

john 15:4
A b i d e in **ME**



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

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LIVING IN THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S WILL:
Understanding what God is doing and responding to His call
Ephesians 1:9-10, Colossians 1:9-12, Isaiah 6:1-8 & Romans 12:1-2

THIS WEEK'S CORE PRACTICE

God Space: Disciples of Jesus Christ regularly seek to increase the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

James Rudd is the lead pastor of True Vine Church Community in Philadelphia, PA and below in an excerpt from his article entitled "Missional Living."

It seems that no matter what form of ministry we are in, we will always be challenged to make the Christian faith relevant to those we minister to. However, we must take care not to strive for relevance at the expense of faithfulness. True apostolic Christianity requires both.

Recently, a new word has emerged to describe how modern Christians should relate to the rest of the world: "missional." In his book *Planting Missional Churches*, Ed Stetzer states: "Missional means adopting the posture of a missionary, learning and adapting to the culture around you while remaining biblically sound. Think of it this way: missional means being a missionary without ever leaving your zip code." While living missionally may not require us to leave our zip code, it does require us to leave the confines of our homes and church buildings. Core to a biblical philosophy of missions is the conviction that we should "go and tell." However, most church outreaches operate with a "come and see" mentality. One has to ask, if we didn't have church buildings, could most of our attempts at outreach survive?

Church father Tertullian, in a statement directed toward the Roman Empire, wrote: "We have filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, marketplaces, the very camps, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum. We have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods." Ray Bakke, in *A Theology as Big as the City*, comments on Tertullian's statement: "Early Christians penetrated the whole city, but not by claiming space for church buildings or programs of their own. They penetrated everybody else's space instead." Could this be what Jesus meant when He called His followers the "salt of the earth?"

Finally, by serving as missionaries within our own zip code we recognize that while some may be called to reach Judea and Samaria, many more are called to reach Jerusalem.

What are some practical steps we can take? Below are practices that have been fruitful as our church seeks to be alive missionally:

- Rather than joining a church softball league, try joining a public league. Better yet, flood a public league with people from your church.
- Pastors, commit to spending at least one workday a week outside of the church. Find a library or other public area to do things like return e-mails, write reports or study. Even if you don't make any connections, you'll get some great "real-life" sermon material.
- Do one-on-one discipleship training in a public area like a restaurant or coffee shop. You'd be surprised how many nosy people will interrupt your conversations. Of course, you need to be willing to be interrupted. These surprise encounters could lead to some interesting "on the job" discipleship training experiences.
- Ever wonder where early Christians gathered before church buildings existed? They met in homes. Try decentralizing your church ministry and moving it into the community.
- Rather than reinventing the wheel by starting "Christian" community organizations, join existing service groups and witness for Christ while volunteering.

- Become a “regular” somewhere. Find a restaurant, coffee shop or other business to patronize weekly. Try to learn the employees’ names; maybe they will even learn yours.
- Rent your facilities to a community organization. This can be risky, but it’s a great way to build bridges and break down some of the barriers that people have toward coming into a church.
- Create inroads for spiritual conversations. When you’re at the hardware store, instead of asking where the paint is, say, “I’m helping at my church. Can you direct me to the paint section?” In my experience, at least half of the time, the person responds with “What church do you go to?”
When possible, walk rather than drive. It gives you a better feel for your neighborhood, you’ll be more likely to pray and you’ll actually meet people. Remember their names!

If you follow a few of these tips, at least two things will happen: you will dig deeper into the Bible as your faith gets stretched. And you may see people show interest in your faith. This may lead to new relationships that culminate in gaining new brothers and sisters in Christ.

STEP ONE . . .

READING what the passage says
(*Read it at least three times*)

Ephesians 1:9-10

⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Colossians 1:9-12

⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Isaiah 6:1-8

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

STEP TWO . . .

OBSERVING how the passage moves
Return to the passage and **mark key words, phrases and movements:**

- Circle all of the words in these passages that speak of the Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc.).
- Underline the significant verbs/action words in these passages.
- Highlight Ephesians 1:9-10.

- In Colossians 1:9, underline the phrase “we have not ceased to pray for you.”
- In Colossians 1:10, underline the phrase “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him.”
- In Colossians 1:12, underline the phrase “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints.”
- In Isaiah 6:1, underline the phrase “I saw the Lord.”
- In Isaiah 6:3, underline the phrase “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”
- In Isaiah 6:5, underline the phrase “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”
- In Isaiah 6:7, underline the phrase “your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”
- Highlight Isaiah 6:8.
- In Romans 12:1, underline the phrase “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”
- Highlight Romans 12:2.

STEP THREE . . .

Ask the five “W” questions and the one “H” question:

1. **WHO** is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? And, to **whom** is it speaking?
2. **WHAT** is the subject of the passage? What does the passage say about the subject?
3. **WHEN** do or will the events occur? When did something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **WHERE** did or will this happen?
5. **WHY** is something said or mentioned? Why would or will this happen? Why at this time? Why this person?
6. **HOW** will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

STEP FOUR . . .

UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.

Ephesians 1:9-10

1:9 - “**Mystery.**” Paul often uses this term (cf. Romans 11:25; 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 4:1; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Colossians 1:26; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Timothy 1:9-10). It has several different connotations for different aspects of God’s redemptive plan. In Ephesians 2:11-3:13, it refers to the uniting of all people, Jew and Gentile, in Christ, to God. This had always been God’s plan (cf. Genesis 3:15; 12:1-3; Exodus 19:4-6). This had always been the implication of monotheism

(one and only one God). This truth had been hidden in the past, but is now fully revealed in Christ.

1:10 - “**A Plan.**” This is literally “stewardship of a household” (*oikonomia*). Paul uses the term in several different senses: (1) an Apostolic commission to proclaim the gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25); (2) an eternal plan of redemption, “mystery” (cf. Ephesians 1:10; 3:9, 1 Corinthians 4:1); and (3) training in the plan of redemption and its accompanying lifestyle (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4).

“The fullness of time.” This phrase emphasizes that God is in control of history. At just the right moment, God sent Christ and, at just the right moment, He will come again.

“To unite all things in him.” In Koine Greek (the language of commerce in the Mediterranean world from 200 BC to 200 AD, it was the language of the common man) this compound term is literally “the uniting of several things under one head.” This is a reference to the cosmic significance of the work of Christ (as is seen so clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 and Colossians 1:20-22). Christ is the “head” not only of His body the church, but of creation (*kosmos*).

Colossians 1:9-12

Colossians 1:9-20 is a single sentence in Greek and verses 9-12 are Paul’s prayer for these believers.

1:9 - “From the day we heard.” Paul did not start this church, nor did he know its members personally. He heard about their faith and love from its founder, Epaphras (cf. 1:7-8).

“That you may be filled.” Believers cannot fill themselves, but they must allow and co-operate with the Spirit (cf. Ephesians 5:18). “Filled” is the main verb of verses 9-12. It is the first of two requests that Paul made of God on behalf of the Colossians. The other is for their walk to be worthy (verse 10). Notice he links knowledge of God with a godly lifestyle (cf. Ephesians 4:1, 17; 5:2, 15). Faith without works is dead (cf. James 2:14-26).

“The knowledge of his will.” The content of this knowledge (*epignōskō*, cf. verse 6) is the gospel. The gospel is both a body of truth to be believed and a person to be received. God’s will is that individuals personally respond to Christ who is the goal of all “spiritual wisdom and understanding.” This verse is a play on the theology of the false teachers. This is confirmed by (1) Paul’s use of “filled” (*plerōma*), one of the Gnostics’ favorite terms and (2) their emphasis on secret knowledge. For Paul, all fullness and knowledge was in Christ, who was God’s wisdom (*sophia*, cf. 1:28; 2:3, 23; 3:16; 4:5; Ephesians 1:8, 17; 3:10) and the convergence of all truth (*sunesis*, cf. 2:2).

1:10 - “Walk in a manner worthy.” God’s will is that His children reflect His character daily.

“Bearing fruit in every good work.” God’s will is that believers live godly lives. The moral transformation of believers is evidence that the image of God has been restored! It serves as a bridge to evangelism. It reflects the believer’s new family characteristics and shows who our true father is - God. Biblical salvation is a free gift, which must result in a new and different life (cf. Matthew 13; Ephesians 2:8-10).

“Increasing in the knowledge of God.” This is a strong compound term for knowledge (*epignōskō*, cf. verses 9, 10; 3:10; Ephesians 1:17; 4:13). Believers are to continue to grasp the meaning of the gospel and continue to live out its implications.

1:11 - “Being strengthened with all power.” This phrase could be rendered “with all power being empowered.” Like salvation, the Christian life is a supernatural gift, not unaided, strenuous human effort or commitment (cf. Gal. 3:1-3).

Believers must yield to the Spirit to produce effective, godly lives (cf. Ephesians 5:18). This term is always used of supernatural strength (cf. Ephesians 1:19; Philippians 4:13).

“According to his glorious might.” This phrase describes how believers are to be “strengthened with all power.” They must yield to God’s Spirit, and the energy, power and glory are His!

“For all endurance and patience.” One wonders if these were used synonymously. They had slightly different foci. Steadfastness (*hupomonē*) meant patient endurance and perseverance, while patience (*makrothumia*) meant patient endurance of evil or suffering. They were both frequent admonitions from Paul (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:4, 6; 2 Timothy 3:10). Believers are only capable of them in God’s power. These terms were often used to describe how God treats fallen mankind (cf. Romans 2:4; 9:22; 1 Corinthians 6:6) and how redeemed mankind should therefore treat one another (cf. Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12).

1:12 - “Giving thanks.” An essential part of a worthy walk is constant thanksgiving (cf. 3:17; Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Thanksgiving is a characteristic of the Spirit-filled life.

“To the Father.” Christians need to be constantly reminded that the New Testament focus on the ministry of the Son should not diminish their praise of God the Father. He is the One whose character and grace are exhibited in Jesus. He was the sender and sustainer of the Son (cf. Ephesians 1:3-14 and 15-23).

“Qualified.” This term is used only here and in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 (the adjective form is used in 2 Corinthians 2:16; 3:5 and 2 Timothy 2:2). God has qualified us (1) by declaring us to be righteous in Christ (justification and positional sanctification) and (2) by developing Christlikeness in us (progressive sanctification).

“To share in the inheritance.” Inheritance is literally the term “lot.” In the Old Testament God promised Abraham a land and a seed (cf. Genesis 12:12). The Old Testament focuses on the land; the New Testament focuses on the seed. In the Old Testament, the land of Palestine was given as a tribal inheritance to all the children of Jacob except the Levites because they served God in a unique role (cf. Numbers 4:45). God Himself was said to be their inheritance (cf. Numbers 18:24). In a sense all the Old Testament people of God were priests (Exodus 19:4-6). They were a kingdom of priests to bring the whole world to God. The New Testament people of God are spoken of in Old Testament terms as priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6). As the Levites had God as their inheritance, so now do the saints.

“Of the saints.” “Saints” (*hagioi*) is etymologically related to the Old Testament term “holy” (*kadosh*) which meant “set apart for God’s service” (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Romans 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1). It is plural in the New Testament except for one time in Philippians 4:21; even there, it is used in a corporate context. To be saved is to be part of the covenant community of faith, a family of believers. God’s people are holy because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus (cf. Romans 4 and 2 Corinthians 5:21). It is God’s will that they live holy lives (cf. 1:22; 3:12;

Ephesians 1:4; 2:10; 4:1; 5:27; 1 Peter 1:16). Believers are both declared holy (positional sanctification) and called to a lifestyle of holiness (progressive sanctification).

“In light.” This was either (1) an ethical statement (cf. John 3:19), or (2) a statement about Christlikeness in opposition to the demonic (cf. Ephesians 6:12; Acts 26:18).

“The Lord.” *Adonai* in Hebrew, meaning “Sovereign.”

Isaiah 6:1-8

6:1 - “King Uzziah.” He died in 740 BC, having suffered from leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

“I saw.” Isaiah describes a “theophany,” a visible manifestation of God. God’s coming is often attended by such phenomena as earthquakes, smoke, fire, and lightning (13:3; 29:6; 30:27-31; Exodus 19:18,19; Psalm 18:7-15; 50:3; 97:2; Micah 1:3,4; Nahum 1:3-8; Habakkuk 3:3-15).

“The Lord.” *Adonai* in Hebrew, meaning “Sovereign.”

“Throne.” The Lord rules heaven and earth from His throne. The choir of seraphim (6:2) and the splendor of God’s holiness inspired the prophet throughout his ministry.

“Temple.” In his vision he saw not the temple in Jerusalem, but the heavenly temple (cf. Revelation 4:1-8).

6:2 - “Seraphim.” This is a Hebrew word probably meaning “burning ones” (cf. the fiery serpents in Numbers 21:6). Representations of angelic creatures with six wings have been discovered in the Near East by archaeologists.

“Covered his face.” The seraphim have no glory to compare with God’s and they cannot look on Him directly.

“Covered his feet.” This may be an indication of modesty.

“Flew.” The seraph does the Sovereign’s will. Here it is to praise Him.

6:3 - “Holy, holy, holy.” A three-fold repetition is the strongest sort of superlative. Nothing is as holy as God. Isaiah calls attention to the unique and awe-inspiring splendor of the Lord.

“Lord of hosts.” This designation of God presents Him as a divine warrior (13:4; 30:27; 40:10; 42:13, 25; 59:17; 66:15, 16), the commander over all troops whether in heaven or on earth. Israel’s survival ultimately is not due to the enemy’s weakness, but to God’s sovereign power.

“Whole earth.” This announcement explains the cosmic perspective of the prophet. God is King of the world, and His salvation and judgment extend to all nations (11:4, 9, 12; 42:1, 4, 5; 65:17; 66:1; cf. Luke 2:14).

“Glory.” This refers to the splendor and brightness of God. The glory of God is revealed in all His works, but especially in the Messiah (Psalm 19:1; John 1:18).

6:5 - “Woe is me.” Isaiah was astonished by the glory of God;

like Peter he became afraid (Luke 5:8). He pronounces an oracular curse upon himself.

6:6 - “Altar.” The altar from which the live coal was taken is not described. The stress is on the purification necessary for approaching God. The altar symbolizes purification by blood, and the fire, purification by the Spirit. The blood of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit sanctify believers today.

6:7 - “My mouth . . . your lips.” The purification makes the prophet acceptable as a minister of God’s words (Jeremiah 1:9).

6:8 - “Who will go for us?” The Lord invited Isaiah to listen in on the sessions of the royal, heavenly court. From this moment on Isaiah is a servant of God’s court and proclaims God’s message to kings and people alike (cf. 1 Kings 22:19, 20; Jeremiah 23:18, 22).

Romans 12:1-2

12:1 - “I appeal to you.” This phrase is both tender and tough. It is a call to appropriate living. Paul often uses this term (cf. 12:1; 15:30; 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 4:16; 16:15; 2 Corinthians 2:8; 5:20; 6:1; 10:1; 12:8; Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:10; 1 Timothy 1:3; Philemon vv. 9-10).

“Brothers.” Paul often uses this term to introduce a new subject.

“By the mercies of God.” This describes the compassionate nature of God (cf. Exodus 34:6). Here it refers to the doctrinal progression of chapters 1-11. There is an obvious emphasis in Romans on the “mercy” of God in dealing with fallen humanity (cf. 9:15, 16, 18, 23; 11:30, 31, 32; 12:8; 15:9). Because God’s grace and mercy are offered freely, believers must live godly lives (cf. Ephesians 1:4; 2:10) out of gratitude, not merit (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9).

“To present.” This was one of several sacrificial terms used in this context: sacrifice, holy, and well pleasing. This same concept is expressed in 6:13, 16, and 19. Humans will either give themselves to God or to Satan. As Christ gave Himself uniquely to do the Father’s will, even death on a cross, His followers must also emulate His selfless living (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 3:16).

“Your bodies.” Christianity is different from so much of Greek philosophy, which thought the physical body was evil. It is the arena of temptation, but it is morally neutral. The term “body” seems to parallel “mind” in verse 2. Believers need to commit their entire being or person to God (cf. Deuteronomy 6:5; 1 Corinthians 6:20) as they had previously committed it to sin (cf. Romans 6).

“A living sacrifice.” This was radically different from the dead offerings of the Jewish or pagan temples (cf. 6:13; Galatians 2:20). It must also be differentiated from asceticism (the harsh treatment of the physical body for religious purposes). It is not the body’s isolation, punishment or celibacy that is advocated, but an active life of service and Christ-like love.

“Holy.” The term “holy” means “set apart for God’s service.” The focus of this term in this context is on the believer’s consecration and availability to be used by God for His purposes.

“Acceptable to God.” This refers to an appropriate offering in the Old Testament (cf. verse 2). This is similar to the concept of “blameless,” when used to refer to people (cf. Genesis 6:9; 17:1; Deuteronomy 18:13; Job 1:1).

“Which is your spiritual worship.” This term [*logikos*] is derived from *logizomai*, meaning “to reason” (cf. Mark 11:31; 1 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:8). In this context it could mean rational or reasonable. But the term also was used in a sense of “spiritual,” as in 1 Peter 2:2. The essence seems to be a conscious offering of one’s true self versus the ritual offerings of dead sacrificial animals. God wants us to live our lives in love and service to Him, not in formalistic procedures that do not impact daily living.

12:2 - “Do not be conformed.” This is a command, the underlying thrust of which is to stop an act already in process. There is a contrast to verse 2 similar to the one in Philippians 2:6-8, between the outward changing form and the inner unchanging essence. Believers are exhorted not to continue to be like the changing, fallen world system (the old age of rebellion) of which they are still physically a part, but to be radically changed into Christlikeness (the new age of the Spirit).

“To this world.” This is literally the term “age.” The Jews saw two ages (cf. Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 20:34-35), the current evil age (cf. Galatians 1:4; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2) and the age to come (cf. Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 1:3; 1 John 2:15-17). Believers live in the tension-filled time in which these ages have surprisingly been overlapped. Because of the two comings of Christ, believers live in the “already and not yet” tension of the Kingdom of God as both present and yet future.

“Be transformed.” The command may be rendered, “continue to transform yourselves” or “continue to be transformed.” For a similar contrast compare Ezekiel 18:31 (human commitment and action) with Ezekiel 36:26-27 (divine gift). Both are needed! A form of this same word for “formed” is used of Jesus at the Transfiguration (cf. Matthew 17:2),

where His true essence was revealed. This true divine essence (cf. 2 Peter 1:3-4) is to be formed in every believer (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:13).

“By the renewal of your mind.” This is from the Greek root for new in quality (*kainos*), not new in time (*chronos*). For the Jews the senses of sight and hearing were the windows of the soul. What one thinks about, one becomes. After salvation, because of the indwelling Spirit, believers have a new perspective (cf. Ephesians 4:13, 23; Titus 3:5). This new biblical worldview, along with the indwelling Spirit, is what transforms the mind and lifestyle of new believers. Believers look at reality in a totally different way because their minds have been energized by the Spirit. A new redeemed, Spirit-led mind results in a new lifestyle!

“That by testing you may discern what is the will of God.” The Greek word (*dokimazō*) is used with the connotation of “to test with a view toward approval.” The will of God is that we be saved through Christ (cf. John 6:39-40), and then live like Christ (cf. Romans 8:28-29; Galatians 4:19, Ephesians 1:4; 4:13, 15; 5:17-18). Christian assurance is based on (1) the promises of a trustworthy God; (2) the indwelling Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 8:14-16); and (3) the believer’s changed and changing life (cf. James & I John); “no fruit, no root” (cf. Matthew 13:1-9, 19-23).

“What is good and acceptable and perfect.” These represent God’s will for believers after salvation (cf. Philippians 4:4-9). God’s goal for every believer is Christ-like maturity now (cf. Matthew 5:48). The term translated “perfect” means “mature, fully equipped to accomplish an assigned task, ripe, complete.” It does not mean “sinless.” It was used of (1) arms and legs that had been broken but were healed and restored to usefulness; (2) fishing nets that had torn but were mended and useful for catching fish again; (3) baby chickens now old enough to go to market as fryers; and (4) ships rigged for sailing.

Resources for Commentary: *The Reformation Study Bible* and Robert James Utley’s *Study Guide Commentary Series* from Logos Software.

STEP FIVE ...

SUMMARIZING the Message

Ephesians 1:9-10: “... And He made known to us the mystery of His Will...to bring together all things in heaven and earth under one head, even Christ...” (Mystery = something we could not have figured out on our own, but something God wants us to know.)

Colossians 1:9-12: Fruitfulness, deep experiential knowledge of God, power, endurance, patience and joyfulness are all by-products of knowing God’s Will and applying understanding and wisdom to that.

Isaiah 6:1-8: Isaiah’s “send me!” in the light of the revelation of God’s majesty and redemption.

Romans 12:1-2: Offering ourselves as a living sacrifice in view of God’s majesty and redemption.

What is God’s “W” Will, vs. what is the “w” will for my life? What is God’s ultimate will and how can I serve it. It is about something far bigger than “me”

Covenant and Kingdom at the core of God’s purpose = “together” (community, unity, bound in love) and “headship” (government, authority, respect, honor, dependency and freedom under Christ).

Breaking it down:

“All things” - God’s cosmic restoration of all that was lost by man’s rejection of God. All nations, All institutions/powers, God’s will on earth as in heaven/harmony between the spiritual and the natural realms with Christ over all.

“The Church” - Mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ, without blemish or wrinkle, unified around our relationship with Christ and our common mission.

“And You...” - He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.

CHALLENGE: *Will you do what is the reasonable thing to do: to make your life an offering today and every day, to put your hand up and say, “Today, send me!”*

STEP SIX ...

EXPLORING the passage through discussion

Questions

Icebreaker Question: Go around the circle and have each person share how they are carrying out God’s mission in their lives.

1. How do you discern God’s will for your life?
2. What are the characteristics of a “worthy walk?”
3. How do you evaluate the fruitfulness of your Christian journey? What role does the disciple play in “bearing fruit?” What role does God play in “bearing fruit?”
4. What message can we take for our own practice of prayer from the Apostle Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-12?
5. Isaiah’s encounter with the Lord (Isaiah saw the depth of his own sinfulness in stark contrast to the greatness of God’s holiness) radically changed the trajectory of his life. How does your understanding of your own sinfulness in light of God’s holiness impact the way that you live your life? How should it impact your life?
6. What is your own sense of God’s calling or God’s mission for your life?
7. How have you experienced God’s mercy in your life?
8. In what ways are you conforming your life to the world? In what ways is your life being transformed by God?

Sermon Notes:

2018: BOOK-AT-A-TIME ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN
(on LCC website)

Sunday, May 6 thru Saturday, May 12, 2018
Romans 6-8, Proverbs 21:1-16; Romans 9-11, Proverbs 21:17-31
Romans 12-13, Proverbs 22:1-16; Romans 14-16, Proverbs 22:17-29;
Ruth 1-4, Proverbs 23:1-18; Ephesians 1-3, Proverbs 23:19-35

Memory Verse

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2