

Sermon Reflection & Discussion Questions - April 26, 2020

"You have tension, conflict, and divisiveness in your relationships with each other. You're not unified, and it grieves my heart that wounding each other doesn't seem to bother you. Stop turning on each other, and hurting each other. Repent of your self-centeredness, and by God's grace humble yourselves by serving others, the way Jesus did."

How do we promote unity in community? We ask the Spirit to put to death our selfishness and pride, and we replace it with the mind of Christ, a selfless servant who humbled himself by putting the needs of others ahead of his own.

1. Cultivate a humble heart by constantly reminding yourself that like Paul, you are the chief of sinners, and that only by God's grace have you been made acceptable to God. (I. Tim 1:15)
2. Humbly submit yourself to God's Word in every engagement you have with others. Resist the temptation to see others as a stepping stone to be exploited, or an inconvenience to be avoided. Don't allow your "agenda", "ego" , or "plan" to run over others who are getting in your way. Ask God to give you a genuine, lasting affection for God's people. (Mark 10:41-45)
3. Guard your tongue, by refusing to gossip or speak unlovingly about a fellow believer. The tongue does more damage to unity than anything else (James 3:6).
4. Learn to listen carefully, lovingly, and patiently. Conflict often stems from not listening intently, and empathizing with the person speaking. Poor listeners communicate that they don't really care what the other person is saying. (James 1:19)
5. Refuse to consider yourself "so busy", or your time "so valuable", or your schedule "so important", that you can't stop and serve someone in need, no matter how small or inconvenient. See interruptions to your day as opportunities that God is sending your way. (Luke 10:25-37)
6. By God's grace, die to the desires of your heart that long to hear people sing your praises. Repent of lusting after the approval and commendations of others, the exaltation of self, the recognition you must have to feel good about yourself. Learn to love being unknown, unrecognized, and unrewarded. (Luke 17:10)
7. Humbly celebrate the victories of others, without any jealousy or complaining rising up in your heart. Resist the urge to "one up" them by sharing your greater victories and turning the spotlight on yourself. If they rejoice, rejoice with them. If they suffer, suffer with them. (I Cor. 12:26)
8. Learn to receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, humbly submitting outwardly and inwardly, finding no resentment or rebellion rising up within your heart. (Proverbs 9:8)