

New Self/Old Self

January 29, 2017

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Ephesians 3:14-21

(Here is a passage to help your group as you worship. You can go through it together or in groups in meditation and/or in prayer)

Read Paul's prayer for the growth of the church of Ephesus using the prayer practice of Lectio Divina. Read the passage aloud 3 times. After each reading, spend a few minutes reflecting. After the first reading, open yourself to the presence of God. On the second reading, listen for a certain word or phrase that stands out to you. On the third reading, listen to what God's invitation might be to you. Take a moment to let people share what they experienced during this time.

Icebreaker

Have you ever had to break or institute a habit? What was the process like?

Text for Discussion: Ephesians 4:22-24

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

Why do we so often feel fragmented, scattered, always in a hurry, yet somehow always behind? Competing voices wage war within us, meaning we're not nearly as rational as we presume while our true motivations often elude us. The truth is we are divided between what the Bible calls the *Old Self* and the *New Self*. Deep down, we know this is true. Our lives are being corrupted by the lie that we can find happiness by living our way rather than God's. But living into this lie emerges in completely understandable ways: We seek acceptance to protect ourselves and to earn approval. Over time, its voice becomes so familiar that it doesn't feel false. We forget that we don't have to live this way.

What makes us want to be free of the old self? Some of us finally attain the success we've always yearned for... only to realize it doesn't satisfy us. Others are disappointed at the mess we've made in our lives. A chasm separates the life we've dreamed of and the reality we are living. The old self has corroded our lives, and we are ready to be free of it. God offers a new life where our security and significance are no longer bound to the work of our hands. The original lie in the Garden of Eden was that we could be like God without God; the truth is that *with* God we can become what we were made to be: like Him in true righteousness and holiness.

We don't always believe we were made for this. It may sound burdensome or even unappealing. We forget that God is much more willing to forgive than we are to sin. Holiness is not an achievement of self-discipline, though discipline will be needed. It is not a reward of new habits, though new habits are necessary. It is a gift we are invited to receive and a new way of being we are called to grow up into.

What does putting on the new self look as a church?

We want to be a Deep Community. We want to take the words of Jesus seriously – to sincerely strive toward maturity as Christians, living out the Kingdom of God in LA. Our ultimate loyalty is to Jesus because our hope is set on Him. And for this reason, we are not afraid.

We want to be a Wide Community. Jesus has a passion and compassion for lost people. And so we seek to be a place where lost, broken, hurting and needy people feel safe. A wide community is warm, welcoming, hospitable, vulnerable and authentic, caring about justice and the poor.

We want to be a Whole Community. We want to appear as we are – incomplete and unfinished – and to have a posture of wholeheartedness. We seek to be humble listeners and a community that welcomes people

before they agree, because we are founded upon One who welcomed us before we agreed with Him, while we were yet enemies.

We want to be a Healing Community. We endeavor to be healed of our old self, realizing that while this might feel like death, we are being weaned from those deceitful desires that corrupt us. A healing community is one full of grace and truth – both and in that order. First comes God’s indiscriminate and undeserved love, followed by the truth that each of us must put off this old self so we may become like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Jesus calls us to new life – one that is deep, wide, whole and healing threaded together by love. This isn’t an idealistic dream. It is God’s will and what we were made for. It is the cure for our exhaustion with our old way of living, offering wholeness through whole-hearted devotion to Christ.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

**How can I cooperate with God to see my life with Jesus become DEEP, WIDE, WHOLE and HEALING?
How can I do this in community with others?**

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

Let the group know that this session will be about digging into the concepts of DEEP, WIDE, WHOLE and HEALING that were talked about as pictures of “putting on the new self” and our vision as a church for 2017.

- 1) DEEP
 - Read Rom 11:33-36 and Phil 1:9-11. “How would you describe some of the depths of God we are to enter into based on these words?”
- 2) WIDE
 - Read Matt 28:18-20. What does it mean to “make disciples”? Does this include both Christians and non-Christians?
 - What are some common obstacles that non-Christians face when considering faith? How can we as a community be “wider” in engaging with those obstacles?
- 3) WHOLE
 - Read Luke 7:36-39. How did Jesus encourage wholeness in this woman through his reaction to her? How did the Pharisees discourage it?
- 4) HEALING
 - Read Luke 4:16-21. How does Jesus’ first declaration of “his gospel” point out his priorities in regards to healing? How can we make these things more of a priority as Jesus’ followers?

Guiding Question Exercise

- Let everyone know that the guiding question for this session is this: **How can I cooperate with God to see my life with Jesus become DEEP, WIDE, WHOLE and HEALING? How can I do this in community with others?**
- Hand out index cards to each person. Ask each person to take a moment to pick one of the words (deep, wide, whole, healing) and write down one specific thought from the discussion that really jumped out at them.
- Next, ask each one to write down one specific action they can take this week in order to take a next step forward towards the ideal of the word they chose. Ask them to write down one sentence about how doing this in community with the church could help them.

Praying for One Another

(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)

- Have everyone read what is on their card.
- Pray for each other based on what people have written down.
- Ask each person to hand their index card to the person on their right. Have them keep the cards all week in order to pray for those specific requests for each other in the coming week.

The Relationship Project

Do you want to revolutionize relationships within your CG? Is there a desire to cultivate healthy relationships in your personal life (i.e. marriage, friendship, dating, family, work, etc.)? We invite you to join the Hargraves on Saturday, Feb 4 (9am-12pm) as they illuminate the reasons for, and solution to, the relationship patterns that make us feel stuck and hopeless. This will be an interactive time of gaining new insights into healthy relationships of all kinds. Your CG can even attend this event together! Register here:

<https://pacificcrossroads.tpsdb.com/OnlineReg/708>