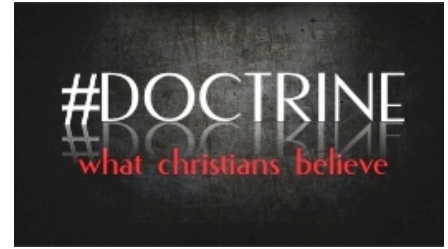




Sermon Discussion Guide




“The Church”

Ephesians 5:23-32

Rev. Ray Cortese, August 9 & 10, 2014

Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Ephesians 5:23-32. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Ray used the phrase, “the church wounded”. Who are “the church wounded”? Do you know anyone who has a negative view of church? Do you love the church? Why or why not?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

THE CHURCH – THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

- 3 In your own words, how do you become the treasure of God? How is it possible that he can love you? How do you get in the beloved community? What is the difference between the gospel as good *news* and the gospel as good *advice*?

- 4 Can a Nazi war criminal really become a Christian? Is there anyone who is ineligible for grace?
- 5 What kind of energy is released when church people begin to experience the radical love of God? How does the gospel free you to “cut other people some slack”?

THE CHURCH – THE DEMONSTRATION COMMUNITY

- 6 Explain the following quote: “If you belong to Jesus, then you belong to everyone else who belongs to Jesus.”
- 7 The church is supposed to be a taste of heaven. How have you experienced a taste of heaven through the church? In what areas do you still long for the perfection of heaven?
- 8 What is the difference between viewing the church as *part of* your life versus viewing it as *the center*? Why does church keep on going, even after the pastor says, “amen”?

THE CHURCH – THE MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

- 9 In your own words, what was the mission of Jesus? How does He invite us to join in His mission?
- 10 How have you been guilty of whining about Citrus County? How might God be calling you to be a blessing to the community instead? Discuss the following quote: “A ship may be safe in the harbor, but that’s not what ships are for.”

Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?