



WHO WE ARE

culture // commission // call



Week One - Our Culture

This week, we started discussing the identity of LFCN. We spoke about our cultural identity and how we are to be in the world but not of it.

Scripture Focus

John 14:15-31 | John 17:15-19

Sermon Recap

In John's gospel, Judas asks Jesus, "why are you showing yourself to us and not the world?" It's a fair question! "Jesus, why don't you just reveal yourself to everyone and demonstrate your Lordship over all? Then, everyone will follow you and all this injustice and evil will end!" Well, one day Jesus will come back and reveal himself to everyone. In the meantime, he has a plan...

This is how Jesus responds: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My father will love them, and we will come and make our home with them." Did you catch that? The Trinity wants to make a home in us. The theological word for God taking on a body is "incarnation." Jesus is the incarnation of God and the Church is the incarnation of Jesus! We *become* the body of Jesus when we obey Him. When God makes his home in us, we put God on display to the world. God has decided it is best to reveal himself in a body. So, when Judas asks Jesus his question, Jesus is essentially saying, "I AM revealing myself through you as you live like me in the world."

In order for God to reveal himself, he had to take on a body, a language, and a culture. It was how he communicated who He was. He became what He wanted to save. He is still doing this - becoming who he wants to save. That means each church, as the body of Christ, has to demonstrate the life of Christ to the culture around them. In John 17, Jesus prayed that the church would be sent into the world even though they are not of it. This requires every church, whether Amish, non-denominational, or Nazarene, to make some decisions concerning the culture.

How will the Church "wear" the culture it's in for the purpose of revealing Christ to it? In other words, how will God be incarnate in this current culture? There are some ways the church has to "look" like the culture in order to reveal Christ. There are other ways, the church can't look like the culture in order to reveal Christ! You see...In but not of. This is God's plan. This is Jesus' answer to Judas. "My father will come make our home in you, if you obey me." This is how God reveals Himself to the world!

Discussion Questions

At LFCN, we are intentionally developing a culture that is based on Christ. **We want to be a compassionate, spirit-led, united, healthy, relational, innovative FAMILY of disciples.** This is the goal because this culture puts Jesus on display.

- 1) How would you describe the culture of your family growing up? What was your mom's role? What was your dad's role? What was expected of you as a kid? What were the family dynamics?
- 2) How would you describe our American culture?
- 3) Do you find it difficult to describe a culture? Why? Why not?
- 4) Read through our list of LFCN culture words. What is your initial reaction? Which ones stick out to you? Why?
- 5) In John 14, Judas asks Jesus why he isn't revealing himself to the whole world. What do you think is behind this question? What is Judas wanting Jesus to do and why?
- 6) Jesus responds by saying He will live inside people who obey him (weird!). How does God living inside obedient disciples answer Judas' question?
- 7) What do you think it means to be in the world but not of it? How do you know where the "line" is concerning how "in the world" you are?
- 8) Explore how a *GROUP* of people can represent Jesus in the world. Usually, we speak of evangelism in personal terms (1-to-1). How might an entire group do evangelism?
- 9) We often think about evangelism in terms of "fishing" for people. This usually entails finding the right bait and waiting until the person is ready to "hook" them. However, people in Jesus' day fished with nets and drew fish up into a new environment (the boat). Explore together what it looks like for the Church to "net"-fish instead of "hook"-fish.

Week Two - Our Commission

This week, we continued discussion about the identity of LFCN. We focused on our mission as a people: We want to Love God, Love Others, and Serve Both.

Scripture Focus

Matthew 28:18-20

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Matthew 22:34-40

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1 Thessalonians 2:8

Sermon Recap

What is the mission of the Church? We don't have to invent or create one. Jesus gave the church a mission - "go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." That is the mission of the Church and it is the mission of LFCN.

However, as soon as we decide that our mission is to make disciples, we have to define what a disciple of Jesus is. For this, we turn to Matthew 22. There is a man asking Jesus what he believes to be the greatest command. This is a question of discipleship. The Jews had 613 laws. Sometimes, these laws were at odds with each other. So, rabbis had to determine which ones were more important in order to make the law livable. To ask a rabbi which commandment was the greatest was like asking, "how do you *live* the law?" Discipleship is about life. The point wasn't for the rabbi to teach other people what the rabbi knew. The point was for the rabbi to train other people to *live* how the rabbi *lived*.

Consider [this clip from Karate Kid](#). Mr. Miyagi was not interested in teaching Daniel the names of the karate moves. He didn't hand him a book or show him some videos. He invited Daniel into his life and showed how this life could be more than just waxing, sanding, and painting. This is what the early church was doing in 1 Thessalonians. They loved enough to share their lives because the Gospel always impacts life.

So, what is Jesus' answer to the young man asking about the greatest commandment and about how to live? Love God with all your heart soul mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. All the commandments hang on those two. This is how Jesus lived. At LFCN, we don't have a mission to Love God, Love Others, and Serve Both because it's simple and catchy. That is our mission because Jesus instructed us to go and make disciples - make people who live like he lived. He told us to teach them to obey everything He commanded. Also, we are convinced that the life of Jesus is life and it the full. We want everyone to be apprenticed to this kind of life.

Discussion Questions

- 1) Can you speak about a time you learned a craft from someone else (maybe your mom or dad)? What was involved in learning this craft?
- 2) Do you think everyone is born knowing how to live life or do you think it is something that has to be learned?
- 3) What are some things in life that have to be learned? Are the best things in life things that have to be learned? Why/Why not?
- 4) How does being a disciple of Jesus relate to being a person who is practicing how to live life and it the full?
- 5) How is Jesus' command to go and make disciples instructing us to help people learn how to live life to the full?
- 6) What is at the heart of Jesus' mission for the Church (to go and make disciple of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey every word)?
- 7) Would you say that you are "on mission" and doing what Jesus commanded? Why/Why not?
- 8) What hinders you/the church from being on mission with Jesus?
- 9) Name three people in whom you would like to invest.
- 10) What is the first step in helping them love God, love others, and serve both?

Week Three - Our Call

This week, we continued our conversation about LFCN identity. It is one thing to speak about who we are as a people. However, there is a call to participate in that identity and to take our place in this body of Christ.

Scripture Focus

Romans 12:1-5 | 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Sermon Recap

I'm sure you've heard that we are a part of the body of Christ. If you haven't, let me tell you that we are all part of a larger whole. We need each other. We are not all the same, but we should all be working for the good of the body. If a foot should say that it's not a hand so it doesn't belong in the body doesn't mean that stops being a part of the body. If the whole body was an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? No, the body is a whole that is made up of many parts working together. But, how do we work together?

In Romans, Paul calls us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. He goes on to say that each member of the body of Christ "belongs to each other" (vs. 5). Most churches will communicate the body aspect of the Church. However, we can't omit the surrender aspect of the Church! If we're going to be the body of Christ, we have to be willing to belong to each other - to surrender to the greater good of the whole. We cannot function properly without this act of surrender.

Imagine a football team that is trying to win the superbowl. Now, imagine it is made up of superstar athletes. This team will NOT win the superbowl unless all of these athletes learn how to play their role every week. It means their stats may not be as good as they could be for their team to get the "W." But, they all have to agree that the win is the most important thing (Consider [this clip](#)).

It is not enough for our church to determine our culture and to outline our mission. We all have to approach this mission with a great deal of surrender and sacrifice. We all have to take our place on the team and play our role. The win is nothing less than the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. That is a big win. That means the stakes are high and the sacrifice is great. Who is ready to win the world for Christ?

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Can you share an example of when someone on a team wouldn't be a team player? How did they make the team feel? How did that affect the success of the team?
- 2) Why is it sometimes difficult to remember that every member of the team (or body) is equally important?
- 3) What are the benefits of being a part of the body of Christ?
- 4) What are the challenges?
- 5) Do you believe that you are a more healthy person when you are a part of a healthy church? Why/Why not?
- 6) How do you discover your role in the body of Christ? Why do you think so many people struggle to find a place? How can this be remedied?
- 7) Why is surrender such an important aspect of being a part of the Body of Christ?