DIGGING DEEPER

ENGAGING WITH THE SERMON

CULTURE CHECK PART 2: THE WALK | JULY 26, 2020 |
1 JOHN 1:4-10

02

WHAT IS DIGGING DEEPER?

Two of the main pillars of Gracelife Church is gathering and growing in which we encourage each of our attenders to be a part of a community that gathers together with the intention of growing in Christ. However, we understand that gathering in community is a little complicated right now. Thankfully, during the summer our community groups take a break so that makes things a little less complicated. We wanted to continue to provide a way for you to dig deeper into the message whether individually, in your d-groups, or sitting around the table with your family so feel free to use these questions as a guide for discussion for whatever kind of gathering you feel comfortable with or as a tool for personal reflection.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

Culture is not neutral: symptoms of the culture will show up in the people affected by it for better or worse - consider some of the habits you have, is it possible that past church cultures have influenced this habit? For example, why do you sit where you do in church, how freely do you allow yourself to worship, when and how do you greet people?

The culture of a church is not just what you hear/read on the website (doctrinal statements) but it's also the experience you get when you are part of the community
Reflect on your time at GraceLife Church and other church experiences - go back and read some of the doctrinal statements; have the cultures matched the doctrinal statement? Write down some of the consistencies and inconsistencies that you noticed.

Toxic church culture happens because “doctrine never made its way into the heart, it never beautified the relationships in the church”
What prevents doctrine from moving into the heart? Has your personal doctrine about God and the Gospel moved into your heart? Based on this quote how do you know if it has or hasn’t?

03

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

"*He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone...Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community...Sin wants to remain unknown. It shuns the light. In the darkness of the unconfessed it poisons the whole being of a person. This can happen even in the midst of a pious community*"

WALKING IN DARKNESS

We stay in the darkness by not being honest about where we are - we lie to ourselves, others, and God. Churches that are “okay” with this dishonesty lack healthy fellowship as it can’t exist in the midst of secrecy. We may be together but we are separated and isolated by our sin (Bonhoeffer quote).

> Has there been a time in your life when you were a part of a community but still felt isolated? Was it because you were hiding something from that community? Did you distance yourself from them or finally share your secret?

John is concerned about this type of culture developing within the church more than the influential things that occur outside of the church - He knows that the Spirit of Truth grieves “when we hold back from being open, honest, transparent, and vulnerable”.

> What holds you back? What makes the idea of being totally honest with yourself, others, and God terrifying?

04

GOD IS LIGHT, HE IS IN THE LIGHT

Everything starts with God; not with us - 1 John 1:5

Consider Adam and Eve, while they were with God in the garden they were naked and unafraid - they had no secrets; they had perfect fellowship with God but it was broken by sin. Christ restored this fellowship by bringing us out of the darkness.

> Why do we resist this rescue? What makes the darkness so comfortable?

God's light opens our eyes so that we can see clearly and knowing Him rightly leads to knowing yourself rightly. (Psalm 36:9)

> Describe a time when God revealed something about himself to you that made you realize something about yourself.

I believe in Christianity
as I believe that the sun has
risen. Not only because I see
it, but because by it
I see everything else.

C.S. Lewis

05

IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER

"The Gospel is the only thing with the supernatural power to create a community where you can walk in the light"; a community that you can safely participate in without having to be afraid, hide, prove, or lose anything.

Have you ever been a part of a community like this? How did it impact you? How did it change how you engaged with others outside of that community?

Surprise: Walk in the light and there are a bunch of people there waiting to welcome you, love you, grow with you, and share life with you. A place where you can experience deep genuine unity: Fellowship. God intends for this to take place in the church.

When you think of the word "fellowship", what do you think of? Pot-lucks? How is this fellowship different from what we have experienced in the past? Do you find this intimidating? Why?

"Our culture should be real and refreshing from the darkness outside" A church with Gospel doctrine and Gospel culture should give you confidence to confess your sins to one another so that we may be healed (James 5:16)

"Are you sharing things with your brothers and sisters in Christ that will encourage them, help them, and build (GraceLife Church's) culture where we can walk in the Light together; where Jesus is, where the blood of Christ can drown those sins and cleanse us and make us new?" - Tommy Clayton

> **"Therefore , confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working"**
>
> *James 5:16*

06

ARE YOU WALKING IN THE LIGHT?

Have you shared what is going on with your heart with God and/or someone else?

When is the last time you confessed sin to God and/or someone else?

When was the last time you asked God and/or someone to forgive you?

Who is close enough to you to know you, pray with you, encourage you, help you, or challenge you?

We know that the Gospel is being unleashed in our hearts and changing us not just when we believe the right things but when beauty appears in the way we treat each other

Tommy Clayton, Pastor