



THURSDAY 07.29.10

Ephesians 4:29-32

The active presence of the Holy Spirit in the people of the church is made known in many ways, especially through our sincere hospitality toward one another, our body language and the way we “join in” as worship is being led by others. Newcomers often tell us they can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit here. In this passage Paul says we grieve the Holy Spirit when we fail to choose words, thoughts and actions that build others up.

- Have you ever withdrawn because you felt rejected by people in the church?
- Have you ever hurt someone’s feelings and sensed a change in their relationship with the church?
- Consider how the Holy Spirit can guide you in bringing healing to either of these situations.



FRIDAY 07.30.10

Romans 12:5-11

Early in our spiritual growth, the role of the church is to help us grow. Our participation can be slanted more toward receiving than serving or giving. If over a long period of time the balance doesn’t shift, church can come to feel boring or disconnected. God designed us to fuel deeper connection in our relationships with him and others as we participate and serve in the life of the church.

- How has your participation changed as you’ve grown spiritually?
- The *Message* version of verse 11 says this, “Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don’t quit in hard times; pray all the harder.” Paul knew there would be times we would begin to feel depleted. Do Paul’s words challenge you? How will they be an encouragement the next time your spiritual tank is running on empty?



GROW • PRAY • STUDY

A RESOURCE FOR DISCIPLES SEEKING TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS & SERVE THE WORLD ...

Series: *Why People Leave Church*

Sermon: *Church Became Boring!*

Scripture: John 21:18-22

“Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:18-20)

1. The question: Do you love Me?
2. The challenge: Follow Me!
3. The task: Feed my sheep!

If we choose to accept the challenge of following Jesus Christ because we love Him, life will be a great adventure filled with the power of God. If we pursue the idea of Jesus following us, boredom, depression and a hollowness of life can become our way.

Bored no more:

- Fight temptation;
- Fight sin;
- Fight injustice;
- Fight unbelief;
- Don’t give in, give up or give out.

People today often are living on adrenalin: they are tired, have worn-out emotions, their senses have been desensitized by a crazy world. The ability to hear the quiet voice or to be touched by the soft moment has been compromised. They have bought into the idea that they must be entertained and engaged by the world around or life becomes dull. We have become consumers instead of worshipers. Consumption eventually becomes boring; real church never does. What is real church? What do we do?



Introduction

What fuels our desire to be in church? Sermons, music and prayers are important elements, ones we certainly can enjoy and look forward to. But as much as we may enjoy the elements of worship, it is the relationships we continue to grow with God and others that consistently fuel our desire to be in church. Here at First Mansfield, we express those relationships in our mission statement — love God, love others, serve the world.

If a person leaves the church because they find it boring, it may be that they have never felt close to God or the people of the church. This week we will focus on passages that reveal God's design for the church as a community and explore how the quality of these relationships can either fuel or deplete our attitude about church.

May this prayer guide you in the coming week:

God, help me to learn more about my relationship with you and the church this week. I want to come to church fired up and ready to express my love for you with excitement and passion. I invite you to use me as a catalyst to help others grow and express their love for you. Guide me in growing new relationships and finding places in the church to invest the gifts you've given me. Amen.



TUESDAY 07.27.10

Hebrews 10:22-25

The writer of Hebrews challenges us to serve as catalysts to help others grow in their love for God and others. Encouragement to be faithful in meeting together is included in this passage as well.

- Have you ever considered how important your friendship and presence might be for someone else to feel more connected here? Can you name someone who might become more deeply connected through your encouragement and friendship?
- Whose encouragement to be present in church has the greatest impact on you? Have you ever told that person how much their friendship impacts your commitment? Consider telling them this week.



MONDAY 07.26.10

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Growing our love for God is something we practice. God gave the Israelites a pattern to use for this. They wrote down this passage and placed it on their doorpost. This served as reminder to stop and express their love to God every time they came in or out of their front door.

- In verse 5 we read about God's desire for us to love him with all our heart, soul and strength. What do you practice that helps you grow in your love for God with that same passion?
- God longs for these commands to be impressed upon our hearts and those of our children. Verses 7-8 give specific times and places for these conversations. When was the last time you had a conversation with a child or adult about your love for God? Can you develop new practices or actions that will help you do this more often?



WEDNESDAY 07.28.10

1 John 1:1-4

In this passage John shares his testimony of Jesus with beautiful phrases and words for the purpose of offering an invitation of fellowship between the reader and the faith community. He goes on to reveal that the members of this fellowship include the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Just writing about this relationship gives great joy to John and his followers.

- What have you seen or heard in church recently that made you want to share the experience with someone who is disconnected from church? If you shared your experience with that person, were they intrigued by your enthusiasm?
- How has someone shared their experience in church in a way that intrigued you?
