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*Session 4:*

**DEVOTED TO  
ETHNIC HARMONY  
& EQUIPPING THE SAINTS**

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We were made to glorify God by loving Him and reflecting His image. Sin entered the world and broke everything, including:

1. our relationship with God,
2. our view of ourself,
3. our relationships with others, and
4. our relationship with the physical world.

*Whether you are new to the faith or you have been walking with the Lord for decades, God has graciously used regular everyday people empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the truth of his Word to help us grow in knowledge, love, and obedience of our Savior.*

Colossians 3:1-10 (ESV)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

***What does verse 3 mean when it says, “You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God?” Who does this verse apply to?***

***What is the difference between the “old self” and the “new self?”***

*This is not the only passage that instructs us to “put off the old self” and to “put on the new self” (see also: Eph. 4:22, Romans 6:6). Why do the Scriptures regularly instruct believers to stop acting like the “old self” and start acting like the “new self?”*

*“The gospel changes heaven’s courtroom proceedings  
from a criminal trial to an adoption ceremony.”<sup>1</sup>*

*-Matt Smethurst*

Romans 6:11-13 (ESV)

11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

## **ACTIVITY** ~5-10 minutes

Using the chart below, briefly look up each verse and write down the identity of our new self that God has given to us in contrast to the old self.

OLD SELF		NEW SELF
Enemies of God	<i>John 1:12</i>	
Slaves to sin	<i>Romans 6:18</i>	
Haters of God	<i>1 Peter 1:8</i>	
Spiritually dead	<i>Colossians 2:13</i>	
Powerless against Satan	<i>Romans 8:35-39</i>	

*[God] has given us our identity in order that his identity might be proclaimed through us. God made us who we are so we could make known who he is. Our identity is for the sake of making known his identity. The meaning of our identity is that the excellency of God be seen in us. Therefore being a Christian and making the greatness of God known are almost identical. We can do it in church services with preaching and singing and praying and reading. We can do it in our small groups as we tell each other what God has been for us, or what we need him to be for us. We can do it at work as we tell people what we love about God and why we think he is great. And we can do it in a thousand different ways."*

*- John Piper*



# We Stand for Ethnic Harmony

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

To stand for Ethnic Harmony means that we are proactively participating in the work of redemption and restoration, seeing ALL people as being made in the image of God, and helping ALL people to be made more into the image of Jesus by showing them how the Gospel addresses every aspect of brokenness caused by sin.

***What are the implications of Jesus' commands?***

Mark 11:15-17 (ESV)

[15] And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. [16] And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. [17] And he was teaching them and saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” (ESV)

God's desire is for people of all ethnicities to be together in one body. We have no reason to separate what God knit together through the blood of His Son.

***Jesus overturned the tables to restore the temple to its intended function. How does pursuing a multiethnic church restore the church to its intended purpose?***

***How can you contribute to The Parish becoming a place that welcomes people of all backgrounds so that they can encounter the life-changing message of the gospel?***



# Devoted to Equipping the Saints

Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV)

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV)

15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Colossians 1:28 (ESV)

28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

***From these two passages, what does it mean to be “equipped?” What potential dangers are posed if the saints are not equipped?***

***How does doctrine guard a person from human cunning, craftiness, and deceitful schemes? What is the relationship between equipping and sanctification?***

***The more we behold the glory of Jesus,  
the more it transforms us to look like him.***



# HOW THIS IS LIVED OUT AT THE PARISH CHURCH

## EVANGELISM & DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus gives both the command to make disciples and the model for how to do it. Looking at the model Jesus demonstrated, partners at The Parish are trained to pursue discipleship in the same way.

1. **He was selective**, choosing to focus specifically on only few people in order to reach the many.
2. **He lived among them**, not only teaching them, but also letting them see the way He lived.
3. **He made obedience essential**, not requiring them to be the smartest or most gifted, but rather to be faithful.
4. **He gave himself to them**, sacrificing His preciously short time in order to help them specifically grow in His likeness. Not only that, but He laid His life down for them.
5. **He led by example**, not asking them to do anything that He Himself would not do.
6. **He gave them tasks**, preparing them for a time when they would be leading others.
7. **He kept track of their progress**, challenging them and encouraging them to grow into maturity.
8. **He expected reproduction**, wanting them to produce new leaders, not just new followers.

## EQUIPPING CLASSES

Equipping is an explicit command from Scripture to apply the gospel to specific needs in our church for the work of ministry. By God's grace, the majority of our adult partners participates in different equipping classes offered throughout the year. We offer a wide range of topics designed at developing people in all stages of life to grow in character, discipline, and knowledge of current cultural issues.

## **FIGHT CLUBS**

Also referred to simply as “Discipleship Groups,” these are small groups of three or four believers of the same gender that commit to meeting together consistently to hold one another accountable to being faithful disciples of Jesus in everyday life. It is a consistent relationship with trusted friends that set apart time each week to primarily do three things:

1. Hear from God’s Word and share how you obeyed it
2. Repent and confess your sins, and share your belief in the gospel
3. Consider how you can tangibly serve, and pray by name for nonbelievers.

## **LEADERSHIP PIPELINE**

The vision of The Parish Church is bound up in our ability to develop leaders, elders, and deacons. That is the goal of the Leadership Pipeline. Coupled with our Equipping Classes, the Leadership Pipeline is a competency-focused discipleship regimen for men and women that seek to grow, equip, and deploy as future elders, deacons, church planters, and global missionaries.

Each class is designed to grow participants in specific areas: theology, spiritual discipline, character, and cultural issues. The classes are offered periodically based upon the seasons and rhythms of The Parish Church.



# Partnership Agreements

Because we stand for ethnic harmony and we are devoted to equipping the saints, partners will:

## **1. Promote unity in the race-transcending gospel by pursuing Christ-exalting racial and ethnic relationships at all times.**

God wants people from every culture to be saved. The gospel compels us to widen our circles, to pursue relationships beyond proximity and interest. As we are united to Christ, we must pursue love towards others, because that is what Jesus has done for us. God's heart is for people from every tribe, tongue, and nation be saved. If the heart of God is to be the heart of The Parish, the church must have God's vision for togetherness of all ethnicities worshipping Him together.

## **2. Pursue training opportunities through classes, conferences, seminars, and partner gatherings**

If every saint is called to be a minister of the gospel, then every saint must also pursue training and discipline to be an effective minister. God has given some believers in the church the task of equipping the saints so that the whole body might participate in the work of the ministry. But it is the call of every Christian to participate in God's work through the church. We value getting trained for ministry here at The Parish not just so that we can say we know a lot about God, but so that we can put what we know about Him into practice for the edification and building up of the church.

## **3. Teach nothing contrary to The Parish Affirmation of Faith**

This agreement pertains to all partners who will be serving our church in a teaching or preaching capacity through the ministry of our church. You will have the opportunity to review The Parish Affirmation of Faith this week and bring any questions you have to the final session. It is not required that all partners fully understand and embrace every doctrinal position outlined in the Affirmation of Faith, only that those who will be teaching and preaching agree to teach nothing contrary to it.

**NOTES:**

**QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE FINAL SESSION:**