

## 6 Months of Pandemic – A State of the Church Sermon Ephesians 4.1-13

### Character Matters (v.2-3)

- Humility – not thinking of yourself too highly
  - Bragging, Bravado, Conversational hijacking
- Gentleness – thinking about the relationship
  - Even when you're right, you're thinking about your relationship to the truth rather than your rightness and another's wrongness
- Patiently bearing with one another – recognizing Jesus is at work (or praying for Him to be at work)
  - "I am much more worried about their relationship to Jesus than I am anything else AND I can continually point them to Jesus without trying to fix what I see is wrong"
  - We don't shirk our responsibility as parents, employers, protectors of others – but if the situation allows, we focus on pointing them to Jesus and doing so with patience

### Doctrine Matters (v.4-7)

- We are the people of God
- We have one God we follow
- Our God reigns
- We have more in common than not – which is why it's important to eagerly maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (v.3)

*It does no good to have one without the other: right theology with wrong character or good character with bad theology*

- Why character is so important: it will lead you when questions don't have answers
- Why doctrine is so important: doctrine sustains when situations don't resolve

### Questions and Situations

*How have we made decisions?*

- Scott Gottlieb – former FDA chief
- TMC data published daily (9 counties' combined data)
- Commitment: pray, because we don't know what we're doing

*What is our financial status?*

- Giving is down about 4% Year-Over-Year

- Took several months to feel it but we are feeling it
- Commitment: just be faithful

#### *When will the church meet again?*

- Groups are more important than ever
  - Students / Kids -> Adults -> Adjust students -> Full expression
  - Zoom fatigue is real and isolation / lockdown has revealed the need for genuine human interaction
- Commitment: connection with our church family
  - If you're not comfortable, wait! (just not too long)
  - If you're not connected, join! You can now check it out without even showing up!

#### *When will the church start doing ministry?*

- We refuse to stay still! Pandemics don't destroy the church, they deploy it
  - Church Plant – first groups met last week, 80k
  - Virtual VBS
  - Who's Your One – engaging people, praying for people, sharing with people
  - Lake Charles – initial trailer, two deliveries to Mt Pilgrim
  - Fall Festival / Light the Night – 10/31
  - Opportunities abound for ministry – especially as we re-engage with diff expressions of ministry
- Commitment: I am a missionary (v.11-12)

#### *What do I do with uncertainty?*

- Don't fear and don't lash out (as an expression of fear) ZACCHEUS' TREE
  - Remember: there's more that unites us than divides us
    - Doctrine – "one" and "each one given grace"
- Get about the business of the Kingdom
  - Walk worthy (v.1)
  - Grow up and help others (v.13)

#### Questions for Discussion

1. Out of the three character traits mentioned in v.2, which do you find most difficult to express? Why do you think that is?
2. Whose transformation are you praying for right now? How do you see Jesus at work in their lives? In what ways has He not worked on your timetable in their transformation?
3. What is your level of uncertainty right now regarding pandemic life, church life, or life in general? What are you doing with that uncertainty?
4. Do you have remaining questions that weren't addressed in the sermon on Sunday? What are they? Can you let someone in church leadership know?
5. COVID Check-in: how are you? Your family? Your One? Your Neighbors?