

The Medium Is The Message – 1 John 1:1-3

“That which...we have heard, which we have seen ... and our hands have touched – this we proclaim ... so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

Can you walk in a straight line while blindfolded?

There is a profound _____ to stick to a straight line when blindfolded or when there is no fixed point of reference: no sun, no moon, no mountain top to guide us. This tendency _____, when we think we are going straight is a universal. There are parallels in the Christian faith.

For example:

- Christians say we believe in salvation by _____, but we often revert to a gospel of _____. (Galatians. 1:6-9; 3:1-5)
- Christians say we believe in the _____ of all believers, but we expect _____ to do most of the ministry. (1 Peter 2:5,9)
- Christians say we believe in _____ or _____ Christianity, but in practice we lean on _____ worship. (Heb. 10:25)

We Christians prove ourselves profoundly unable to stick to the straight-line truths taught in the New Testament. We often veer off into circles.

Straight-Line Truth – Acts 2:42 (context = 2:37-47)

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.”

Application of Straight-Line Truth:

The small group (communal) experience of life with Jesus through the Spirit IS God’s essential means to transform us to be like Jesus. Christians grow best through the _____ of being with Jesus in the presence of other followers (the ecclesia/gathered ones) to practice the universal, and pivotal four small group disciplines as we learn to serve.

The Medium is the Message: Group life with Jesus (the medium) **WAS** their message: **Church IS gathering with other Christ-followers to work the four disciplines for the purpose of learning practical, experiential Christianity through the guidance and power of the Spirit.**

1. The discipline of didachi: the apostles’ teaching.

They told stories, experiences, push-backs and insights from Jesus, which transformed them into _____, self-giving followers of Jesus.

Implication: Always wrestle with apostolic teaching as you discern truth, _____ and _____. Together, allow insights into the meaning of Jesus’ life and resurrection to be discovered and shared in the group.

2. The discipline of koinonia: the fellowship.

The communities of believers became _____ with the Son, who lives in eternal community with the Father and the Spirit.

Implication: Always work on growing into sisterhood and brotherhood, guided by the law of love: love God, love neighbor, love self. The essence of life in the name of Jesus was the emerging reality of _____ relationships. This becomes a pattern for living in community.

3. The discipline of klasei artou: the breaking of bread.

To be an ecclesia is to be a participant in the breaking of the bread. The apostles gathered them around Jesus, who had gathered them around the table of the Last Supper. The shared meal was an ongoing portrayal of the story of his sacrificial, redemptive death.

Implication: As part of a shared meal, always make place for remembering and reenacting the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to maintain our _____ as the people of God.

4. The discipline of proseuchais: the prayers.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, but it did not become a living dynamic until their communal experience in the upper room (Acts 1:14) as they waited on the gift of the Spirit. Here the discipline of communal prayer was learned “with the women, including Mary, the Mother of Jesus.”

Implication: Always practice group praying and interaction with application of the things being learned via the teaching and the shared life of Jesus and the Spirit. Listen to the Holy Spirit and share so that the group may not only be guided by the Spirit, but may also may _____ the group.

Closing Story: What Pastor Les learned while fixing zone four in his lawn irrigation system.