

Celebrating Calvary's History P6

Establishing People in Intimacy with God

Thesis: We are a people who remember and celebrate the skills which the Lord has given us to help us to do life together with each other and with the Triune God.

Intro:

In September 2022 at our Anniversary Weekend, we are celebrating our rich history and anticipating our promise-filled future.

In a few messages, we want to celebrate Calvary's history in God. In [Part 1](#) of these messages, we celebrated the fact that God called us to join Jesus on his mission in the earth together with others. That means that this church began because God birthed Calvary to express his nature and his will. We were created to be a congregation that embraces and expresses intimacy, community, and kingdom.

In [Part 2](#), we heard from [Angela Petry](#) about the impact of Calvary on her life and she shared with us a prophetic word from Paul Cain for this historic hour. I also shared [two personal prophetic](#) words that I received.

In [Part 3](#), we reminded ourselves that we were meant to do life together with one another and with the Triune God. We considered the outcomes of community. And, we talked about the vision God has for Greater in Houston.

In [Part 4](#), we considered the "why" of community.

Why Is Fellowship [community] Important to God?

God wants us to receive and reflect the generous fellowship he enjoys as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 15:5). This is the mission of God—to unite creation to himself and human beings to one another. When God's mission is carried out, more and more of the joy, generosity, and peace of the Father, Son, and Spirit can be seen on Earth.

And isn't that what we all want? Relationships that are so authentic, generous, and secure that we are not afraid? Where real love is shared between every human being, and we are no longer threatened by abandonment, rejection, betrayal, and violence? This is the kind of fellowship that God enjoys, and he made us like him. Our joy is fullest and most complete in the loving fellowship that the Father, Son, and Spirit enjoy (John 15:10-12; 1 John 1:3-4). But to really experience joy, we are invited to trust God as we devote ourselves to sharing

our lives and our resources in a real community. When we do, we participate with Heaven while on Earth.

When we give our time to the family of God, we all get a glimpse of eternity. Every time we emotionally spend ourselves for another, we all can feel God's love and commitment for us. When our limited resources are generously shared, God's limitless resources can be experienced by all. We were created in the image of a God who has always known the abundance of shared fellowship. His reflection can be seen on Earth, just as it is in Heaven, when we share all that we have (*What Does the Bible Actually Say About Church Fellowship?* Cheree Hayes & [BibleProject](#) Team. Fourth post in the series, "[The Life of the Church](#)." Oct. 21).

In [Part 5](#), we sought to remember and celebrate some of the skills which the Lord has given us to help us to do life together with each other and the Triune God. We were created for attachment to God and one another.

Today, in *Celebrating Calvary's History P6*, we want to consider the third part of our vision: **establishing people in intimacy with God.**

You and I were created for an intimate relationship with the Living God.

1. **God created us to know him** (Genesis 1 – 3; John 17:3; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Ephesians 1:16-17).
 - a. *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (John 17:3).*
 - b. *This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD (Jeremiah 9:23-24).*
 - c. *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him (Ephesians 1:16-17).*
 - i. **Paul prays that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that you might know him better.**

- ii. God authored this prayer and desires to fulfill this prayer in your life.
2. **God desires to be at home in us individually and corporately** (Isaiah 66:1-2; John 14:23; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:19-22; Revelation 21:1-5.)
 - a. *This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? 2 Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word (Isaiah 66:1-2).*
 - b. *Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (John 14:23).*
 - c. *Do you not know that your body is a temple [dwelling place] of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).*
 - d. *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Ephesian 2:19–22).*
 - e. *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:1–4).*
3. **God designed us for fellowship with himself** (Genesis 3:8; 1 Corinthians 1:9).
 - a. The Lord God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:8).
 - b. God called us into fellowship with himself through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9).
4. **God invites us to do life with him.**
 - a. **Walk humbly with your God** (Micah 6:8).
 - i. *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).*
 - b. **Abide experientially in the Lord Jesus** (John 15:5).

- i. *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5).*
- c. **Walk with the Spirit** (Galatians 5:16-25).
 - i. *Walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).*
 - ii. *Live by the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).*
 - iii. *Keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).*

Intimacy opens up lines of communication.

1. **Are you aware that you are designed and have capacity to hear the voice of the Lord?**
 - a. *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).*
 - b. *You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you (John 15:14-15).*
2. **Our God is the speaking God (Parable of the Sower, Mark 4:3-20).**
 - a. God communicates lavishly and abundantly.
 - b. God has a part and we have a part in this relationship.
 - i. God's part:
 1. Anything God does in our lives is a grace work of God according to this parable.
 2. The seed of the kingdom is being scattered and sown generously.
 - ii. Our part: Any work of God in our lives is contingent on our yielding, cooperating, blessing, and receiving God's work (Philippians 2:12-13).
 - c. Mark 4:15-20 describes 4 types of soil.
 - i. Impenetrable: too much traffic
 - ii. Shallow: no water; too dry
 - iii. Thorny: distracted; not pulling the weeds through confession
 - iv. Good: *"...who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop" (Luke 8:15).*
 - d. Ask God to prepare your soil and let him turn the topsoil of your heart.
 - i. You can cultivate a capacity for God by seeking God.
 - ii. *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..." (John 1:12).*

- e. In our culture, we want everything to be instantaneous, with our having no responsibilities. Learning to hear God, however, is a process, not a one-time event!
 - f. Steps we can take:
 - i. We are exhorted to “earnestly desire spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1).
 - ii. We are encouraged to ask the Father for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
 - iii. It is commendable to thirst and yearn for God (Psalm 63).
3. **Here are some ways that God speaks to us.**
- a. [Fourteen Ways God Speaks to Us](#) by Pastor Steve Meeks.
 - b. See the addendum below: *Cultivating the Capacity to Walk in Spiritual Gifts and to Receive Revelation from God.*
4. **How does God speak to you?**
- a. **I meet with people all the time who say, “God never speaks to me.”**
 - i. Yet, as we converse, I find ways that God is speaking, and they don’t recognize his voice or his ways.
 - ii. What they mean is, “*God is not speaking to me in the way that I want, or the way in which I expect him to speak.*”
 - b. It is necessary to let God be God, and to let him speak to us as he desires.
 - c. It is necessary to live a reflective life. It helps us to pay attention.
 - d. It is necessary to learn the language of God, how he speaks in general and how he is speaking to you specifically.
 - i. Over time he will speak to you in different ways so that you will grow in dependence upon him.
 - ii. Otherwise, we feel like we have figured out God.
 - e. It is necessary to pay attention, to be grateful, and to listen well.
 - i. Answers to prayer for direction, insight, revelation, understanding, etc.
 - ii. Surprise downloads and revelation (unexpected; reminders; etc.).
5. **How are you growing in your capacity to pay attention to how and what God speaks to you?**
- a. Pay attention to **how** you hear.
 - i. “*Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away*” (Luke 8:18).
 - ii. How actively are you listening, paying attention, reflecting, receiving, etc.? Are you learning to tune in to God? Are you positioning yourself to hear through spiritual practices? Are you practicing so that you make progress?

- b. Pay attention to **what** you hear.
 - i. *"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." 24 And he said to them, "Pay attention to **what** you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. 25 For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away" Mark 4:23–25).*
 - ii. What are you doing with what the Lord is saying to you? Are you recording it, praying through it, acting on what the Lord says, sharing authentically with others for prayer, discernment, and process, etc.?
 - c. **To grow in intimacy with God, we need to engage intentionally in spiritual practices regularly** (daily, weekly, monthly, occasionally).
 - i. What are your current spiritual practices?
 - ii. How intentionally are you engaging in spiritual practices?
 - iii. How regularly are you engaging in spiritual practices?
 - iv. If your spiritual practices aren't life-giving and resulting in growing intimacy with God and awareness of God, then:
 - 1. Change what you are doing.
 - 2. Get help from someone who can equip you and coach you in your journey.
6. **Do you have ears to hear?**

How do you know if you are growing in intimacy with God?

1. The core outcome of intimacy with God is growth in our capacity for **awareness** of God.
2. If you are growing in intimacy with God, you will **grow in your capacity to love God, to love others, and to love yourself** (Matthew 22:37-39).
3. If you are growing in intimacy with God, you will become more aware of the God who is with us, in us, and for us.

Conclusion:

God has been doing an amazing, awesome and authentic work in us for 40 years. And the best is yet to be.

I pray that you have been encouraged, inspired, and challenged as we have celebrated our history in God over these past weeks.

And, I pray that you will grow in your capacity for joining Jesus on his mission together with others so that God's vision is fulfilled in us as a people who are being established in intimacy with God, experiencing true Christian community, and extending the kingdom of God in the earth.

Addendum: Cultivating the Capacity to Walk in Spiritual Gifts and to Receive Revelation from God

1. We need to learn to listen to the language of God.

a. God is speaking to us.

- i. In John 10:3-5, Jesus said that he calls his sheep by name and that they recognize his voice.
- ii. At some point or another you have probably heard the voice of God. Maybe it came to you as an impression, an urging, a desire, a thought, a word, a sense of peace or release.

b. Here is our problem, however: we limit God to what we have known or experienced.

- i. We get into a rut of thinking that God only speaks to us in one particular way.
- ii. We forget the creativity and uniqueness of our God.
- iii. Then, we ignore his various ways of communicating with us when he does not speak to us in the package with which we are accustomed.

c. As we grow in our intimacy with God, we must learn how he communicates with us.

- i. A husband and wife, through time, will communicate with more than words: a look, a touch, a gesture.
- ii. God wants to speak to us that we might know him better (Ephesians 1:17).
- iii. Asking God "if" he speaks to you, analyzing what he says, or questioning what he says ("is that you, Lord?") quenches God's Spirit. The correct response when God speaks is to ask the following question: "What does this mean, Lord?" This will allow you to be receptive to God and to learn the language of our intimate, Heavenly Father.

2. The Language of God.

a. The out-growth of our intimacy with God is his revelation to us, and revelation releases God's power through us to carry out his revealed will!

- i. Jesus' entire life and ministry was an out-growth of his relationship with the Father and the revelation he received.
- ii. Let's look at some examples of how he operated in revelational gifts just as we are to do:

b. Words of Knowledge:

- i. A word of knowledge is an utterance inspired by God and spoken by an individual. It is an insight into the thoughts of God through a revelation made by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians

2:10-12). A word of knowledge may come in one of five ways:
You may "See it," "Know it," "Hear it," "Feel it," or "Speak it."

- ii. Jesus' Use of Words of Knowledge: John 1:45-49, 2:23-25, 3:34, 4:17-18, 29, 49-50, 52-53, 5:6,14,19-20, 6:64; Matthew 9:4, 12:25; Luke 6:8, 9:47.

c. Words of Wisdom:

- i. A word of wisdom is an utterance inspired by God and spoken by an individual. It reveals a part of the total wisdom of God. It is "seeing" what God sees in a situation and "saying" it. It is applying God's wisdom or solutions to a specific situation.
- ii. A word of wisdom may come as a picture in the mind's eye or as facts which you did not know before or an utterance that flows from your mouth without really thinking about it.
- iii. Jesus' Use of Words of Wisdom: Matthew 22:15-22, 21:23-27; John 8:1-11.

d. Discerning of Spirits:

- i. Discerning of spirits is the supernatural capacity to judge from a spiritual insight whether the spirit operating has a source that is human, demonic, or divine. It is a supernatural perception into the spiritual realm for the purpose of determining the source of the spiritual activity. Discerning of spirits may be received as a word written over a face, seeing shadows or dark patches on a face, seeing shapes superimposed over a portion of the anatomy, seeing the anointing of God on a person either naturally (trembling, peace, etc...) or supernaturally (a glowing light upon a person).
- ii. Jesus' Use of Discerning of Spirits: John 1:47-48; Matthew 16:21-23, 12:22; Luke 10:13-17.

e. Inspirational Prophecy:

- i. Inspirational prophecy falls within these three boundaries: edification, exhortation, and consolation (1 Corinthians 14:3).
 - 1. It is defined as speaking the mind of the Lord under the inspiration of the Spirit.
 - 2. Any believer can operate in the arena of inspirational prophecy (Act 2:17-18).
- ii. Example: 1 Corinthians 14:29-33

3. Watch out for these traps!

a. Deception.

- i. Revelation should always be tested (1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).
- ii. Revelation will never contradict God's word (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).

b. Pride.

- i. Pride is the greatest destroyer of those who operate in revelatory gifts (1 Peter 5:5-7).
- ii. Humility is vital (James 4:6-10).

c. Abuse.

- i. Phrases such as “God said...” or “God told me to tell you...” are not only unnecessary, they are dangerous (Deuteronomy 18:20).
- ii. It is better to humbly present things in terms such as, “I think God may be saying...” or “I believe the Lord may be saying...”