

George Miley at Christ Church Anglican: May 11, 2014

Learning to Receive God's Love through Others

Acts 2:42-47—A beautiful picture of the Church. What is the Church?

- The Church is an institution.
- The Church is a family (community).

The Church: A family (community) where we can know healing by receiving God's love through others

1 - What caused our relational brokenness? We violated our relationship with God. God is a Trinity. God is a fellowship. God is a relationship of persons. We are created in his image. We are created relational—to need one another.

This violation ...

- Separated us from God's love. Knowing God's love is crucial to our soul's health. We have been inadequately loved. Only God can give us what we need.
- Damaged us within—extensively.
- Triggered behaviors that alienated us from others.

2 - Christ came to initiate reconciliation in our relationship with God. When relationship is broken, one party must take the initiative toward reconciliation. This is the core of the Gospel. God wants relationship with us.

As our relationship with God is gradually restored

- We begin to once again experience his love. This is a process.
- His love begins to heal us.
- We learn that God's love often comes to us through other people.

3 - How do I learn to receive God's love through others? This is what the Church is all about. Two overarching dynamics in the Christian life: 1) my relationship with my Father as an individual, and 2) my relationship with my Father that I share with my brothers and sisters.

- I learn to be honest about my neediness (process, trust). We feel vulnerable and so we act as though we are fine. This leads to the "public persona". But in order to receive your love, I must choose to trust you. Trust must be earned. As trust grows, a community becomes safe.
- I learn to look to God, not others (Christ in-between). We will not be able to receive the love of others until we are established in looking to God alone to meet our needs. Two words: "demand" and "request". "Request" is a love word.

- I learn that God often meets my needs through others' gifts. The Church is gifted. The gifts of God work through love. My gifts are not for my benefit; they are for your benefit. My needs are met through your gifts.
- I submit to your gifts—allow God to love me through you.
- God's gifts work through love.
 - not demand—attempt to control—violation
 - but request—honors your freedom to choose your response

Goodwill of all the people.

- The church (Christ) is the evangelist. How did Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire. It was said of the early Christians, "How they love each other." A community of love is so attractive. People are drawn.
- Christian ministry is not primarily about "doing" but "being". When Christ fills the Church, the Church becomes incredibly attractive.