

Week 6 Faith Formation in a Secular World: Study Series, Brentwood Hills Church of Christ, fall 2018
“MINISTRY AS THE MUSIC OF OUR LIVES: FINDING MY UNIQUE PURPOSE IN GOD’S WORK”

MADE ALIVE IN CHRIST! Ephesians 2:1-10

- We were dead when living for other things (transgressions and sins)
- This is how we lived when we followed the ways of the world...
- We all lived that way, living for the things of this world, finding our identity in things other than Christ. Whatever our bodies told us we needed, we did
- God, with great love and mercy – brought us back to life, seating us right next to him because of Christ Jesus.
- God is using us to show the world how great his love is, his kindness.
- Grace saves us, we accept it by faith – this great gift! We do not earn it, how could we? We certainly don’t boast as if we did earn it.
- FOR – we are God’s handcrafted masterpieces, created in Christ Jesus to do just what God prepared for us to do when God knit together our DNA...
- JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. HE CAME TO REDEEM US!

SOME BIG PRESUPPOSITIONS!

- We are not who we are by an accident of biology.
- Might it be that we are not where we are by accident? We are called to be God’s hands wherever we are. 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 informs us God’s call doesn’t necessarily change our status – we are called right where we are...
- We all have a purpose in the body of Christ – we are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4 and following).
- The purpose of the church is to help us find our place in God’s redemptive narrative. It takes all of us working together to accomplish God’s purposes in the world (we’ll discuss this more fully next week).
- Each of us reflects the image of God in a unique way. We were created to glorify God by using our gifts to accomplish God’s work in the world...
- Therefore, “in Christ you have been brought to fullness” (Colossians 2:10)

CALLED TO BE WHERE YOU ARE?

- We are sent as Jesus was sent (John 17) to bear witness that there is only one God – only one real reason to live.
- There is only one Messiah – Jesus IS the way, the truth, and the life. Life (coming to the Father, Creator) can be found in no other narrative...
- What did Philip do for the Ethiopian? (Acts 8)
- How often are we placed alongside confused travelers?
- What is our role? To be prepared to listen, encourage, love...
- How? What study method should I learn? I do not feel equipped to teach...
- Here is the good news. Be who God created you to be, but be fully committed to participation in the work of Jesus through you...

A FASCINATING PICTURE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST – 1 CORINTHIANS 12

- Different by design: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-6; 11.
 - Different gifts – same Spirit
 - Different kinds of ministry – same Lord

- Different kinds of working – but in all, same God at work
- We are invited into the “cosmic dance” of the true Triune God – through serving consistent with the Spirit’s gifting.
- The early church didn’t approach ministry as we do – it was not an action independent of their lives – it was their purpose for living...
- Foot, “I am not a hand” or ear, “I am not an eye” – no less significant.
- Eye to hand “I don’t need you”
- NO! Even parts that “seem” to be weaker are honored.
- Indispensable human need? To be needed, to be valued...

WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN GOD’S WORK?

- “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12, 13)
- Salvation is by grace through faith, not of our doing (Ephesians 2), but we have a role in becoming everything God has created us to be...
- The church is where we are equipped (next week’s study), prepared to give away that with which we have been entrusted...
- Ministry means to be a “go between.” We have received in order to give away (remember – *kenosis* is the way to a life of true *shalom*)
- Access who you are. Study ways in which to recognize your personal giftedness. This is NOT working out of your personal strengths, but out of your God entrusted gifts and abilities.

MISSIONAL METAPHORS...

Paul to Corinthians (second letter):

- You are the aroma of Christ (2:14-17) – not a “peddler.”
- You are the reflection of the glory of God in Christ (through the Spirit of God dwelling within) as you contemplate the Lord’s glory (3:12-18).
- You hold this magnificent treasure (the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ) in fragile jars of clay – to show the all-surpassing power is from God and not us (4:4-7).
- Christ’s love compels us – we no longer live for ourselves but for him – as ministers of reconciliation. We are ambassadors of peace. (5:14-21)
- “As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain” (6:1)
- Develop a missional imagination – prepare yourself for the battle (6:3-10)

HOMEWORK...

- Study the enneagram or some other personality or gifts measuring device. Know yourself better.
- Acknowledge the gifts entrusted to you – what do you do that makes your heart beat fast?
- Meditate on the blessings you have received and celebrate the person God has created you to be.
- Discuss with others what they see in you...
- Pray for an understanding of how God might use you exactly where you are.
- Pray Paul’s prayer for guidance – Colossians 4:2-6.
- Be ALERT to God’s work in the lives around you. LIVE FOR GOD’S PURPOSES!
- AUGUST RUSH: You have a song to sing – find your instrument of expression!