

I. ME

A. Welcome

B. Thanks to Schirle Crew

1. About 40 people worked/ 3hrs / **120 work hrs**
2. Amazing

C. We're better together

1. Age old wisdom- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**
2. UNITED STATES- WW2, 9/11, tragedies- "look for the helpers"
3. Draft Horses- Alone 8000 lbs. Two 24,000 lbs
4. Peanut Butter and Jelly
5. Tuesdays and Tacos

D. Even the most exciting sports to watch are team sports

II. WE

A. But it seems like we are more divided than united

1. Politics/Communities
2. Who's looking forward for the election campaigns to hit full stride?

B. Psychologists tell us we're in the middle of loneliness epidemic.

1. Most technologically connected culture in history yet 50% feel isolated.

C. See it in churches

1. Divided within and without
2. Separated from rest of community
3. Known for what they are against- which is usually everyone else
4. Including the other church down the street that half of them used to go to until there was a fight about changing the color of the carpet in the Sunday School class.
5. Division among Christians is one of the top reasons people leave church and xianity... might be why you or someone you love left.

D. Before we start looking around and blaming- we need to look at ourselves.

1. It starts with us.
2. Often if we feel divided/isolated/disconnected we have had a part in it.
3. **Division is the result of choosing ME over WE**
4. Every time we choose to put ourselves/wants/desires over others... we separate ourselves from each other.
5. We are able to basically have anything we want in less than two days,
6. It's very easy and natural to become more and more obsessed with ourselves and what we want and more and more separate from everyone else.

7. **C.S. Lewis' version of hell**- have whatever you want but it never satisfies. People move further and further way from each other.

8. We can isolate ourselves in our own little worlds where we watch and read things that only / always agree with what we think and anything that is different is evil.
 9. And we become more and more isolated and more and more miserable.
- E. The answer is pretty simple.
1. But you're not going to like it.
 2. Whether you're a Jesus-Follower or not, it might sound sweet and cutsie, but if you dig just a little beneath the surface its pretty offensive.
 3. I think especially church people... but **the medicine we need the most often tastes the worst.**
 4. But if you're not a JF... you're safe. You don't have to do anything.
- F. The answer is found in two small sentences in the Apostle Paul's longest letter and what is considered his masterpiece.

III. GOD (Romans 12:10)

A. Romans Overview

1. Written to JF's in Rome around AD 57 (About 20 yrs after Jesus)
2. Nero is 19 won't get super crazy for a couple more years.
3. Church is figuring out what it means to Follow-Jesus
4. Lays out how Jesus' death and resurrection actually changes everything for all of humanity
5. This section describing day-to-day life of following Jesus...
6. If you've read this before you might have just breezed by this little nugget.
7. But I think it's the secret to erasing the divisions we see all around us...

B. Romans 12:10

C. Highlight "Be devoted to one another in love"

1. *Philadelphia*
2. Idea is the natural love between parents and children...
3. How you love your kids
4. **Devoted-** What you spend most of your time/energy/thoughts/resources on.

- D. Paul is talking to Jesus-Followers- “This is what a normal, typical, church should look like. Devoted to each other like a mother devoted to her child.”
1. The church should be the model of unity.
 2. People should be lining up in droves to be a part of a church... even if they can’t stomach the idea of a resurrected Jesus... b/c of how well Jesus-Followers treat people.
 3. Is that what we normally see?
 4. Those of you who left xianity is that what you experienced?
 5. Is that what Jesus-Followers are typically known for?
- E. I think if we were honest we would have to say that instead of “Be devoted to each other” the church has acted like Paul said...
1. “Jesus-Followers, be devoted... to a political party, to a country, a race, a culture, a theology, a denomination, a viewpoint...”
- F. Look at **John 13:34-35**
- G. “Everyone will know you are my disciple... by who you **vote** for, by your stance on **abortion**, creation/**evolution**, your view on **sexuality**, what you **boycott**, all the bible **verses** you’ve read/memorized, how right your **theology** is...”
- H. **NO**- “They will know you are my disciple/follower IF YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”
- I. God cares more about how you treat people than how much bible you know.
- J. God cares more about how you treat people than how you vote
- K. God cares more about how you treat people than how right you are
- L. God cares more about how you treat people than what specific rules you follow
- M. How you treat people is more important than what you know.**
- N. Paul is saying if we truly want to be better together, be united, have a healthy community, our devotion must be to each other- above anything else.
1. Committed to their care
 2. Willing to serve them, pray for them, cry with them, celebrate with them.
 3. Identify with them. You are with them and for them.
 4. And how do we get started?
- O. **Romans 12:10**- **Highlight- Honor one another above yourselves.**
1. Literal reading- Go first in showing honor.
 2. Other translations- Outdo/Surpass each other in showing honor
 3. **Honoring creates devotion.**
 4. **Honor**- Respect/esteem/celebrating
 5. Putting the needs of others before your own is honoring them over yourself
 - a. giving them the best seat at the table
 - b. Complimenting them in public
 - c. Helping with a task

6. Especially when they don't deserve it
7. **Lincoln-** Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?
8. Following Jesus demands that- Titles / positions / respect / preferences / praise are to be GIVEN... not sought after or fought for.
9. **Honor is meant to be given. Never demanded.**

IV. YOU

- A. J-F or not... **What are you devoted to?**
 1. Yourself- Comforts/ Entertainments / Stuff / Image
 2. Opinions- Political / Theological
- B. Ask yourself this question...
 1. **Are you more devoted to your view or the people around you?**
 2. Do you fight to be right, to be recognized, to be praised?
 3. Or do you go first in showing honor... even if you feel they don't deserve it

C. **Challenge #1: Once a day, as publicly as possible, honor someone else.**

1. That would change the flavor of social media for a while.

- D. This devotion doesn't just happen by accident, and it doesn't just happen by sitting here in rows listening to someone talk.

1. To truly honor someone you have to know them and you have to serve them.
2. Connect Groups
3. Contributing
4. **Challenge #2: Join a Connect Group and/or a Service Team**

- E. If you have decided to Follow Jesus, part of honoring each other is identifying with each other.

1. That's the idea of baptism.
2. Identifying with Jesus and with his church
3. If you have never, by your own decision, identified with his family...
4. **Challenge #3: Be baptized**

V. WE

- A. Imagine what this country would be like if we were devoted to each other more than our personal views and opinions?
- B. Imagine what your marriage would be like if you were devoted to each other more than being right or getting what YOU want?
- C. Work? Devoted to each other so much that a win is a win no matter who gets the credit?
- D. It starts with us.

E. **We're better together so love the WHO's next to you.**

