

A Charge to Discipleship - Week 2

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Date: 08 February 2015

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[0 : 00] He says, so all this authority has been given to me, so go and make disciples. And defines what that looks like for us. To all peoples, baptizing them in the truth of the Trinity, teaching them to observe all that he's commanded.

And then he ties it up again with the promise. And behold, I am with you always. That I will bring to pass all of these things by my work in you and by you.

This should be enough. This should be enough. I feel that I should be able to just simply read this to you. And that the people of God should go, amen, and get busy.

But I fear there is more necessary. And I know that there are no doctrines that very readily stay alive in our minds unless they're fed.

And so we need to be feeding them and we need to be about this work. So what is the God-ordained institution meant to accomplish this? To continue to remind us of the way in which we should be living.

[1 : 02] It's the church. He has given us this organization by which we are meant to fulfill the Great Commission. Peter writes in 1 Peter 3, 9 and 10, This is the great high calling for us as the church and as a church, as part of that.

That we have been given a mission in this world. And there are ways in which we go about fulfilling that mission, which includes our meeting together. But to that great end that we might see the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed amongst the people of the world.

I hope that that's something that excites your heart. That you have such a degree of love and adoration for Him. That you want His praises to be sung.

That you want more and more people to experience the transforming power of the gospel. That they might forever tell of how great their God is.

Is He not great and worthy to be praised? Should we not invite people into that? That He might be praised in higher and higher degree.

[2 : 30] And so the church is the methodology by which we press at each other. That we move each other into that kind of living. And that we remain in that place together.

And I will tell you that the study of the church in the scriptures is one of my favorite studies. As a church leader, likely. It's called ecclesiology, if any of you care at all.

The theology, so to speak, of the church. Literally, ecclesiology means church knowledge or church logic, which I particularly prefer.

Rather than asking, as we look at the scriptures, what is the church? What we need to be asking is, who is the church? And the place that we need to be going to ask this very question is the scripture themselves.

We believe as a church in a doctrine called the sufficiency of scripture. And that is that God has given to us all things necessary for holy living. It is here in the Holy Bible.

[3 : 33] This is why it's called this. That we don't need anything out and beyond it. Which isn't to say we shouldn't read a good book, but only insofar as the good book points us back to the scriptures.

We don't need to add a bunch of methodology to the methodology in the scriptures. God has given us everything that we need. God, when he had the scriptures penned by the Holy Spirit, didn't not know what was going to happen in the 21st century.

He didn't go, what? Simulcasts? I had no idea that was a possibility. He knew.

God is the church. This is a vastly misunderstood topic in our day and time. Wrongly, many people look at the Greek word ekklesia, which simply means gathering, and understand it to mean a gathering, an event, so to speak.

One evangelical writer put it this way. For the modern evangelical, worship is defined exclusively by the individual's experience.

[5 : 07] Worship, then, is not about adoring God, but by about being nourished with religious feelings. So much so that the worshiper has become the object of worship.

Sunday worship is to be centered on my needs and desires. I am at the center. My needs are paramount. Meet them or I will go to church elsewhere.

A large local church in our area advertises their multiple services in this way. At 930, you have a traditional blend of praise and worship. At 11, an inspiring and vibrant contemporary worship experience.

And at 11, I guess at the same time, on the same campus, contemporary acoustic worship. Right? Meeting all of the needs and all of the desires of the individual coming, who says they're coming to adore God.

But it has seemed that the object of worship has been turned around on the individual, the congregant, rather than the God that the congregation comes to worship. What distinguishes the church from any other social club?

[6 : 16] There are some things. But it would seem in many churches, you simply have to show up and pay your dues and don't do anything that would embarrass the club.

Just be sure that you don't get out there and make the club look bad. This is very consumption driven. We live in such a consumer society and that is exactly what happens in most churches and in ours.

We don't need consumption. In fact, I would say that if you are a consumer Christian, you have much to consider. Much to consider. What we need, rather, is participation.

We so often think of our churches as businesses. This is evidenced in the way we talk. Out of the outflow of our hearts, our mouths speak, beloved. This is a truth that we cannot avoid in the scriptures.

We say things like, where do you attend church? We ought to be asking questions like, who do you fellowship with? We think of a church as a name, a building, a pastor, and a collection of programs.

[7 : 32] A website. Such a wrong way to think about church. Church. Now, I've got the whiteboard back from last week.

I'm going to draw you a picture. I think this is the way most people consider what church looks like. This is going to be my very rudimentary Jesus. Church, then, is structured like this.

It's a triangle. This is how every business that we're aware of is structured. Someone at the top and a structure that plays out below this. Good for business.

I applaud this for business, but this is not meant to be the structure of the church. We, as a more biblical, in many ways, church, we've tried to take the tip of the pyramid off.

And biblically, we have a group of elders who give leadership to this. But culturally, many of you put the pyramid back on the top.

[8 : 40] Right? That this is the structure. Information is disseminated from the top. Right? So, I'm somehow holier than you. I have some special granted access to Jesus.

You'll hear us talk a lot in terms of vision, church leaders will talk about. And I think all that a church leader is really trying to say is, there's a place I think we should go.

I could say these couple of weeks we're taking off from Mark is about vision casting. Right? But it's not that God has come to me and given me some kind of a dream that we're driving toward. Right? And I think a lot of people think in those terms, this guy gets up and he says he has a vision. He must be hanging out with Jesus. We should do whatever he says.

The altar call presses at this type of thing. People to think that they have to get up and go down to the quote unquote altar. Didn't Jesus do away with sacrifice and that type of a system?

[9 : 42] Somehow we built some stage out of wood and carpet and it's become a holy place. And there's a man who's going to stand between you and God. God, this is not healthy.

This is not the way the church should function. But the congregants do this too. Right? Sitting and consuming. Giving, paying, saying, put together programs, put together ministry.

Do things where I can plug in. And we will expect you as the trained professional to reach people. This is a shame. And you know why?

Because all of you have the Spirit of God. All of you are some expression of God's great work in the world.

You are necessary in the kingdom. A man named Mark Dever, some of you may be familiar with. A pastor of First Baptist Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

[10:42] wrote a rather wonderful book called *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. I would commend it to you if you'd like to read it. Let me just read to you the way he begins. Chapter 1. And this, for him, was the beginning of a sermon series which became this book.

And this is how he actually started out the sermon. Now, I want you to hear, he's going to say some things that have no application to our building at all. I think their building is much nicer than ours. Probably their program is a little bit nicer than ours.

But still get the flavor of what he's saying here. So he gets up on a Sunday morning and he says, So, how's it going? Did you get enough sleep last night?

Did you have trouble finding a good parking place this morning? Were the doors clearly marked? Did the people welcome you as you came in? Did the building seem nice and neat? I wonder, did the church's name make it more difficult for you to decide to come in?

Or maybe that was part of the reason why you decided to come in. And when you did come in, were the people friendly and welcoming? Any trouble dropping the kids off? Not a problem here, is it?

[11:46] And what do you think about the stained glass? I know I have the best view of it, but it's really pretty, isn't it? Then again, maybe it's a little too traditional for you. Are the pews comfortable? Do you have a good view of all the activities from where you are sitting?

Can you see clearly? Can you hear okay? Is it warm enough for you right now? Do you feel pretty comfortable? And how about the bulletin? Nice, clear, simple, pretty straightforward, wouldn't you say?

Not too complicated. Maybe a little too staid. Did you notice all the announcements in it? And did you see all the programs listed in the church card? There are a lot of them, aren't there? Probably more than you've ever read.

Of course, it's easy to read, but I guess the print is kind of small, isn't it? And there aren't any pictures. I mean, it's so type-heavy. That probably tells you a lot about the church, doesn't it? You think this is probably the kind of church where they'd rather have thousands of words than pictures, right?

What about the people sitting around you? Are they the kind you like to go to church with? Yeah, I know you're too nervous to look around you right now, but you know who they are. What do you think? Are they the right age? Are they the right race?

[12:50] Are they the right social class? Are they just like you? And what about the service so far? I mean, was it too difficult switching between the two hymnals? You know, most churches just use one, and here you have to use two.

You've got to go to the green one, and then sometimes the beige one. Had the leader seemed informed, yet not know-it-all-ish? Competent, yet not overbearing? There weren't too many announcements in the service were there.

I don't think so this morning. Have the prayers been involving? Have they engaged your heart and mind? I'll skip. There's two more pages. The preacher does have a very difficult job, doesn't he? The preacher has to be someone that you feel you can relate to and talk with and let your hair down with or trust in some measure. But he needs to seem holy, too, but not too holy. You know, he needs to be knowledgeable, but not too knowledgeable.

He needs to be confident, but not too confident. He needs to be compassionate, but not too compassionate. And his sermon? Well, his sermon needs to be good enough, relevant enough, entertaining and engaging enough.

[13:48] And certainly, short enough. And he goes on for a whole other page beyond that, listing off all of these criteria by which people shop churches.

The very fact that we tend to call the buildings that we meet in churches says so much about our misunderstanding about what church is.

Out of the outflow of the heart, every time you call this building the church, it says something about what you think about church.

It reduces it. It reduces it to a place and programs, rather than being a people. It's confusing to me. When somebody says, I'm going to drop something off at the church, I say, how is that possible? Our people live all over the place. Who specifically are you talking about? But it's become the cultural norm that we speak in this way.

[14 : 49] In fact, we had called this building, not the church, but the meeting house, is what we were trying to call it, get to stick in those days, for years. And yet I found myself still calling other church buildings churches.

Which says something about what I thought about every other church in our region. I had to adjust my heart concerning that, to think of those as people groups gathering in a place under a name, but as people, as eternal beings, things that will last forever, versus all of this which is going to turn to dust.

Not a single bit. The name Christ Family Church, our website, our signs are already turning to dust. This building, it's all passing away.

But you guys are eternal. You have eternal souls, and we are the church. If you have a bulletin, I hope everybody got one today. You'll notice on the front of it, it says this every single week. We try to do it in our speaking as well, but it says, Welcome to 60 South, the meeting place of Christ Family Church.

We've just coined a name for the property, so we could call it something, because meeting house was taking too much time to get out. It's what the Puritans used to call their places of gathering.

[16 : 10] So we call it 60 South. If you don't like it, take it up with Wes. He came up with the name. I didn't care, so we started calling it that. We're located on the side of 60 South, so there you have it.

This is just where we gather. It's not who we are, praise God. This building doesn't define us. It ought not, anyway. This is an improper way of thinking about church.

The better way, the better way to understand that the term ecclesia is the gathered ones. Not that church is an event, but rather a people centered on the event, namely Christ redeeming his people, his life, his death, and his resurrection.

That this is what we are gathered around as a people. Ecclesia, the gathered ones. Now the church is both invisible and visible.

We can see, there's some things we can tangibly touch about the church. We see churches in function in our world today, but it's also invisible, which is the way that God sees it, which would be all true believers for all time.

[17 : 24] The scriptures speak of the church in this manner rather regularly. The church is both universal and it's local. The scriptures once again do this.

The church is universal. All believers alive today, right now are the church, capital C. But the more regular expression of church that we see in the scriptures is the local form that's most mentioned. And that's what we would be considered. We're a local church. And just for your sake and for your future study, I've been kind of working on a definition of the local church.

Actually, let me say this is a working definition, but I put it in the notes section of your bulletin and it goes like this. The local church is a community of regenerate disciples of Jesus Christ, believers, true believers of Jesus Christ, organized under qualified leadership who gather regularly to grow in the knowledge of God, to be equipped for every good work, and to observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the end that the Great Commission is fulfilled.

This, I think, is a pretty good biblical definition of what the local church is. It distinguishes it rather from a Bible study you might participate in. Right?

[18 : 41] If you can't meet all these criteria, then it's not a church. It's not an expression of that word, ecclesia. It may even distinguish it from some of the things that are called church in our area that are really much more like large weekly conferences.

There's a place and a time for that, but I think that we must rightly understand what church should regularly look like in our lives if we care at all, and we should, about the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

All right, let's land on our text for today. The major part of our text, anyway. Hebrews chapter 10. Hebrews chapter 10.

Just as a little bibliography for you. The way your Bible is organized is not in chronological order. But you have Paul's epistles with the pastoral epistles being at the end.

Then the book of Hebrews. We're not exactly sure who wrote Hebrews, although many people believe it was Paul. Here it's placed at the end of the Pauline epistles because maybe, but maybe not.

[20 : 05] But then beyond that, you have the other writers. So Peter, John, etc. And so you know you can separate it out that way. Help you find the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 10, verses 19-25.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as they see the day drawing near.

Now, what I want us to primarily draw out of this text this morning is the corporate nature of God's people. If you look at the very beginning of verse 22, the writer of Hebrews says, let us draw near. And this is a single Greek word, *proserkamai*. It's plural, present tense, active voice, subjective mood, which means it's contingent on something.

[21 : 31] And so to draw out that, let us draw near at greater length, it could be said, let us continually draw near because we can in Christ.

Because of what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, one of the blessings, one of the outworkings of that is that we get to gather together.

We get to draw near to God together as a community of faith. As Kyle says so regularly and I love, as a faith family together. Notice that's what those first three verses are about, 19, 20, and 21, the accomplished work of Christ.

So we get to draw together and look at the rest of the plural pronouns in verse 19, since we have confidence. Verse 20, that he opened for us. Verse 21, since we have a great priest.

Verse 22, once again, let us, our hearts, our bodies. Verse 23, let us hold fast the confession of our hope. Verse 24, let us consider.

[22 : 37] So we are to draw close together in celebration and worship of God, holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering.

This is the doctrinal part of our learning together, holding true the gospel doctrines, stirring up one another, encouraging one another, pressing at one another to love and good works, and all the more, as we see the day drawing near.

This is meant to be the activity of the church, right? That we are firmly planted, our feet are firmly planted in doctrinal truth, and we press at each other for the going, the loving, and the doing of good works.

Any expression of Christianity devoid of the church is foreign to the pages of Scripture. It does not exist.

Just think about the biblical metaphors for the church. The church is called a body made up of parts, a household made up of family members, a temple made up of living stones.

[23 : 46] Apart from them, the individual makes no sense. They were created to exist together. These are all pictures of life together.

Now, even biblical analogies tend to fall short, right? Certainly your body can function without part of it. Some parts are more vital than others. But you will in some degree be handicapped, will you not?

My back seems to have given up on me today. I can still function as a human being, can I not? Sure trying anyway. But I'm handicapped in some regard because I don't have the full function of my back.

All the parts are necessary and not for filling seats. It's really not that important, you know, that your participation, this is for you, this is me, bringing a meal to you, feeding you.

I'm glad you're here. I want you to be fed. I want to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to you. You know, I do the same amount of preparation whether it's ten of you or however many are here today.

[24 : 59] It doesn't really matter. You come and you sit. It matters for you but it doesn't matter for the church. You've got to get involved. You have to participate. You have to be part of this process together. So you ready? So not this.

We're going to draw an X through that version. Let me draw Jesus again. Boy, that crown just got bigger. I'm sure Jesus' crown fits.

The church rather should look more like this and hang with me. Let me explain my perspective here. This is a circle on its side.

Get that? Rather than trying to draw it from above or make it just this weird straight line. A group of believers a gathering an ecclesia gathered around the event and that is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ linking arms together certainly playing different roles in that process. You look back at my very definition of the local church and it includes gathered under qualified leadership. But nonetheless that we're all part of this.

[26 : 08] We're all linking arms together. we're all looking for direction from Christ himself. We do that by his word as revealed to us by the spirit. This is the way that this functions.

Right? A priesthood of believers with different roles to play but nonetheless that we all recognize that we're part of this process. We need one another.

I'm asserting that you cannot be a faithful disciple of Christ apart from the church. Exactly what I'm saying to you.

You cannot be a faithful disciple of Christ apart from the church. Many Christians merely attend a worship service of the church.

Many of you merely consume and do not participate. Now I know I know that a lot of you are in a transitional part of your life college students particularly.

[27 : 09] Right? You're only up here nine months out of the year but I would just say to you you're up here nine months out of the year. Three quarters of your time has spent living in a place called Dahlonga home and invest and be involved.

Many of you do this well and I'm thankful for you. Many of you have caught this already and you're coming and doing this. If you're just coming and you're just consuming this is what you're up to let me make a suggestion to you.

If that's all you're doing and that's all you're ever going to do let me make a suggestion to you.

Sleep in on Sunday mornings. Get up have a nice leisurely eleven o'clock breakfast.

Go find a beautiful place in these gorgeous mountains to go sit and listen to a better preacher than me on your iPod. There are better preachers than me.

John Piper, John MacArthur, Martin Lloyd-Jones, you can get all of his stuff on Ephesians, it's phenomenal, Arturo Azerdia. Just go and consume it. It's out there for you, floating around.

[28 : 12] Eat away until you're full. Not argue that there's no better music, but do you know that Wes and Liz have an album out and they're working on another one? So listen to the music. Sing along at the top of your lungs in your car by yourself.

If that's all you're ever going to do, why? Why come here and why do this? I'm telling you it makes no sense to me. Why do we gather in this way?

Because we're a people, a community drawn together. Because we need to be with people who know us, who know what we struggle with. We've been finding Sam and I as we're continuing to minister how many people in our church struggle with depression.

And we've just kind of been wrestling with this, like what is going on in our church? Why are so many people struggling with depression? And it just kind of struck me as I've been doing some reading on the matter that it's not just our church, it's our culture.

Maybe it's just the human condition in general. People struggle with depression. And so I said to Sam just the other day, it's probably a really wonderful thing that we're coming to this realization because it means that people are letting us know them.

[29 : 21] That they're actually putting down the mask, they're letting the veneer be stripped away, they're actually coming and being honest about the things that are going on in their life. That's a good thing.

We need this. We need to expose ourselves. It's the healthiest thing that can happen for my Christian walk, is that I say to a group of believers, I'm failing.

Let me tell you how I'm failing. I need your prayers and I need your support. There are burdens in my life I cannot bear on my own. We need one another. You need a pastor who's paying attention to the ebbs and flows to which way the wind is blowing in the congregation so that he can take a text and not only tell you what it means generally, but tell you what it means specifically.

John Piper and all the other guys that I listed for you can't do that. They don't know you. A great old adage is that a shepherd should smell like a sheep. I agree.

We can all be stinky together. Can we? We are meant to be an army, not an audience. There's a time for this.

[30 : 29] But we're meant to be mobilized as an army on a mission. And let me remind you what that means. The kind of nagging, haunting words of Jesus from Mark 8, verse 34.

I shared with you last week where Jesus says, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Let him put aside his dreams and his goals. Let him instead take up my dreams and my goals, which is going to be hard and it's going to mean death for them and let him follow me.

And at the end of Mark, he says, again, this is a re-declaration of the Great Commission, Mark 16, 15, and 16. Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And again, when he appears to the disciples in Acts 1, 8, he says, you will see power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth in these ever-increasing spheres of influence, these circles radiating out from the place that they were, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

And we see this begin happening just a few chapters later as we see Peter's great sermon and many thousands come to faith in Christ. And then in Acts 5, 40 through 42, after the apostles are taken to trial and they're then let go, they're told not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore, Acts 5, verse 40, and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

[32 : 11] Now just pause for a moment and consider yourself in that situation. Somebody beats you, a court beats you and tells you not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore, but they respond in such a peculiar way, right, in such a taking up their cross and dying kind of a way.

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counterworthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And then listen to what they do, and every day in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

They did the very opposite thing of what they were charged to do because they understood that they were an army with a mission. And they worked both overtly and covertly. They went into the temple itself.

This was a public place of gathering and teaching, and they were heard proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, and they did it as well from house to house to house. This is our calling, beloved, in Christ.

It's up on the screen all the time. I think it's up there now. It is. It's in your bulletin. I want you to know the vision statement of our church. It's important that you know it.

[33 : 22] I was about a year ago, we were about to have our men's retreat here at the end of February. About a year ago, we were gone on our men's retreat, and a speaker, which was a good friend of Darrell Allison's, was there, and we were just talking about vision, and he's a pastor of a church, and I was talking about the vision statement of our church, and I told him what it was, and he goes, I really like that.

I'm like, yeah, we try to put it on stuff a lot. We really try to press that vision at people, and then I won't name the person, not here at all today, or would be, but he goes walking by, and I said, hey, tell him what our vision statement is, and he went, it starts Christ's family church, exists, and I'm like, okay, I guess I have some work to do concerning this.

It's wordy, I know, it's wordy, I know, Christ's family church exists to glorify God, the great high calling of all creation is to glorify God, in what way? By experience and proclaiming and displaying the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things to all peoples, actually knowing that it's true that Jesus Christ is supreme, that he has subjected all things to himself, that in his life, death, and resurrection, he has become better than everything else in this world, and that we know that to be true in our own experience, the reality in our lives, and we display that in the way that we live, and we certainly tell people about it.

Sometimes I wish I was experiencing, displaying, and proclaiming, because it makes more sense, but it sounds better, experiencing, proclaiming, and displaying the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things and to all people.

So in all things, in the midst of suffering, both the good times and the bad in our lives, and to everyone, every possible place, we can preach the good news of Jesus Christ.

[35 : 00] This is why Christ Family Church exists. I think we are a far cry from accomplishing this thing. Who is our Jerusalem, our Judea, and our Samaria?

Certainly we know what the end of the earth means. We get all peoples. I think you could argue much about the regional nature of this type of thing. Jerusalem could be our Dahlongega, and Judea could be the county surrounding us, and Samaria could be all of Georgia.

It doesn't really matter, though. We're meant to be going, is the point. We're meant to start where we are and continue to go. Let's just start with this. Last week I shared with you the three counties in which we live, and again I know that not all of you can see this, Hall, Lumpkin, Dawson counties. The dots here are Gainesville, Dahlongega, Dawsonville. My mind went totally blank. And the star, which probably looks like an amoeba to you, is where our church building is located, kind of central in these areas.

In this area there's 232,000 people. This is recent census data. It's probably gone up since then. The Chattahoochee Baptist Association, which we're a part of, estimates that 80% of this 232,000 people are unchurched.

[36 : 20] So this is self-reported people who attend church. It doesn't really specify denomination. I think that this is a very optimistic number as a result of that. Unchurched.

But let's use it as a starting point, just as a number to roll around in your head, that there are 185,600 people in these counties around us that in many ways we touch.

That there are our spheres, the little places that we run, the circles that we work and play and sleep in, those of you who live on campus. And there are people in that category that are dying and going to hell, eternal beings that matter immensely.

And it's our job to share the gospel with them. God is at work. He wants to save people. And I think that often he delays blessing because he wants to bless us.

He wants us to participate in the blessing of the gospel. He wants us to be obedient to his call. He wants to see us grow up in our faith and actually do the things that he's asked us to do that he might pour out blessing on us in immense ways.

[37 : 21] Now, what is the primary mode our church is going to work to this end? To being a people who are changed, to shift the culture, that our church is different, that we are all actively sharing our faith.

Certainly we want to do that on Sunday mornings. Anytime we gather together as a church, we should be doing this. We should be lifting high Jesus Christ. In my preaching, every sermon should be a gospel sermon. Every text of scriptures, scriptures, just cries out the gospel.

A rapper once said that all roads in the Bible lead to Galgotha. It's very true of the scriptures. This should be the case for us. You should hear it in everything that I'm saying.

Certainly it should be true in the way in which we sing, in the way in which we pray together. Our heart should be turned towards Christ as we meet together in this setting because this is in some degree consumeristic.

There's only so much interrelating and connecting with people you can do before and after the service. It is the nature of what we have. We don't have a big grand foyer where you can stand around and drink coffee in.

[38 : 29] We clog up the hall very effectively every Sunday morning trying to do that. Don't we? Go across the hall. It's better over there. But it's the nature of it. It's going to be true of it.

So what's the primary way we're going to do this? And that's going to be through community groups. Through community groups. It has always been the intention of our community groups to both build community with each other to reach community for that great end.

In fact, I'll suggest a name change this morning. I may try to work this into more that we're doing. Instead of calling them community groups, calling them community outreach groups. Because I think that we've lost in some sense that vision of what we're meant to be doing together.

Gathering together as a small unit of the greater army in order to accomplish the great gospel end of reaching our communities around us. Community outreach groups, this is the activity we're meant to be about together.

Now, we handed out, and I don't think we quite had enough for everybody, which I apologize for, but we handed out a sheet that has one another verses on it. I want you to grab that out if you have

one. If you don't have one, if someone's near you, share with somebody who doesn't have one.
[39 : 36] If you don't have one at all, it's okay. You're going to be all right. You're not going to miss out on everything not having this. But we would say in church that it's very important that we do the one another's of scripture, right?

If you've been around here for very long at all, you've heard me say that. I say it in passing quite often. What am I talking about? The one another's? It's these, all these things, all the places in which we're told how to interact with each other.

And these aren't the only places. Certainly there are other instructions given to us. Typically it's a repetition of many of the things that you read here that just don't have the phrase one another in it, right?

And those are good and valuable too. I'm not trying to elevate these in any way, but a pretty quick way we can identify the way we're meant to live together is to look at these one another verses.

The one another that's always being referred to as the people of God with each other, right? One person of God to another person of God. The way in which we're meant to relate together.

[40 : 35] I've highlighted some of them for you. Bold faced them for you. John 13, 14. If I then, your Lord and teachers, as Jesus talking, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

Not literally, figuratively serving in this way. We're meant to serve one another. Do lowly jobs for one another. John 15, 12. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Jesus loved us to the point of death on the cross. Romans 12, 16. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.

Never be wise in your own sight. Romans 16, 16. Greet one another with a holy kiss. This was a family affection to kiss a family member.

And the church had begun doing this as people were being kicked out of their families. They would greet each other as a faith family, as Kyle always says, and it became known as a holy kiss. I'm not suggesting that we kiss one another, but we ought to greet each other as family.

[41 : 38] Like, we ought to be pulling people in the way you should with a family member. All the churches of Christ greet you. 1 Corinthians 11, 33. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

Galatians 6, 2. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5, 11.

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Hebrews 3, 13. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Skip down, I'll come back to Hebrews 10.

James 5, 16. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

This is the way we're meant to function together, beloved, and you can't do it simply showing up on a Sunday morning, finding your seat, getting up, and walking back out.

[42 : 47] For those of you who are highly involved here, does it bother you that you don't know everyone's name this morning? It bothers me to no end. It drives me crazy that I don't even recognize some of your faces.

That might be because it's your first time here this morning. It may not be because you slip in, and you hang out in the hall for a little while, and you sit down, you get up, and you go, and I never have a chance to shake your hand and to learn your name.

And for those of you who know me, you know that it takes me a couple times of doing that to remember who you are. It drives me crazy. Are you a person who doesn't feel known? You feel like you're falling through the cracks?

This is not the setting to be known in. It's difficult to do that. This is not too many people to know, but we just have to be able to take the time to get to know you. How do you do that?

You've got to do it in a different setting. You've got to do it in a different setting. And so all these functions, these one another's, are the way in which the church lives together.

[43 : 50] So the question for you is, do you really love the church? Do you love the people of the church, or do you love programs and buildings and maybe a pastor, or do you love people?

If we love Christ, we will love what he loves. And Jesus loves the church. Ephesians 5.25 says, Christ loved the church and he gave himself up for her.

Jesus loved the church because Jesus purchased the church. Acts 20.28 says, pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he, being Christ, obtained with his own blood.

He loves the church because he purchased the church, and Jesus himself identifies with the church. In Acts 9.4, remember Saul, soon to be Paul's blinding experience on the road.

Acts 9.4 says, and Saul, falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? If we love Christ, we're going to love what he loves.

[45 : 04] And this is the church. We love the church because it's the gospel means, it's a picture of the gospel, it's this expression of God's grace.

Every one of you who is found in Christ is so precious because you're a picture of the gospel at work. You're a picture of the transforming power of the gospel. I love it. One of my favorite things that we do as a church is we get testimonies for new members, and I get to read them, and I get to read these wonderful stories of God's redemptive work in the lives of individuals.

It is a pleasure to me. And the drive of all of this is we're loving one another, as we're pressing at one another, as we're bearing one another's burdens, is so that, so that we will be going.

That's not the end itself, that all of your emotional issues get healed, but so that they do, so that you can go and share the good news of Jesus Christ, so that the transforming power of the work is alive in your life, and that you can go and bring it about in the lives of others.

Let me read to you again Hebrews 10, 24 and 25. That is back on your sheet, if you care to look.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.

[46 : 17] not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near. So this is the drive of that together.

You need to be involved, involved, participating, marching with a local congregation. We love to have you here, so hear me clearly. We are so thankful that you're here, but it doesn't have to be here.

We care first and foremost about the kingdom of God. We care so deeply about the gospel and about our Jesus. It's good news.

It's about Him. And if you want to go march with another congregation, just go do it. Just be marching. Just be involved. Engage yourself in the life of a church.

If you're here, I hope it's because you enjoy being here, and I hope it's because you want to be here for the right reasons, and if you're not already involved to the degree that you should be, I would invite you to do that very thing.

[47 : 19] Get more involved in the activity of our church. If you are not involved in a community group, and you say that you're part of the life of this church, you need to be involved in a community group. You need to engage in that way.

Members, let me remind you of the covenant you signed when you became a member of this church. There are seven commitments that you made in that covenant to this congregation.

Four of those seven have to do with the way in which we live with one another. The second one, to love my family, the church, and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Are you giving yourself opportunity to preach the gospel to the church? Because we need to hear it. These ideas aren't staying alive in our minds by themselves. We need you. You're important. You have an expression.

You have the spirit of God. You have a perspective that we need to hear. We need to hear the gospel come out of your mouth for the sake of our hearts. The third one, to promote the edification and sanctification of the church, the building up and the purifying of the church, by sharing God's work in my life and praying for the church.

[48 : 33] If you're only coming here on Sunday morning, you cannot do that. There is no way to do that activity. Number five, to hold myself and the brethren to the standard of scripture, submitting myself freely to the discipline of the church for my restoration and spiritual gain.

Do people know the struggles that are going on in your life? Are people bringing correction to you because you're sharing with them what's happening? Are you hiding away? Are you closeted off? It's not healthy. And then sixthly, to contribute to the work of the church with my talents, my time, and my finances.

There is time in your week to do this. We're only asking two things of you. We do many activities as a church, but the two things we want to see you involved with are Sunday mornings and with a

community group.

And it pains me a little bit to say this, but I will say it because I believe it. If you can have to choose between one or the other, get involved with a community group. Get involved with a community group.

You've got that week, students, that there's just no way you're getting it done. If you do not lose something in the week, spend some time and study. Don't show up on Sunday morning. I think the community groups rightly done are going to be infinitely more valuable for you.

[49 : 47] There's so much more to be gained sitting down with people, studying the scriptures, opening up your life, being honest. Love to see you at both. I think both have important places in your life, but if you've got to choose, I'd ask you to choose community groups.

They're that important. We must do this. If you're a member of this church and you're not actively involved in a community group, you need to be. If you are unwilling to be, then things are going to get uncomfortable for you around here.

Because I'm going to bother you and bother you and bother you until you decide to get involved in a group. Or you decide that you'd rather just go someplace where consumption is okay.

You just want to go sit. That's fine. If you have committed to us, to this covenant, I have a responsibility to you. And I love you much too much to not serve you in this way.

Wednesday night is when all of our community groups meet right now. Wednesday is not a holy day. It just happens to be kind of the middle of the week. Sunday is not a holy day for that matter.

[50 : 53] It's the middle of the week, which for most people works out really good. We get to meet with people of God on Sunday. We meet with people of God again on Wednesday. It helps push us through. If you're not available on a Wednesday evening, come let me know that.

Man, we want you to be involved. So much so that we'll try to start a group just to meet your schedule. You don't want to meet in the evening. Evening times are not good for you. I understand, man.

After dinner, my graph goes like this, my energy level through the day. But then when dinner hits, it goes like this. Once I get food in me after dinner, I'm really wrapping it up pretty quickly.

If that's rough for you, I'm sure we could get a group going that meets at 6 a.m. I don't know. There you go. It's vital and it's important.

And here's the thing. It's your joy. It's your growth that's at stake here. But the thing that bothers me, the thing that presses at me about this, the thing that frustrates me about this is not so much you.

[51 : 58] And I hope that doesn't come off as super unloving, but it's this. It's that I want to see this change. And I need your help. I can't accomplish sharing the gospel with all 185,600 of these people, but I think that we, through a movement of the spirit, can.

So we have to get active and involved. The responsibility level is much higher with the proper diagram view of what the church looks like.

You have a part to play. You have a responsibility to your spirit, those people that you work with and are involved with. And I think that the best way, as a church, we can encourage that and support and equip you for that is through community groups.

And that's why we do them. That's the very reason that we gather. Not because we've invented some extra thing. There's a lot of trendy stuff that's going on right now about small groups and the debate over Sunday school.

people and they call all kinds of things is ridiculous. The point being that we're gathering together in smaller groups of people who can do so many things that we can't do in this setting.

[53 : 07] Those one another's of scripture. We need to be working those things out together for the great sake of the gospel and our joy in it. Let's pray together.

Let's pray together.