



Sermon Questions

Date: *May 14, 2023* | Scripture: *Phil 2:19-30 (Grace-filled community)*

1. Read the passage from the sermon together. What do you find convicting? What do you find challenging? What do you find confusing?
2. When have you felt lonely in life? Try to not just speak in generalities, but share stories of when you've felt lonely.
3. What makes vulnerable, tenacious, authentic community scary? Again, try to not just speak in generalities. Share stories of what makes community scary.
4. How does a grace-filled community look different than any other kind of community? Share an example of a time you've experienced that difference.
5. What does your ideal community look like? How does the church compare to that vision?

Inward Grace in Action (Continued on back)

In John 15, Jesus calls his disciples his friends. Why? Because “all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (15:15). There's no more secrecy and nothing hidden—total transparency. God himself is being vulnerable with his disciples.

Isn't it fascinating how we use the word vulnerable to talk about being totally honest with someone? It feels risky to put yourself out there. Yet Jesus doesn't shy away from sharing everything with his friends. Jesus is saying in this moment “I know you fully, and I love you fully.”

These are two of the deepest desires of our hearts and also the sources of some of our deepest fears. It's scary to trust someone if you question their love for you, but it's hard to grow in love for someone without fully trusting them. Since we don't know if they love us, we can't totally trust them, and since we don't trust them we limit the depth of our love. It's a cycle of fear that closes us off from the rest of the world, even from those we consider to be friends. We're left with huge walls around our hearts and shallow friendships all along the perimeter, begging for someone to come inside but too scared to open the door for them.

Jesus says “No.” He refuses to build walls and close himself off. God went to such lengths to bridge the gap between him and those who were far off that he became a human so he could live among us. He's a God

WORSHIP THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

Reflect on these Scriptures:

- Genesis 15:1-21
- Psalm 133
- Hosea 2:16-23
- Matthew 12:46-50
- 1 Thes 2:17-3:13
- Hebrews 10:19-39

Serve: there are lots of opportunities to serve in our church family. [Click Here](#) to serve as a volunteer.

Pray for Matthew DeLong and his work with RUF-I at George Mason University, that international students would be curious, ask good questions, and come to know Christ.

Reach out if you need assistance:

- Call our church office at 703.821.0800
- Request aid from our Deacons' Fund at deaconsfund@mcleanpres.org

who has shared all of our experiences with us. He's laughed and cried with us. He's eaten meals and danced with us. He's grieved the brokenness in this world right along side us.

The only point at which Christ was alone on this earth was while he died hanging on a cross, after his disciples abandoned him. But even the crucifixion was an act of love so that his Holy Spirit could dwell in us, so that one day the dwelling place of God will be with man, and as a final act of love on this earth as he breathed the words "It is finished" he tore the curtain in the temple, breaking the barrier between God and man. No more walls.

- What does it feel like to know that Jesus calls you friend? Is that hard to accept?
- How can you follow the example of Jesus in building community?

ACTION: Sharing testimonies can be a powerful bonding experience. If your community group has not had a time to share your testimonies with the group, consider what it would look like to create that. Some choose to have one member share their story for 15 minutes each week. Other groups choose to host "testimony nights" when several or all members share their stories.

If you would like help processing your own story or thinking through how to share hard experiences with an appropriate level of vulnerability, please reach out to care@mcleanpres.org or one of our pastors.