

Wired for Connection & Community

Week 3 – You Become Your Community

1 Cor 15:33

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Feb 16, 2019 - Trinity Church/NEI-EF

Series Main Idea: Contrary to the modern belief that strong independence is the key to health, healthy community is the key to health. You are unique and part of a greater puzzle. The fullest version of you is not alone but in community. The second false narrative is that marriage is required to build family.

Series Summary: You were made from a family and for a family. You are unique with a personality and interests that are wonderful but incomplete. The fullest version of you is you in a community applying your uniqueness and letting others apply their uniqueness to build wholeness.

Week 3

God calls us to influence one another from the basis of Resurrection.

What influences do you need to let go of?

What new relationships do you need to embrace?

Intro

Greetings – Pastor Mike and family driving back from a wedding, watching on-line
Nice and loud – We love you Pastor Mike & Leslie!

GPark Update –

Thursday – some victories, some hard situations – pray for break through!
Making places for community to develop

Prayer

Illustration

It has been cold!
I love cold and snow – I'm a Yooper!

One thing we all know about the cold is not to stick your tongue on a flag pole! (Photo 1)
Interesting thing about this, is the reason your tongue will freeze to the pole
It's not because the pole makes your tongue cold
It's that your body can't keep your tongue warm fast enough
In other words, the pole draws the heat out of your tongue (Photo 2)
Heat always moves toward cold

The Second Law of Thermodynamics: Heat transfer occurs spontaneously from higher- to lower-temperature bodies but never spontaneously in the reverse direction. Lumen Learning Courses

If warm and cold matter are placed near one another, eventually they reach equilibrium
But the result is always that the heat moved into the cold matter (Photo 2)
Heat transfer always moves in one direction

What is true in the physical world often helps us understand spiritual truth
(*Hold onto this truth, we'll come back to it*)

Review — Sermon Series: WIRED for Connection & Community

Last week — We were reminded in Genesis 2: It is not good for us to be alone
We were created by a community (the Trinity), to be in community

We learned that God designed us to need each other – to be interdependent
To grow/mature with each other in mind
So we all mature in the faith together
Not at the expense of one another

We also learned that the tribe we belong to is super-important because
You are only as strong as your tribe
The church – must be our primary tribe
Because it is the only one that is eternal and
Beat death through the Resurrection (*Hold onto this truth, too*)

Today - What types of relationships we should develop within this primary tribe, the church

Text - 1 Cor 15:32b-34

³²If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” ³³Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” ³⁴Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. 1 Cor. 15:32b-34

God designed love to flow in one direction – into the void of evil

The entire story of God (subject of the next sermon series) is how love wins

- Behold I am making *all* things new (Rev 21:5), not *some* things
- A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. (John 1:5)
- Love is the strongest force in all of creation, it conquers death (1 Cor 15:26)
- The greatest of these is love (1 Cor 13)

God designed love to flow in one direction – into the void of evil

Love always conquers hate and indifference (Repeat)
Every time.

Love is not a mushy Valentine – it is FAR greater than we can imagine!

Tension

So, because the influence of love (like heat transfer)
flows in one direction, into the void of evil and hate

And we are in this world broken by sin

Paul exhorts us:

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

The question is:

Are we supposed to cut off everyone who could have a bad influence on us?

Maybe. Maybe not.

Let's work through God's Word to discover the answer

Context – (Go to 1 Corinthians 15 - quick overview of the chapter)

1 Corinthians is Paul's corrective letter to the Corinthian church

He planted a church in Corinth (Greece), and he is in Ephesus (Asia)

He has heard the Corinthian church is growing

As more people come into the church

Arguments develop and heresy creeps in

So Paul spends much of the letter going back to basics

And untangling the Gospel from false beliefs

He saves the most important for last, the truth that ties them all together

Chapter 15 – Jesus Christ rose from the dead

Chap 15 begins with an ancient creed, or statement of belief in verses 3-4

*I delivered to you **as of first importance** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.* 1 Cor. 15:3-4

"To be a Christian is to believe and confess that Jesus is alive. For everyone else, no matter how much he is admired, Jesus is still a dead man. For Christians he is the Living One. On this point there can be no equivocating. It's either one or the other... Everything stands or falls on that." Seamands, *Give Them Christ*, pp. 100, 120

The Resurrection of Christ "is the defining, central, prototypical event of the *new* creation, the world that is being born with Jesus." Wright, *Surprised by Scripture*, p. 62

Throughout the chapter Paul makes the case that the resurrection did happen

In verses 29-34 he provides the logical argument for the believer's resurrection

Verse 33, our text for today is in the center of that argument

Before we can answer our question, we need to go phrase by phrase

Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

The verse begins a command: **Do not be deceived**

The Greek word suggests someone *was* going in the right direction

And someone or something has caused the person to get off track

Literally “to lead astray...from the right way” (4105 πλανάω [*planao* /plan·ah·o/])¹

Bad company in the Greek means close relationships, even sexual relationships
(3657 ὁμιλία [*homilia* /hom·il·ee·ah/] n f. companionship, intercourse, communion)¹

Paul isn’t talking about casual acquaintances or random associations

He is talking about really close relationships

The ones that have great influence in our lives

People we spend so much time with, we become like them:

We talk how they talk (slang, even accents/pronunciation)

Go where they go (favorite hang outs, where we spend money)

Wear what they wear (cool or not, we wear it)

Respect who they respect (Repub/Dem’s leaders, sports heroes)

Act how they act (family values)

Believe what they believe (values, politically correct)

This type of very close negative company...

Ruins – take what was God’s and waste or corrupt it

Similar to having a gorgeous collector car that begins to get rusty

The corrosion turns a prize auto into a heap of junk

Good morals/character - *Ethos* (AY-thos - 2239 ἦθος)¹

patterns of living, morals, character, customary ways

We get the word *ethics*

Everything that influences our thinking, decisions, and how we live

Summarize

¹ Strong, J. (1995). [*Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon*](#). Woodside Bible Fellowship.

The really horrible truth is that this **bad company** is coming from WITHIN the church!

Look at the next verse (34):

Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For **some have no knowledge of God**. I say this to your shame.

No knowledge of God

No knowledge [*Agnosia* (ἀγνοσία)] “is an actively pursued way of life, as is shown by the connection of thought between ignorance and sin.”² Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*

(“Agnostic: a person who holds the view that any ultimate reality (such as God) is unknown and probably unknowable.” (Merriam Webster))

Supposedly Christians, were actively pursuing a way of life in the church...
with no knowledge of God?

What were they actively pursuing?

The real dividing point may not be whether a person has ever heard of the name of Jesus or not but whether he or she is relying solely on God’s grace, to whatever extent it is understood, or trusting in his or her own self-righteousness.³

Blomberg, *1 Corinthians* Commentary

In other words: Bad company trusts in itself, not grace, or the resurrection

Paul is using very strong language to tell the Corinthian believers

Be very careful who you let influence you

Or to say it in the positive:

Limit your close community to those who truly follow Jesus

Allow people to speak into your life who pull you closer to Christ

Illustration - Tennis

A few years into our marriage Tom started playing tennis with a few guys

One day I went to watch, kept playing with them if he never won

His answer floored me

“I want to play with them because it makes me a better tennis player.

I learn something new every time I play with them.”

² Conzelmann, H. (1975). *1 Corinthians: a commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (p. 279). Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

³ Blomberg, C. (1994). *1 Corinthians* (p. 313). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Four Thoughts (before we can answer the question)

We can begin to answer the question with another question:

Which way does influence flow?

How can we be sure that love is flowing into the void of evil, not in reverse?

Take out Next Steps card, write numbers 1 – 4 down the side of the Sermon Response

1. If you influence others away from Jesus, stop it

Don't be *bad company*, hopefully, no one here is!

Find a strong Christian community

Be accountable to others for your thoughts and actions

This is why we need each other, to get us back on track when we get off

Isolated expressions of faith lead to heresy

Pause: is there someone you have a negative influence on? Write name

2. If you influence others (bad company) toward Christ, keep the relationship

AND – make sure you have a tribe that influences you for good

to keep you accountable and strong as you pour into others

to ask the question, are you falling into sin because of the relationship

Pause: is there some "bad company" you are influencing toward Christ? Write name

3. If others influence you away from Jesus, limit the relationship if possible

This is the answer to our original question

Remember – very close relationships have great influence on you

Set boundaries: how much time & frequency, alone with them

Counseling may be necessary if there is manipulation or abuse

Find a new tribe that helps you follow Christ

Test: do you see the fruit of the Spirit in their life? (Gal 5)

Do you want to be like them?

When you look at their life, is it going toward or away from Christ?

You are only as strong as your tribe

Pause: are there people who have a negative influence on you? Write name

One more...

4. If you want others to influence you toward Christ, build the relationship

Embrace close community with those who truly follow Jesus

When you see others who follow Christ well, spend time with them

You become your community

You are only as strong as your tribe

Pause: is there someone you want to influence you? Write name

One final story (Call up worship leader)

A long time ago a several marriages of people we know got into bad places. Really bad. There seemed to be an epidemic running through our circles of friends.

I'll just tell you about two of them. (And I've changed several details to protect identities.)

Couple #1

Without warning it seemed the wife had a very civil conversation with the husband
Without emotion she said she didn't believe in God anymore
And she didn't love the husband either
And in a few short weeks everything was over
Except it wasn't
He was left to pick up pieces – financially, emotionally, spiritually
The women she disciplined were devastated, and some also walked away from God
Even today, the ripples continue, though he has now sought out Christian community
Healing is finally begin to happen after more than a decade

Couple #2

Again, without warning, the husband was caught in a really horrible affair
The wife confronted him, screaming and yelling, kicked him out
Then she called all the women in our small group at church
We prayed with her while the guys confronted the husband
We prayed for months, women in one place, men in another
And after about a year of counseling and being accountable to our Christian community
They got back together and renewed their vows

Couple #1 left a wake of destruction,
even though they tried to navigate their mess on their own

Couple #2 also caused a lot of hurt,
But because they submitted to Christian community
There has been almost total healing in their family and church

Closing

Who do you hang out with?
Will their tennis skills help you be a better player?
Do they encourage you to be a better version of you?
Or do they influence you away from Christ?
Do you encourage them to be a better version of themselves?

Love flows into the void of evil because of the unsurpassed power of the Resurrection
As we embrace Christian community, our truest selves created in Christ Jesus shine
Heb 10:19-25 (NIV)

Next Steps Cards

What influences do you need to let go? (people, social media, porn)

What relationships do you need to embrace/start?
Influence you for good, influence others for good

REFERENCES

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