

## OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

LIVE: WE JOURNEY TOGETHER AS COMMUNITY

(1 PETER 4:7-11)

SEPTEMBER 15, 2019



### SERMON OUTLINE

1. Life in Christ isn't F on just what we K,  
but how we L (2:1)

2. Life in Christ emphasizes R, not R (2:2-8)

3. Life in C offers us an O to  
learn how to live our life in C (2:11-14)

*What do I need to do with what I have heard today?*

### MAIN POINT

God has called His people to live within the community of the church as a crucial aspect in spiritual growth.

### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

1. What would you say are the essential aspects of a good community?

What makes real community work?

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

### **2. What is the best community, group, or team you have ever been involved with and what made it so good?**

**Leader:** Community is something most people desire at some level. Every day, people around the world strive to improve the community they belong to or to build a new community that is worth joining. In 1 Peter 4, Peter wrote about the type of community we are called to as followers of Christ. Peter made it clear that this community is not an end in itself but a means by which God is most glorified in our lives.

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

READ 1 PETER 4:7-9.

### **3. Why do you think Peter began this section of verses by stating that the end of all things is near?**

**As society crumbles around us, how does this statement change our focus as followers of Christ?**

### **4. What are some practical ways Christians can maintain deep love for each other?**

**Why did Peter declare that maintaining Christian love for one another is crucial for building community?**

**Leader:** While his words could certainly be applied to reaching out to the lost, Peter was referring specifically to the actions Christians should take toward other believers. He gave these commands to the church. The urgency for this challenge was found in the reality that the end of all things is near. Jesus will return to set things right and restore His people completely. With that in mind, the church is called to treat one another with grace and love.

### **5. Why is it vital that Church community continually seek and offer forgiveness to one another?**

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

**What is the basis for this focus?**

**6. How would you define hospitality?**

**Why is hospitality opposed to grumbling?**

**Leader:** Peter specifically prohibited grumbling because it undoes what hospitality accomplishes. Complaint spoils hospitality. We were outsiders brought inside by God's grace. Welcomed strangers ought to be the first to welcome other strangers. The receiving of grace inspires the giving of grace, and this is the heart of hospitality.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 4:10-11.

---

**7. According to Peter, who has received a gift from God?**

**How is the use of our gifts connected to love and hospitality for others in the community of the church?**

**8. Verse 10 says that the gifts we have received are God's varied grace. How are we to be stewards of God's grace to one another?**

**Leader:** By using the phrase God's varied grace, Peter made the point that these gifts are freely given and aren't to be hoarded or wielded for self-glorification. Rather, we are to use them for their intended purpose, the building up of the church. It is only then that we are being good stewards of God's varied grace. In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told the parable of the talents. Those who invested their talents to produce an increase were praised, and the servant who did not steward his talents well was punished. We are to steward our talents by investing them in our local congregation for the good of our brothers and sisters and the glory of God.

**9. By what strength did Peter exhort his readers to serve?**

**Why is this important to remember?**

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

**By what strength do you typically seek to serve?**

**10. How is God glorified when we live in community as He has called us?**

**Leader:** A life of obedience to God is possible for Christians only because our flesh that rejected Christ before meeting Him has died and the Holy Spirit dwells in us. While we certainly have a part in working out our salvation, it is ultimately God Himself who is faithful to complete the work that He started. And now the use of gifts is by God's strength and not our own. God gets the glory for all of it. From start to finish, it's for His glory. As we live together in the manner He has called us, we tell the world the truth about His greatness.

### DOING LIFE TOGETHER

*Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.*

**11. What spiritual gifts do you have, and how are you using it as a way to show God's grace to others?**

**Leader:** If group members do not know their spiritual gifts and/or feel unable to identify them, direct them to our church's resource on this subject: [www.okotoksefc.ca/shape](http://www.okotoksefc.ca/shape). If needed, you can find a list of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12.

**12. As you consider the spiritual gifts you think God has given you, how would you use them differently if your primary goal was to love and serve others?**

### PRAYER

Pray and thank God for the community of the church. Ask Him to lead us as we seek to live together in the way that most honors Him. Ask for His strength to love and serve one another with the gifts He has given.

### MEMORIZE

<sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. - 1 Peter 4:10

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

### 1 PETER 4:7-11

---

4:7. All the major events in God's plan for redemption have occurred, and all things are now ready for Jesus Christ to return and rule. Therefore connects this doctrinal word to the behavioral and ethical consequences that ought to be demonstrated in the believer's life and in the life of the church. One of the proofs of being a Christian is not simply having a hope for the future; the proof is having a hope that makes a difference in our lives today, in the present. As we live in the expectation of the second coming of Christ, some things need to take priority in our lives.

First on this list of priorities is purposeful prayer. Such prayer must be clear minded and self-controlled. To "be clear minded" suggests that believers pray intelligently or that they think about and evaluate their situations in life maturely and correctly as they begin to pray about them. In light of the context, perhaps Peter was cautioning them against giving way to eschatological frenzy and panic. To be "self-controlled" as one comes to prayer suggests that believers are to pray with a mind that is focused and alert. In other words, prayer should not be practiced nonchalantly or flippantly. Believers are to take prayer seriously.

4:8. The second priority is forgiving love. Above all, love each other deeply burns into our minds the supreme importance of love as the controlling factor in all relationships in the church (see 1:22; 2:17; 3:8). This kind of love (agape) can be commanded because it is primarily a decision of the mind, not a feeling into which a person falls. The goal of agape love is always to seek the good of the other person. The evidence of agape love is action, not words. The extent of agape love is sacrifice. Thus, believers are to love each other "deeply." This word means "to be stretched." True agape love is constantly being stretched to the limit by the demands made on it. This is precisely where agape love shines, because it is not exhausted when it becomes difficult or inconvenient.

One of the most difficult and inconvenient times to extend love is when someone in the church has hurt or wronged us. We must demonstrate a love that is willing to be stretched because love covers over a multitude of sins. "Covers" means "willing to forgive." The present tense indicates that which is to be constantly true in the life of the believer.

Love does not ignore the reality of personal sin any more than it justifies or condones sin. Confrontation of sin is appropriate and necessary, especially when we demonstrate love. However, it is just as important to demonstrate a willingness to forgive and then to move on. Forgiveness, like love, is an act of the will, a personal choice. A person chooses either to forgive or not to forgive. According to Grudem, "Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offenses, and even some large ones, are overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound" (Grudem, Wayne A. *The First Epistle of Peter*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

4:9. Believers should put action into the love command. Hospitality among Christians is an important and tangible expression of love. In the first century, hospitality was a common courtesy that even nonbelievers extended to others. Scripture lifts Christian hospitality to a higher level. A believer's attitude toward the necessity and courtesy of hospitality should be without grumbling. This expression speaks of murmuring and of repeated words of complaint. Such words were often spoken, not quietly to themselves, but to others. Obviously, the arrival of guests in any century can be inconvenient for a variety of reasons. Even the best-behaved guests can overstay their welcome. Therefore, Christians are to provide hospitality without complaining or whining about the time and expense involved. This is an expression of agape love.

## SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

4:10-11. One final priority remains for believers who live in the light of Christ's second coming and who wish to demonstrate agape love toward one another. This priority can best be summarized as intense serving. Every believer is to heed this injunction. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others.

Every believer in every church has received a spiritual gift from God for use in the life of the church. Within the body of Christ, love for each other finds expression in the use of spiritual gifts, not for self-advancement or as an attention-getter, but for the benefit of others. Every Christian, then, is capable of ministering to others within the body of Christ.

"Gift" (charisma) literally means "a gift of grace." When Christians receive God's grace in this way, we have the responsibility to share this gift with other Christians. Through such sharing we are faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. What has been given to the individual as a gift of grace has also been given for the benefit of the body as a whole. Believers are agents of God in passing on the benefits of his grace in our life. God does not grant us gifts of grace for our personal use; he gives them for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Verse 11 illustrates this point by dividing the many gifts of grace into two broad categories: speaking and serving. Speaking includes not simply preaching or teaching, but many kinds of gifts involving speech, such as evangelism, speaking in tongues, prophecy, encouragement, and leadership. Serving includes any type of assisting or encouraging ministry that directly targets the benefit of others within the body of Christ, such as contributing to the needs of others, healing, miraculous powers, showing mercy, and encouragement.

Believers are to take these gifts seriously and to exercise them with an attitude of dependence on God (speak the very words of God, do it with the strength of God). When the gifts of grace are applied in this way, the attention and praise shift from the individual believer to God, the one who has gifted the believer in the first place.