

Sermon Summary 05/03/2015

1 Thessalonians 5:11-24 “A Church under the Reign of Peace” by Drew Hunter

In Short: The gospel-saturated culture that every church needs can only come *to us* from God and is expressed *through us*.

Sunday's Outline

We are called by Christ to be a church that has a culture of peace. What does that culture look like and how do we get it?

1. The gospel culture every church needs
 - a. Paul prays for this culture of peace to abound amongst the Thessalonians, which is something only God can do.
 - b. This gospel-saturated culture is noted for its peace, which must happen on an individual level before it can happen corporately.
 - c. The God of peace accomplishes this by sanctifying us and making us more like Christ.
2. What does this culture look like exactly?
 - a. A culture of peace is full of people who are seeking to encourage one another. The church should be markedly different than the culture of criticism in which we live.
 - b. Peace rises and falls with the esteem people have for their leadership. Even leaders need to esteem other leaders for the work and sacrifices they make (which are often private).
 - c. A culture of peace exists when everyone owns the responsibility to care for one another, admonish one another, counsel and encourage one another.
 - d. A culture of peace is created and protected when people reject evil, are always thankful, and are prayerful.

Help for Understanding & Application

1. What is meant by the phrase “gospel culture?” Does ZF have a gospel culture? Does your small group have a gospel culture? Does your own heart have a gospel culture? In other words, are you preaching the gospel to yourself every day? Explain your answer.
2. In verse 23, Paul writes “Now may the God of peace...” and we expect him to finish with “...give you peace.” Instead he writes, “...sanctify you completely.” What role does sanctification have in helping to establish a culture of peace in your life, your house, your work, your school, your relationships, and in ZF?
3. Much has been said about how evangelicals have focused *too much* on individualism. Based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, is it too narrowly focused to say creating and protecting a culture of peace must start with the individual? Why or why not?
4. Share with your group a time when criticism tore you down.
5. When was the last time someone in your group was greatly encouraged by the words or actions of another person in the group? If appropriate, tell the story.
6. A culture of peace is created and protected when we all own the responsibility to counsel and care for one another. How can we as a small group better encourage and support one another in this up-and-down process of being sanctified to be more like Christ? Suggest some attainable steps to the group.