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FAMILY MATTERS

Church Politics
Family Matters Series
1 Peter 4:8-11

- I. Church Fellowship
 - a. What kind of church do we want to be?
 - i. We think that is a question best left to the staff but all of us play a role in how that question will be answered
 - ii. If you had complete control, what kind of church would Calvary Central be?
 1. The Country Club
 - a. A hub for social activity
 - b. BBQs, softball leagues, small groups that cater to anyone and everyone
 - c. The perfect place to find a spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend
 - d. A place where we belong – where we can scratch that social itch
 2. The Circus
 - a. People come in, take their seats, and they are entertained by the sights and sounds of service
 - b. They laugh, they cry, they are moved emotionally
 - c. Everyone feels like they got their moneys worth
 3. The Lecture Hall
 - a. A Christian University or Spiritual Ted Talks or Biblical self-help seminar
 - i. Everyone gathers around to listen to one man exercise his spiritual gift
 - b. Every service is primarily about growing our knowledge base so that we are better equipped to argue when we get back to work
 - c. More Bible Studies, more Bible courses, every night of the week there is a class to take and no one's as concerned about applying what they have learned as much as just learning more
 - b. I set you up because the real problem is in the question itself – what do I want to get out of church? What is in it for me? What kind of church do I want Calvary Central to be?
 - i. That real question is “What kind of church does God want us to be?”
 - c. We are in the last 2 studies in our series on family matters
 - i. Studies on Biblical fellowship – exploring the reality that God has designed us for and gift us with community – but we have made common what He has designed to be sacred
 1. Fellowship with Christ
 - a. All that goes along with being a child of God
 2. Fellowship within the family
 - a. The joy and the safety that a Christ-centered family can provide as we live out our purpose together
 3. Our final studies will focus on fellowship within the body of Christ – the church
 - a. Another gift that unfortunately is often taken for granted

- d. There are two things you never bring up at Thanksgiving dinner – religion and politics
 - i. We are going to talk about both of them but not in the way that you think
 - ii. Politics comes from the Greek word politikos – which means city
 - iii. Like many societies, as the Greeks transitioned from a rural culture to a more urban culture a need arose for rules that would govern their behavior and protect the rights of citizens
 - 1. We have seen the same urbanization in the US – In 1790 95% of our population lived in the countryside
 - 2. In 1990 3 out of 4 Americans live in a city
 - a. Look back at ancient civilizations and that seems to be the norm – we are drawn to one another
 - 3. God created us for community, to be together – not just to exist in the same space but to share something far greater
 - 4. And He has provided us with guidelines that help us to operate in that space

II. What, why, and how?

- a. The questions we are seeking to answer...
 - i. What is true Biblical fellowship, why should we be concerned about it, and how are we to live it out practically?
 - ii. This study we will look at the what and why and next week we will dig into the how
- b. 1 Peter 4 gives us the answer to all three – it is one of the clearest blueprints for Godly Biblical fellowship in all of scripture
 - i. He provides the what, why, and how of Biblical fellowship
 - ii. **1Pe 4:8 And above all things...**
 - 1. When we read something like this we need to stop and take notice
 - a. As Christians we often major in the minors and minor in the majors
 - b. The Pharisees had the rituals down, but Jesus told them that they had neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness.
 - c. What are the overriding themes of scripture? Love, humility, servanthood, and self-denial
 - iii. **...have fervent love for one another, for "LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS."**
 - 1. We can be so wrapped up in lesser things that we miss the mind of Christ!
 - 2. Is it any surprise that Peter would say "above all have fervent love," that is love without end, constant and consistent love for one another
 - 3. Paul tells us in **1Co 13:1-3** ***Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.***
 - a. It is a scary thing when Christians make excuses not love others, make excuses to gossip and slander and avoid and ignore
 - 4. **Phil 2:5-8** ***Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found***

in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

- a. You serve, you tithe, you teach, you pray, you evangelize, you wear Christian t-shirts – great! Do you avoid doing anything out of selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast? Are you instead humble toward others, always considering others better than yourself?
- iv. ***1 Pe 4:8-11 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***
- c. Did you catch the what, why, and how? Do you see what God has designed the church to be, why He designed it that way, and how it plays out in our everyday lives?
 - i. What? (verse 8) – A community of believers that consistently and constantly loves one another
 - ii. Why? Why is this so important? (Verse 11) That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ
 - iii. How? As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

III. The What

- a. The What is the blueprint – it's the target – the identity that God has placed in front of us as a fellowship
 - i. This is who God created us to be!
 - ii. The Country Club, The Circus, The Lecture Hall – those are all centered on the needs of self – They are about my needs – my need to belong, my need be entertained, my prideful desire to be more intelligent than the guy next to me
 1. As Paul said (who would be the most intelligent guy in most rooms) knowledge puffs up while love builds up!
- b. The true church – God's church – the body of Christ is designed to be others centered
 - i. Not just the staff, not just the pastors, not just the leadership – everyone!
 - ii. ***Joh 17:20-23 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.***
 - iii. Is this what you see in the church today? Unity, one body, everyone with the same mind? Or do you see disfunction and division?
 1. James tells us where envy and self-seeking exist confusion and every evil thing are there
 - iv. We may think – "I'm not envious or self-seeking." Well, what is our mindset when we walk into church?
 1. I hope I enjoy the message this morning, I hope the worship moves me, I hope the coffee is brewed to perfection
 2. Or maybe our mindset is a little more pessimistic – maybe we have been hurt in the church, so we go in with our guard up, or with critical lenses on
 - a. I bet someone is going to ignore me today, I bet the pastor is going to talk about giving, I bet the music will be too loud or too quiet or

too short or too long, I bet the sermon will run long, I'm sure the pastor won't deal with this current event or talk about this topic that is important to me...

3. Have you ever been in the market for a specific model of car? And you've never really noticed it on the road before but now you see it all the time.
 - a. I believe the same is true for life in general. If we are looking to be offended, we will find something that offends us.
 - b. If you are looking for sin, and hypocrisy, and brokenness; you will find it because we live in a sinful and broken world and, newsflash, the church is full of sinful and broken people
- c. What we need is a dramatic shift in our mindset in what we hope to find at church
 - i. If we go to church expecting to find people who need to be loved, that's exactly what we will find
 - ii. This isn't just a different way of thinking or a suggestion, this is what we were created for. This is what we are called to as believers, as followers of Christ
 - iii. There is too much on the line to ignore it!
 - iv. ***Joh 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.***
 1. Not a new suggestion, not a new idea, not a new opinion – a new commandment
 2. Which leads us into the why...

IV. Why?

- a. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.
 - i. There is one thing that God is more concerned about than your story or my story – and that is His story
 - ii. Peter explains the why in verse 11 – why should we love each other fervently? That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ
 - iii. The motivation behind loving others isn't to get something in return, to receive a pat on the back, or even to be loved back – it is so that God may be magnified through His Son Jesus Christ
 1. Magnified – brought close
 2. So that the person and works of Jesus may be made known to this world
- b. That was the purpose of Peter's letters to the churches
 - i. These churches were suffering intense persecution
 - ii. They had to be asking "How do we tell the story of Jesus Christ to a world that is openly hostile towards Him and towards us?"
 1. Peter says "By loving one another."
 - iii. And you hear the urgency in Peter's letter, ***1Pe 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.***
- c. This same urgency is seen in all the writing of the apostles
 - i. ***Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.***
 - ii. If we really care about the gospel and we care about one another this will matter to all of us.
 - iii. So I have to ask, is God being glorified in the way you love others, specifically in the body of Christ?
 1. If the answer is no then is probably because of one of two reasons

2. First – we have the wrong idea of the what and the why of church – what we think the church should be and why we go to church are ideas of our own making – rooted in self
 3. Or...we want to love others so that Christ may be glorified, but we just don't know how
- d. That is what next week is all about
- i. A goal without a plan is just a wish – Peter gives us that practical application in verse 10
 - ii. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies

V. Communion