In Acts 2:42-47, we find the (4) foundational essentials of the church needed to spur each other along.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled w/ awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together w/ glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47*

I We must be Devoted to **SCRIPTURE**

**apostle's teachings** – referring to God-inspired truth. They were committed to knowing, living, and sharing God's Truth. They were more than hearers, they were doers. Like newborn babies, they were hungry for truth – to know God and to know His will.

The 1<sup>st</sup> way we spur one another along is by being in the Word together – reading it, studying it, discussing it, and living it – b/c God's Word is God's will.

**SEE** – the Bible is our true north. It's God's primary voice in our lives. It's a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths that's to be hidden in our hearts. If I can help you and you can help me to know it and live it – then we have done each other the greatest of favors.

**SEE** – the truth about the Bible is that it wasn't given to us to win at a game of Bible Trivia – it was given to us to know God, discover His will, and help us to navigate this life under His guidance and leading.

*My brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, b/c human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do. James 1:19-25*

## II We must be Devoted to **FELLOWSHIP**

**fellowship** (*koinonia*) this is more than popcorn, parties, pizza, and picnics. This is sharing life and allowing other believers to pour into you, encourage you, and hold you accountable for serving God.

**SEE** – we have a duty/responsibility to be relationally and spiritually concerned w/ each other's well-being.

This means the church is *more than a gathering* – and it's certainly more than a worship service/sermon – it's a community of faith and a spiritual family where we should be deriving our primary spiritual relationships.

**Let me say this another way** – if you're a follower of Jesus, it's critical your closest friendships (the people you seek their counsel/influence) are also seeking and moving w/ God as you are. Point – *our closest relationships matter*. Biblically speaking, God intends for our relationships to come from our church family.

*Bad company corrupts good morals – 1 Cr. 15:33*

## III We must be Devoted to **EXAMINATION**

**breaking bread** – a reference to communion

In communion, *together*, we're remembering God's love expressed thru the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ – so, it's a time to reflect/examine ourselves to make sure we're right w/ God.

## IV We must be Devoted to **PRAYING** Together

As believers, prayer is about individually and together being in desperate pursuit of knowing/following God.

*There's much that can be said about prayer* – but suffice to say, true prayer begins w/ seeking God's will, hearing His voice, and following His leading.

**Truthfully**, if in praying together we can genuinely discover God's heart, will, and leading – then there are few ways we can be of more encouragement in spurring one another along than when we genuinely pray w/ and for each other.

**The reason is simple** – it's b/c there's nothing more compassionate and intimate than earnestly interceding w/ and for another person. There's nothing more powerful than genuinely seeking the Lord's heart/will. It requires getting personal – and getting real! And it requires humbling ourselves before the Lord.

**Don't Miss** – to spur each other along requires that we handle God's Word together, spend time together, hold each other accountable, and pray together – and in doing so, God joins us together. He unites our hearts w/ His heart – and for His mission and will.

There was a blacksmith w/ (2) pieces of iron he wanted to join together. At first, he took them as they were, cold/hard, placed them on the anvil, and began w/ all his might hammering them, yet they never united. Then he recalled what he'd learned as an apprentice, so, he took the (2) iron pieces, thrust them into the fire, took them out red-hot, laid the one upon the other, and by one or two hammer blows – the two became one.

**Folks** – God's heart is that our lives our knit together w/ each other as we walk thru the fires of life together. Yet this isn't done in bulk but life2life. **Grow Groups**