

CITYWEST CHURCH

04.02.2024 - 10 AM

LOVE WHAT JESUS LOVES.

7 So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

James 4:7-8 (NLT)

I touched on this last week and I've felt stirred to share a little more around this idea of making sure its the devil we resist and that it is God we draw near too.

As the challenges of life and the season of life come our way, which they will we need to be committed to and work towards making sure we are doing what this scripture from James says.

We must make sure we resist the devil and draw near to God and not resist God and draw near to the devil.

As followers of Jesus, disciples apprentices under Jesus learning not our way but his way, we are challenged, interrupted in our actions thoughts and heart to change things in order to align with Jesus and his way of living.

To be a good example of what it means to be made in the image of God. but this pursuit isnt a lone ranger attempt, it is best achieved in community.

We as apprentices are learning to love the things God loves and to do the things Jesus did and to be a city on a hill for those around us.

With that, I want to talk about the church how we as believers in the waves that 2024 brings we be people who are found in the house of God.

The church protests the wider culture by offering a true vision of what it means to be a human being made in the image of God."

– Carl Truman, Strange new world.

"We do not want a church that will move with the world. We want a church that will move the world."
– G K Chesterton

"The Church is the one institution that exists for those outside it."
– William Tyndale

We would be as the psalmist describes in Psalm 92:

But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.

13 For they are transplanted to the Lord's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God.

14 Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green.

15 They will declare, "The Lord is just! He is my rock! There is no evil in him!"

Psalm 92:12-15 (NLT)

Flourish in the courts of our God. Old age produce fruit, (in it for the long haul)

Coming to church allows to us to centre around God head of the church and also encourage one another in living the week out as humans made in the image of God.

We can't be people that pull back in hard times from the family of God.

We must commit to be people who are found in the house of the Lord.

1. JESUS LOVES THE CHURCH

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.^[b] 27 **He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.** 28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. 29 No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. 30 And we are members of his body.

31 As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." 32 This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. 33 So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Eph 5:25-33 (NLT)

We are given the picture of Jesus as the husband of his bride the church.

Husbands are encouraged in the covenant of marriage to love as Christ loves the church.

Jesus loves the church, as disciples we must love what Jesus loves.

Love the church because Jesus does, don't come, serve, sow in financially because of me or a person, do it because as disciples of Jesus we love what he loves.

Speak well of the church. We are not a perfect church, but we want to be a healthy church.

Don't resist the church, the community the leadership and the chance to bless and serve.

Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.

Matt 16:18 (NLT)

Jesus says on the rock of revelation Peter had about Jesus being the Christ, he will build his church and the gates of hell won't prevail.

2. JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.¹⁹ For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

21 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. **22** Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

Col 1:17-22 (NLT)

We were all once outsiders, now we are insiders through the work of Jesus the Son of God.

We are the body of Christ. We are all one, the children of God as part of his family.

We are through Christ citizens of heaven as Paul says in Philippians.

3. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S CHILDREN.

6 For you are all children[m] of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.[n] **28** There is no longer Jew or Gentile,[o] slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. **29** And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children[p] of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Galatians 3:26-29 (NLT)

We are the children of God. We don't let our other identities take over, we are Gods children by faith in one another. We embrace all tribes but we also know we are all one in Christ.

4. CHURCH: FELLOWSHIP AND SUPPORT.

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. 24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NLT)

You are not the ones who neglect, jus make sure you don't become one. But look at the positive challenge in this scripture.

Hold tightly to the faith

Think of ways to motivate each other to acts of love and good works.

Encourage one another

Remember the day is drawing near.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. **11** Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

1 Peter 4:10-11 (NLT)

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. When life gets busy how do we make sure we are saying yes to the right things and no to the wrong things?
2. How does being part of a local church help your walk with Jesus?
3. How do we find comfort in Jesus as the head of the church?
4. Discuss what it means to “motivate one another to acts of love and good works”. How does that look for us today?

