

Community... In the Image of God

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[0 : 0 0] Will you please join me this morning in reading this morning's liturgy? It's on the screens above. So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourself, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Though he was in the form of God, he did not count himself a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under earth, and every tongue confess, Jesus Christ is Lord.

[1 : 2 9] Glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. Welcome to Watermark. We're so glad to have you here with us this morning. We're a big family here. We're a very big family this morning.

So like families do when we get together, we turn around and we greet each other. We say hello. Try and find someone new and introduce yourself. Morning. The scripture reading today comes from Genesis chapters 1 to 3 and Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Please follow along in your bulletins. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, Let there be lights. And there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light day. And the darkness he called night. And there was evening, and there was morning. One day, then God said, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.

[2 : 4 3] And let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created man in his own image. Male and female, he created man in his own image. God blessed them.

And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it. And rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning. The sixth day.

By the seventh day, God completed his work which he had done. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

[3 : 42] Because in it, he rested from all his work which God had created and made. The Lord God planted a garden towards the east in Eden, and there he placed the man whom he had formed.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate, and she gave also to her husband with her.

And he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened. And they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you?

He said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself. And he said, Who told you that you were naked?

[4 : 56] Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate.

From Philippians 2, Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in Spirit, and intent on one purpose.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men.

[6 : 21] Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And this is God's word. How are you guys doing? Wow, that's good. First time people spoke out like that.

She didn't want me to say it again, right? That's what it is. Hey, so, welcome to Watermark Church. This is your first time, or your second time. I'm Tobin. I'm one of the pastors here.

And last week we've been talking about, we talked about an invitation to a party, and the party was the kingdom of God.

The party was in the kingdom. The party was heaven, and we talked about the invitation to that party. And I got a lot of feedback on that issue, and people asked a lot of questions.

[7 : 48] Some of them were asking for their relatives and their family members, and they said, so what you said was that we can't bring anything to the party. We have to come, but we can't come with anything in our hands.

I said, yes, that's not exactly what I said, but that's what Christ says. And they said, wow, that's really hard to hear because we have so many family members who turn down Christianity because they can't offer anything to God.

I just kind of cried, right? When you hear that, you're like, oh my gosh. And I think that that is something we need to be sure of and true of when we teach the gospel, that we come with empty hands.

We come with nothing. There's another scripture story. It's almost exactly like when we talked before. I almost shared it. It was in Matthew. And in this story, the same thing happens.

The invitations go out, and the people deny it. They say no at the second invite, and so Christ sends out his workers, us, his people, to give the invitation to other people.

[8 : 56] And we're told that when everybody gathers in and the master comes in, he sees someone in the party dressed not appropriately.

And I've always had a hard time with that passage. It really kind of bugged me because the master comes up and says, well, how did you get in here if you're not appropriately dressed? And he goes, well, I just walked in. And he said to his servants, you have to get him out of there to make him leave.

And again, what Jesus was trying to share to the people is that when we come to God's party, when we come to heaven, and I didn't know this until I started studying that in Middle Eastern parties, really big parties, you would walk in and the guest, the host, would give you clothes.

I mean, you would walk in and you would shed your clothes and the host would give you amazing clothes of gold and linen and some of the best things.

And the thought behind the parable was is that the only way you can get into heaven is being dressed by God, being dressed in his mercy, in his grace, in the blood of Christ.

[10 : 07] Sometimes, again, we forget that because we want to wear our own clothes and we want to dress ourselves. You know, when he started to plant, to pray about starting this church, we prayed for a long time.

And we said that we wanted to start a community. We wanted to start a family. We wanted to start a church. We didn't want to start a club. Christina's dad came here in the early 60s and they lived for 30 years here and Christina was born here.

And one of the first things that Don told me about Hong Kong before I even came, when we were thinking about coming, is he says that Hong Kong is a place you can get clubbed to death. I had to think about that for a minute, what that really meant.

But there's clubs everywhere, you know. And we said, you know, God isn't calling us to start a club. He's calling us to start a church. And a club and a church are very different, right?

So you go to a club and people really don't even really know you. I mean, you can step in and step out and no one even knows who you are. They're not going to ask you messy questions in the clubs.

[11 : 15] You know, you're not going to be doing Pilates and the guy's going to look over and say, hey, dude, you're here like every night this week for three hours doing exercise. What's going on with your family? You look at them like, that's none of your business.

Who are you to ask about my family? But in a church, in a community, in a family, we ask those type of questions. We get messy sometimes.

Sometimes it's scary. It's why people come in and they leave. They come in and they leave. They don't want to be known by anybody. They want a club. In a club, people don't notice you unless your phone goes off or you park in their parking space or you don't pay your bill.

But we realized in a church, God has called us to notice everyone. The Greek word often used for church in community is the word *storge*, S-T-O-R-G-E, *storge*.

It's one of the four love languages. And this language is very, this word is very specific. It talks about relationships that are happened and developed over time.

[12 : 23] It talks about people who've been in the middle of battle or they've gone through incredible events like hospital visits and kids and relationships being broken up and all of these things.

And as people are on this journey together and those relationships, *storge* happens, depth in love and caring happen. And that's what God has called the church to be.

So my encouragement to you is don't just come and go. Because if you do, we miss out on everything you have to offer.

We, the church, are less because you don't serve. We, the church, are less because you're not known. We, the church, are not what God meant for us to be because you're not using your talents and people don't know you and that you're not in community.

And I know some of you are freaking out when you hear this and you're going, wow, my community is my yacht club or my community is my cricket team or my community is my workplace and I don't really need another community.

[13 : 36] But that's not what Scripture talks about when it says *storge* in church. But it talks about a community of depth and understanding and being known.

One of the greatest, most famous studies done on community and relationships was done by a Harvard social scientist. It's called the Alameda County Study and it took 7,000 people over a nine-year period of time.

And after this study, he found a couple things. He found that people who are most isolated are three times more likely to die than people who are very connected relationally. The study found that men tend to experience greater health benefits if they are around women, but women have not, had no need or had to experience no significant health benefits being around men.

It's a fact. It's scientific, right? So this means, guys, that while you need women to teach you how to eat and to comb your hair and remember to zip your fly up and all those things, women have no need of men, which I feel like we all knew that a long time ago, right?

So I'm not teaching anything else differently or anything like that. They discovered that people who had bad health habits, that they were smokers, they ate a lot of fast food, they ate sugars, they ate sodas, they were obese or almost obese, they were out of shape.

[15 : 04] People who had bad health habits but strong relational connections lived significantly longer than people with great health habits but who were isolated. So in other words, they found that it was better to eat M&Ms; and brownies and drink massive amounts of Diet Coke and do it with good friends.

It was healthier than you for to eat broccoli and drink water alone. Scientific fact. Okay, so I just had to put that in there for my wife.

It is a scientific fact and we need to remember that. Another study by the JAMA, the Journal of American Medicine Medical Association, they took 276 volunteers and they infected them with a virus that produces the common cold.

In the study, they found out that people with strong emotional connections, deeper emotional relationships, did four times better than fighting off the illness than those who were isolated.

Those with better community were less susceptible to colds. They shed the cold virus quicker. They produced less mucus than relationally unconnected people.

[16 : 13] I'm not making this up. This is true. In other words, less connected people, people not in community with others or more snottier than people who have deep emotional relationships and they're in community.

And we can go on and on. I found all these things and I thought they were hilarious. But what they're saying basically is what we've said all along that the Bible says that you and I, we were made for community.

We were made to know each other. We were made to be known for each other. We were made to care for each other. We were made for community. C.S. Lewis said that Christians commonly say that they want a relationship with God, that they want to get to know Jesus better, but often they say they want to do it by themselves because people in the church really bother them.

But Lewis went on and he said, but you will never be able to do that by yourself. To know Jesus better and to grow in your faith, you must be deeply involved in the church, the Christian community, with strong relationships of love and accountability.

Only if you are part of that community with believers seeking to resemble, serve, and love Jesus will you ever get to know Jesus better and grow into his likeness.

[17 : 30] Everything says that we were made for community. Let me give you a little context here in the scriptures. The Bible was written to a people who were surrounded by pagan nations.

The scriptures were written to people who were surrounded by nations and religions and almost all of them were pluralistic. Almost all of them had many gods.

In fact, the hierarchy was always something like this. Gods, king, priest, artist, merchants, slaves, Aussies.

Always like that. God, I love you. God, priest, kings, priest, merchants, artists, slaves.

And what you see in these cultures that only the king was made in the image of God. Only the king reflected God's glory. Only the king mattered in all of these cultures.

[18 : 45] People, if they wanted access to God, they had to go through the king. If you wanted to see what God looked like, you looked at the king because how the king looked like describes how God looks like.

But then we come to this passage in Genesis and we're told in the very first chapter, in the very beginning of time, that God makes us in his own image.

I mean, the wording is very, very deliberate. I mean, he's talking and he's told that God who existed in community from the beginning of time, from eternity past, God in community, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

He comes in and he creates man, male and female, a plurality, a community with relationships. And as he does that, he says, this is who I am.

This is what reflects my personality. This is how I am. I mean, you see it as God in the scripture. He says, the God creates us in his image. In the Hebrew word there is Salem.

[19 : 45] It basically means his image, T-S-E-L-E-M. And so God makes us in his image and for the first time we look at everyone around us and we realize it's not just the king.

It's not just the ruler but God has given dignity to everyone. That everyone is made in his image.

And when these words are spoken in scripture, everything changes. Cultures change. History changes.

As people are looked at, changes. All human relationships, all interacting with each other. For the first time we look at people in the history of mankind and we see male, female, white, black, slave, free, all of them are equal.

I've been thinking about this a lot. And I've been wondering what would it be like if there was a church or a community who treated everyone equally?

[21 : 05] what would it be like if there was a community that when someone walked in the door the first thought that they thought on their head was and their mind was this person is made in God's image.

What would the atmosphere be like in that church? What would people think as they came to visit that church? What would the community think when they looked at that church and they realized that man, everybody in that church treats everybody like they're the image of a king.

In the olden days and ancient days the kings made these big busts and statues of them and you see them everywhere and they placed their image everywhere. Every part of their kingdom had their bust or their image of it.

And the purpose was so that when you came in to the community when you walked across the boundaries of the country and you saw the image you knew right away who was in control. You knew right away who the ruler was.

You knew right away what the gods would look like because you could look at the king. But in Genesis for the very first time we're told that God makes us and he places his image in us you and I and he places us all around his creation so that whenever anybody walks into God's creation they see us and they see what God looks like how he acts how he should act what should he do.

[22 : 59] The scripture goes on and it says that we weren't just created by ourselves but that we were created in community. In the passage when we see Salem means something very special.

Calvin talked about it a lot a lot of the reformers talked about it but what he talks about is this that you and I are mirrors and our purpose in this world is to glorify the Lord is the chief and the man and as we stand there is a mirror here is God here is us and here is creation God shines his goodness his grace his love his caring it hits us as a mirror and we live that out and people see that on creation.

Are you following me? And then when people see wow that church is amazing or wow that community is incredible or see how they care about each other see how they love each other see how they do that and they get nothing in return that praise and that worship comes up and it hits me as a mirror and it reflects back to God.

And so our whole life the reason you and I were made the reason that we were made in the image of God is so that we would reflect his presence not as a single mirror but that we'd reflect his presence within community with each other as we lived our life because the passage says in Genesis from the very beginning of time that God lived in community there was a father there was a son there was a Holy Spirit and I think sometimes as Christians we forget that especially as American Christians as Western Christians we think so individually we think about ourself we think it's just about me and we don't realize that when God writes his word to his people he's talking to us in a community another way to say this is unless you're from the south you're reading your Bible wrong that's just a fact because when

God wrote in Hebrew and in Greek and in Aramaic and used the words you actually what the word meant was y'all I'm serious but the translators they weren't from the south so they didn't have y'all they just put you and so when we read that we say okay how are you doing how is your quiet time how are you doing sharing with people what's going on here how are things happening and we miss we miss community because when God created it when he penned the words he said y'all okay repeat after me y'all y'all okay so now you know it wasn't just you it was y'all and so you see you know you see in and there's we could go for hours on this topic in many sermons and we're just kind of skimming the pop because we're setting up for the next couple sermons but in scripture this is deep with theology and so when sin comes in and sin comes into the world which we read it comes in and it changes everything it breaks us it breaks our relationship with God it breaks how we see other people we no longer see people as made in God's image we see ourselves as God we look at our mirrors and they're broken and we say you know everybody's giving me these praise and I should be saying yeah God

[27:14] God God gave me the gifts God gave me the talents but you know in reality God really didn't do that because it all came to me because I'm I'm working really hard I've studied incredibly hard and yeah yeah yeah but it's really me and so when that sin comes in and breaks our mirror we look at our mirror and we forget why God made us and so we start thinking thoughts like well maybe I should be God maybe I know what's better for me than God I mean you've heard this in counseling sessions all the time you say hey you know you shouldn't be doing this and scripture says you shouldn't be doing these things and you go yeah I know that but I know what's best for me and I think we should do this the mirror's broken I mean we deal with these things and we deal with these struggles and we try to be God and the question I want to ask ourselves is how are we doing with that I mean how how is your world doing with you as

God I mean we look around and we see wars and we see conflict and we see hatred and we see husbands dominating wives and we see wives dominating children and we see all of these things and that's just in the church that's not even among the people who don't know God we want to rule on our own we want to be our own God and all of our philosophers and people who teach us affirm that I love philosophy and as I read it and think about it you can see it even hundreds of years later played out in our lives Rousseau said this and he was around in the French Revolution he was one of the thinkers for the French Revolution these are his words you are an individual with a mind you don't really need others you don't really need

God you don't need his grace to help you you don't need to look outward to God you need to look inward to yourself you're not really a sinner you are basically a good person what you need to do is not seek God's love but you need to love yourself you need to not seek God's acceptance through Jesus but you need to learn how to accept yourself you ever heard anybody say that I hear those thoughts echo through my mind as I walk through my day William James a well-known psychologist said it this way not only are you a pretty good person not only are all the answers that you need not only are the answers in you instead of God you don't really need God or others at all what you need is a highly trained specialized psychiatrist you need a therapist you need a psychologist you don't need God but you need me how's that

I read that over and over like what the heck and then finally a guy you probably never heard of before but you hear his words echoed in your bank in your law firm in your university in your home at the club Abraham Maslow he's an American psychologist he wrote this Maslow hierarchies needs and he said this you do not need people or God the greatest need is to glorify yourself self actualization achieve your potential make all the money you can be as healthy as you can be as successful as you can be as powerful as you can be as influential as you can be as affluent as possible people will slow you down use them only if necessary and you ask the question is it any wonder why our world is the way it is you ask the question is any wonder as those thoughts go through me that my relationships are so broken and so tainted and not doing good

I remember as a young Christian I went to church and I was going to take some friends who just came to Christ and as we walked into this church in the deep south we were in the back and the elders and deacons stopped me and they said you can go in here but your black friends can't we don't like them the mirror breaks 20 years later I'm in Austin Texas and God seen this amazing amazing ministry of people coming to Christ as mainland Chinese so I thought hey I'm going to take them to a Chinese church and so I take them to a Chinese church and at the end of the service the deacons come up to me again and they look at me and say you know you're welcome to come but you can't bring them back anymore

[32 : 57] I'm like but they're Chinese this is a Chinese church you should be all welcome he goes yeah but they're FOB I'm like what they're fresh off the boat bring them back after they're educated bring them back after they know how to speak English properly and our mirror breaks and we try to reflect God's goodness and his glory but sin has come in and sin has shattered everything in our life and in our community and we don't understand what it means to reflect God's image we don't understand what it looks like to be like God we don't understand what it looks like to take his worship and his grace and give it out to people and we don't understand what it means like to reflect his praise and worship back because we have a broken mirror and the amazing thing to me about this story is it doesn't just end because God continues to pursue us he continues to pursue you and me he sends his son to earth his son comes in and think about this for the first time ever

God breaks up his community because from eternity past the father son and holy spirit were together and all of a sudden the son leaves that trinity so he leaves not the trinity but he leaves the proximity of them he leaves his home and he comes to earth and he walks around us as men and he shows us what it means to reflect God's image he walks around us and he lives like one of us and his whole purpose is to point us to God to point us back to the father and to die on the cross so that you and I might come back to him and as he does this the Bible says that our relationships are healed that as our relationship with God is healed our relationships with all the other people around us begin to be healed and so

Christ comes into our lives and he takes this broken mirror and he starts to heal it and the scripture says it's never going to be totally healed until we get to heaven but the focus on this and what he says to us is that he wants us to do it within community that's why he left the church here the book of Acts is all about the church going out about people being restored about healing happening about relationships being renewed about communities being made the book of Acts tells all of the story about how Christ came and he jump-started this community so that we could understand why we're here and what our purpose is I got to be honest with you sometimes I just like living in the kingdom of Tobin and sometimes I like being God and I like dealing with those things and there's times I like the praise I don't want to reflect it back to God sometimes as I look and I walk and you are like this too because scripture says that all of us were like this before we came to know him and many of us are like this after we come to know him but we walk around God's creation and the one thought in our mind is how do we put our image on everything how do we make our workplace look like Tobin how do we make our community look like

Ian how do we make our family look like Kip and we struggle with that and Christ continually comes into our life and he continually woos us and shows us who the father is and why we're here and how we can be made whole and new again and what the purpose of our community is like how we doing does this make sense so you were made in God's image Imago Dei you were made so that when creation sees God they see you they see an image of grace and mercy sin comes in it breaks all those things and now we cannot act the way that we should do okay I'm going to fly through this because we got five minutes the scripture that you read in Philippians tells the story of a church the church was doing very well when Paul came to the church he couldn't find any Christian men there he went to the river and he found some women working there and through these women he started a community a church in

Philippi Philippi was this amazing city it was a military city but it was very popular to the Romans there was a huge battle that was fought right outside of that and ever since then the Romans treated everybody in Philippi just like a Roman citizen and so Philippi was on this trade route much like Hong Kong all the trade going to Rome had to go through Philippi and everybody in Philippi became prosperous and prideful and wealthy and they came to a point even within the church that they forgot what it meant to be the family of God and walk in God's image when you read that passage you see three things you see what does it look like to be in God's image you see why did the image break and what happened in that church and you see how do we come back to it the what is very easy the what is unity and community verses one and two the Bible says that God is always about this bringing people together one of the names of

[38 : 50] Satan is Diablo Diablo means in Latin to rip apart that's why in the garden the first thing that Satan attacked was community the man and the wife but God says in this passage that what a healthy church looks like what a healthy community looks like is this together now in verses three and four we see that there were some people in this church they started arguing with each other they started asking the question well whose church is this really and whose image should be stamped on it and this argument spread to two different groups of people and they started fighting each other can you imagine that people in God's church dividing the church over whose image should be stamped on this church and in verses three and four he basically says why they did it and he says they did it because they were selfish they were just thinking of themselves and he uses a very interesting word here he says empty conceit in Greek it means kino doksi doksi means praise kino means empty he says they were doing it because they were empty and they wanted praise they wanted worship they wanted everybody to look at them they wanted people to see them they didn't want to reflect it back to

God they wanted them them them them and Paul says because you're focused on yourself because you want the praise because you want the glory because you forgotten why God made you and you're not reflecting it back to God everything's out of control community is destroyed how how do we bring it back verses 5 through 8 have this attitude in yourself which is also in Christ Jesus who although he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped but he emptied himself taking the form of a bond servant and he made in the likeness a man being found in the appearance of a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient even to the point of the cross the people were asking Paul how do we get back to normal how do we regain our image how do we understand our function how do we get back to this and Paul said just a very simple answer look at Christ look at

Christ you've become so prideful in your work you become so prideful in your home you become so prideful in the church you've lost the purpose of why you're here and you're trying to put your image on everything and Paul says the only way that you can fix yourself is by looking at Christ because when we're prideful and we know it and we talk about how prideful we are who are we really focusing on ourselves well I need to do things so that I'm not so prideful and I need to do things so that our church isn't so prideful and we need to do things so that we're kinder and Paul says no because just like those psychiatrists and the psychologists and the sociologists if you focus on yourself you're always going to walk around with a shattered mirror so Paul writes this incredibly tender and loving and nurturing letter it's probably one of the most nurturing letters he's ever written to a church and he's saying remember why you're here remember why

Christ came remember that he emptied himself and I think it means he emptied himself of his glory I mean if you were in heaven and you saw Jesus like Daniel says you would fall down on your knees but if Jesus walked into our church right now the Bible says that none of us would take any notice of him because he didn't draw attention to himself he didn't dress sexy he didn't expect to get the best seats he didn't expect to do anything he was just there to serve and to love the people in the church you look at this progression there in verse 6 he went from being God to being man have you ever thought about that for a second he's living in the perfect place the perfect house the perfect everything everything is spotless and he comes to earth which probably looks like a cesspool and he lives here think about leaving your house and going to the worst place you can imagine the cage city or some kind of little small box where people are living in it that doesn't even compare to what Christ did when he came to be with us and so he went from being God to being a man he went from being a man to being a servant a slave a doulos he went from being a slave to the cross so that you and I in our church in our community could be healed maybe some questions we should be asking ourselves as we walk into church or as we walk out of our church or something like this how can I live my life in a way that mirrors

God well what would it look like for this church to mirror God well in the community in the world around us what would it be like to be in a church church if everyone treated everyone as if they were a king made in the image of God do you think that would be attractive what does it look like to reflect Christ well when I get caught in a work environment that is toxic how do I reflect Christ well when my boss is out of control and he's yelling and cussing at people what does it look like to reflect Christ well when my team goes to the emperor club without their spouses and I know what's going to happen next what does it look like to mirror Christ well when I get ready for church and I'm walking out of the door and my temptation is to yell at my kids because they're so slow not you kid but what does it look like to understand that my broken mirror is being healed

[45 : 46] God is asking me to reflect his goodness and his kindness everywhere what am I supposed to do in this shaky situation do I ask okay what am I what am I about to do am I going to reflect God well in what I'm about to do I mean will my employers or my employee or my family or my friends are they going to see Christ in me are they going to see Christ in my words and my actions what does it look like there and the passage says really clearly that the focus is on Christ that we surrender our lives to Christ we acknowledge our needs for Christ we go and move from reflecting our glory we confess to God that we've been reflecting our glory we want our stamp everywhere we've been retaining the praise from him and we come to him and we confess that to him and we're told that as we do that he heals us and he doesn't just heal us but he heals our relationships he heals our community and the amazing thing to me and when you get some time go back tonight later on and read this passage write down

Ezekiel write down Isaiah 14 right beside it Isaiah 14 tells the devil and the devil is on the mountain of God and what he says is I'm going to raise myself up I'm going to lift myself up I'm going to make myself look good I'm going to do all these things and God says if you do that you're going to fall if you think about yourself if you only do yourself if you want to mirror yourself if you want to do glory to yourself you're going to fall and Jesus comes in in Philippians 2 and he goes from God to man to slave to the cross I know that is not a progression that you're taught in your business schools you're not taught to start at the very top and end up dead but that's God's method for us as children and we're told that as we make less of ourselves and we make more of God

God makes more of us in verse 9 it says because of what Christ has done his name is highly exalted and at the name of Christ every knee shall bow every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord and as he does that our hearts are changed our families are changed our relationships are healed our church is healed our community is healed and the world is healed but it only happens when we understand that our purpose in life is to reflect God's amazing grace and mercy and love to everybody around us and as we do that the praise and worship comes forth like you were singing today and it goes back to God we believe that that only happens in community we believe that just as you were created male and female of community that you grow and you walk in Christ within community these last couple weeks we've been talking about small groups and bringing leaders up here and we don't do it just because we think that it's something that's cool and we can say we have this many people in group we don't even keep track of numbers which is probably not a good thing but we do it because we know it's what God has created you to do and be and if you're in here right now and you come in and you go and you come in and you go and no one knows you you're not you're not in church you're in a club

Hong Kong has too many clubs and we don't want Watermark to be another club but we want to be a community of people going on a journey together so the action point is to remember who you are remember why God created you remember the things that derail you and break your mirror and remember that Christ is always working in your life that Christ never gives up that he's always working to prevent us from getting what we deserve how do you feel about that we have a God who's always working to prevent us from getting what we deserve he's always actively involved in your life he's always moving in your life he's always fixing the mirror and smoothing it the passage says that we do it together we do it together let's pray father we thank you for this day we thank you for your goodness in our life we thank you as we think about why you created us and why we were here and the mess that we've gotten ourselves into we continually be humbled and overwhelmed at your goodness we're continually humbled and overwhelmed at your mercy we're continually humbled and overwhelmed that you would give your most precious thing your son to come to not such a great place earth to heal us to show us what it looks like to be in community with you and to those around us and so we come before you lord because i know there are many of us in here who haven't even thought about these ideas and we're trying to figure out still why did he break the mirror lord we pray that you would just speak to us help us to focus on your son help us to surrender our lives to him and to realize that in him we are healed and we are made new lord we love you and we need you we pray these things in your son jesus name amen please be seated just for one second do any of us have not broken mirrors in here bible says all our mirrors are crushed and i'll probably be the first one to tell you that i'm probably the most broken person in here and the person that needs christ the most there are times i like i don't want to go to community group i've had a huge busy week this week and even though we love our community group we think we have an amazing community group there are times i'm just ah you know there's never been a time that we haven't gone and been blessed because we learn about christ we do that within community next week we are not here okay not that we're getting raptured to heaven but that might happen okay that might happen uh but uh we we are at isf okay so if you come in here there's gonna be a bunch of lawyers in here you're gonna be incredibly bored um sorry for you guys uh so please isf in your bulletin there's a little directional map there so go there that's where we're gonna be next week uh it's one of those times you get kicked out of here and that's what god has for us next week also we have a new member class which will be about 20 minutes after the service there'll be kids time kids child care will be provided uh so if you're interested in learning more about watermark becoming a member of the church having questions encourage you to stay extra 20 minutes after the service uh next sunday and i'll be there with some of the elders and leaders and we'll

talk about why god had us step out in faith and and start this church on your chairs there were two things one of them is this that's tells you where the community groups meet and when they meet and on the front is how to get connected with those so if you're not in a community group we'd encourage you to get connected with one send an email and the person who's overseeing that will send you a reply by tuesday and introduce you to the leaders of community group and we just want to encourage you to start that journey and do it with other brothers and sisters who are broken yeah oh two weeks okay okay so membership classes in two weeks don't worry don't come next week uh also in your in your uh chair there was this right here it's just i know you hate filling out things i do too but we really would like for you to fill this card out it basically just your your name your email address and just a couple information like what what district you live in it's not going to be passed around but it's for us to be able to communicate with you and to know where you're at so if you haven't everyone should fill one of these out and stick it in the offering box the offering boxes are those wooden things over there so uh just stick that out please on the way out just so we can be involved we have three community groups i just want to promo really briefly are the leaders here you bring them up okay come on guys come on up mike these are three groups some of them are new some of them are just starting and i just wanted them to share really quickly uh mike and julian and oliver hey guys come on up yeah just come on up here yeah and so maybe just start we'll start with mike and oliver and then ron and grace and terry and all you guys uh mike why don't you share just a little bit about your group or where you when you guys meet and timing and all that okay so we're in kennedy town or sci one so every thursday uh eight o'clock eight to ten that's um that's our community group everyone is welcome uh heartfelt invitation um for us um jillian and i we think that uh one corinthians 12 everyone is a special gift and spiritual gift from god and if you come to the community group you get a chance to implement it and share it and unpack it and um pour it out into the community that you're going to get involved with thank you oscar hey guys um my name is oscar along with uh jackie and ed and jeremy uh we um co-host a community group uh which meets on friday at 7 30 either in uh causeway bay or mid levels um we usually kick off our group with um uh with dinner um and then we enter into time of bible study uh and uh worship and we end up with uh with prayer and sharing um our group is pretty diverse um we have singles uh uh married couples um we even have a father and mother in our group as well uh um trish and ed so uh yeah feel free to get in touch with me or anybody um any of our leaders thanks uh good morning everyone my name is ron uh this is my wife mccall and this is grace and terry and we co-lead a community group that uh leads on that meets on friday evening 8 30 uh in bel-air phase two uh you don't need to live in bel-air to come to our community group that's just where we meet you're welcome to come if you don't live in bel-air um and it's very much the same as what you've heard we we uh come together to open up god's word to encourage each other to love and good works uh and uh and we pray uh we share with each other what's going on in our lives uh both family and at work and uh and we just uh eat at the end of the evening um we uh there's about five couples

[57 : 48] in our groups we've all got young families um so feel free to get in touch with me mccall grace or terry and if you want to come along we'll give you the details that's good so i think there's a there's a food component in every group right yeah you have to eat so so hey you what are you up to she thinks it's over with right so it's okay uh hey i'm gonna pray for us and i want to pray just uh for the groups if these guys will be out at the table um you want to pray with us these guys will be at the table if you have any questions about community groups ask them ask myself uh today's the elections right so we want to pray for the elections going on in hong kong and just that god would be moving in people's lives and we pray for just the prosperity of hong kong and we're not talking just monetarily we're talking spiritually right and we're talking about that god's hand would move and would redeem huge chunks of hong kong and so i'm going to pray for the elections also and just close our time father we just thank you for this day we thank you for your goodness um wow i just continually am overwhelmed when i think of your mercy and grace in our life so often we want to put the focus on ourselves or on others and the moment we do that we lose sight of your mercy and your grace and your son may we be a church that would really treat everybody like they were made in your image may people hear of this church and this community and your people and they go wow they they really know how to love each other well there they know how to treat each other with respect they treat all people as if they were a king lord we pray for this city your city we pray for hong kong lord we pray for the people who 95 who don't know you they walk in darkness we pray for the leaders while we pray for wisdom we pray that you would put the right people in there that you'd be working on the leaders hearts and softening their hearts and showing them your son and talking to them about the invite and may we as a church and as individuals and as community groups take every opportunity we can to to love these people to send encouraging notes to them and to say that we are praying for them so they might do great things for your kingdom so lord we we desperately pray for our city that you would heal it because we know it's not going to happen unless you do it we love you and we pray these things in your son jesus name amen god bless you see you at isf hang around and meet people before you leave and we'll see you later prayer amen our you