

SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 02.06.24

PREACHER: PS ADAM DODDS

“GIVING AND RECEIVING LOVE”

BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

BEING, THINKING & DOING

Conviction of a Disciple: Maturing Christians Practice Core Spiritual Disciplines. They regularly confess their sins to God and others and repent (a change of heart and mind that changes the way they live).

OVERVIEW

As diet and exercise are essential to the health and maturity of our physical bodies, so spiritual diet and exercises are essential for our spiritual health and maturity. Two of these practices, Confession and Repentance, help us grow into being the image of God.

ACTION

Step 1: Reflect: What stood out to you in this message?

Step 2: Assess: How am I going at the giving and receiving of love?

Step 3: Act: Pray for ways to practically love your community this week.

THOUGHT

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:27, PSALM 32

As Christians, the foundation of our identity comes from the first page of the Bible. From the very beginning, God made humanity in His image! This may be familiar to you, but it's important to remember that this is a royal, functional role. It means that we image God through what we do and how we live. We image Him properly through the giving and receiving of love to one another. This is the primary purpose of life—to give and receive love to all we encounter in creation.

Almost every problem in the world throughout history comes from a failure to image God properly. This failure to image God is what we call “sin”. Sin can be summed up as “the human person turned in upon themselves”. A life truly imaging God is always one lived outward toward others.

What practices can help us deal with this issue of living inwardly, taking and keeping for ourselves at the cost of others?

1. Confession. Often when we think about confession, we hear shame, guilt, and regret. This unhelpful belief keeps us from engaging with this core practice in the Christian journey. Practicing confession in healthy ways (to God and to trusted people in our lives) brings the experience of forgiveness and tremendous healing.

We often need to reframe how we think of God. In the spiritual life, we often compare the cross to a courtroom. This is not how God operates. God sees us through the cross, not the courtroom. In God, we confess and through the cross, He calls us forgiven.

2. Repentance. This is a change of heart and mind that leads to transformation. It is a cleansing bath for the soul. Repentance can be a 180-degree life shift, but more often, it is about daily recognition that we fall short of fully being God's image to our world—work, families, friendships. Repentance helps us make the adjustments needed to reposition ourselves toward Jesus, his love for us, and the world.

Confession and repentance are two sides of the same coin. They are designed to go hand in hand. Confession is how we come into the Kingdom of God. It's also how we are formed and continue to grow as disciples made in the image of God. Regular practice of these exercises moves us from being infants in Christ into the mature stages of faith.

DISCUSSION

1. Which is harder for you? Giving or receiving love? Why do you think that might be?
2. Do I more regularly view God and confession through the courtroom or the cross?
3. How can we engage these spiritual practices as a group?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for Your grace and unconditional love.

As we experience your radical love and forgiveness through Your work on the cross, help us to see the beauty of confession and the freedom in repentance. Lord, would You continue to grow us and shape us as we walk in step with You and become Your image-bearers.

Amen.