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Making the goodness,
glory, and grace of Christ
visible through the church

“Jesus did not design the church to be a place where our dreams come true. Actually, it’s where many of our dreams are disappointed and die. And this is more of a grace to us than we likely realize, because our dreams are often much more selfish than we discern. Our personal expectations easily become tyrants to everyone else, because everyone else fails to meet them. When we are more focused on how others’ failings and foibles obstruct the ideal community we want to pursue than we are on serving those others and pursuing their good and joy, our expectations can kill love, which impedes the real mission.

Jesus designed the church to be a place where love comes true, where we lay our preferences aside out of deference to others. It is meant to be a living laboratory of love, a place where there are so many opportunities, big and small, to lay down our lives for each other that the love of Christ becomes a public spectacle. That's why when it comes to the church in this age, the picture of community we should have in our minds is not some utopian harmony, but Golgotha. In living life together, we die every day. We lay down our lives for each other.”

— Jon Bloom, Desiring God Ministries

a
culture of
holiness &
humility

Philippians 2:1-16

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

— vv 5-11

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who...

— vv 1-6

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

— vv 12-16

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

— Matthew 5:14-16

“When men look for a bride, they often look for a beauty queen. But Christ chose the dirty one who needed his cleansing. The Son of God crossed the tracks to the wrong side of town, where we all live, to find his bride. We brought into the relationship our messy backgrounds, our ongoing problems, and our shame. But we can face all that now because of what he brought into the relationship: cleansing enough for all our dirty guilt...

...At conversion, what did we do? We gave ourselves to him. We put ourselves in his arms. We surrendered to his love. And we started changing by his power. But as in any healthy marriage, we are to give ourselves to him over and over again. We gave ourselves to him once, and we give ourselves to him constantly, in trust and surrender, moment by moment. Over time, then, he faithfully brings forth his fruit through us. His holiness starts to show only by his miraculous power in our weakness and corruption. Then people can see his beauty in the world today — in churches graced with holiness.”

— Ray Ortlund, The Gospel

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