

ONE FROM THE HEART

Filled to Give

As we hit this mid-part of the year, let's take a moment and re-centre on what's most significant, about what's important, about what is central about life, faith and this thing we call church!

How We See The World

When we come to the life of faith, it's a life designed to be one where we are following someone: Jesus. Not like we would 'follow' someone today, it's more about focussing on and emulating that person.

It all starts with this foundational relationship, which compels us to follow Jesus, be like Him, and be with Him.

Where we come undone is when we either don't ensure this is our foundation to begin with, or think that this is a bunch of stuff to tick off a list, and then we can move on from that foundation.

We need to be practicing Christians

Square One

When we enter into this process of becoming like Jesus, it's not just your best efforts to copy Him. Something changes in us as we choose to follow Him: we become children of God.

We are made new, we are 'born again' into a new family and a new way of life; we are given a new identity.

1 John 3:1

The Hardest Part

What then should we do?

The church exists for three things:

- + Worship
- + Discipleship
- + Mission

But we need to make sure we don't make this an either/or space, it's a both/and.

Acts 3:1-10

Now My Feet Won't Touch The Ground

Firstly, Peter and John are engaged in a life of worship.

Then they see the lame man at the gate of the temple. They are missionally engaged because they are worshippers and lovers of God.

Then the request: the man expected something.

They acknowledged his felt need – money, material resource. But they knew they didn't carry that. But they didn't move on. They saw that they did have something they could give away, and they did!

When we know who we are and what we carry, we are ready in and out of season to give away what we have!

Reign of Love

I truly believes it starts with a personal encounter with God

I think this is key because giving what we have is not acts of obligation. Sharing what God has done in our lives is the overflow of the life focussed on worship.

Where there is fear connected to anything in life, it's simply an opportunity for me to love God more, and to let Him love me back – more!!

Romans 8:1

As a result, we are free to love others in a way that God made us to love others, using our actions, our personality, our gifts, our passions, our idiosyncrasies and interests.

And as soon as we feel the condemnation of not doing something – we come back to God and let Him love us. And He'll lovingly convict us if we need correction and motivation – and He does! But the fruit is always life!

Everything's Not Lost

So where to begin? Start with loving God!

The golden rule: Mark 12:28-31

Put things in the right order: Love God! With everything! Then love others, as you love yourself!

Fix You

“I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you” – Peter

What do we have? With Jesus we have everything we need!

2 Peter 1:3

He has made us whole and given us an identity, and so purpose and meaning.

Nothing to share? Lacking anything to give? Nothing overflowing? Go back to the foundation.

The fruit: And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God...”

Discussion Questions

1. How can we develop a strong foundation of faith through prayer and a deep relationship with God?

Application: What daily practices can you implement to strengthen your relationship with God and centre yourself on your faith?

2. What does it mean to follow Jesus as an apprentice and how can we emulate His values, actions, and practices?

Application: What specific values, actions, or practices of Jesus can you apply in your life to become a more faithful follower?

3. How do we integrate our faith into every aspect of our life to make our worship, discipleship, and mission more sincere?

Application: What are some practical actions you could take to intertwine your faith in everyday life and make your worship, discipleship, and mission a genuine expression of your relationship with God?

4. How does the story from Acts 3:1-10 illustrate the intersection of worship, discipleship, and mission?

Application: Can you think of a time when your worship and discipleship led to an opportunity for mission? Share this experience with the group.

5. Why is it important to love ourselves as God loves us, and how does this impact our ability to love and serve others?

Application: What steps can you take to better love and accept yourself as God loves you, and how might this change the way you serve and interact with others?