

Lake Highlands Church

Sunday Assembly Reflection – 11/30/14

RECAP: Today, Jim spoke powerfully about sin as that which disables the capacity for enduring relationships. The evidence is all around us, but because relationships have become “all about me and meeting my needs,” we aren’t aware that we have a problem. We see others as the problem, and aren’t able to own our part in the failure of relationships. We may say “this just isn’t working for me anymore” or “I’m done.” And the world applauds our decision because “why would we stay in relationship that’s not meeting our needs?” That’s the power of sin. So, even if we do start to recognize the sin, what then? We do not have the knowledge or the power to fix anything on our own. But Jesus does. He is not just the Reconciler of the world to the Father, but the Reconciler of us to each other. Jesus is the ultimate example of capacity for enduring relationship – even when we were His enemies, He gave His life for us. What was in it for Him? Why would He do that?

What I liked most about Jim’s story about swimming in the Mediterranean Sea was the fact that he wasn’t prepared for what he encountered, but God’s grace surrounded him and was more than enough. For most of my Christian life, I’ve stayed in the shallow end of the pool, playing it safe, not fully jumping in and trusting God – especially regarding relationships. I have justified cutting off relationships as “best for me.” That is changing now (it’s never too late!) but it is only as I am starting to understand that I really am loved by God, and by a family of believers at this church. We love because He first loved us.

I jumped in at Lake Highlands Church five years ago, trusting a sea of strangers who love Jesus, and have shown me they don’t leave. Like Doubting Thomas, I needed a real-life example to believe this kind of covenant love was possible. I’ve moved from skeptic to believer through these relationships.

REFLECTION: (Pick one of the questions below to answer in your small groups, or more if you have time. Be sure to pray for each other at the end).

- What relationship is the most challenging to you right now? How are you responding? How does Jesus as Reconciler impact this relationship?
- Would you describe yourself as having jumped in the deep water or wading in the shallow end? Share a story of God’s faithfulness when you faced a difficult situation, or share an area or opportunity where God is calling you to trust Him more.

Ephesians 3:14b-19 (The Message)

....I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit – not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength – that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite Him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all the followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.