

“I am a rock, I am an island”

– Paul Simon

In Jean-Paul Sartre’s famous play, *No Exit*, three individuals who lived morally questionable lives find themselves sharing a room after their death. They interact as they await judgment for their sins, but as they interact, they emotionally wound each other until they realized at the end of the play that they are each other’s punishment. This realization culminates in a line that summarizes much of the atheist’s existential philosophy: “Hell is other people.” Our culture is infected with this kind of thinking. We are often bombarded with less explicit messages that we should be emotionally self sufficient and relationally guarded to get ahead and avoid being hurt. Paul Simon sings of this idea in the mid-60’s singing of the pains of personal connection and the safety of distant relationships repeating the catchy and often invoked refrain: “I am a rock, I am an island.”

A simple insight from this week’s Scripture counters this perspective. In Acts 2:44 we see that one of the values of the apostolic church was togetherness. They were more than simply a group of people coming together around a common cause – they actually spent time together and enjoyed it. Eugene Peterson describes his process of discovering this truth:

“I often found myself preferring the company of people outside my congregation, men and women who did not follow Jesus. Or worse, preferring the company of my sovereign self. But I soon found my preferences were honored neither by Scripture nor Jesus...there can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life apart from an immersion and embrace of community. I am not myself by myself.”

In God’s redemptive plan, the company of morally questionable co-travelers on the road of redemption is *the* environment in which we realize his healing and live life as God intended.

Monday – Tangible Togetherness

“The truth is, we all have quirks and annoying traits. But community has nothing to do with compatibility. The basis for our fellowship is our relationship to God: We’re family.” Rick Warren, [The Purpose Driven Life](#)

1. Please read Acts 2:42-47. Focus on the first half of verse 44. Why do you think that these new believers continued to meet together rather than accept the baptism and forgiveness and then go home?
2. Sometimes people say, “I belong to the universal church, but I don’t like churches or organized religion.” What does the account of early Christianity in Acts 2 seem to imply about this position?
3. Look back at the different sorts of people who were present for Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:9-11). How do you suppose they found unity in this diversity? What might this imply for us as we consider people at FBC that we might have a hard time appreciating or understanding?

Tuesday – Purposeful Togetherness

“This means that there are no solitary Christians... There are no self-help Christians. There are no Lone Ranger Christians. The moment the adjective intrudes it cancels the noun. Salvation is not a private deal with God... Any understanding of salvation that separates us from others is false.” Eugene Peterson, [Christ Plays in 10,000 Places](#)

1. Please read Hebrews 10:23-25. According to the author of Hebrews, what is the purpose of believers meeting together?
2. Why do you think meeting together as Christians is tied to perseverance?
3. Look at verse 24. “Let us consider” is a directive. Consider how this verse might play out in your life this week. Pick out an individual whom you could “spur on.”

Wednesday – Co-Belonging

“In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around.” Romans 12:5, [The Message](#)

1. Please read Romans 12: 1-5. According to these verses, to whom do we belong?
2. Paul boldly asserts that we belong to one another. How is this truth related to verses 1-2?
3. What is the “pattern of this world” when it comes to community? What can you do today to oppose, reject, or confront this worldly pattern?

Thursday – The Pursuit of Unity

“Obedience is the road to freedom, humility the road to pleasure, unity the road to personality.” C.S. Lewis

1. Please Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-12 and James 4:1. What is Paul trying to communicate in the Corinthian’s passage? How might this apply to our relationships at FBC?
2. What does James say is the source of disunity? Which desire is most likely to move you to quarrel?

Matter of Prayer - Pray for unity in our local congregation. Ask God to lead you in specific ways.

Friday – Sharing More Than Time

“The first disciples shared their capital goods as well as their prayers in the fellowship of the Spirit. Sharing the life of the Spirit drew them to share their living.” Edmund Clowney, [The Church](#)

1. Please Read Acts 2:44. What did the early church share together besides time?
2. Would you be inclined to think of this practice as a detail peculiar to that time and place, or as a timeless practice for the church? If you choose “timeless practice,” how does it apply to your home group, small group Bible study, or Sunday School class?
3. What could the FBC congregation share together besides time?

Weekend: Review your insights from the previous days. Re-read Hebrews 10 and James 4:1. Then Read Acts 2:44-45, focusing on how verse 45 expands the ideas of vs. 44. We will spend the coming week looking at vs. 45.