

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Non-Negotiables // The Community is the Temple

Pastor Gabe

February 19, 2023

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What do you do to unwind after a long day of work/classes?

Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

Outline:

- I. The community was fractured (v. 11-12)
 - A. Similarly to how the church was split between Gentiles and Jews around the time Paul wrote Ephesians, the church today is split socio-economically, racially, politically, among other things. However, Pastor Gabe tells us the biggest hurdle in the church is cynicism.
 - B. The harsh reality of the church's diminishing role in society may lead us to cynicism, but as Christians we are called to resist cynicism in the church.
Q: Do you ever fall victim to cynicism, and if so, what does that look like for you?
- II. The community is reconciled (v. 13-17)
 - A. Through Christ's death and resurrection, the church is reconciled and united in Christ. He has broken down our walls of hostility, and he's abolished the laws that would divide the church between Jew and Gentile.
 - B. "Ultimately, what binds [the church] together is not our shared ambition but our shared failure. What binds us together is our shared need for God's grace given to us in the cross of Christ! What binds us together is that none of us has it together, none of us has it all figured out, none of us is perfect." - Pastor Gabe
Q: When have you seen the church most unified, despite apparent divisions?
- III. The community is the temple (v. 19-22)
 - A. In the ancient world, temples were considered the "control room" and dwelling place of deities, so Paul making the claim that we are now God's temple is a big deal! The community is the temple of God, and this is why we must resist cynicism.
 - B. "The nearness of God is not a sentimental claim. It's either ludicrous and crazy or it's the best news ever." - Julia Pickerill
Q: How does it feel knowing you are part of the temple of God?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How exactly do we resist cynicism in the face of injustice or disappointment?
- 2) How do we recognize differences in the church without creating division?
- 3) How do we remind ourselves that the church is united when it often feels like it isn't?
- 4) How do we deal with the responsibility that comes with being part of God's temple?

Suggestions for further study:

- Colossians 2:13 Q: How does this verse give context to what happens when the church is united by God?
- 1 Peter 2:4-5 Q: How do these verses show us what being a part of God's temple means?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for using your Son to abolish divisions and unite the church. Teach us to resist cynicism and value your church as a community and temple. Continue to remind us in all that we do that we are part of your dwelling place. Amen.