

CHURCH

What on earth is Church?

Integrated sermon, kids program
and bible study series

24 May – 21 June 2015

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OVERVIEW

Here at Trinity Inner South (TIS) we've been greatly blessed by God as He has brought so many people from varied backgrounds into our community. As I look out on a Sunday it's great to see a community where people feel comfortable exploring who Jesus is with us; new Christians, people connecting into a church family for the first time in a while and many who have been following Jesus in communities like ours for decades.

With such growth and diversity we thought it would be a great time to launch into our first ever "doctrine" series titled "What on earth is church?" Our goal is to hear from God's word what His plans and purposes for church communities like TIS are.

I think for all of us there is a "perception gap" between how God sees church and how we do. The simple goal of this series is to close that gap as much as possible that we might all have our view of church lifted and expanded, to see it more like God sees it.

Please join with me in praying for a great series together.

Your brother in Christ,



Matt Lehmann

Senior Pastor



WHAT ON EARTH IS CHURCH?

There is much that could be said in such a series and this series is by no means exhaustive. Some important topics won't be covered, some referred to briefly. The below sermons and studies have been chosen as those that I think we at Trinity Inner South need to hear together at this stage of our life together. Here is an overview of the Church series:

SUNDAY	TITLE	READING
24 May	What in heaven is the church?	Revelation 21:1-8, 21:22-22:5
31 May	We belong to one another	1 Peter 4:1-11, Romans 12:1-13
7 June	A church growing together	Ephesians 4:1-16
14 June	A church on mission together	Matt. 28:16-20, Romans 10:5-15
21 June	Whose church is it anyway?	Ephesians 5:21-33

INTEGRATED SERMON AND BIBLE STUDY SERIES

In this series the sermons and bible studies are on different topics and could be done stand alone. In our planning however we've planned a logical flow between the two and you'll get the most out of the series if you listen to each sermon and do the bible studies too. Here's an overview:

STUDY	TOPIC	BIBLE REFERENCES
Study 1	Identity	Ephesians
Study 2	Community	Hebrews, Acts and Romans
Study 3	Church discipline	Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5
Study 4	Conversion	Ephesians, Acts and Galatians
Study 5	Partnership	Philippians 1:1-2:12

COMMUNITY GROUPS

COMMUNITY GROUPS AT TRINITY INNER SOUTH

Regular Bible study in small groups is a great way to grow as a Christian. At Trinity Inner South (TIS) we call our groups Community Groups as we see them as more than a Bible study. We see three things as being really important in all of our Community Groups:

1. GROWING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

This is a central goal of all we do at TIS and God's appointed way of doing so is through ministry of the word and through prayer.

2. GROWING IN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

God has called us to be in community with one another and there are many "one another" tasks in the Bible, which simply can't be achieved at a big Sunday gathering and are better done in smaller groups.

3. SERVING THE GOSPEL TOGETHER

We'd love all our groups to be growing in their commitment to the gospel and how that works out practically at a local church level.

JOINING A COMMUNITY GROUP

If you are able to join one of our community groups and haven't done so yet, please consider it in the next few weeks. The easiest way to get into a group is to go to our website at www.trinityinnersouth.org.au/#/connect and launch the form at the bottom of the "Community Groups" page. Matt Winter our Community Group co-ordinator will get in touch with you.

OUR KIDS PROGRAM FOR THIS SERIES

OUR KIDS ARE IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH

Our children's programs at Trinity Inner South (TIS) are for children between the age of three up to year six at school. In our kids programs throughout the series the children will be studying the same key points as the adults are in the sermons in age appropriate ways. As such the kids talk, sermon and kids programs will all be on the same topic.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS IN THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

If you know children at TIS (parents, grandparents, God parents, everyone) please talk to them about what they are learning at church. To help with this, grab a take-home card each week and use it as conversation starter. Why not collect the five cards over the series and review the key ideas each week?

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE SERIES – EPHESIANS 4:15

“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.”

Kids are great at remembering things (every song from “Frozen” for example) and helping them to remember passages from the Bible is a great way to help them grow. Take a fridge magnet too and use it to teach children the memory verse and encourage their enthusiasm for church.

OUR KIDS PROGRAM FOR THIS SERIES

TEACHING THE KIDS THE MAIN POINTS OF THE SERIES

Have a go at using this simple activity with hand gestures to help kids recall the central teaching points across the five weeks of the church series:

WEEK 1: The church will last forever in heaven



WEEK 2: The Church is for one another

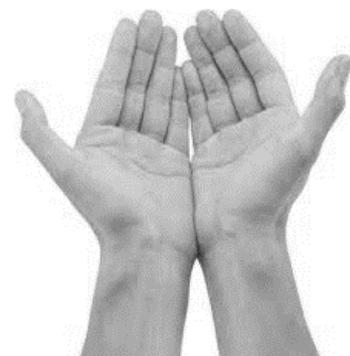


WEEK 3:

The church is to be built up together to maturity



WEEK 4: The church is to share the good news of Jesus.



WEEK 5: The church belongs to Jesus



BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

TOPIC: IDENTITY

WRITTEN BY: MATT WINTER

OVERVIEW: People think about the question ‘What is Church?’ in all sorts of different ways. It’s important to think biblically about the Church’s identity, and also important to keep this question separate to the question of “What does a Church do?”

1. If someone asked you ‘What is Church?’ what answer would you give?
(Try to answer in less than 5 words)

READ EPHESIANS 1:1-5

2. How does Paul address the Church in Ephesus? Would you be happy to address our Church in the same way?
3. What are the spiritual blessings we are given in verses 3-5? How does God bestow these blessings on us?

READ EPHESIANS 2:19-22

4. What is the interaction between the Son, Father and Spirit in verses 17 and 18? How would you describe the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity here? Considering the Church is God’s holy people, do you think the relationship of the Father, Son and Spirit says anything about the identity of the Church?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

5. What phrases could you use to describe the Church from verses 19 to 22? Based on these verses, what would you say to someone who says ‘I can be a Christian without being an active part of a Church Community’?

READ EPHESIANS 5:21-33

6. From verse 23, what do we learn about the Church?
7. After reading through these passages, what different ways might you answer the question ‘What is Church?’
8. How would you respond if you were chatting to someone after Church and they told you they don’t feel like they are part of the Trinity Inner South community?

Pray that we would remember and be secure in our identity as God’s People, God’s family, God’s Household and Christ’s Body and that God would help us to live out this identity by loving one another.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

TOPIC: COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY: MARK CURRAN

OVERVIEW: Community is a word we use a lot in a church context, but what does the Bible say about the purpose and practicalities of church community?

1. How would you explain what Church community is, and how it differs from other communities that we may be part of?

READ HEBREWS 10:19-25

2. What is the purpose of Christian community, according to the writer of Hebrews?
3. What does it mean to spur one another on to love and good deeds, and to encourage one another?
4. How does Jesus dying for us shape the way that we interact with others in our Church community?
5. What is the approaching Day, and why should it drive us to meet together and encourage each other?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

6. What are some ways that we can be spurring each other toward love and good deeds and encouraging each other as a community at TIS?

READ ROMANS 12:3-8

7. How has God equipped his people to live in Christian fellowship?
8. What does this passage teach us about how we fit into our Church community?
9. How does this passage deter us from being prideful in our walk with God?
10. Thinking about some of the Church communities you may have been involved in (whether TIS or elsewhere), what are some of the ways in which you are thankful for God giving people gifts to serve the Church community?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

READ ACTS 2:42-47

It's important as we read this passage to be aware of the danger of creating an idealistic view of Church community, which then leaves us disappointed with the imperfect Church community we're a part of. The early Church was certainly not a perfect Church community (see Acts 5:1-11)! But this passage does present a number of marks of a Church community that is heading in the right direction.

11. What are some aspects of this early Church community that stand out to you as being good habits in Christian fellowship, and how might we imitate these as a Church community at TIS?

Pray for our community, that we would be humble, spur one another on and encourage one another.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

TOPIC: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

WRITTEN BY: MATT WINTER

OVERVIEW: Unfortunately no earthly Church is perfect, and situations will always arise in Churches where a Church member has sinned and the Church has to decide whether they will intervene in a situation. Let's have a look at what the bible says about this topic of 'Church Discipline':

1. Have you ever been in a Church where the Church has had to publicly discipline someone? Do you think this is something a Church should ever do?

READ MATTHEW 18:12-22

2. From verses 12-14, what do we learn about what God is like?
3. What does this passage tell us about how Church discipline should play out? Imagine you suspect a friend at Church has been stealing from you, talk about what you would do & how the situation might play out.
4. What do you think is the purpose of carrying out this sort of Church discipline? Why?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

After thinking about the principles of Church discipline, we'll now look at an example in scripture where Paul writes to the Church in Corinth, encouraging them to enforce Church discipline.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-8

5. What sin has been committed here? What is Paul's reaction? Does Paul's reaction surprise you at all?

6. What do verses 6-8 say about why Church discipline is important?

7. After reflecting on these passages, has your thinking on whether or not Church discipline is a good thing changed?

Pray that as a Church we would be good at doing Church discipline, quick to repent if someone ever points out one of our sins to us, and quick to forgive someone who repents of their sin and seeks to change.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

TOPIC: CONVERSION

WRITTEN BY: MARK CURRAN

OVERVIEW: As a church we have a great heart for people coming to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In this study we'll have a look at how the Bible addresses the need for conversion, the process of conversion & its results.

1. What is Christian conversion and what experiences have you had with it (whether your own conversion or seeing someone else's)?

2. What do you think are the signs that someone has been converted?

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10

3. What does this passage tell us about the condition that we were in?

4. What condition are we in as a result of what God has done through Jesus?

5. What makes it possible to go from being dead to being alive?

READ ACTS 2:14-41

Peter proclaims the death and resurrection of Jesus, saying that God has made him Lord and Messiah. He then calls on the people to repent and be baptized.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

6. What is the link in this passage between conversion and the news of Jesus' death and resurrection?

7. What does it mean to repent, and why is it necessary?

8. Who is the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to?

9. From this passage, how would you summarise what it means for someone to be converted?

READ GALATIANS 5:13-26

So far we've seen in the Acts passage how conversion involves repenting of our sins in response to Jesus' death for us, and from Ephesians, how conversion is a step from death to life. In this passage we see a picture of what it looks like to live as a converted believer.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

10. According to this passage, what should we expect to see as being evidence that someone has been truly converted?

11. How do we understand v16 knowing that we are all susceptible to at least some of the acts of the flesh listed in v19-21? Would it be reasonable to doubt whether your conversion was genuine if you were struggling with one of these sins?

12. Can someone who has not repented and received the gift of the Holy Spirit still be capable of fulfilling the fruits of the Spirit listed in v22-23?

13. How does this passage distinguish between what the lives of converted people and unconverted people look like?

Pray, thanking God for the incredible work He has done in Jesus, that He has rescued us from our sins. Pray that He would save others.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

TOPIC: PARTNERSHIP

WRITTEN BY: MARK CURRAN

OVERVIEW: Thinking through what gospel partnership looks like today.

1. What do you think it means for Christians to be partners in the gospel? What does this partnership look like? Share any Christians or Christian organisations that you would say you ‘partner’ with.

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:1-13

2. What role does prayer play in the gospel partnership that Paul has with the Philippian Church? Do you think we place the same level of importance on prayer in our modern day gospel partnership?

3. How does Paul express his love for the Philippians?

4. What lessons about living in gospel partnership can be learned from Paul’s expression of love and prayer for the Philippians?

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:27 – 2:12

5. What does it mean to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, and why is this so important in gospel partnership?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

6. How does Paul encourage the Philippians in regard to their struggles?

7. What is the point Paul is making in Philippians 2:1-2?

8. What role does humility play in gospel partnership? How does Jesus model that humility for us? How could pride impact our gospel partnership today?

9. How can we make sure that the partnership we have in the gospel at TIS is characterised not by pride and disunity, but by love, prayer and humility?

10. Do you need to rethink how you partner with other Christians in the gospel as a result of what we've seen?

Pray that our gospel partnership would be characterised by love, prayer and humility. Also pray for the specific Christians or Christian organisations that you partner with.

FEEDBACK

We'd really appreciate feedback on the series, how helpful you found it and any suggestions for improvement. If you are able please send any feedback via email to: office@trinityinnersouth.org.au

Feedback on each aspect of the series would be helpful:

SERMONS

1. Do you think they were faithful to God's word?
2. How engaging were they?
3. Did you feel they were applicable to your life?

BOOKLET

1. Were the studies helpful?
2. Would you use them again if they were produced in future?

OVERALL

1. Did the series help you grow in your relationship with God?
2. Do you think you've had your view of church changed for the better?
3. If you have kids in our programs how did you go teaching them at home with the take home cards?

Any other comments would be welcome.

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TRINITY INNER SOUTH CHURCH A TRINITY NETWORK