

SESSION 4 NOTES

Community: The Context for Change

(Philippians 2:1-11) 1 Peter 2:9-12

God's purpose throughout history is to glorify Himself by forging a new community that pursues Him (1 Peter 2:9).

- A holy nation — We are to be different and distinct from the world and the people around us. This will show the world what everything could be under the Kingship of Jesus Christ. We do this by bringing everything we do into conformity with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- A royal priesthood — We should be bringing people to God by being deeply involved in the lives of the world and the people around us.

To summarize, we need to be distinct from the world, for the world.

As priests, we cannot go out into our daily lives in the world with the same values and mindset as everyone else confine our spiritual lives to the weekends, but we must respond to the glory of God in every area of our lives.

1. You cannot know God apart from community.

Jesus and His disciples had close communion with one another in every way on a regular basis. Furthermore, when God summons you into a relationship with Himself, He also always summons you into a relationship with a new community. Just showing up at church isn't being in a community; it's being in a crowd.

2. You cannot change deeply apart from community.

Our character is mainly shaped by the people with whom we eat, play, converse, and take counsel. Therefore, it is our primary social community that makes us what we are at the deepest level. Before we experienced the grace of God, everything we do is out of self-interest; we attempt to derive our self-worth out of whatever we engage in. The gospel changes that; it changes all my relationships! Only gospel-shaped people are enabled to form deep community; only in deep community can we become gospel-shaped people. So, if we want the gospel to change us, we must share life together—honor one another, serve one another, encourage one another, accept one another, admonish one another, bear with one another, teach one another, be hospitable to one another, love one another, etc.

3. You cannot win the world apart from community.

Community is not merely the result of the gospel; it is also part of the gospel, for it declares and communicates the gospel. For example, within community, we show the world how distinctly we think

about money, sex, and power. We show that the gospel turns those issues into life-giving things. Furthermore, we are able to show how the gospel's power to humble us, affirm us, and give us a new identity brings us together with people that we would otherwise never be with. Community communicates the power of the gospel.

Jesus prayed for this power of community in His high priestly prayer (John 17:23). The quality of our community is the real secret to our mission.