

## THE DEAREST PLACE ON EARTH (22)

### A Christ-like Community

#### A. Introduction

1. The local church is a community of God's people.

2. What kind of community should we be?

When people look at this local church what should they see?

3. They should see a Christ-like community.

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." (Philippians 3:20-21)

#### B. What does a Christ-like community look like?

1. It's a worshipping community.

Jesus perfectly worshipped God.

"Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" (Matthew 4:10)

"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34)

"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission." (Hebrews 5:7)

We are a Christ-like community when we worship God together.

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:19-22)

2. It's a praying community.

Jesus spent much time in prayer to His Father.

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." (Mark 1:35)

"He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:41-44)

He continues to do so.

"Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:25)

We are a Christ-like community when we pray together.

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:19-20)

### 3. It's a learning community.

Jesus in His humanity learned from His Father's teaching.

"After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers... And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." (Luke 2:46-47, 52)

We are a Christ-like community when we learn together in order to grow as disciples.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..." (Acts 2:42)

### 4. It's an evangelistic community.

Jesus spent 3 years preaching the gospel.

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17)

We are a Christ-like community when we reach out with the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done.

"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 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 28:16-20)

### 5. It's a mission-minded community.

Jesus was concerned for people of all nations.

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two (seventy) others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go." (Luke 10:1)

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19)

We are a Christ-like community when we have a concern for making disciples of all nations.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

### 6. It's a serving community.

Jesus came to serve us by dying on the cross.

"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

We are a Christ-like community when we serve God by serving others.

"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14)

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4:10-11)

#### 7. It's a giving community.

Jesus was the ultimate giver.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

"The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

"and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:2)

We are a Christ-like community when we give generously.

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need." (Acts 2:44-45)

"if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously." (Romans 12:8)

#### 8. It's a merciful community.

Jesus had a genuine concern for the physical needs of people.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people." (Luke 24:19)

"I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat." (Mark 8:2)

We are a Christ-like community when we care for and help those in need.

"Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (John 20:21)

"There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need." (Acts 4:34-35)

#### 9. It's a real community.

Jesus as the eternal Son of God has always been in a real, loving, united community with the Father and Spirit.

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." (John 17:22-24)

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:8)

We are a Christ-like community when we are being a real community.

"This is my command: Love each other." (John 15:17)

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:3-6)

#### 10. It's a holy community.

Jesus is the image of the holy God.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” (Colossians 1:15)

“The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” (Hebrews 1:3)

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

We are a Christ-like community when we are different from the world around us because of our obedience to Jesus' commands.

“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:14-16)

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.” (1 John 2:15-16)

#### 11. It's a suffering community.

Jesus walked the path of suffering for us.

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” (1 Peter 2:21-24)

We are a Christ-like community when we suffer for His sake.

“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.” (Philippians 1:29)

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12)

### **C. How can we become a Christ-like Community?**

#### 1. We become a Christ-like community by looking to Jesus.

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

#### 2. We become a Christ-like community by obeying everything Jesus has commanded.

“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, 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 28:19-20)

3. We become a Christ-like community by structuring ourselves as Jesus tells us to.

The Lord Jesus instructs His church through His Word.

4. Until one day we perfectly become this Christ-like community.

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2)