

WOODMONT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

SEEKING CLASS

An Exploration of Beliefs, Practices and the Christian Community

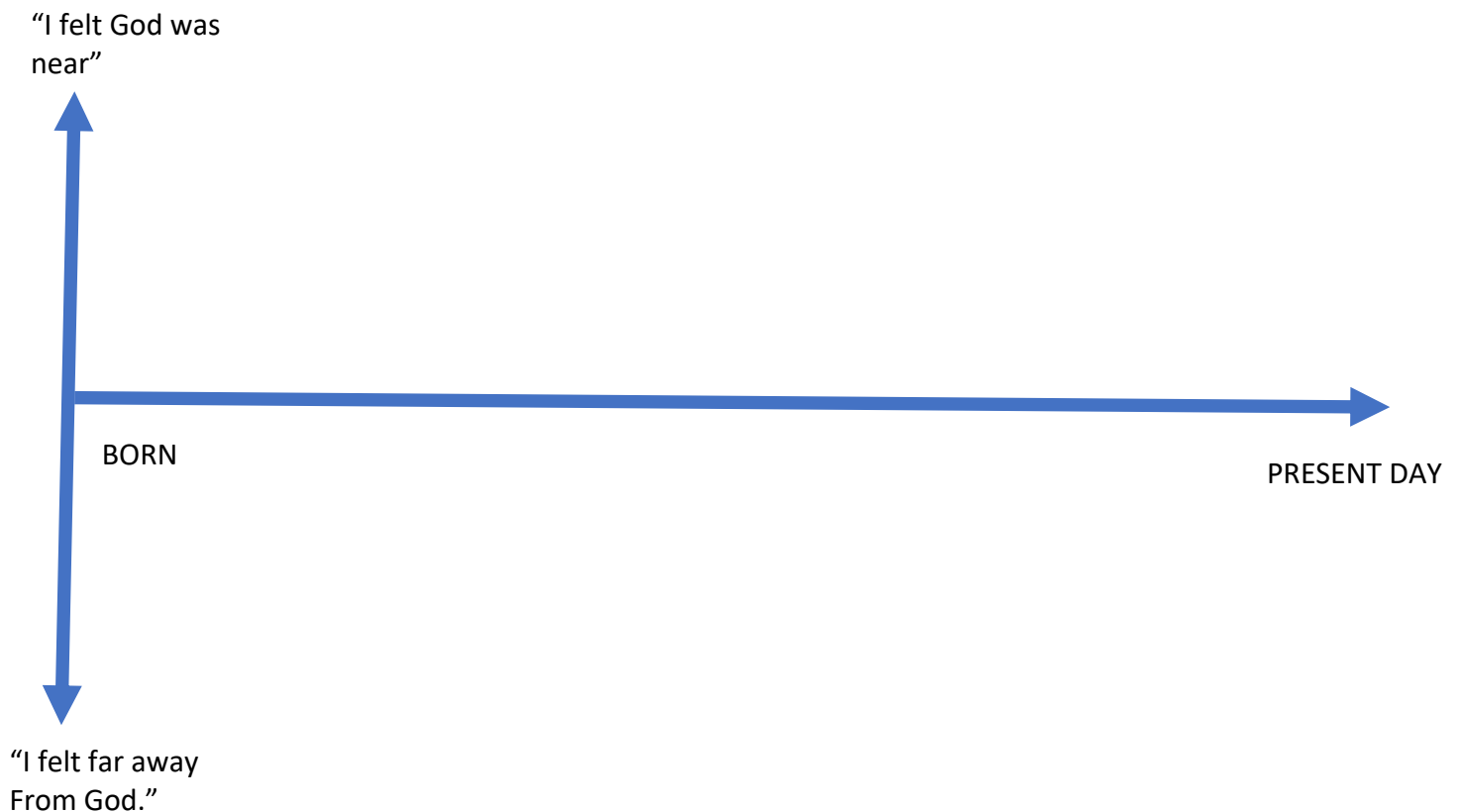


SEEKING God

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

"SPIRITUAL TIMELINES"

- Start with day you were born on one side of the sheet. Present day on the other.
- Put an X on those dates you consider to be the BIG WATERSHED MOMENTS in your life.
- Chart above the line if those times brought you closer to God. Chart below the line if you feel like those times carried you farther away from God.
- Draw a line between those moments charting your spiritual movement between them.
- DISCUSSION: What was going on? How did God show up? What was your prayer life like? What resources worked for you? Which didn't? What changes did you make?



Woodmont is a place where we would like to see YOUR timeline and God's timeline closely intertwined. In fact, we are fully committed to this at our church!

Woodmont is a PLACE where YOU will...

- **SEEK** God in the company of others, and then...
- **SHARE** God's love and invite others to life-giving relationships, and be empowered to...
- **SERVE** others in love, bringing the life, hope, and healing of Jesus to people's pain, brokenness, and suffering.

WOODMONT CORE VALUES

W – Welcoming
O – Outstanding Worship
O – Outreach
D – Different Traditions
M – Mission and Ministry
O – On the Move
N – Nurturing
T – Transforming

NOTES

“Jesus of NAZARETH poses a question and a challenge two thousand years after his lifetime. The question is fairly simple: who exactly was he? This includes the questions, What did he think he was up to? What did he do and say, why was he killed, and did he rise from the dead? The challenge is likewise fairly simple: since he called people to follow him, and since people have been trying to do that ever since, what might "following him" entail? How can we know if we are on the right track?”

from N.T. Wright, “Simply Jesus”

CHURCH MEMBERS?

OR

FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST?

“Characteristics and Beliefs”

- We believe in Jesus Christ who is the Son of God.
- We believe that sin separates us from God and from one another.
- We believe that Jesus Christ enables us to overcome sin.
- We believe in the power of prayer and in the Holy Spirit.
- We believe the Bible speaks God’s Truth.
- We Believe God’s people are called to live together in a community of faith called the Church. The Church is not a place, but people.
- We believe in baptism by immersion at the age of understanding.
- We believe the Lord’s Supper is the central experience of worship.

- We believe in freedom and diversity in Christian thought and interpretation.
- We believe that which unites Christians (Jesus Christ) should be greater than that which divides them.
- We believe in Salvation and Eternal Life, which begins when one accepts Jesus Christ, and is fully completed after physical death. True Salvation is a life-long experience, not just a momentary one.
- We believe that faith is a matter to be lived out and not just expressed in words.
- We believe that every Christian is called to ministry.
- We believe that Christians are called to be good managers of their God-given money, time and ability.

WHO and WHAT we are: We are the BODY of CHRIST!

1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now YOU are the body of Christ, and individually members of it."

- When Jesus was alive, he TAUGHT, he PRAYED, he WORSHIPPED. (John 17, Matthew 5-7 Sermon on the Mount, Luke 22:41-44)
- When Jesus was alive, he HEALED people. (Luke 8:43-48, John 9)
- When Jesus was alive, he WELCOMED people into God-formed, intimate, COMMUNITY. (John 4:4-26)

WHO and WHAT we are: We are the BODY of CHRIST!

1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now YOU are the body of Christ, and individually members of it."

- When Jesus was alive, he RAISED up LEADERS. (Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16)
- When Jesus was alive, he cast VISION for the KINGDOM of God. (Matt 6:33, Matt 21:43, Mark 1:15, Luke 9:2, Luke 10:9, Luke 13:19-20, Luke 17:21, Luke 18:17, John 3:5)
- When Jesus was alive, he OFFERED people SALVATION (Gk "sozo" = healing, wholeness) (John 14:6-7)

DISCUSS: If WE (collectively) are the body of the Christ (which, btw, we ARE!!!) then how do we go about doing these things that Jesus did?

NOTES

At WCC, the purpose of the Pastors and STAFF is to EQUIP our community to BE the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,** **13** until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. **14** We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.

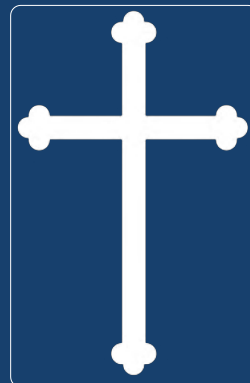
THE CORE OF CHRISTIANITY

Great Commandment - Matthew 22: 37-39

"Love the Lord your god, with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The Great Commission – Matthew 28: 19

"Go, therefore, into the world making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, the son, and the holy spirit."

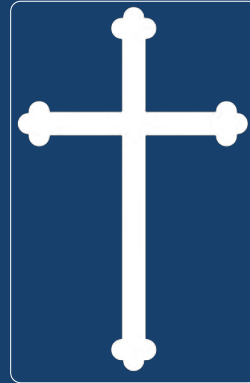


THE CORE OF CHRISTIANITY

ROMANS 12:9-18 (NRSV)

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

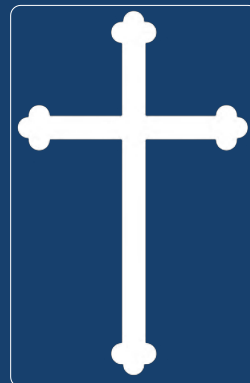


THE CORE OF CHRISTIANITY

GALATIANS 5:16-18; 22-25 (NRSV)

¹⁶ Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.



WHAT TURNS THE UNCHURCHED OFF

1. Christians who treat other Christians poorly
2. Holier-than-thou attitudes
3. Christians who talk more than they listen
4. Christians who never attend or support the church

(Thom Rainer, Lifeway Research)

IMPORTANT TRUTHS

- The church is a family
- God wants you to be a part of the church family
- A Christian without a church family is an orphan
- It is impossible to be a Christian and be in isolation

WHY WE NEED THE CHURCH

- We are social creatures and we need each other
- God created us to live in relationship with Him and one another. Human beings are social creatures.
- Those relationships are shared in love.
- God is love.
- The kind of love which is God's is agape love – unselfish good will towards others.
- When we live in love with God and others, we experience peace, joy, and fullness of life.

NOTES

THE PROBLEM

- Humans have a tendency toward selfishness.
- Selfishness is the opposite of agape love.
- Selfishness destroys our peace, joy, harmony and fullness of life.
- When our relationship to God isn't right, it causes problems in every area of our lives – marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

- Jesus Christ said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” John 14:6
- “If any want to become my followers, they must DENY THEMSELVES, take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” (Matt 16:24-25)
- Through Jesus Christ, God has made it possible for us to restore our broken relationships with others.
- The Church is the means through which we learn about Christ and His way, and experience fullness of life.

A WORD ABOUT GRACE

- Grace means God's unmerited love for us. It is undeserved and we cannot earn it.
- Grace is the means through which God gives us the strength and power we need to cope with life's difficulties.
- It is by grace that we are saved from whatever might keep us from fullness of life.
- "We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ" – Ephesians 2:8
- Through life together in the Church we come to know and experience Christ.

THE "MISSIONAL" CHURCH

- Recognizes that the church is not a place or a building but people gathered together
- Must have an outward focus and not just an inward focus
- Must be concerned about bringing God's kingdom to earth and not just concerned about personal salvation
- Is not just a place to consume
- Must send people out into the world



WHY BECOME A PART OF THE CHURCH?

- A Christian does not live in isolation from other Christians.
- Through Christ we learn what life is all about. Who we are. Where we came from. Where we are going.
- The church is different from all other institutions – it is of God.
- Through life in the church we care for and support one another. We are there for each other no matter what we are going through in life.
- Through the church we always have hope.
- Through the church we grow spiritually.
- Through the church we are part of something bigger than ourselves – the love of God, and love for others.
- Through the church we find the help we need to put life back together again when it falls apart.

**HOW IS THE
CHURCH
ORGANIZED
AND HOW
DOES IT
FUNCTION?**

The church is a family

- I Peter 3:8, “You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.
- The church should operate on the basis of relationships not rules.
- The church is a theocracy. God rules and we obey.
- When we do have to make a decision in the Church, the spiritually more mature members and leaders should lead the way, and the others follow.
- The Bible says that a pastor or elder must manage his/her own family well before they are in a position to take care of God’s church (I Timothy 3:4-5)

**HOW IS THE
CHURCH
ORGANIZED
AND HOW
DOES IT
FUNCTION?**

The church is a body

- I Corinthians 12:27, “You are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.”
- Paul describes how the different parts or members of the body of Christ should work together just as the different parts of the human body do, each fulfilling the purpose or function for which God created it.
- God created each part with a certain purpose in mind. And God gave each part spiritual gifts to carry out that purpose.
- The church should be organized and function on the basis of spiritual gifts – not just elected offices.
- It’s when the church begins to focus its attention on organization rather than gifts and ministry that we get into trouble.
- When organization is emphasized, maintenance becomes the focus. When spiritual gifts are emphasized, ministry is the focus.

WHY OUR CHURCH MUST NEVER STOP GROWING

- Because God loves people.
- Because God commanded us to reach out.
- Because growth is God's will.
- We believe that evangelism – winning others to Christ – is our #1 calling and mission as Christians and as the church.
- You cannot share Christ with others until you first know Christ yourself.

NOTES

What It Means to Be a Member of the Church

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF MEMBERS?

- Regular Worship
 - Faithful Stewardship – Time, Talent, Treasure
 - Active in a Small Group or Class
 - Using Your Gifts for Ministry
 - Protect the unity of the Church
 - by acting in love toward other members
 - by refusing to gossip
 - by following the leaders
-
- Share responsibility of the Church
 - by praying for its growth
 - by inviting the unchurched to attend
 - by warmly welcoming those who visit
 - Be in in a small group
 - Serve the ministry of the Church
 - by discovering my gifts and talents
 - by being equipped to serve by my pastors
 - by developing a servant's heart.
 - Support the Witness of the Church
 - by attending faithfully
 - by living a growing and Godly life
 - by giving regularly

“SEEKING GOD”

**HOW we help (equip) each other come to know
God (the "Seek God" part of our mission statement.)**

- WORSHIP**
- PRAYER**
- STUDY**
- SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION**

Definition of Worship:
Expressing my love to God. Jesus said.
“Worship the Lord your God, and
serve only Him.” Matthew 4:10

WHY DO WE WORSHIP?

- Worship unites us as a church.
- Worship turns our hearts and wills toward God.
- Worship reminds us of what’s most important in life.
- Worship renews the soul, refills our spiritual cup, and recharges our batteries.

WORSHIP INCLUDES:

- Singing (Ephesians 5:19 & Psalm 95:1)
- Commitment (Romans 12:1-2)
- Praying (Psalm 95:6)
- Hearing the word (John 17:17)
- Giving (I Corinthians 16:1-2)
- Baptism (Romans 6:3-4)
- Meditating (Psalm 119:15,23)
- Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-26)

Worship is vital to our spiritual
health and emotional well-being
as eating right is to our physical
health.

PRAYER

“The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son.”

— Richard Foster, [Prayer: Finding The Heart's True Home](#)

"ACTS" PRAYER

- A-doration
- C-onfession
- T-hanksgiving
- S-upplication

“Contemplative” PRAYER



Richard Rohr

- Franciscan Priest
- Speaker on “Spirituality” and spiritual growth and maturity.
- Author of “Falling Upward”
- To see the entire interview, go to Youtube, search Richard Rohr “Contemplative Prayer”

NOTES

STUDY

"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." - John 8:31

STUDY



N.T. Wright

- Anglican Bishop
- World-renowned Bible Scholar
- Author of "Surprised by Hope" and "The Day the Revolution Began"

NOTES

STUDY - Resources

- **“The Bible.”** Try side by side translations. Great website for this is biblegateway.com. Bible Gateway ALSO offers lots of online resources to help read the Bible. Also AUDIO Bible for free.
- **Bible Dictionary.** Harper Collins BD, Zondervan BD
- **Commentaries.** “The Bible for Everyone” series by NT Wright. “Understanding the Bible” series. Tyndale Bible Commentary Series.
- **Podcasts.** “The Bible for Normal People”

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

- It's one thing to throw someone into a swimming pool, but it's another thing to teach them how to swim ...
- So it's one thing to lead a person to Christ, but it's another thing to nurture and educate and help him/her to grow spiritually.
- "Be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind." (Romans 12:2)

HOW DO WE NURTURE SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION?

We do it through...

- Sunday School
- Small Groups
- Bible Study
- Seminars, Leadership Breakfasts etc.

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

- Conversation happens in Small Groups where relationships are built, trust formed, life shared.
- Conversation immerses me in a real, lived relationship with another person.
- Conversation offers me a different perspective than just my own and opens up MY world.
- Conversation exposes me to different resources that maybe I didn't know about.

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

- Conversation fine tunes my own ideas about things.
- Conversation is progressive and on-going. We approach greater truth but with the humility that what we know now could change tomorrow.
- But more importantly, conversation allows me an opportunity to bring ENCOURAGEMENT and LOVE to another person's life!

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION



Rick Warren

- Pastor, Saddleback Church
- Church planter of one of most influential churches in the world.
- Author of "The Purpose Driven Life" and "The Purpose Driven Church"

NOTES
