

We would go by the name missional. That would be sort of the way that we would describe our church. And we would differentiate the way that we are versus a lot of churches, specifically in this area, would see themselves. So what I want to do this morning is really explain what that is and why that's so important and things that I think we can really improve on to even move forward in this direction. And so I'm going to be talking about what a missional church really looks like and how we can really kind of buy in to being missional believers, missional individuals that live on mission throughout our city.

So that's what I want to cast this morning as we kind of look through Ephesians. And we're going to be a little bit in Matthew as well. And so I'm going to kind of jump around to different places. But primarily I'll be in Ephesians 4 this morning.

What you see here in the Gospel of Luke – we've been covering Luke. By the way, we'll be back in Luke next week. But what we've seen in Luke's Gospel is Jesus, even at the very beginning of his life, he is promised really the Holy Spirit is going to do mighty works in his life.

And you see even in his baptism the Holy Spirit ascends like a dove in the form of a dove. And you see Jesus' ministry begins, and the ministry of Jesus was empowered by the work of the Holy Spirit. And people ask often, "How was Jesus able to perform miracles? How was he able to heal people?" Well, I think he is the perfect example of a man that's completely full of the Holy Spirit without sin in his life, all right?

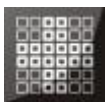
And so that's the way that Jesus would function as a perfect, sinless man, full of the Holy Spirit. And you see this throughout the Gospels. You even see it in John the Baptizer's life. Even in his mother's womb, God gives him the Holy Spirit.

And so Jesus' life is marked by really the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. And how he was able to do the things that he did was through the work of the Spirit. Then you see at Christ's death, he is crucified on a bloody cross, the most horrendous death. He lived the life that we should have lived. He died the life that we deserved to die. And three days later, he is risen from the grave. And that same Holy Spirit that lives in him throughout the end of his life he's promising his disciples that they would have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would empower them. The Holy Spirit would allow them to do and continue the work of Jesus.

By the way, Luke and Acts are a continual story. All right, so it's like *Lord of the Rings I and Lord of the Rings II*, Luke and Acts. *Back to the Future?* Okay, but the prequels are good this time. It's the same story, and it's a continual story through the Holy Spirit empowering Jesus and continuing the work of the church.

And so what Jesus does is he promises the Spirit's work in the disciples' lives. And here's what he says in Acts 1:8. This is a very popular passage. A lot of churches use it for their mission statement. It says:

*"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*



All right, so this is what we have. And then we have this other promise in Matthew. Look in Matthew 28, and we'll have this up on the screen, Verse 16.

<sup>16</sup> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

<sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make –

What's the word?

– disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

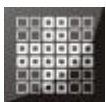
So this is the Great Commission passage. You see the mission of Christ presented in Acts through the continual work of the Spirit, through Jesus, through his disciples in Acts. And then you see this commission that's a commission to his disciples in Matthew 28. And what is it? What's the plan? To make what? Disciples. So the great commission is really about making disciples, right? So we could talk all day long about reaching the Gospel and preaching the Gospel and getting people saved and getting people to pray the sinner's prayer and that's the Great Commission.

It is, but it's a prerequisite to discipleship. Discipleship is the Great Commission, all right? And I'll be honest with you. I think many churches have failed in the idea of what it means to make disciples, all right? I don't think we think that way. I think for so long the church has thought, "Converts, converts, converts. Let's just get people to submit and pray the prayer and get saved and follow Jesus, and then we'll just let them do stuff and they'll figure it out," right? "We'll get them a New Testament Bible, and they'll start in John, and they'll just know what to do."

And it doesn't go that way, does it? I mean, it just doesn't go that way. The promise really is to make disciples. And that's really the command that we as believers – everybody who is a believer should have this desire to make disciples. So he goes from "You will be my witnesses" to "Make disciples." And then he goes from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the world.

So what he's doing here is he's building this idea of this is not something that just remains locally. It goes to uttermost parts of the world. So it's disciples making disciples that are making disciples. And it's spreading throughout the region and throughout the world. And so discipleship is a movement that he's beginning to plant in the minds of his disciples. Jesus is telling his disciples, "This is going to be a movement that is going to shape the world." And so if the church's goal is to make disciples, then the church itself should be reproducing itself, and it should be spreading.

That's why in our budget 10% of all of what we bring in will go out to plant more churches regionally and globally, because we think that's so important. We think that's so important. That's why we spend a great deal of our time training young men to go and be sent out. That's why we have a church planting residency program at our church, because we believe that it's so important that disciples are being made and they're being sent out. And there's a movement happening of disciples being made and



disciples making disciples, and it's spreading. You guys excited about that? I mean, you don't look excited about that. I think that's pretty awesome, all right?

Okay, so what we have here is this movement that's happening of disciples being made, and that's began by Jesus. So if this isn't on the radar of many churches – which I don't believe that it is. I don't believe that it is – we are not doing the job that he has set out for us. So if we're not making disciples – like I've even heard other pastors say, "We're good at these things, but we're not good at making disciples." That's like saying, "We're a good football team, but we just don't score any points." Like, you are going to lose every single game, all right? You're not doing the job. Your job is to get the football across the line, and you are going to win games that way, okay? That is it.

So if we're not making disciples, we're not even doing our part. So it's not this category. It's everything that we do is revolved around how we make disciples. All right? You guys with me? It's everything. It's everything.

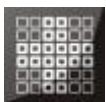
And so I want to not be the church that plants a good Sunday gathering but has no intention of having relational discipleship relationships happening throughout our church. And I think the churches that are being planted, there's many of them that are planting services and not churches. Meaning I think you can have a guy who gets up every single week and talks about Jesus and sings songs about Jesus and has a Sunday gathering and not function as a true church should function. Can we agree with that? We can agree with that. Thank you.

But a church that functions the right way has a gathering, but the gathering is only a celebration of disciples that are being made throughout the week. You get that? So there's a big difference here between what we see here in the way that we view church in Eastern North Carolina as just an event on Sunday morning. You know, you even hear the mindset of, "My life hasn't been good. I got to go to church this week," church meaning the event on Sunday morning.

But really we are the church. It's the people that make the church. I think there's some benefits that we have in not having a building. Because I think one of the benefits are people don't ever identify, "Well, that's where you go to church." People identify Integrity can meet at City Hotel and Bistro. They can meet at Wahl Coates Elementary. They can meet at the Town Commons and still be a church, because we want to be about people who are making disciples and living on mission throughout the week.

So it's a very different idea, but here's the thing. And here's what I don't want you to think it is. I don't want you to think that Integrity Church is a model. I want you to think that Integrity Church is just trying its best to be Biblical. Discipleship is not just a model. Being missional is not just a model. Being missional is just being Biblical, all right?

So we just want to be Biblical in all that we do, and we want to be the church like Jesus has planned that we would just be a church that makes disciples. So if we have a strip down Sunday, it's not a big deal, all right? If we have lights or we don't have lights, it's not a big deal. If we don't even have a sound board,



it's not a big deal, all right? But if we're making disciples, that's a deal breaker for us. That's the most important thing for us.

So let me just show you before I set things up in Ephesians 4. Let me just show you some groundwork, some kind of behind-the-scenes things in Ephesians 4. Okay, we're going to be in Ephesians 4 from here on out. What you see in Ephesians 4 is you have this amazing start. This church blows up in Ephesus. Paul plants this church. He's a church planter. He goes around different places and plants churches. And what he does is he plants this church in Ephesus, and it affects this whole continent in Asia. Asia has never even seen a church like this at this point. It's just blowing up. And so you see they become literally this large mega church really fast.

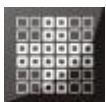
And in the Bible, by the way, one of the largest churches in the Bible is the church in Jerusalem, which was the first church ever started. And after that, you really just see disciples being made and the Gospel being spread. And most of the churches, by the way, are 60 to 80 people in the Bible, all right? So when he writes to the church in Philippi, he writes to the church in Colossians, and he writes in 1 and 2 Corinthians the church of Corinth, they're all really small congregations. All right, this is probably the size right here of those congregations, okay?

And so what you see here is at this point, he's planted a church that's uniquely different, because it's grown so fast the church of Ephesus. And something weird happens in Revelation. That church actually dies. This massive, huge, influential church dies. And so what we have between this blowup of a church plant to a death of a church plant, you have book ends with Paul's writing to the church telling them what they should do.

So it's not about momentum. A church can't function just on momentum, because this church had a lot of momentum going into it. It's not about momentum. It's got to be about something else. And I think this is where Paul begins, because here's –

I was talking to an older pastor recently. I'm a young church planter. I'm 32 years old. And it's important for me to get around older pastors, because they're just not as arrogant as young church planters are, because life has happened to them and they've realized reality quicker. But I was talking to this guy, and he said, "If I were you, I would do exactly what you're doing planting a church." He goes, "I just love church plants." I said, "Well, what makes you love church plants?" And he says, "Well, church plants are so healthy." And I was like, "Okay, well, tell me what you mean by that, because I want to know how you see that." He's like, "They're just so full of young people." I'm like, "Okay, well, how is that healthy?" And he's like, "Well, they have so much excitement, and they have so much energy and momentum."

And I was like, well, I agree those things do happen. I think that happens at our church. We see some excitement, momentum, and some youth. There's always babies and weddings and I don't do a lot of funerals. That is great, but what – and I gave him this example. I said, "What if I just drank energy drinks and energy bars all day long? Would that mean I was healthy? Or would that mean that I was



just really annoying at the end of the day?" He says, "You'd be really annoying at the end of the day." I said, "Yeah, absolutely." I said, "So energy and momentum does not equal health." Can we agree?

All right, so there's got to be something else there that makes you healthy. Now, I'm not saying energy and momentum are bad things, but it does not equal health. So I don't want to build Integrity just on energy use and momentum. I want to build it on something that will last.

So Acts 20 is where Paul begins to speak into – and this will set us up more for when we get into Ephesians. He'll begin to speak into the minds of these elders, the leaders of the church of Ephesus. Acts 20:26 it says this:

*<sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you.*

So he's really wanting to say, "Listen, this is what I want to say just so I'm not guilty of not saying this."

*<sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.*

Listen to this.

*<sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; <sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away –*

What's the word?

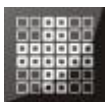
*– the disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.*

So Paul is coming to this church who's blowing up, and they are shaking this whole continent for the Gospel. And Paul's coming in and saying, "Listen, you are going to have to be careful. Pay attention to yourselves." He's telling that to the leaders. "Pay attention to the men who are leaders in this congregation that they're watching themselves because, listen, fierce wolves will come, and they will take away the sheep, the congregation. People are going to come and try to steer them away from the truth of God's Word and the Gospel." He's like, "We cannot be steered away from the Gospel by the fierce wolves." And he actually says this, "Some are going to come, and some are going to rise up from among you."

And this is how we see this unpacked further in Paul's letter to the church of Ephesus in Ephesians 4. Look at Ephesians 4:11. Stay with me here, because I think this is really important things in here in 4:11-16.

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers –

Listen to this. Verse 12:



*<sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.*

So you look at this pattern that you're seeing here in Paul that he's trying to really save and salvage this growing, vibrant, exciting church. And he comes in, and he says, "Our job, your job as the leaders" – talking about people like me, the pastors – "is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. That's your job. That is how disciples are being made is that you are pouring in, and you're teaching sound doctrine so that godly men would be rise up from the group that could lead and that can shepherd." And he does this in such a way that he says, "It's to equip the saints."

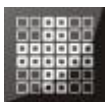
And so what this does for me is it shapes the way that we see church, because the way that I grew up seeing church is church is the thing that we do so that everything that happens on Sunday morning is for the lost friend that comes. Right? Anybody ever see that church growing up? Everything that happens, all the songs, the sermon was all about that person coming down front and praying or joining the church or being baptized, and that's the application points then. It was almost predictable. Those are the three things that the pastor's going to nail. He wants someone to get saved. He wants someone to join. He wants someone to be baptized, and that's it, right? That's the application, and everything's around your lost friend.

So the goal then is your job as a Christian who goes to church, your job is to invite, invite, invite so that your professional pastor can tell them how to get saved, right? And that's it. Our job is to invite. And I think those are good. Inviting is good. I told you the beginning of the service to invite your friends to come to life group. Nothing's wrong with that. That's great.

But it is not the main intention of why you come is so that you can go out and invite people to come here. The purpose and why we gather even on Sunday mornings – the purpose of why we go and have life and do life together is so that we can equip the saints, you, to go and share the Gospel to your neighbors, to your friends, to your coworkers, to your enemies, that we can equip you to do that.

I don't want to be the guy that just – that's a lot of pressure on me. You bring your lost friend to come, and I'm the one who's supposed to win them to Christ? I don't mind doing that, but I want to be knowing that I'm doing a good enough job training you how to do that. So I want to teach you the Gospel really well. And I want every single sermon that every single time we get to a sermon, it's going to bring back to the Gospel and how you can know the glories and the wonderful saving grace of God so that when you do go out and you do share you know what to say. You've got it right, and it's the right Gospel.

Paul says no other gospel. Even if an angel comes down from heaven and tries to preach another gospel, let that angel be accursed. He's telling us know the Gospel so that we can go and share it rightly



so that we can go and share it rightly so that we can equip the saints for the work of the ministry. He's not saying that's Ben Tugwell's job. He's saying that's everybody so that I can equip you so that you can equip others so that we can make disciples together. See that? It's an awesome mission.

I think we've missed that so much, because we've created services just around winning lost people. I think services should win lost people, but I don't think that's the primary reason why church is to gather. All right? We get that?

All right, so being a missional church is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. By the way, if this is what we're doing, and if the mission is to make disciples, we have to ensure that the definition of the word is informed by Scripture, right? We have to make sure that that's Biblical the way we're even making disciples.

And so I think a couple things happen in discipleship. Churches might do a discipleship program, and that's fine. This is not us. Again, we want to be the most Biblical that we can. A lot of churches have a linear process. So they become a Christian and that's it. There's no real mission. There's no real end goal. They just might win someone to Christ and do a spiritual gift survey and say, "Okay, this is where you want to serve in the church," right? An online survey and, "You're good. You're good to go, and that's it. That's our discipleship is put you in there."

Some are done like a baseball diamond. Knowing Christ is the hit, and Base 1 would be growing in Christ. Base 2 is committed to Christ. Base 3 is you commit to ministry. And a home run is you're being sent out. And that's, "We're done with discipleship. You're sent out. And we're done."

But here's the thing about discipleship. Discipleship is an endless pursuit of a holy God. Discipleship is me pressing you, me pushing you to pursue the all-satisfying, wonderful, saving Lord. And that is an endless process. And this is why discipleship is an endless process of chasing something that you will never obtain until you see him in glory.

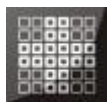
Here's an example of that, Romans 11:33, one of my favorite passages of all time.

*<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

You can know him infinitely, and you're pursuing him continually throughout your whole life. And so discipleship doesn't have an end function. It's just a continual movement. So our life is just about living on mission for him and making disciples ourselves.

And so the second thing, a missional church is not only to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, but it's to grow deep in the Gospel. Look at Ephesians 4. And I think this is really going alongside of how we won't know him completely and fully, but we pursue him. Look at Ephesians 4:13.

*<sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be*



*children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*

So what does Paul do in order to show us this? So if being a missional church is growing deeper in the Gospel, become experts in the Gospel, who does he call out first? Does he say to mature womanhood? No, he says mature manhood.

And this is a key understanding of when the Gospel really takes root I believe that men will begin to step up. And men will begin to seek the joy of leading their wives and loving their wives like Christ loved the church and loving and leading their families and loving and leading their children. I believe the church was set up so that men would step up and lead.

I mean, you have this so clearly in 1 Corinthians. Paul plants a church in Corinth, and this church was a wreck, all right? He plants this amazing church. And again, it's like Ephesus. It starts off really good, and then it just goes sour when he leaves. And what happens is they're looking for this leader named Apollos, who apparently was this amazing speaker, and they wanted him to come back because they like to hear his voice when he preached.

You know, kind of like my voice. You know, everyone just wants to hear my voice. Not at all.

And so they want this guy to come back. And they're like, "Where's our boy Apollos? I can't wait. I want that Apollos poster to be put back up in my room when he's back." And they're just wanting this guy to show up. And Paul's like, "No, no, no, listen. He might come back. He might not. But here's what I want you to do." He tells them this in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. He says:

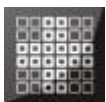
*<sup>13</sup> Be watchful, stand firm in the faith –*

What does he say? Act like what?

*– act like men, be strong. <sup>14</sup> Let all that you do be done in love.*

So he's not using men in this ambiguous way of saying it means men and women. Why would he be telling women to act like men? That would be weird, right? Didn't he just tell them about head coverings and all that stuff, right? I mean, why would he be telling them that?

So he's calling out men continually in the churches. He's telling them to grow up to mature manhood. So you're not a child being tossed to and fro. You want to see someone who's really unstable emotionally? You will find the same thing. They have no doctrinal convictions. And so when they're challenged in some way by false teaching, they'll just go for that. Or when they watch Oprah, they'll just go for whatever she says, right? Or when they turn on the TV and they watch TBN and they see that, they say, "Yeah, I'll go for that too." "Oh, this book, yeah, that looks good." And then they're all over the place. And then when suffering happens and life gets them, they can't make any wise – they're children, right? They're in Candy Land.



And what he's saying here is the churches need to grow in our deep understanding of this pursuit of Christ, this endless pursuit of Christ that discipleship is, that the men specifically are called out in this in how they pursue holiness.

I've got to tell you we are in a culture of some of the worse men that I have ever seen in our culture ever. I'm reading articles like last year I think it was. NPR did an article called "End of the Macho Man." And it was about how more women are finishing college than men, because the video game addicts are now from the ages of 18 to 30. All right, video games, right? What we played when we were 14. No, 18 to 30-year-olds are the experts at it. They're the guys that are beating the 14-year-olds, all right?

I mean, just recently I met a young man and I asked him. I said, "So what do you do? Where do you work? Where do you go to school?" He said, "I'm a gamer." I was like, "You're 25. Do you make money doing that?" "No, I go to tournaments." "Okay, what's the winning prize." "Oh, \$300." "Oh, okay, so you live your life to get \$300, right?" I didn't say that, but I wanted to.

And this is the men in our culture of boys who can't shave. They live with their moms. You get more and more guys who are not moving out when they're 17 to 18. The actual age now the average age of men moving out of their house is 23-24. And women they don't want to marry guys anymore. They say, "I don't want to marry a young boy. I don't want to marry a little baby. I'll just go and build my own career and I'll do my own thing. I don't care about this."

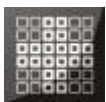
So what does Paul do? He says the men have to step up, and they have to lead, and they have to know sound doctrine so they aren't children tossed to and fro. Y'all all right? Y'all all right? He's saying men have to step up.

So if Integrity really wants to be a church that makes an impact on Greenville, we are going to have to reach the men. There's a five to one ratio, by the way. There's five women to every one man in Greenville. So the men definitely have to step up, because the women just don't have a lot of options here, all right? They just don't have a lot of options.

And so we've got to do a good job on how we're training the man. And I really believe that we'll start to see men making disciples. We'll start to see women treated differently in our city, which is a great need. I mean, I don't even want to know how women were treated in this room last night, right? New Years, a big party thing, I don't even want to know.

And so if our church really wants to make a dent on our city, it's got to be toward men. Their energies and their time and their cultivating is not focused on worthless thing. Their energy and their time is in the truth of God's Word, knowing him rightly, being able to articulate the Gospel well and live the Gospel. I'm not talking like seminary church. I'm not talking these guys got to be great theologians and brilliant. I just want these guys to love Jesus and live for him, right? That's what I want, all right?

And so if it's growing deep in the Gospel, that's being missional. And the third thing is being authentic. A missional church is being authentic. And so again, if we're growing deep in the Gospel, we're going to see – and we're not becoming the seminary church where the pastor – I don't want to just be the guy



that says Greek words for no reason just so you know that I know them. I don't know them, by the way, but if I did, I don't want to be this stiff, impersonal church either, because we're growing deep in the Gospel. I think sometimes that you would see a church that does grow deep and they do teach sound doctrine. I think we do teach sound doctrine. But I definitely never want to get to the point where we're doing that and we're becoming stiff and impersonal and arrogant. It's not the thing that I want to see.

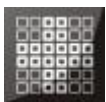
And so what I want to see here is a church that creates really not a subculture, because that's what that is when we become that way. We become a subculture. A subculture is like when we kind of are the Christians and that's the world out there. It's like when we where our own shirts and the shirt that says Sprite, instead of Sprite it's Spirit, right? You know, Burger King, Christ is King. That's subculture. That's we're freaking you out, right? "Lost? Got Jesus." Okay, you got it.

We don't want to be a subculture. We want to be a counterculture in that we are going to live our lives differently in how we live and how we do life together. We're going to share. We're going to have all things in common as it says in Acts. We're going to live this way incarnationally among each other. And this is the way that we live, and it's different. So when the world looks at us, they say, "You know what? That person's not perfect, but they have this joy and they have this excitement to be around other people. Who would have thought, right?"

And these friends that they have is something different than in proximity and the things that they enjoy. They might even have total different things that they enjoy. If you just look in this room and the people that I am closest to in this room, even the staff in this room, you would probably recognize that we don't have a lot in common, all right? We just don't. But there's this thing that we have in common. It's the joy that we have in Christ. And the mission that we are focused on is the same. So we get along famously. The music is different, all right? And the movie styles are different. And all the little things that we think are really important are different, but that's the same, because the community that we want to build is authentic.

And so I sense sometimes when we want to grow deep in the Gospel and we want to teach sound doctrine and we want to teach the full council of God, so when there's difficult passages that we might reach in the sermon or on Sunday morning or even in a life group, I sense sometimes that people are like, "Why did you have to teach us that? Why do we need to go through that verse?" Because it's in God's Word. That's the first thing, but because it teaches us how, if we know God rightly and if we know who he is personally and we know his character, what Paul tells us in Ephesians that we will know how to love, which is very interesting. Because I've heard multiple times that if we become deeper in the Gospel we forget how to love. It's actually the opposite. We'll know more about – look at this. Ephesians 4:15-16.

*<sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*



So you notice this. It flows down from men and women pursuing a great, wonderful God, having sound doctrine so they can know when fierce wolves come and they try to steer us away from the Gospel, we know the Gospel enough to be able to steer them away. And in our own body, through pursuing him rightly, we'll know how to build ourselves up in love. The more you know about God, the more than you will know how to love others. It's pretty awesome.

And so this uniqueness that they have as this body that's growing together, that he's wanting to grow together, is one that's foundationed in love, but it also has sound doctrine. Galatians 6:10 it says this:

*<sup>10</sup> So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

So he says we can do good to everyone. We can share the Gospel to everyone. Those are great things. But what does he say it's especially to those? Those who are in the household of faith. Those who are among each other.

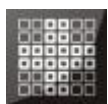
So the mission there is that we are a community that loves one another, so when those who are on the outside look in, they say, "Man, that is one church that loves one another. And they make this a priority in their lives." And that to me is the most attractional thing about a church is a community that loves one another in this way. It's just amazing.

And so if you are a person that just wants to come on a Sunday morning, you're going to miss that. You're going to miss that. And this is why I think life groups are so important. This is why I think we should gather weekly on Sunday, yes, but we should gather in our homes scattered throughout our city that we're doing life together. And as we grow and as we expand – and we're going to grow this year. I mean, honestly, I think this space is going to be really tight here in a few weeks. I think maybe in a few months we might have to do two services because of where we'll be, all right?

But what if the focus that we have is really about the love in our own community, that we have an intentional way about us when we see new people that we want to challenge them to be disciples of Jesus? We want to bring them into our communities so that they can love and pursue this endless pursuit of a wonderful, glorious Savior.

So discipleship has to happen, and it starts with me, but it continues with you, that you are disciple-making machines. So when people come, your intention with new folks that are coming –

By the way, people talk about the First Impressions Team. We talk about that all day long. You're all on the First Impressions Team, because you're all here. Your goal is to make disciples and to make those disciples into disciples, all right? And so this is our mission this year. This is what we want to accomplish this year. We're going to add a discipleship process that we want one-on-one discipleship happening with individuals in the church. And we will even open that up to anyone who wants to be discipled in a discipleship relationship. We'll talk more about that. And we've got other things that we're offering.



But really our focus this year, we're going to emphasize life groups. We're going to annoy you with how much we talk about life groups, because it is so important to us. You know, this Sunday gathering is great. We could meet on Thursday night. We could meet on Sunday. We could meet whenever we want on this gathering. But I want this gathering to be more of a celebration of what God has done that week through life groups. Wouldn't that be just a great model of church if we just saw it that way? What a celebration that we could come and celebrate what God has done throughout the week. When we come on Sunday, we're celebrating what he's done as we lived on mission for Christ.

