

## Day 1

### The Church: YOU on display

So how was your first night? Did you feel retreated? **What do you miss from your regular life?** Your bed? Family? School or work? Desire to be alone? Is there anything that hangs over your head from your regular life at home? Relationships or issues with them? School or job? Health and sleep issues? While we hope you can “get away” from some of normal life, you bring YOU with to this retreat. The emotions exposed here this weekend show much about what you value, and working with these values under God using some of His means of grace is one of the main reasons we have these weekends. Will you take a minute right now to ask the Lord to help you make the most of what God exposes about your values, that what we study and discuss alone, together, and in intentional conversations will make God’s nearness and His ways to know and live to serve Him more precious to you?

This is our third year working through our second goal for youth group—Teaching Roles. The first year, we concluded our foundational statement for this goal—the youth group is a microcosm of the church. Thinking about what makes youth group valuable to us and what changes our value for youth group led to a discussion about “fitting in.” Where do you fit? And so last year, we looked at where we fit with God, concluding our search through Scripture with a helpful starting definition for the church—those in right relationship with their Creator. I’m so encouraged that most of you know this definition by heart. Can you fill in the blanks?

**The Church is \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ created \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ by their \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of God to \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ service.**

This common identity and purpose led to looking for how this practically lives in smaller groups of Christians. Can you list a couple of important pieces we learned from Ephesians 4:15-16 about what should be very important to us as we seek to live among the people of God? What goals are listed, how do these goals get carried out? What would you need to care about or grow in for you to be able to fulfill your part in this picture of a healthy church?

---

---

---

Finding ourselves inside this definition of a church and living the life found in Ephesians 4:15-16 requires a couple of assumptions. List the four we’ve discussed and think about what you understand and where you fit with each of them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

I know we’ve repeated these so many times that it could lead to you not even thinking about these essentials involved in a right relationship with God. While you will spend a lifetime learning more of what these words mean and how they live, head in the direction of building on what you already have learned and commit to the work of putting your relationship with God in the center of your mind, heart, and life. I praise God for those of you who have professed faith in Christ. Keep learning what this means as you need more than your effort to be right with God and live pleasing to Him (see back page of the packet—God’s Plan of Salvation), but what effect should everything you learn and hear taught about God have in your life according to I Timothy 1:5 and II Timothy 2:22? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

What do you think fights against these effects taking place in your life as a result of what you hear and learn about God? \_\_\_\_\_

---

It is this struggle between what God says should result from us learning about Him and what actually results that reminds us not only of our need to be born again (the Spirit of God at work within us showing we are not our own but belong to Christ), but just how different our relationship with God is from other relationships. Can you think of ways our relationship with God is different than other relationships? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

The answers to this question have many ramifications which I hope we can continue to discuss together. This reality is why our second goal for study at youth group is to? \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching roles doesn't first start with learning how to respond to parents or the police, but begins with how we "fit" with God. We are always under God, and therefore, need to submit to His intent for us individually and then together with the rest of the people of God, the Church. We've spent much time on this because it is easily ignored or misunderstood, so while there is much more you will learn as you seek to honor and live for Christ, I want to title this last section of our study, Three Integral Components of the Church. Define Integral Components?

---

We looked at the first of these integral components and will finish it when we return—The church provides a place for you to be accountable. This is integral to your understanding of the church because it reminds you that you are part of a people and that you have a job to accomplish together. Now we move to the second integral part. The church provides a place for you to be on display. What does it mean to be on display?

---

---

What feelings/fears/thoughts do you have about being part of a group that is always on display? What would be important to you if you knew you were always going to be seen? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

But we are not just talking about being seen, we are talking about what God wants to be seen because **a church is a group of people created and loved by God, tied by their relationship to God...** Now, what changes in your thoughts about being on display if God decides what is to be displayed? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Whatever feelings and thoughts you have about this, it is probably obvious to you that God would determine what should be on display among His people even if we haven't thought of how this affects us too much. This brings us to our memory verse for the weekend. Take a few minutes and work on it, looking for what Paul expected to see on display when he or others looked at this group of believers.

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;   Philippians 1:27 (NASB95)

What did Paul hope to see or hear about these believers and what are some of your first thoughts about what would be needed for this to be seen. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

This is not just an isolated idea. What is to be seen, heard, or on display in the following passage?

I Thessalonians 1:2-3, 6-10: \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 15:5-7: \_\_\_\_\_

I Peter 2:9-12: \_\_\_\_\_

Add to these passages the passage we've memorized showing healthy church activity and goals (Ephesians 4:15-16), and we have some pretty big stuff that should be seen if people were to look at any group of believers. Combine these passages we just examined (starting with our memory verse and then your answers for all the passages you just looked up including your answers from the front page about Ephesians 4:15-16). What would be seen in a group of believers (a church) that heads toward these goals? (Perhaps these questions will help: What would people be thinking about? Busy doing? What would be a distraction toward these goals? What would be frustrating? What kind of skills would be needed that people would be displaying or learning?) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you find yourself busy with what you just wrote in the last question? What do you think is likely to be seen or heard if people watched you as part of a group of believers? (We are all at different places, so not looking for perfect answers—just what someone would currently see if they watched you/listened to you right now among a group of believers) \_\_\_\_\_

If this seems to hard to answer, what do you see when you watch a group of believers together that fits or doesn't fit with what you wrote as a summary of what would be displayed if groups of believers understood and obeyed these passages? \_\_\_\_\_

### Think About It

We need to sum up for today. Some of you might have felt the weight of these questions and been a little discouraged because maybe you want some of what we talked about, but it doesn't show or isn't heard as much as you would like. If the only thing that matters is the result, then how can we ever be pleasing to God before the result is seen? We will talk about this tomorrow, but let me give you a hint toward hope. Everything we've talked about today about being on display as part of the people of God hinges on something that comes from God, not you. You are saved by faith alone. **True saving faith gazes at God.** Why? Because salvation is a transfer of ownership. Christians yield their rights to control their own lives to God. They do this not merely because they are forced to, but because they see the wonderful position, provision, and freedom that

comes from God's control. Think about some of the words from our song as we contemplate what needs to take place for us to willingly gaze at God for what is needed to be on display for what He desires.

There sits Simon, so foolishly wise Proudly, he's tending his nets  
And Jesus calls and the boats drift away And all that he owns he forgets  
But more than the nets he abandoned that day He found that his pride was soon drifting away  
And it's hard to imagine the freedom we find From the things we leave behind

Every heart needs to be set free From possessions that hold it so tight  
'Cause freedom's not found in the things that we own It's the power to do what is right  
With Jesus, our only possession And giving becomes our delight  
And we can't imagine the freedom we find From the things we leave behind

We show a love for the world in our lives By worshipping goods, we possess  
And Jesus says, "Lay all our treasures aside And love God above all the rest"  
'Cause when we say no to the things of the world We open our hearts to the love of the Lord  
And it's hard to imagine the freedom we find From the things we leave behind

Take a few minutes and ask God to help you gaze at Him until you see His acts toward you as so precious that you will be faithful to yield to His work to help you fulfill your part to be on display among His people. God bless you as you seek to gaze at God and follow Him!

Day 2

**The Church: YOU in Process on Display**

Welcome to the morning after the morning after the evening that we left what is normal for us! One day completed. Is that all it's been? Two nights ago you slept in your own bed ☺ So how do you feel? Rested? Does anything hurt from skioarding? I'm SO THANKFUL for more snow this year as the ice and yuck the past few years have made learning to ski extra hard. Do you enjoy playing house with 23 people? Are you getting to know those around you—taking time to think of others, including them in your activities? While most of these things are pretty normal for these trips, having everyone attempt to ski is something brand new for this year. In addition, the group dynamic continues to change more than normal as we are up to ten of our own away at college. Change may be exciting for you, but as we are creatures of habit, sometimes change unnerves us. I trust you are having a great time, and while I don't wish hard times on you, sometimes not getting what we want or hoped for leaves us more open to what God's Word says to us. We feel the emptiness or perhaps frustration and we long to feel good again—to have joy and purpose. I trust today's look into God's Word will color how you view the rest of the trip, bringing encouragement and direction. Take a moment and ask God to prepare your heart to do the work of giving attention to His Word in a way that will bring worship of God, repentance as you see where you are not like Him, and then intention to obey what you have heard.

Yesterday, we began our look at the second integral component we will examine about the church. Can you list both integral components we've covered so far?

1. The church provides a place for you to be \_\_\_\_\_
2. The church provides a place for you to be \_\_\_\_\_

Our memory passage contains elements of both these components. Look at it again and say it 2-3 times before you continue.

Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;      Philippians 1:27 (NASB95)

Yesterday, we asked for your initial thoughts about what would be on display and what it would take to accomplish this goal. Today, look for other elements than what you focused on yesterday. Who are the players? What do you learn about them? What are they being asked to do that might be

slightly different than where you first focused? What exactly is to be displayed? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

Accountability might be something you struggle with, but it is very valuable providing structure, a goal, a standard, and means to help get to that goal including the other people involved. But we took it up a notch yesterday as we talked about being on display—YOU being seen by others as part of a group. This might get a little more unnerving when we remember that God determines what will be displayed AND your part in that display, especially when we looked at the passages describing what should be displayed among the people of God. What should give us hope when we hear that God is the one determining both what is to be displayed

AND your part in that display? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Do these passages line up with your answer? What gives hope and must be remembered from each of these passages?

II Corinthians 1:8-11: \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 2:20: \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 3:20: \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 4:12-13: \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 1:29: \_\_\_\_\_

You should have found hope in these passages. And where was that hope found? \_\_\_\_\_

Okay, but what if you still feel like you can't do what our memory passage and the rest of the passages from yesterday told us we are to do? What if you don't even clearly understand what you are supposed to do or know how to help others get it and do their part? Perhaps there is something else we must display besides where we've been focusing. We've been working through Ephesians 4 in youth group, so let's look for what follows the picture of a healthy church besides accountability and a goal. Sum up the main idea of Ephesians 4:17-24. \_\_\_\_\_

What would it take to actually do this? How would you start living this passage? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now, read Ephesians 4:25-5:4 and list some of the things you are to do and not do. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you do with living like this? Where do you find it hardest to obey these commands? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**These commands are not just behaviors that Christians display, but they are attitudes and actions to be displayed as you live with and among other Christians.** What would need to happen in a church for you to have to be reminded of these commands and for you to look to God for the strength to obey them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does requiring us carry out these commands at the end of Ephesians 4 add for what is to be on display in a church that perhaps we didn't think about before? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If we must love, forgive, be kind, use anger rightly, not steal, abstain from words that are foolish, tear down, or are dirty along with all the other commands, there must be occasion for these commands. Relationships must be deep enough to produce occasion for wrong attitudes and responses as well as requiring right responses which might not be easy for us based on what has happened and how we are treated. This means we must not only display the product or the goals God desires for His people, but we are to display the process of Him working those goals. How does God get glory by displaying us working through very yucky situations with others requiring us to display these attitudes and actions and refrain from other ungodly attitudes and actions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Faith is not only present but required to obey these commands. **Do you remember where our hope comes**

from and where faith's gaze is to be? Can you find evidence of that gaze in Ephesians 4:17-5:4 required to obey these commands? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Christ as Head of His church doesn't teach His people how to act and how to grow in just classroom settings, but like with His 12 disciples, He teaches us as we live life following Him. What would keep us from obeying the attitudes and actions we are told to display in Ephesians 4:17-5:4? \_\_\_\_\_

---

The hope we need to be on display as God intends for His people is not merely for those who see it and want it. It is absolutely essential. What would be the alternative to the hope offered in the passages we studied at the beginning of today's study? What other gaze/place to focus could we have other than where Christians are supposed to look? \_\_\_\_\_

---

The power of the alternative gaze is addressed here in Ephesians 4-5, but it is seen very clearly right at the beginning of one of the other passages telling us how we are supposed to act with and toward the others God has redeemed. **You will see the same kinds of commands that we've already looked at in Ephesians in Romans 12:9-21.** Read this passage and add a couple of other behaviors/attitudes to the list we've already made from Ephesians. \_\_\_\_\_

---

Now read Romans 12:1-3. What must we do here and how would this help us carry out Rom. 12:9-21? \_\_\_\_\_

---

The commands are hard, but they are impossible to do as God intends unless we first learn to yield to God and see that yielding to Him as worship—as giving Him the honor and respect that is due Him. In fact, when we don't yield to Him, we are showing disrespect and dishonor on top of our disobedience. This sounds hard for us to hear, but what is to motivate us to yield in the first part of Romans 12:1? What are the mercies of God and where would you find ones that will help you willingly yield to God in worship? \_\_\_\_\_

---

God loves us. You've heard that from the first time you heard John 3:16. The Bible is FULL of instances of God pouring out love on undeserving people. But remember our talk from Ephesians 3:14-19? Why did Paul pray that the believers would be strengthened with power through God's Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

---

THIS is what you must pray for when you feel you can't or don't want to yield to God to obey His commands. THIS is what you must pray when you don't understand exactly what God wants or when it seems to messy to continue to be on display with other believers. This will give you an identity that is greater than all the hardships and YOU are not the center of that identity. This is what our other song talks about. I am not my own. I belong to Christ! Then you can freely yield to God and transfer your dreams and ability for what He

will do in and through you. This is what our other song speaks about. I belong to the Lord, I am not my own. I will honor Him for this I know. I belong to the Lord, I am not my own. **But did you hear what else the song discussed making it seem like a wonderful thing to belong to Christ?** Look on the back of the front cover for the words and find everything you can in the song desirable in belonging to Christ.

---

---

### Think About It

There is amazing provision from God for what He calls us to do and be, and right at the heart of that provision is a new identity. You are no longer to be known by your abilities and failures, but by His holiness. According to Colossians 3:12, God's children are holy, chosen, and beloved. As we close for now until we get home and continue this study on your own and again at youth group, think about God not only changing us, but changing us together. The very process of Him changing us—the very hard relationships and circumstances He allows in your life are the places where He would have you look to Him and trust and obey not only His commands, but head toward His goals for His people. It is in this way that His goals WILL take place among His people. God is able to do all this. Do you remember Ephesians 3:20? **“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”** Take this verse to prayer right now as you ask God to help you willingly take your place on display among His people. God bless you as you seek to know and grow under the One who loves you more than anyone else.



# God's Gift of Salvation

## 1. The Problem

All of mankind is separated from God because of sin. We were created to know the joy and abundant life that comes from communion with God. God gave us the freedom to choose to follow Him, and we didn't. Man sinned. Romans 3:23 says,

**"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."**

Because God is holy, He can not look at sin. Because we have sinned, there is now a gulf between man and God. The Bible says that the penalty for sin is death. Romans 6:23 says,

**"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Although we try many ways to get right with God, there is no solution that will bridge the gulf between God and man that we can work out ourselves. All of our good deeds amount to nothing when we do them to try and earn our salvation. Ephesians 2:9 says that our salvation comes

**"not as a result of works, that no one should boast."**

## 2. The Solution

God sent His only Son to earth to die for your sins. Jesus was the only acceptable sacrifice because He was the only perfect sacrifice that could pay the penalty of death as your substitute. Romans 5:8 says,

**"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**

I Peter 3:18a says,

**"For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"**

## 3. Our Choice

Christ is the only bridge to bring God and man back together. We can choose to leave that gulf separating us and spend the rest of our earthly lives in separation from God and the joy that He wants for us followed by an eternity separated from Him in hell. Or we can be restored to God by accepting Christ's payment for my sins as being the only bridge to a right relationship with God. He died in my place. By faith, I take hold of God's gift. John 1:12 says,

**"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."**

Romans 10:9 says that if you

**". . . confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."**

Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

**"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."**

John 3:16 gives us a wonderful promise when it states,

**"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

To accept this gift of salvation, talk to the God who created you, who loves you so much. You must admit to Him that you are a sinner (a rebel who lives life for yourself instead of for the God who made you). You must be willing to turn from your sins, this life of rebellion against God and His ways and believe that Jesus died in your place on the cross and rose again to pay for that rebellion. Inviting Jesus into your heart means that you change gods in your life. You come off the throne and you put God on the throne. Tell God your life is His and you accept His right to rule your life as you live for His goals according to His commandments, seeking to please Him alone.

If you have prayed this prayer, the Bible says that you are a child of God. Welcome to His family! Tell us of your decision. We'd love to hear the good news and encourage you in your newfound relationship with Christ.

