



BATTLEGROUND
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Leader Guide
Sunday, January 20, 2019

One in Christ

Sermon Text: Ephesians 2:11-22

Study Text: Philippians 2:12-18

Sermon Recap: In this portion of Ephesians, Paul continues to develop the idea that we are together as the Church *in Christ*. This is the foundation and bedrock of genuine gospel community. In these verses, Paul outlines for us what was true before our salvation: that we were strangers and aliens to the commonwealth of God's covenant promises. He tells us what happened in the process of our salvation: that Christ abolished the Law and commandments by standing in our place and taking on our sin, taking it to the cross, dying, and rising from the dead. And Paul tells us what is true now because of our salvation: We are in perfect fellowship with God and the saints of the household of God; in other words, we have been given good and right fellowship with the Church through the gospel. We should, therefore, have this mind and heart concerning our fellow church members: "We are each other's, both now and forever."

Sermon Connection: In Philippians 2:12-18, we follow along with Paul's argument from last week. In Phil. 2:1-11, Paul developed the idea of being *in Christ*, and now, he goes on to apply this idea more specifically to gospel community. We must keep in mind that Philippians is a letter to the community of saints, and therefore must be read in that communal context. Paul says to "...*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...*," and to "*Do all things without grumbling or disputing...*," and other such things. These are statements of encouragement and promise for the community of God. Paul is explaining how our being *in Christ* binds us *to* one another and cultivates a deep and abiding love *for* one another.

Lesson Plan

Lesson Goal: To see that true gospel community is found in "**one-anothering**." By one-anothering, we mean discipleship and love among the members of the Church of God

Lesson Points:

Point 1: Working Out Our Salvation (vv. 12-13)

Point 2: The Fruit of Matured Salvation (vv. 14-18)

The Context: In this portion of Paul's letter to the Philippians, having just explained the great humility of Jesus for the sake of the Church, Paul now seeks to apply it to the life of the Church. He desires that we see Christ, not only as our Savior, but also as our great example. He states in 2:5, "*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...*" And having explained what that mindset is, he now applies it.

Transition Statement: Paul is clear that the Christian life is lived in community with other brothers and sisters. As we prepare ourselves for worship and discipleship, we are actually caring for others...

Opening Question: How do you prepare yourself for Sunday mornings? For growth group? How do you prepare yourself to love and serve others throughout your week? Or, if you do not prepare yourself, why?

Point 1 - Working Out Our Salvation (vv. 12-13)

Paul's words in v. 12 remind us that he is writing a letter, and he is not currently with the Philippian church. What should his willingness to write a letter to these people who are no longer physically in his life teach us about discipleship and true community life?

Paul teaches us over and over again, both in word and deed, that discipleship is a lifelong relationship. Paul lived and ministered in Philippi for a time and then moved on to plant more churches. But, he never lost touch with this church (the first he planted in Europe). And, this church never forgot Paul. The letter to the Philippians is a reminder of the deep love and affection that should be present in our discipleship relationships. If we are to truly live in "one-anothering" gospel communities, it must be founded on genuine love for one another.

In the original Greek, the word "you" in v. 12 is a 2nd person plural and more appropriately reads "you all." How does this change the meaning and understanding of the command, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling..."?

We must keep in mind that Paul is writing to a group of people and not an individual. Therefore, the command to work out the salvation of God is a command for the community, not the individual. It might be helpful if we add the alternate translation of "work out" which is "to exercise" or "to prepare." Paul's meaning is this: Gospel communities should work together to love God and to lead each other to love God. They should "one-another;" discipleship and love should be the heartbeat of the true gospel community. Thus, to work out our salvation is to hold fast to it, to cherish it, to hold it high, and to spur one another on to faith, love and good works.

What implications does this understanding of "you all" hold for gospel community?

Such an understanding holds tremendous implications for gospel community. It means that gospel community has a task, and that task is discipleship. I, the individual, can no longer use gospel community for what I want or participate to the level I feel comfortable. This understanding confronts me with a choice: I must embrace the community of God or I must reject it. So many people take a Burger King approach to gospel community in that “they want their way.” Gospel community doesn’t work like that. God is clear on how we are to “one-another.” He is clear about what it means to be a Christian, to be a member of His Church, and to carry out His mission.

Read v. 13 and then re-read 2:5-11 from last week. How does v. 13 help further our understanding of being *in Christ together*?

Again, our understanding of gospel community must rest on the foundation of God. Gospel community exists because of God. It is His creation, and it is He Who sustains it. If we are to live within God’s gospel community, honoring and glorifying Him, finding deep and fulfilling satisfaction, we must understand the truth of v. 13, “...for it is God Who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” Just as Jesus was obedient to the will of God, so we too are called to obedience. And just as Jesus found infinite blessing and honor in His obedience, so we too find infinite blessing and honor in being obedient to God’s call to His gospel community.

Transition Statement: As we work together to grow and mature into Christ, the gospel community (the Church) should take on an other-worldly character. We should grow more and more like Jesus and less and less like the world...

Point 2 - The Fruit of Mature Salvation (vv. 14-18)

What does Paul mean saying, “*Do all things without grumbling or disputing...*”?

Here we begin to see the fruits of true “one-anothering.” As we love God in our own hearts, and as we love others in gospel community, we grow in our Christlikeness. Grumbling and disputing are marks of immaturity, and within gospel community, such actions are evidence of spiritual immaturity. Paul is continuing his instruction from v. 12, “...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...” As we grow to be more like Jesus together, we should look less and less like the world. The world argues, grumbles, holds grudges, and leaves when relationships get tough. Such is not to be the case within the gospel community.

What implications does the command to “*Do all things without grumbling or disputing*” hold for our behavior and attitude in God’s gospel community?

The implications for gospel community and our role therein are numerous. Because I am a member of my gospel community, and because I am called to disciple and love others within my gospel community, I bear the responsibility to put away sin and worldliness in my own heart and to lead others to do the same. Because I am in Christ, I must take on the mindset

of Christ (2:5) and humble myself before God for the building up of others. How is it that I put away grumbling and disputing? It is by living *in Christ*.

How does being *in Christ together* bring a higher calling to such commands?

We can often limit our thinking about holiness and submission just to God and forget that such commands also extend to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Just as I have the responsibility to love and honor God, I also have a responsibility to love and honor my fellow members of the Church. As I take on the mindset of Jesus, I do for Christ's honor and for the benefit of others. My life is no longer to be lived only for me. Because I have the mind of Christ, I live for the sake of others. Just as I am in Christ, so too are my brothers and sisters. We are *in Christ together*. And as we "one-another" within gospel community, we "*shine as lights in the world*." (See also John 13:34-36.)

What is the fruit of mature salvation according to v. 16? How does gospel community factor into this?

Paul is very clear here. The fruit of mature salvation is a "holding fast to the Word" of God. True gospel community is built upon and revolves around God's Word. Paul writes in Col. 3:16, "*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...*" How can we know if we live in true gospel community? We ask, "Do we treasure the Word of God?" "Do we treasure it together?" "Are we obedient to its commands?" "Are we seeking to pattern our lives after it?"

We must also ask, "Are we *holding fast* to the Word the Lord?" Paul's phrase "...*holding fast...*" carries the idea of maintaining commitment or staying true and faithful. Marriage vows would be an appropriate image. He is calling the gospel community to remain true to the Word of the gospel in all of life.

Group Reflection/Activity - The unity of our Growth Group is *Our Work*

- Have someone in the group read Romans 15:5-7.
- Take some time to work through these questions and encourage open and honest dialogue.

Ownership defined: "To own an ideology, vision, or mission is to take possession of it, to make it your own. It is to internalize it to the point where not only can you reiterate it, but also you can teach it, defend it, and live it."¹

- How have we/you owned the mission of God and the growth group?
- How have we/you neglected the mission or changed it to suit your own desires?
- What difference does renting vs. owning make in how we treat things?

¹ Brad House, *Community*, 69.

- In what ways are we guilty of “renting” the mission of God?

“Our churches are filled with people who agree with the mission [of God] but do not own it...Ownership looks like people participating in the messiness of community and being inconvenienced for the sake of another’s satisfaction.”²

- How can we encourage one another to own the mission of God in our lives and in our growth group?
- How is participating in the messiness of gospel community a carrying out/fulfillment of the mission of God?
- What three things can we start doing this week as a growth group to respond to God’s call to own His mission?

Intentional Prayer for Unity within Growth Group

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would begin helping you and your growth group prepare for Sunday worship, for growth group, and for loving and serving others throughout the week.
- Pray that God would grant you to live in peace and harmony with your brothers and sisters in Christ in order that you might glorify God.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would help your growth group learn to lean on each other for discipleship and “one-anothering.”
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would cultivate in your heart, and those of your brothers and sisters, a deep love for one another.
- Pray that God would, *together* with those in your growth group, lead you to take up and own His mission of making disciples.

² House, 73.