

THE BIG IDEA CURRICULUM

There are Icons and there are icons

Sermon 28.8.09

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Small Group Study for Week of Aug 28-Sept 4

Sermon Overview:

With the play on the word “icon” (from the Greek: an image), we connected to both the ancient use of an Icon (as in what one will find in an orthodox church) and then looked at the modern use of the word icon in the language of computers. An icon in a computer is an image that one looks for to open up a program. When double clicking on an icon we are taken to something bigger, and a program opens up that we can use. It defines what one is going to get when they click on it. We applied this metaphor to the church. When the world looks at the church and double clicks on it what does it find? Does it open up a the image of God expressed through the community of faith as it allows the Holy Spirit to grow and encourage and witness to the power of God working in us? Or are we identified with a building, an image, a program, or the kind of music we sing?

The Big Idea:

“The church is not buildings, worship styles, or programs - the church is the Spirit filled community of disciples of Jesus Christ.” This is what God wants people to see when they double click on the church to find God.

Background behind the Big Idea

The temple was the centre of ancient life. Every thing went through the temples. Charity, worship, identity, economic networking through the trade guild was also very much tied into the temple life. As one walked through ancient Corinth one would have seen the temple of Zeus in the centre of town and would have noticed the mountain (Acro Corinth) that has the temple of Venus. Every part Corinthian life was centred on these and other temples and their gods.

To the Jews the temple they understood was the temple in Jerusalem. And again Jewish life was centred on the temple and the ceremonies in it. To convert to Christianity was to convert into a religion that had not great temple, was not the centre of society and was almost invisible. But Paul is saying that the church itself is the temple.

***Group Reads:** 1 Cor. 3:16,17.

Discuss this text, keeping in mind that Paul is using a plural form of the word “you” when pointing to the temple. The “you” is the church collective not the singular individual. We collectively are being made into a dwelling place for God Himself.

Group Reads: Eph. 2:19-22

1. What is a temple? What is it used for?
2. What is this telling us about the church?
3. When we read Eph. 4:1-16 how is Paul building on Eph. 2:19-22?

***Group Reads:** 1 Peter 2:1-10

1. Read this through together three times, then answer of the following questions:
 - a. 1st time: “What is the text tell me about the church community?” or “what have I heard in this text in relation to the church?”
 - b. 2nd time: “What is this text telling me personally?”
 - c. 3rd time: “How am I going to implement what God has revealed to me?”