



UNLEASHED
Unleashing Community
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Discussion Notes
The Crossing Church
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OPENING

This week we are continuing our series called “Unleashed.” So often, the biggest thing keeping us from the life God has for us is actually us. What would it look like if we, as a church and as individuals, fully unleashed God’s purpose in our lives? What if we pursued God fully and prayed completely over that pursuit? We are on a journey to discover what living an unleashed life looks like as God uses prayer to release His power in us. Our goal is to spiritually re-engage our hearts and souls and realign with God after the distractions of the summer.

SCRIPTURE¹

Genesis 1:26a Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.”

Genesis 2:18 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

OBSERVATION

We cannot achieve our full personal and spiritual potential apart from community. God created us in His image and we know that He is a God of fellowship. We see this most profoundly in the Holy Trinity. He said, “Let us make mankind in our image.” The triune God, consisting of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, functions in our lives as the Father, Creator, and Sustainer; the Son as Savior and Redeemer; the Holy Spirit as Comforter, Teacher, and Conscience. So God has given us the model to follow: that we are to exist and serve in communities of Christians who live to discover the will of God in their lives. Early Christians worshiped together in the temple courts. They were in fellowship and studied together in individual homes. They served together in the streets of their cities. They gave of their own possessions in order to give to those in need and they shared their faith and experience with Jesus so that others might share in heaven.

Question: Doesn’t this time sound wonderfully fulfilling and exciting? Compare it to today’s Christian life experience. How is it different/the same?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

APPLICATION

Community is the very essence of God. We see Jesus teaching His lessons of living a Christ-centered life as He traveled with His twelve close friends for three years. They were colorful characters from varied backgrounds who became as close as brothers because they all believed in Jesus.

Question: Who, in your life, has become like a brother or sister because of joining together in Christian fellowship?

Community is a critical part of God's plan for our lives. We meet on Sundays for worship, instruction, and fellowship. We sing songs of praise together as our hearts are opened to the glory of our Almighty God. This is an expression of gratitude toward Him. But there is a shift taking place all over our country toward people coming to church less and less often. Even in our own church we find that, on average, Crossing people attend services once a month!

Question: How often are you attending church each month? Are you content with your answer and what it may mean to your Christian faith? If not, what can you do to attend church more often?

This is an astonishing statistic when we consider that it is difficult to grow in faith when we fellowship together so seldom. We lose the worshiping together experience and we lose the encouragement of others and the meeting of needs that takes place in fellowship. Our greatest spiritual growth happens when we are connected with other followers of Jesus who help form and stretch us and encourage and inspire us.

Question: Name for us the last five people who have influenced your Christian walk. How did each one of them do this? What are you doing for the Christian walk of others?

Additionally, God's design to fully follow Jesus occurs in a circle. The row in church meets the needs of a Sunday morning service, but the circle of a small group opens us up to discussion, sharing, and caring for one another. They take the form of Bible studies, or groups that go deeper into the Sunday morning message and encourage introspection, or discussions about living the Christian experience, or in service to our communities.

Question: What is keeping you from joining a small group or from fully engaging in its activities?

Question: If you belong to a small group during the week, what is the focus of your group? What do you contribute to it?

Question: Some of us have been in a group before, but have left it after the first seven week study. If this is you, why did you not reconnect with that group? What would it take for you to rejoin?

We often avoid small groups out of fear that we won't belong or that it will require too much personal sharing so we keep people at a distance. But we need to take ownership of that fear in order to grow spiritually. Our church can't grow if we are not fully committed to the concept of fellowship and sharing and giving and serving together. God uses the people we encounter there to transform our lives.

Question: What would encourage you to host a study for the Open Doors experience that begins in two weeks?

Question: What plans do you have for engaging in an Open Doors study group?

Question: As you watch the unfolding of disaster in Texas this week, what is our God of compassion saying to you about contributing to the rebuilding effort?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, when we reflect on the early church and the disciples' exciting experiences in fellowship, we sometimes wish our joy to be like theirs. Help us to reignite that community in our lives as we seek to enrich our Christian experience and service. In Jesus' name. Amen.