

“Built Together Part 14 - Presence” (2-18-24)

Series Review: Section 1 - Living in Community / Section 2 - Gifts for Building up in Love

Key Verse: Eph. 2:22 - “In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

Review: Jonathan’s sermon - perfect segue / so far - Living in Community & using our Gifts to build up

Section 3: The Mature Church - 4 Components of a Mature, Healthy church - produces fruit & reproduces life
(presence of God, community/fellowship, discipleship, outreach/mission)

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

(18) And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- **Presence** (vs. 18 & 20b - He has all the authority . . . He is with us always)
- **Community / Fellowship** (19b - baptize them into this community - the God community)
- **Discipleship** (19a & 20a - “make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all I have commanded”)
- **Outreach / Mission** (19a - “go . . . all nations”)

Today: The 1st of 4 - **Presence of God**

1) The Presence of God

John 14-17: Jesus’ last night with the disciples before he was crucified - could have talked about anything, but he emphasized his own intimacy with the Father, and then encouraged them to cultivate this intimacy themselves, including that the Father would be sending a wonderful gift to make this possible - His Spirit!

John 14 . . .

John 14:6-7 (ESV)

(6) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (7) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

John 14:10, 12 (ESV)

(10) Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. . . (12) “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

John 14:16-17, 20 (ESV)

(16) And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, (17) even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. . . (20) In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

John 14:23 (ESV)

Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

John 15 (we’ll come back to this) . . .

John 17 (The High Priestly Prayer) . . .

John 17:3 (ESV)

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 17:10 (ESV)

All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

John 17:20-21 (ESV)

(20) "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, (21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

John 17:26 (ESV)

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Application: As a church community, this should be absolutely central - In our corporate worship, fellowship, study, decision-making, serving, and outreach. Before all, and through all - the presence of God is vital. It's the very breath in our lungs!

2) Maturity produces Fruit

John 15:1-17 (Abide in the Vine)

John 15:4-5 (ESV)

(4) Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (5) 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.

Note: Abiding produces fruit - in fact, it's the only way to produce fruit!

John 15:6 (ESV)

If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

Note: Not abiding is not just fruitless, it's death - it causes us to wither away, throwing our life away

John 15:9-11 (ESV)

(9) As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. (10) If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (11) These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Note: Abiding is about enjoying the love of God. We are to learn about, & live in the activity of Abiding Love.

John 15:14-16 (ESV)

(14) You are my friends if you do what I command you. (15) No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (16) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Note: Loving Obedience is about intimate friendship with God - we are with Him and becoming like Him!

Jesus tells 2 sower parables in Mark 4, the one that is slightly less talked about . . .

Mark 4:26-29 (ESV)

(26) And Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. (27) He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. (28) The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. (29) But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Note: The absent-minded farmer - just let the gospel do its work! Abiding produces Fruit

For reflection

- **Mark 4:26-29** - The natural by-product of abiding
- **Mark 4:3-9, 13-20** - a guide to pruning, so we can be fruitful
- **Galatians 5:22-23** (The Holy Spirit produces Fruit)

Application: Fully mature tree - produces fruit (remember, fruit carries in it the seed that produces new life)

3) Maturity is reproducing yourself

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Note: The Abiding Presence of God (experienced thru the gift of the Holy Spirit) - brings power to reproduce!

Acts 2:1-4 (ESV)

(1) When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Note: Easy to focus on the miracle, but the real miracle here is people united in purpose, devoting themselves to the presence of God! **Acts 1:14** - "All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer"

Acts 2:5-6, 11 (ESV)

(5) Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. (6) And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. . . (11) we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

Note: When we are abiding, we will receive what we need to reproduce, we can tell the mighty works of God to the generation around us in their own language!

Fully mature adults - reproduce themselves (the joy of intimacy leads to sacrificial love & reproduction)

Conclusion: One of the primary reasons we have looked & grown the way we have is a commitment to this. Not the staff or a small team trying to produce growth, but the church grounded in the presence of God, cultivating intimacy with Him (both personally & corporately). Then, we all will have His fruit in our lives, and we will be reproducing. Not programs or growth centered around someone's preaching or the worship team, but the body of Christ mature and reproducing in Knoxville & beyond. Fewer programs - more life.

Let's commit ourselves to gathering in the presence of God and watch what He produces in us and thru us!