

a
growing
faith
family.

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Our Purpose: At Sanctuary, we are being transformed by the gospel
to live and love like Jesus.

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introduction



You probably know the story of how Sanctuary got started. From the beginning, we were compelled by the Gospel of Christ, the livable reality of the Gospel in the here and now. We were unified by the simple desire to learn to live and love like Jesus.

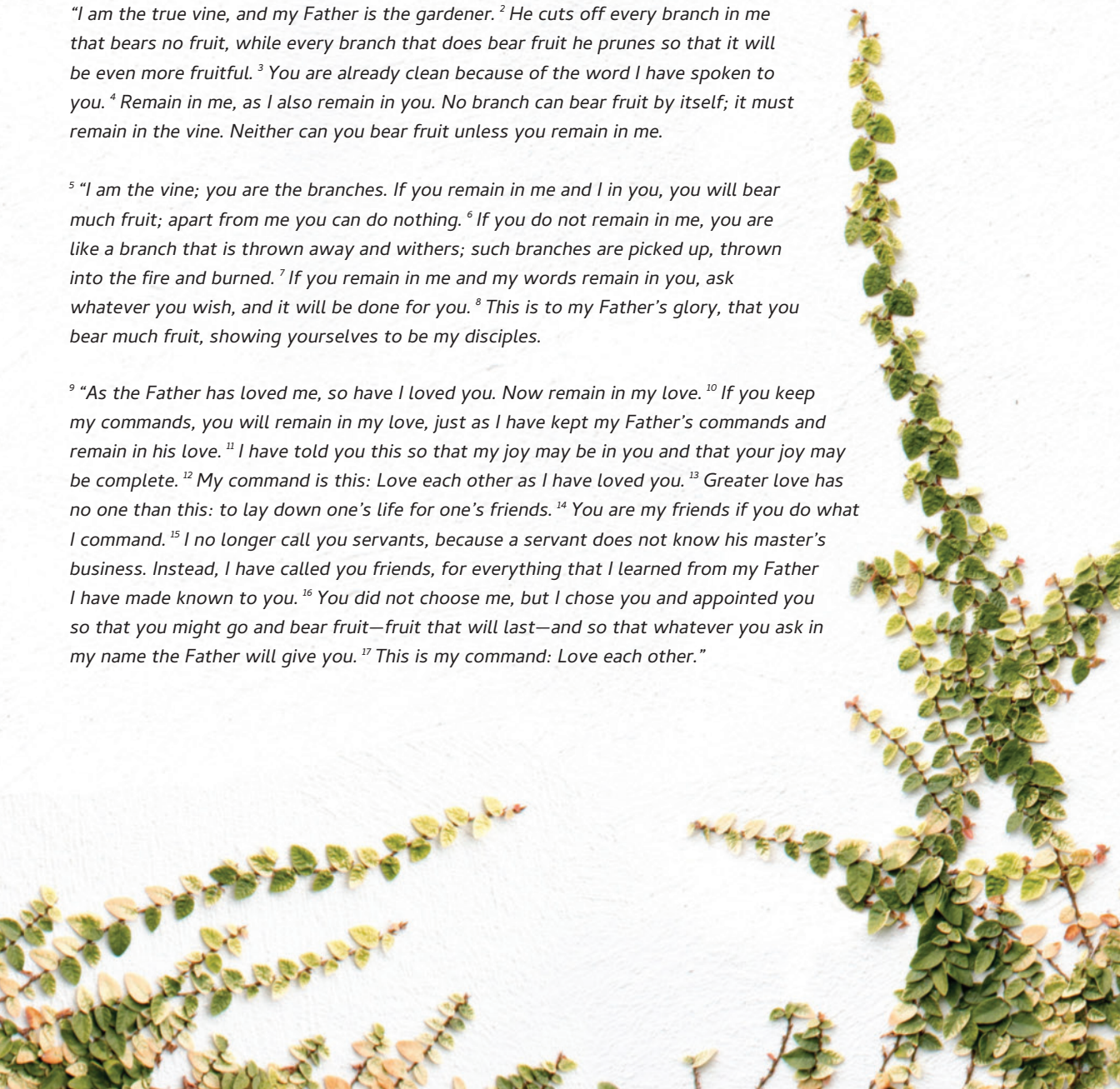
We would then go on to say, “Forgive the way Jesus forgave. Care the way Jesus cared. Pray the way Jesus prayed. Serve the way Jesus served. Deal with betrayal in the same way Jesus dealt with it.” At the time, that sounded right. It felt right. It was right.

A couple of years ago, we began to sense a disconnect. The “doing like Jesus” became increasingly religious. There was little freedom. Our leaders even had a year-long “wilderness discussion” about doing away with this idea altogether. That discussion led us to John 15, where we began to hear Jesus draw us closer and clarify our vision and mission as a church.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other."



Dallas Willard teaches that we are to abide in His work and abound in His love. This sounds antithetical to our normal understanding of this text. With seasoned eyes, John 15 brings us back to a better understanding of what living and loving like Jesus might actually look and sound and feel like. Here, it's less about "doing" and more about "abiding." By abiding in the Vine, Jesus experiences the love of His Father—on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus then extends to us the same offer: *Live in My love, just as I live in the love of our Father.*

In reality, learning to live and love like Jesus is more like:

- Loving the Father the way Jesus loves the Father.
- Being loved by the Father the way the Father loves Jesus.
- Loving the Spirit the way Jesus loves the Spirit.
- Being loved and led by the Spirit the way Jesus is loved and led by the Spirit.
- Loving Jesus the way the Spirit and the Father love Jesus.
- Being loved by Jesus the way the Spirit and the Father are loved by Jesus.

As we abide in Jesus, the overflow of His love in us transforms our responses to others as He transforms our hearts. We respond out of His love rather than out of forced spiritual expressions. The fruit of the Spirit becomes natural and normal, and we gradually and practically begin to live and love like Jesus. Nothing forced. No need to strive. Just freedom.

One of our elders, Dan Sartor, has said, "Transformation is growing in our capacity to receive [abide in] God's love and live out love [as Christ loved]."

This study is intended to guide us in our deepening understanding of our mission and vision as a church and what it means to be transformed by the Gospel to live and love like Jesus. In order to stay in step with each other and with the Spirit as He leads us, we've put together this little booklet as a guide. You'll notice a few simple elements included each week to give us shape and rhythm. You'll see a "For Reflection" section, inviting you to consider the implications of this vision. Each week will end with a prayer from a member of our Faith Family. Prayer is our lifeline, our anchor, our greatest gift. Let's pray for one another as we grow together.

create space for worship & for His work

*“In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Isaiah 40:3*

Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness... Psalm 96:9

The transformation journey is from knowledge to knowing—from the knowledge of God to knowing God. Paul prays, “...that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17–19).

The work of transformation is the work of the Spirit. We can’t hurry it along it; we can’t get a Fast Pass to skip ahead. But we can partner with the Spirit in what He desires to do in us, what He desires to grow in us, where He desires to heal us and make us whole.

Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 13.

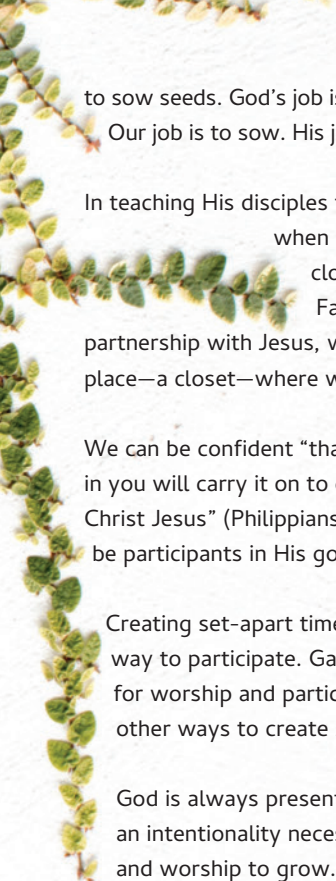
That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and

choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

The disciples are not sure they totally understand the parable—or Jesus. So Jesus explains what His words mean.

¹⁸ *“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”*

Our role in the transformational journey is to be faithful. God’s job is the outcome. Our job is to tend to the soil, to remove anything that could get in way of rich growth,



to sow seeds. God's job is to bring the sun and the rain. Our job is to sow. His job is the harvest.

In teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus said, "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen." In partnership with Jesus, we create a space; we find a place—a closet—where we meet with the Father.

We can be confident "that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). He will do it. We get to be participants in His good work.

Creating set-apart time to just be with God is one way to participate. Gathering with our Faith Family for worship and participating in a DMD group are other ways to create space to grow.

God is always present. He indwells us, yet there's an intentionality necessary for the fruit of intimacy and worship to grow. To know the love of God will mean living in such a way that we are responsive to His invitation and His prompting to receive His grace and live out His love.

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul writes, "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10–11).

The Psalmist reminds us, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10).

Ruth Haley Barton elaborates:

We are highly evangelistic by nature, placing great emphasis on what we can accomplish for God through our activity and service. This

has left us uncomfortable and even suspicious of prayer forms that invite us to just be in God's presence beyond all of our doing. In our focus on activity, we are not very good at waiting for the work that only God can do. In our wordiness, we are not very good at being silent so we can hear God speak.

Be still and know.

For Reflection

The implications...

- Personal: Making space in our lives for both solitude and community.
- Communal: Being present and attentive to God; gathering corporately in spirit and truth.

Questions...

- Where and when do you most profoundly experience the love of God?
- Where do you sense God inviting you to come deeper still?
- How might your daily schedule or the cravings of the flesh be hinderances to the good soil of spiritual growth?

Prayer

Hey, God...

I pray my worship to You would not just be a ritualistic calling, but rather a battle cry to my adversity, a standing witness to Your love. As we press forward into our communities, I pray we find peace and refreshment in time alone with You. In a time when our communities are divided at every corner, bring us together as one voice in worship to You, oh Lord.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

—Ara Johns

the call to travail

*My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth
until Christ is formed in you... Galatians 4:19*

*Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them. Psalm 126:6*

Soul work is slow work.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin calls us to “trust in the slow work of God.” We, however, crave anything but slowness. The call to travail is the call to trust in the slow work of God. There are two interdependent dynamics in traveling: prayer and presence.

The ultimate goal for the life of every believer is for Christ to be formed in us. Travail is the process in which the community supports, nurtures, and cultivates our transformative change to the image and character of Christ.

The psalmist draws a picture of sowing seed. Transformation requires seasons of growth. It includes days of scorching heat, along with damp and dreary nights. Laughter and tears are part of the relational dynamics of growth, as well.

Prayers and presence. There is no greater gift we can give one another than the gift of our prayers and our presence. Interceding for the soul of another moves that relationship to an eternal plane. When we show up and are present in the midst of another’s loss or grief, or when we participate in their celebrations of life, an intimacy is fostered, bringing wholeness and leading to holiness.

The call to travail includes an inherent call to suffering. No one suffers casually. Jesus came and took on flesh. Isaiah describes Jesus as our suffering servant. Notice his description.

*Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.*
⁵ *But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*
⁶ *We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah 53:4–6

David Thomas amplifies:

The ordinary people of Scripture knew nothing of casual prayer. Pray with a sense of urgency and audacity, with an attitude of brokenness and desperation. Pray in a manner that can only be described as both daring and agonizing...as if the Holy Spirit Himself were groaning through you.

For Reflection

The implications...

- Personal: Rhythms of silence and solitude for travail.
- Communal: Faithfulness to travail in the process of transformation.

Questions...

- Who are you travelling for?
- Who are you suffering with?
- How have you experienced growth as you live in the slow work of God?

Prayer

My Father,

I am grateful for Your presence in the midst of my trials. I thank You for comfort and for being my ever-present Help.

I pray for grace to actively rejoice in trials, travails, and temptations. I ask for a humble heart and the strength to keep my face bowed before You.

You are my Anchor, my Victory, and my Song.

Amen!

—Kennie Kansom



mutuality in maturity

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

There are three components at play here: equipping, mutuality, and maturity.

Equipping: The biblical definition of equipping is “preparing, mending, or restoring to proper use.” God’s call to church leaders is to shepherd people by preparing, mending, and restoring, all for the purpose of leading them to experience the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

It’s what our Good Shepherd does for us.

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want
[I lack nothing].*

*² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,*

³ he restores my soul.

*He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name’s sake.*

*⁴ Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,*

*for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

*⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.*

*⁶ Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.*

Notice the language in the psalm. He “prepares.” He “restores.” And he mends. In Him, you “lack nothing.” He mends our brokenness. In Him, we are whole, holy, and growing in holiness.

Our ministry leaders are primarily shepherds who partner with the Good Shepherd in preparing, mending, and restoring others to their proper use.

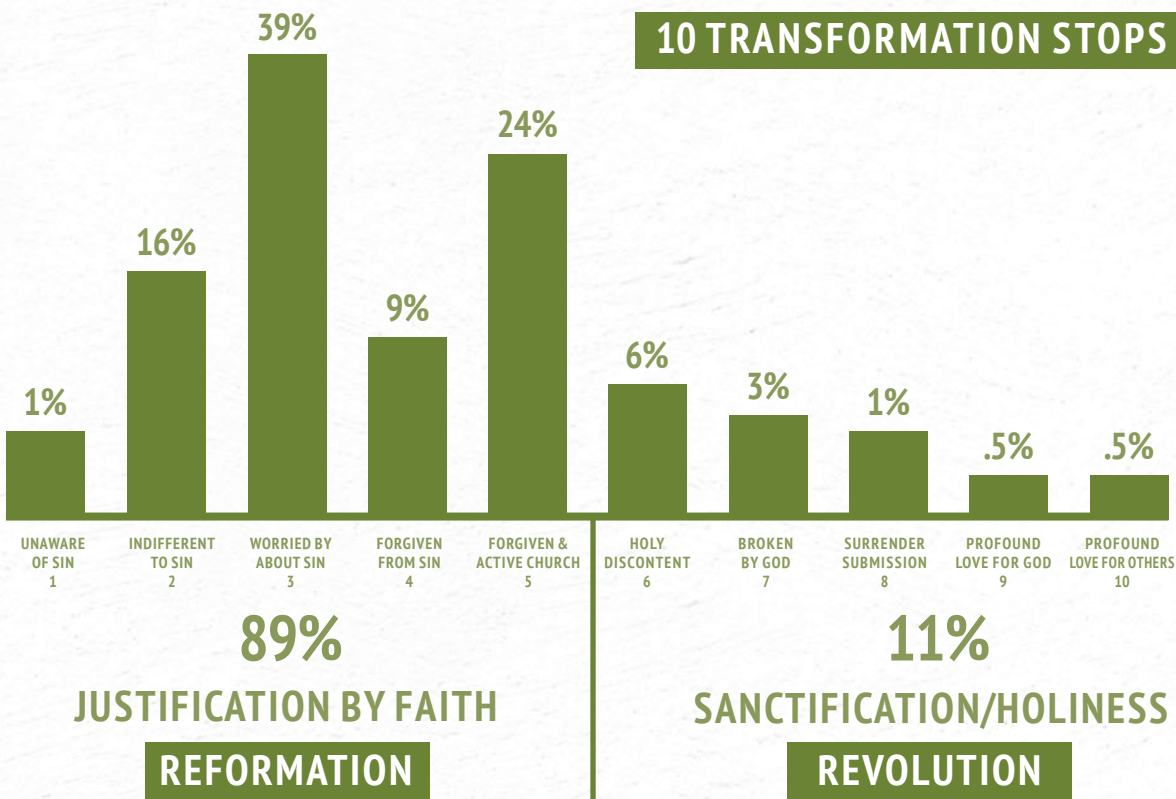
There is inherent vulnerability in shepherding. To shepherd and be shepherded will require a willingness to be led, an openness to be known and to know, and a desire to care and be cared for. This is not a once-a-week kind of life. This is an ongoing reorientation to Kingdom life and Kingdom love being lived on earth as it is in heaven.

Maturity: When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment in the Law was, He responded:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40

At Sanctuary, we define maturity by the fulfillment of the commands of Jesus—living lives of profound love for God and a profound love for others.

A recent study by the Barna Group identified a ten-step process of God’s transformation in the lives of believers, leading to their maturity in Christ. A quick preview of the results indicates that the majority of Christians are halted in their transformational journey, falling far short of fulfilling Christ’s commands. Only 1% of Christians have come to the place of maturity.



Meister Eckhart is quoted as saying, “There are plenty to follow our Lord half-way, but not the other half. They will give up possessions, friends, and honors, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves.”

Mutuality: Maturity in Christ never happens in isolation. While one can be justified alone, sanctification requires relationship. That’s why mutuality is so important in our spiritual growth. Relationships are the crucible for holiness.

Using a picture painted by C. S. Lewis, Jan Johnson helps us embrace what this looks like in our context.

In *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis writes that Eros is represented by two people looking at each other. At first, it’s novel to meet people we don’t know, and we notice things we like about each other. After a while, we notice things we don’t like...or we may even become bored.

But Phileo is represented by two people sitting side by side, looking forward at the same thing together.

Our focus is not so much on each other but on the thing we look at together; in this case, we look at Christ. As you and I focus on Christ together, you may notice things I don’t notice and point them out to me. I’m glad, because I need to hear what you see. I appreciate you so much! As Christians, we are looking at the story of God, the love of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit here on earth.

As a church, we want to shepherd people to live life

deeply with others as we help one another learn how to be fully known and fully loved. Only the Spirit can lead us there.

But if we choose not to shepherd or be shepherded, our maturity will be stunted, and we will not find soul rest. Notice the verses that follow Paul’s call to equip—to shepherd toward maturity.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:14–16

Let’s grow together!

For Reflection

The implications...

- Personal: Abiding in the Vine and entering into places and spaces of ongoing learning.
- Communal: Equipping sowers to cultivate and foster maturity through mutual relationships.

Questions...

- Why is mutuality necessary as we grow toward maturity?
- What would maturity look like, sound like, and feel like in your closest relationships?
- Who is sitting “side by side” with you, looking at Christ?

Prayer

Dear Father God,

We thank You for the gift You have given us in the body of Christ, Your beautiful bride. We thank You for how You have uniquely handcrafted each individual member—each fully chosen, fully forgiven, and fully loved. Together we celebrate how You have purposefully designed us with different giftings and callings and personalities. What a creative Father You are!

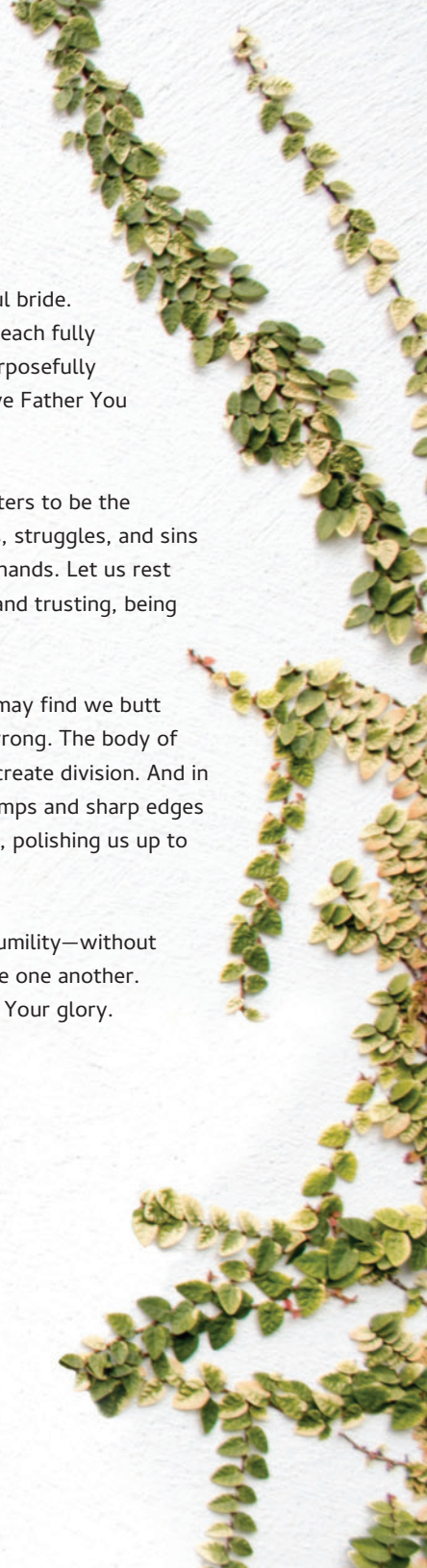
We ask that You continue to mold and shape every one of Your sons and daughters to be the children of God You made us to be. May we daily surrender our personal stories, struggles, and sins over to You, our good Father who holds us steady and safe in the palms of His hands. Let us rest our spirits in those hands as we continue to spin on the Potter's wheel, pliable and trusting, being formed into holy vessels for Your good use.

And in that forming, amidst the molding and shaping at our Father's house, we may find we butt up against the other clay pots—their jagged edges rubbing our ragged side all wrong. The body of Christ is not immune to hurts and anger. Lord, forgive us when our differences create division. And in the divine way that only You can, like smoothing river rocks, soften over our bumps and sharp edges as we knock into each other, Your mighty water flowing through us and over us, polishing us up to reflect Your Son.

We ask for an authentic deepening of relationships within our Faith Family. In humility—without pretense—and through our actions, let us serve, encourage, strengthen, and love one another. Remind us of our unity in Christ. We are one family serving one God. It is all for Your glory.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

—Anonymous



community for the purpose of transformation

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory,
are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18*

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other
so that you may be healed. James 5:16*

Christlikeness is our desire for every area of our lives. Following His example, becoming His apprentices, and being transformed in His image and character is our hearts' cry.

We are created for community. Regardless of our personalities, our affinities, or our likes and dislikes, there is planted within us a desire for connection. The deepest desire is for spiritual connection.

Sanctuary is a safe place for many wounded souls. Many people who come to Sanctuary are drawn in by our authenticity, but find it difficult to become authentic themselves.

We are learning that it is imperative for us to help people see that what is authentic about Sanctuary is not just its people; it is, foremost, the authenticity of the Gospel of Christ. The authenticity of the Gospel being lived out in our everyday, ordinary lives is attractive to people. It's the genuineness of Jesus that draws people to Him like a magnet.

Our great temptation as a church would be to offer a method or a prepackaged program to meet a felt religious need. We aren't interested in that, and we know you aren't, either. So we courageously refuse to settle for a manufactured religious life, and we fully embrace The Jesus Way that leads to life!

Jesus lived and loved openly and honestly with those around Him, particularly Peter, James, and John. It was with them He shared His weariness, His fears. Sorrowful and troubled, He asked His closest friends for prayer, telling them, "My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death" (Matthew 26:38).

We choose to follow Jesus' example by entering community for the purpose of transformation. It's in these intimate relationships that we find healing and wholeness and learn to grow in holiness.

One other dynamic that God has revealed to us is that we grow more profoundly when we connect with people who are different from us. It's easier to be in relationship with people who are similar. But when we are in relationship with someone of a different race, a different season

of life, different interests, a different socioeconomic background, or a different political affiliation, our personal biases and even our beliefs are challenged and either changed or affirmed and solidified. Embrace the differences!

Community for the purpose of transformation—for the purpose of Christlikeness. Nothing less.

Scott Hubbard says,

As long as we value a dream community over Christlikeness, we will unwittingly work to destroy whatever community we join. But if we value Christlikeness over even our dearest dreams of community, then every slight, every peculiarity, every conflict, and every sin will become an opportunity to become more like the glorious Head of this body.

Scripture reminds us:

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.
Ephesians 4:32–5:2

For Reflection

The implications...

- Personal: Ongoing participation in regular community for the primary purpose of transformation.
- Communal: Equipping sowers to cultivate and foster maturity through mutual relationships. Open-door opportunities to connect; regular invitations to deeper/dedicated T2 community.

Questions...

- What's the difference between community and community for the purpose of transformation?
- What's your biggest hesitation in stepping toward community for the purpose of transformation?
- How have you experienced transformation in genuine Christ-centered relationships?

Prayer

Father,

Our greatest hope is to love You and bring You glory worthy of Your name. Thank You for loving me even when I fall short. Thank You for putting brothers and sisters in my life to guide me and love me and transform me to Your image. I need those people. Help me to trust them as they bring me to You daily. Speak through their wise counsel and their hearts as they guide me to become more like You.

Father, You are good, and I want to become more like You. Help me today to walk with others and be vulnerable with them. Just give me the strength I need to do it today.

I love You, Father.

Amen.

—Robert Gnann

** If you are new to Sanctuary or have been around awhile and have not connected, we invite you to join us for First Steps on September 12. First Steps is a comfortable environment designed for you to meet our staff over lunch, learn more about our story as a church, and ask any questions you may have. It also allows us to meet you and learn how we can encourage you in your journey of following Jesus.*

in Christ for the sake of the world

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18–20*

*Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. Isaiah 1:17*

Prior to diving into this study, we did a twelve-week study through the book of Ephesians entitled “In Christ.” The great invitation of God is not something that needs to be acquired; it needs to be realized and embraced. We’ve spent most of our lives building our own kingdoms, designing and developing strategies and structures, generating processes that lead to desired outcomes, and fighting against those who get in our way of achieving and accomplishing our goals. We’ve done this in our work, in our families, and in our relationship with God.

On a deeply theological as well as an extremely practical level, God is inviting us to live life fully and completely “in Christ.”

Ephesians 1:3–14 (personalized)

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed me in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing **in Christ**.*

*For He chose me **in Christ** before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.*

*In love He predestined me for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ,
in accordance with His pleasure and will—to the praise of His glorious grace,
which He has freely given me **in Christ, the One He loves**.*



*In Christ I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,
in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on me.*

*With all wisdom and understanding, He made known to me the mystery
of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ,
to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—
to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

*In Christ I am chosen, having been predestined according to the plan
of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we,
who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.*

*And I also was included in Christ when I heard the message of truth,
the gospel of my salvation. When I believed, I was marked in Christ with a seal,
the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing my inheritance until the redemption
of those who are God's possession—to the praise of His glory.*

Once we are made alive in Christ, we become His manifest presence in the neighborhood and in the nations. As we go in Christ, we make disciples of all people; we seek justice, defend the oppressed, and plead the cause of the widows and orphans.

It's important to note the difference between being "in Christ for the sake of the world" and "in the world for the sake of Christ." The difference is more than subtle. It's staggering.

When I'm in the world for the sake of Christ:

- I pursue my own agenda.
- I live on my own schedule.
- I am in control.
- I control my own relationship with God.

When I'm in Christ for the sake of the world:

- "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17)
- I'm broken bread and poured-out wine for the sake of others.
- I live as the manifest presence of Christ.
- My love is radically others-referenced.
- God is in control of our relationship.



week five

When we are rooted in anything other than Christ, we are:

- Protective.
- Defensive.
- Manipulative.
- Possessive.
- Preserving of our fleshly nature.

When we are rooted in Christ, our identity is in Christ alone.

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4

Eugene Peterson writes:

The Holy Spirit forms church to be a colony of heaven in the country of death...Church is a core element in the strategy of the Holy Spirit for providing human witness and physical presence to the Jesus-inaugurated kingdom of God in this world.

For Reflection

The implications...

- Personal: Intentional engagement with people, diverse people groups, outside the church.
- Communal: "To be the manifest presence of Christ [the body of Christ] in the neighborhood and nations."

Questions...

- When have you been "in the world for the sake of Christ?" What was the outcome of that season?
- What does it actually look like for you to be "in Christ for the sake of the world?" Give an example.
- Do you believe you are the manifest presence of Christ in the places where you live, work, and play?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

I pray over Your people at Sanctuary Church.

I pray You would awaken us to the urgency of Your work. Awaken us to the calling You've placed on us as kingdom priests (Revelation 5:10) to be mediators between You and the rest of the world. God, I pray You would begin it in me—awaken me to the urgency of Your work and calling as a kingdom priest.

Shift my priorities until my first concern is to love the unloved and bring hope to the hopeless—in every encounter, at every place, and through each and every day.

Shift my thoughts until I am willing to engage in gospel conversations and invest in intentional interactions.

Shift my mind until I understand that Your eternal work is greater than my personal comfort, making myself comfortable with what is uncomfortable.

Shift my eyes until I no longer see the Great Commission as a Great Suggestion, but that I would understand it as a Great Command.

Shift my heart until I am willing to radically realign my life and desires toward You.

Lord, I surrender my life. I make myself available to seek the lost so that through me, You may save them (Luke 19:10). I humble myself before You and ask You to reveal to me the ways in which I fail to put You and Your kingdom work first in my life. And I promise to listen...

Help me to lay aside my own agenda in order to seek and serve Your kingdom.

Lord, do whatever it takes in order to align my heart with Yours. I am willing to pray this dangerous prayer, and I am ready for Your will to be done in and through me. I let go of my kingdom, in order to let Your kingdom come—in my life and in our church.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*

—Leah Sartor





SANCTUARY

Being transformed by the Gospel to live and love like Jesus.