

“The Wealth of True Community”

True Riches #7

INTRODUCTION

This week we conclude our “True Riches” sermon series with “The Wealth of True Community.” From the earliest days of the church, the Christian life has been characterized by the fellowship of believers (*koinōnia*). When we commit our lives to Christ, we are called to turn from our selfish ways and follow Him. We see from 1 John 1:7 that when we are in fellowship with the Father and the Son we are also in fellowship with other believers. In fact Paul’s epistles are filled with direction on how to live in community with one another. In this study we look at the building blocks to Christian community.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Are you closest to your co-workers, your neighbors, or your friends from church?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

The Commitment to Grow

Q1. Read Philippians 1:7-10; Romans 12:9-10; Ephesians 4:15-16

When he addressed the church at Philippi, Paul not only expressed his deep affection for them, he also prayed that their love would grow with knowledge of God and spiritual discernment. Why did Paul want the Philippians to grow in love? (Philippians 1:10) To the Roman church he appealed for love reflected by honoring others. Do you feel the honor we show others is a valid reflection of our love for them? What are some ways that we honor or dishonor others? And to the Ephesians, Paul explains the interconnectedness of the body of believers. Have you experienced growth as part of a growing body of believers? If so, share that experience with your group.

The Willingness to Be Real

Q2. Read Proverbs 25:11-12; Proverbs 27:6; Ephesians 4:15

God wants us to be honest with one another, but truth has its challenges. If you are in fellowship with other believers, it takes time to develop a “relational bridge that can hold the weight of truth.” Proverbs 25 tells us a word spoken fitly, that is, in the right circumstance, is of great value. But in Proverbs 27 we see that it can hurt to be openly shown our faults, even when delivered by a friend. What very important attitude should be motivating us to speak hard truths into the lives of our brothers? (Ephesians 4:15) What other attitudes do we need to keep in check?

The Resolve to Stay

Q3. Read Romans 12:16; Romans 12:3-5; 1 Corinthians 12:21-25; Philippians 2:3-4; John 17:11, 23

Being part of a close community of believers takes commitment. In Romans 12:16, Paul encourages us to live in harmony, without being conceited or prideful. That’s difficult to do. Romans 12:3-5 warns us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. How does keeping a correct view of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:21-25) give us the reason to stay connected to one another, even when it is difficult to do so? How does living out Philippians 2:3-4 reflect Christ living in us? When believers live in unity, what does the world see? (John 17:23)

The Readiness to Serve

Q4. Read Ephesians 2:8-10; Galatians 6:9-10; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

You have probably heard that God has a plan for your life, but do you know what that plan includes? What does Ephesians 2:10 tell us is part of God’s plan for all of us? One very important way we can bless others in need is by offering them comfort and support in hard times. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) What are some other good works that you can do for your “family of faith?” What are some of the ways that other believers have blessed you?

WRAP-UP

God created us to be members of the body of Christ and the family of faith. In His Word we find instruction on how to live in true Christian Community. In community we grow together in love for God and one another. As we grow together, we establish trust that translates to a strong enough bond to be real, and speak the hard truths that need to be said. But we must guard our hearts so that we are motivated by love, not pride or arrogance. Maintaining harmony in the family of believers requires effort and humility. But when we are one, the world sees Christ’s love shining through us. And that love translates to acts of service to one another; good works that comfort and bless others just as we ourselves have been comforted and blessed.

Memory Verse

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:7

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more space) _____

Challenge

Schedule time with one or two others from your group this week to enjoy their company and to offer a special blessing of comfort, or encouragement.

1 John 1:7 ESV - 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Q1 Read Philippians 1:7-10 in your Bible

Romans 12:9-10 ESV - 9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Ephesians 4:15-16 ESV - 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Q2 Proverbs 25:11-12 ESV - 11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. 12 Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprovener to a listening ear.

Proverbs 27:5-6 ESV - 5 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Ephesians 4:15 ESV - 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Q3 Romans 12:16 ESV - 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

Romans 12:3-5 ESV - 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-25 in your Bible

Philippians 2:3-4 ESV - 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

John 17:11, 23 ESV - 11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ... 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Q4

Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus for good works*, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Galatians 6:9-10 ESV - 9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, *so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction*, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Prayer requests con't _____
