

On-Mission Class #10

Christ Proclamation Church; Sunday, June 10, 2018; Steve Thiel

I. Welcome

- Tonight's Goal – Lecture and Discussion
 1. Teach on the vision here at Christ Proclamation Church
 2. Discuss Trevor Joy and Spence Shelton's book, "*The People of God*"
- Next Month – We are taking off for the summer!

II. "*The People of God*" by Trevor Joy and Spence Shelton

A. Forward – (p.XI)

- Salvation was a team effort by the church. He says, "*As I look back at my conversion, I marvel at the fact that it was very much a community project.*" – (p.XI)
- "*My relationship with God in Christ is tremendously personal... but it should not be private. Deep, authentic, and honest relationship are imperative to our development, our on-going maturation in Christ. The more isolated, hidden, and private your relationship with Christ is the more you will be stunted in your ability to grow into all that God has for you in Christ. To state it simply, discipleship is a community project.*" – (p.XII)
- "*A church full of communities that laugh, cry, pray, eat, confront, and encourage one another will be a power force in the community in which it resides as it reflects the power of the gospel to cover all our sins past, present, and future and celebrates the ongoing work of the Spirit in our lives.*" – (p.XIII)

B. Introduction – (p.1)

- "*We were created for community, and community is redemptive. If the bride of Christ is functioning as He designed us to, we can be a deep, life-giving community and that community runs to restore what is broken. Instead of disunity, conflict, and pain, we can dwell together in unity, joy, and redemption.*" – (p.4)
- "*There is no substitute for the body being the body! The people of God should play a primary role in discipleship, and community is the primary context where that discipleship takes place.*" – (p.5)
- "*Let's empower the church to make disciples.*" – (p.5)

C. Chapter 1 – The Shepherd-Leader – (p.7)

- John Piper Quote – Great! – (p.7)
- Reflecting on the "Cambridge Seven" Story – "*This is the normative flow of the gospel among the people of God. Throughout the N.T., the Holy Spirit comes upon a people and the gospel takes root in such a way that it transforms that community and begins to flow beyond that group to the world around them (Acts 2:42-47; 2 Cor. 5:16-21)*" – (p.10)
- "*The mission of God pushes forward the people of God. This is why when we talk about building toward gospel-centered community, we must talk about leaders. If our desire is to see the message of the gospel go forward and transform the hearts and lives of the people in our churches, to spread out in gospel movement, then we must pay greater attention to the messenger.*" – (p.10)
- "*The best thing a leader has to offer their group is their own passionate pursuit of God.*"
- "*The flow of a gospel-driven community is made up of disciples who make disciples who make disciples. When churches continue to minimize the expectations of leaders and make the barrier of entry into that role as low as possible, the flow decreases.*" – (p.11)

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Shepherds, NOT Facilitators

- *“The leader must be a shepherd, not a facilitator. Shepherds don’t avoid or manipulate difficult circumstances. They walk faithfully through them.” – (pp.12-13)*
- *“We are all called to shepherd one another at some level. This is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer refers to when he writes, ‘The Christian needs another Christian who speaks God’s Word to him.’ We, as a community of faith, are called to encourage and exhort one another toward greater maturity in Christ.” – (p.13)*
- *“There isn’t progress, and there is never maturity, without struggle.” – (p.14)*
- *“The job of a leader is to shepherd, not to make the process easy; it is to guide, direct, provide, and care for those on the journey.” – (p.15)*

The Characteristics of a Shepherd-Leader

- *“When we talk about a shepherd-leader, we are talking about a disciple maker.” – (p.15)*
- *“Biblical discipleship is simply the exchange of truth in the context of authentic relationships. To quote Steve Timmis from his book, ‘Total Church’, ‘Life is the context of discipleship and the Word of God is its content.’ – (p.16)*
- *“The call of God on our lives is to go and make disciples. The qualification for that call is a transformed life and authority rooted in Jesus. We are to be active participants in the mission of God. Gospel flow in group life begins then not with the curriculum or catchy acronyms, but with a person whose life has been transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and who is on mission to see that reconciliation takes place in every sphere of life. In short, disciples make disciples who make disciples.” – (p.17)*
- We describe a shepherd-leader as someone with the following characteristics:
 1. A love for Jesus – a person who’s show evidences of grace in their life
 2. A love for the Scriptures – someone who can communicate truth from the Word of God in such a way that it profits the people who are around them
 3. A love for people – a person who longs to see others grow in their faith
 4. A leadership calling – a humble willingness to serve if that’s what’s most helpful

The Function of a Shepherd-Leader

- What are the key functions of a shepherd-leader?
 1. Cares – cares for and counsels the people in their group
 2. Encourages – encourages group members to maturity in faith through the understanding and application of Scripture
 3. Models – models Christ and the fullness of joy found in Him
 4. Mobilizes – mobilizes the group to serve the body an incarnate gospel through multiplication efforts locally and globally
- *“There is a 100% chance that your leaders will deal in the messiness of sin”*
- *“By empowering our leaders to care for the flock, we return the mission of God to the people of God, equipping saints to do and be what God has called them to do and be”*
 5. Genuine and Authentic – a place that consistently works to tear down the walls that we erect out of pride, embarrassment, fear, isolation, individualism and sin – (p.22)
 6. Safe – A place to confess struggles, sins, doubts and to share our sufferings and joys
 7. Intentional – A place to work together by applying God’s Word, pushing back darkness, helping the poor, reaching the lost, and loving one another – (p.23)
- *“Our role as pastors is to equip and guide our people to be the church to one another.”*
- *“A shepherd-leader is one who models a pursuit of Christ.” – (p.24)*

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D. Chapter 2 – Community Corrupted – (p.29)

- “*The Trinity is our model for community*”
 1. Truth: We are created by God for community – (p.31)
- “*When rightly practiced, Christians doing life together literally put God on display. And when they do, Jesus said that the world will come to know Him through it.*” – (pp.32-33)
 2. Implication: Community is not a church program – (p.35)
- “*We can only live out God’s purpose for us to reflect His image when we live in community. The creational mandate must influence the way we perceive community in our local churches. In light of the created image, it’s not just unfortunate if there are people in your church who aren’t in some kind of God-reflecting community, it is unbiblical and subhuman.*” – (p.35) – [Comment on Quote]
- “*Gospel community must become a part of every church member’s personal lifestyle in order to connect God’s people with the people of God, because community is something that is lived out, not attended.*” – (p.36)
- Great questions to think through. How would you answer these questions?
 - Where does community stack up in your priorities?
 - How do you communicate community?
- “*Community needs to be more than doctrine*” – (p.38)
 3. Truth: The Trinity is 3 interdependent persons in community – (p.39)
 4. Implication: The power of God is displayed through community – (p.40)
- C.S. Lewis, “*Mere Christianity*” Quote – Great! – (pp.40-41)
 5. Truth: Sin distorts the image of God in our community – (p.42)
 6. Implication: Building community is hard work – (p.44)
 7. Truth: Biblical community is the final apologetic – (p.47)
- Francis Shaefter, “*The Mark of a Christian*” Quote – Great – (pp.47-48)
 8. Implication: Community must be accessible – (p.49)
- “*If the Christian community serving one another in love and grace is a powerful argument for the truth of Christ’s message, then we must ensure this community is accessible to non-Christians, right?*” – has implications for how we set up and manage Life Groups – (p.49)
- “*3 out of 5 young, unchurched people say, ‘they would be willing to study the Bible if a friend asked them to do so.’*” – (p.50)

E. Chapter 3 – The Distinctives of a Gospel Community – (p.53)

- “*Until that one thing that we give ourselves to is Jesus, we experience false, disappointing versions of the true community that we are created for.*” – (p.54)
- “*The only one thing strong enough to build and sustain Christian community is the gospel and the refuge found therein.*” – (p.56)

A New People

- Great verse that highlights the new people of God – 1 Peter 2:9-10 – (p.58)
- “*When you become a Christian, you become a part of the new people Christ came to rescue. It’s impossible to divorce a Christian from community, for to be Christian is to be a part of the new people of God.*” – (p.59)
- This new people of God have gospel distinctives – 2 examples given
 1. Grace – we forgive much because we’ve been forgiven much – (p.60)
 2. Sacrificial Generosity – we give much because we’ve been given much – (p.61)

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A New Family

- “You must renounce the primacy of your natural relationships and follow Jesus into the fellowship of the family of God.” – (p.63)
- This new family of God has gospel distinctives – 2 examples given
 1. Diversity – our family reflects the gospel that reconciles races under Christ – (p.65)
 2. Care – we serve one another joyfully as we’ve been served by Christ – (pp.66-69)

A New Body

- Great verse that highlights the new body of Christ – Romans 12:4-5 – (p.69)
- Great verse that highlights the new people of God – 1 Corinthians 12:12-27
- This new body has gospel distinctives – 2 examples given
 1. Humility – we submit to one another in participation with Christ – (pp.71-72)
 2. Unity – we fight together for oneness in obedience to Christ – (pp.72-74)
- “The church is the visible expression of the gospel.” – (p.75)

F. Chapter 4 – Asking The Right Questions – (p.77)

- “Community is not the goal in the mission of God; bringing Himself glory through the making of disciples is the goal. Community is the primary context God designed to take the church there.” – (p.78)
- “When shaping the community culture in a church, the focus needs to move away from creating new programs that lead people to connection and toward placing people into communal relationships that lead to life transformation.” – (p.78)
- “What steers the rudder of many churches today is fear fueled by consumerism, rather than courage fueled by truth.” – (p.79)

Foundation, NOT Formula

- “The key to building a biblically faithful ministry doesn’t begin with aesthetics but with theological foundation. What we believe about God and who and what He has created His church to be and do should be the starting place of your endeavor.” – (p.81)
- “We would rather not have a group than send someone to an unhealthy group.” – (p.83)

Courage to Lead

- “One ironic aspect about leading in the church today is that the bulk of the opposition you face will be internal instead of external.” – (p.89)

G. Chapter 5 – The Missing Link: Alignment – (p.91)

- “If we want to take a group of people somewhere, we’ve got to have a clear, unified plan of where we are going and how we are going to get there.” – (p.93)

The Power of Alignment – (p.93)

- “Alignment is the intentional coordination of all disciple-making efforts to create a clear discipleship path for the church.” – (p.93) – **Unity – Momentum – Care – Impact**

Creating a Clear Discipleship Path – (p.103)

- “We want to develop shepherd-leaders who grow into partners in disciple-making.”
- “Sermon alignment is a tool to this greater end.”
- *The Wheel: Gospel is Central to Prayer & Bible Intake, Community, Evangelism & Missions, Generosity, and Character.*
- Great Questions: (1.) Where are you? – (2.) Why are you there? – (3.) How can we help?

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What Can Knock You Out of Alignment? – (p.110)

- Unclear Communication
- Overprogramming

H. Chapter 6 – Gospeling One Another – (p.117)

- *“What we need are the real-life kind of words that we can use to audibly speak the gospel to one another on a continual basis. It is not enough to live alongside one another, simply assuming that we are believing the gospel at all times. To do so runs the risk of forgetting it all together. You and I are built to hear and speak God’s truth often and audibly to one another.” – (p.119)*
- **“I’ve sinned against you, and I’m sorry.”** – (p.120) – *“Confession and repentance isn’t easy. Apologizing to another human being requires a painful amount of humility.”*
- **“I forgive you.”** – (p.123) – *“The only way you and I will be able to forgive someone who sins against us is if we remember that we are first sinners, and only second are we sinned against. We have been extended impossible, undeserved grace. And still, when someone sins against us, we have a tendency to jump into our judgment seat, demanding justice for the injustice committed against us.” – (p.124)*
- **“Christ is better.”** – (p.126) – *“How do we account for our blind spots? Very practically it means that you need to deputize some people to go hunting for sin in your life. You must leave your life completely open to them, and they need to commit to be as honest as necessary to point out the sin in your life. And here is the kicker: you commit to do the same for them; it’s mutual.” – (p.128)*
- *“We need to be reminded that Christ is better than our sin!” – (p.129)*
- **“How can I serve you?”** – (p.130)
- **“I love you.”** – (p.130)

Some Obstacles to Gospeling One Another – (p.133)

- *“While this all sounds great in theory, there are a few things that can keep you from implementing a healthy gospeling practice into your community of believers.” – (p.133)*
- **“Margin”** – (p.133) – *“Are you living your life with any margin? That is, do you have time and space to respond when someone you are trying to ‘do life with’ seeks you out? The way we communicate this idea to our small group is that the calendar should serve us, we should not serve our calendar. A good friend who is a small group leader calls this ‘logging hours’ with his group. Quality time requires quantity time. Ultimately, this obstacle is a matter of priorities.” – (p.135)*
- **“Fear”** – (p.136) – *“For most people, having meaningful conversations is a daunting task. We live in a world that conditions us to be relationally risk averse.” – (p.136)*
- *“The point is, we are afraid to become transparent with one another because when we do, it makes us vulnerable. Vulnerability is many things, but it is always a risk.” – (p.136)*
- *“Here’s a way to start overcoming this obstacle: Go first. The only way to break down fear and build up trust is to believe the gospel, then from there start trying.”*

I. Chapter 7 – Gospel Flow – (p.139)

- **“Stagnant”** – (pp.140-142)
- **“Getting the Story Straight”** – (pp.142-147)

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- “Gospel Flow” – (p.147) – *“We know that community is not the goal – growing into the image of Christ is the goal – but community is the vehicle by which we move toward the goal. Community provides the ideal context for the gospel to flow in and flow out. When the gospel does not flow in and through your community, your groups will become vessels for consumerism rather than ones that give life.”* – (pp.148-149)
- “Gospel In, Gospel Out” – (pp.149-151) – *“Gospel-centered community is a radical call amid a culture of mere attendance and casual involvement. It involves mutual love, care, consistency, and authenticity as we seek to adore the person and work of Christ with our lives. Where these elements are lacking, we have moved away from gospel-centered community and into the realm of social clubs. As Bonhoeffer describes it, ‘the people of God are bearers of the gospel to one another.’”* – (p.149)
- “Gospel Mission” – (pp.151-159) – *“In the conversation on discipleship, community is often elevated as the goal. Community is not the goal, but rather the vehicle that God has designed for His people to pursue sanctification together. Mission is the engine that drives this vehicle. We cannot separate mission from community in the conversation on discipleship.”* – (pp.152-153) – [See Diagram]

III. Closing Comments

- No Next Meeting
- We are taking off for the summer – Enjoy!!!