



New Creation

Dec 3: Created To Be The Church

Series Summary: As a believer in Jesus, all who have professed Christ should know you are saved by faith in Him, with a confidence of eternal security. Yet, for many, there still lies a tension between what is read about their faith in the scriptures compared to what they see play out in their habits and day-to-day living. It's possible that many still struggle with a disconnect between their understanding of the Gospel in faith and its practical application. To fully understand the difference the Gospel has the potential to make in every area of our lives.

Big Idea: We are used to attending church weekly. We're used to going through the motions of what a church service is like. However, we need to understand what it means to BE the Church, rather than simply attend church.

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Lead in: One of the greatest details that I've noticed about this student ministry is that we see so many of the same faces weekly, and that's a great thing to celebrate! Church attendance is very important, but there is ultimately a difference between attending church, and actively being the Church.

THE VISION

In Acts chapter 2, we see the beginning of the Christian Church. Pay attention to their actions and the purpose behind these actions.

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46** 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, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

In 5 verses we see the importance of "attendance" 5 times.

- "Fellowship", "All the believers were together", "every day they continued to meet together", "They broke bread in their homes and ate together", "enjoying the favor of all the people."
- The "attendance" is obviously important, however there is intentionality to the attendance.

What we call "going to church" should be something that means much more to us than just simply an attendance aspect...This should be a culture and a lifestyle.

- Our small groups, and really our church in general, should have a culture that we desire to invite other people to join.
- This isn't to simply have higher attendance, but the purpose is seen in vs 47- "**And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**"
- We should desire to set a culture in our small groups and our ministry where those who don't know Jesus see and experience something different through our members. This starts with everyone who is a believer in Jesus to play their part.
- I also want to look at what it means to be the Church towards other believers as well...

THE CHURCH IN OUR SMALL GROUPS

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** 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.

Even here in Hebrews it encourages attendance, but it still encourages something deeper...spurring one another on towards love and good deeds, and encouraging one another.

If you know the “right answer” in small group discussion then that’s awesome, but small group is more than just knowing the right answer. The right answers should lead to life change, and encouraging one another in where the discussion leads.

- Don’t treat our time in groups like it’s school. It’s not about trying to sound the smartest.
- It’s about creating discussion to create a culture that spurs one another along in our faiths.

Does your group look and sound like what we read tonight? Laughing and joking with each other is great, I love to hear laughter in our church...but do you intentionally pray with others in your group? Do you care more about simply having the right or good answers? Do you see it as worth encouraging others, and receiving encouragement from others? Is the culture in your group one that a newcomer would want to come back to?

From these church walls, take it everywhere you go. The discussion and worship that goes on in this building shouldn’t just stay here. It needs to go out into our communities.

- Apply the discussion daily to your life, so that way you can be a Godly influence amongst other brothers and sisters in Christ
- Apply the discussion so that those who don’t know Jesus may see Him through your life.
- This should ultimately lead to all of us living out the two greatest calls on our lives: to live out the Great Commission, and to love God and love others.

Transition to groups: We’re going to discuss more in-depth these two passages that we just read about in this message. The goal for small groups is for us to see that our groups are about spurring each other along, and encouraging one another to live out fruitful faiths.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

For tonight's small group we're going to unpack the same passages that were mentioned in the message. Unpacking these messages will help the students see how important small group/church culture, and being an active part of the Church, truly is.

Get Them Talking: In your own words, how does it differ between simply attending church and being the Church (the body of Christ)?

What good is it if we know the right answers to the questions, but don't live out what we discuss?

READ ACTS 2:42-47 AS A GROUP

What stands out to you about the people and their actions/lifestyles in the early Church?

Leader Note: They weren't just simply sitting around each other out of coincidence- they were intentionally doing life with one another. This was their goal. They spent their time with each other with a purpose in mind. This purpose being to live by Godly example with the hope of nonbelievers coming to know Jesus through their practices.

Why should that last sentence stand out to us? ("And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.") Especially when tying it to the verses before it?

Leader Note: "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" should be our greatest hope. We put the right and good answers that are said in group into practice with the prayer that others would know Jesus through us. In a similar vein of this verse, when a newcomer comes into our group we should hope that they see Jesus through our example and our culture. It should be enlightening to a newcomer. There should be a Godly impact that we have on each other, rather than just going through the motions of small group. Everything that we say and do as Christians should come with the hope that those who do not know Jesus would see Him through our example.

READ HEBREWS 10:24-25 AS A GROUP

Why is it important that a group of believers spur each other along and constantly encourage one another?

Leader Note: The importance lies in the fact that the Church is supposed to operate as a whole. Paul makes this case in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 where he states that all believers have their own individual role, but are essential for each other. Paul says like how the

human body needs every part to work together in order to function properly, so does the body of Christ. In terms of spurring each other on and encouraging one another, all of us are going to face hardships, struggles, and low moments in our faith- we need each other and a healthy church culture to help us in those moments.

What does it take in order to encourage one another in our small group about what we discuss?

Leader Note: In order to live out both Acts 2 and Hebrews 10, it boils down to intentionality and a desire to love like Christ.

What can this group do, or take steps in, to become more like the passages that we've unpacked tonight?

Introspective Question: Am I here weekly to simply answer correctly? Or am I here to play an active part in being the Church and to help set a Godly culture in this group?