

Life Group Notes 8/27/2023
Pastor Mark Warren The Kingdom Part 7

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to facilitate discussion and to discern the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 8/27. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. This week has footnotes on vocabulary, doctrines, and principles of the church. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On the Holy Spirit, His titles and His privileges.](#)
2. [On Christ the Cornerstone.](#)

***Please **Note:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling and further study during the week. ***

Pastor began by saying, "When we come into the Family of God, we do not know how to live as a family. The reality is we don't see church as a family. Sometimes our family of origin interferes with our willingness to relate to each other."

1. What are some roadblocks?
2. What roadblocks have you overcome? Do you have a testimony?
3. Which is safer for you: your family of origin? Or the church?
4. What is the impact of dysfunction on your ability to trust others?

In his introduction, Mark pointed out that when we talk about the Family of God, we need to talk about our family rules, our family relationships, and our family structures. He says when we come to the family of God, we could be coming from a place of factions and division, bringing that with us. In some cases, we could be coming into a place that has factions and divisions already set up. He says, "Let's be clear. God does not like division. He desires unity."

1. What have you noticed?
2. How does strife and division impact you personally?

3. What does it take to be a peacemaker?
4. Have you caused strife? Have you put an end to strife? How?

Look up John 1: [9](#)*The true Light who gives light to every man was coming into the world. [10](#)He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. [11](#)He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. [12](#)But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—[13](#)children born not of blood, nor of the desire or will of man, but born of God.*

1. What do you notice?
2. Why did the world not recognize him?
3. What did the “true light who gives light to every man, who also made the world” look like?
4. What is required to become God’s offspring?
5. If it is not of “the desire or will of man,” whose desire is it? Who reached out first? How?
6. Look up psalm 36:9. [9](#)*For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.* Explain what, “...in your light we see light” means in the context of what we just read in John.

Mark repeats the recurring theme of this series: “Remember. The kingdom of heaven is to be lived here and now. We are not waiting until we go to heaven to experience the kingdom.”

1. What have you learned?
2. What prayer can you point to that confirms this?
3. When should one expect the answer to this prayer: “Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven?”
4. Why?

What do you say to the one who comes to church and goes home, but will not take the risk to join a Life Group? What encouraged you? Mark says, “It takes trust. It takes vulnerability.” Explain.

Look up Ephesians 2: [11](#)*Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—[12](#)remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13](#)But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. [14](#)For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility [15](#)by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, [16](#)and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. [17](#)And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. [18](#)For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. [19](#)So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20](#)built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21](#)in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22](#)In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

1. What once separated us from Christ? What was preventing you from joining the church?
2. What changed? Look at verse 13.
3. If the blood of Jesus is the source of our unity and the root of acceptance, what can separate us?
4. Do you see any wall of hostility? Have you seen a wall of hostility recently? What was the cause?
5. Look at verse 19. What have we become? Fellow citizens with whom?
6. How does the Church of God become a building of living stones?
7. Look up 1 Peter 2: **4**As you come to Him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious in God's sight, **5**[you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.](#) How is it Peter and Paul say the same thing? What sacrifices are we to offer?

Look at 1 Corinthians 5: **19***that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.* **20**[Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God.](#) **2** God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

1. Look again at the passage we read from John 1: Why did the world need reconciliation?
2. What is the instrument of reconciliation? (Ephesians 2:13 above.) How effective is the blood?
3. What does blood do? Does blood cleanse impurity, sickness, disease in the body from the outside in? Or from the inside out? Does blood carry nourishment to the body from the outside in or from the inside out?
4. When were we reconciled? Why must we accept that reconciliation? (John 1:12 above.)

Look up John 16: **7**[But I tell you the truth, it is for your benefit that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.](#) **8**[And when He comes, He will convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: **9**in regard to sin, because they do not believe in Me; **10**in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; **11**and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world has been condemned.](#)

1. Describe the advantage we have that the apostles did not have that day.
2. Can you explain what Jesus is saying here, as to the Holy Spirit's role?
3. What does an "Advocate" do ([See footnote 1](#))?
4. Pastor Mark points out that the Spirit cries out "Abba (Aramaic for 'Pappa')! Father!" Why?

Pastor Mark laid out the next themes in this message: Family rules, family relationships and family structure. As an introduction, he made it clear that we will have to deal with two family structures: the "micro-structure" of your own family and the structure of the church family. Dynamics will change with the level of faith in the Word of God and the Kingdom that each has.

1. Family rules:
 - a. The first rule is the “Golden Rule.” Recite it. Pastor asks how much strife could have been avoided if we treated others as we would like to be treated? What do you think? How does this represent Jesus well?
 - b. Jesus says, “Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself sums up the Law and the Prophets.” Explain.
2. Family relationships:
 - a. Look up Romans 12:[10](#)*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo yourselves in honoring one another.* What would this look like? Where does humility come into play? If each competes to honor the other more, who wins?
 - b. Look up Philippians 2: [1](#)*Therefore if you have any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, [2](#)then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being united in spirit and purpose. [3](#)Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves. [4](#)Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* What does this say about relationships? About “living stones?” What does the opposite look like? What does that lead to? Do you have a testimony?
 - c. How has ignoring these principles led to a divorce rate among Christians that is competitive with the world’s?
3. Family structure:
 - a. Look again at Ephesians 2:[19](#)*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20](#)built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, [21](#)in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22](#)In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.* Paraphrase the structure Paul describes here. Who is the cornerstone?
 - b. See [footnote 2](#) below. To what degree does the structure of our family resemble Christ. To what degree do you seek to be an imitation of Christ?
 - c. Mark says, “Everything is measured off of Jesus.” How does that fit into the concept of a cornerstone, literally “the head of the corner”? When the building is geometrically similar to the capstone, you have a pyramid structure whose builders will initially reject the capstone until it is time to set the “head of the corner” in its rightful place. And everything must be measured off of the cornerstone. Explain.
 - d. There are places in the family to help us grow. Explain what being part of a life group has done to help you grow.

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Analyze your own family structures. How are you doing?

3. Recite the Golden Rule. Assess how well you apply it. Write steps you need to take to improve this and take the first step this week.
4. Deliberately honor someone close to you above yourself.
5. Decide what group you want to be a part of for the next season.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On the Holy Spirit, His titles, and His privileges**—The Holy Spirit has many titles in the New Testament, beginning with this one. Remember “spirit” from both Hebrew and Greek is the translation traditionally chosen from the word “breath” in each language. Hence, Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive my holy *Breath*.” The Spirit is that part of the Trinity Who, at creation, brooded over the waters, as a hen broods over its young, when the Word was spoken by the Father and light and life began. Where the Father is the will and the mind, and Jesus is the Word that moves and fashions all things that exist, the Spirit is the life behind it all. It is His Spirit Who is sent to dwell in us, as promised in both Ezekiel and Jeremiah under the New Covenant, to make us a new creation. Jesus calls Him the *παράκλητος* (*parakletos*), the paraclete...a slightly technical term taken from two Greek words, to call (*kaleo*) and alongside (*para-*). It is the advocate in a court of law, the lawyer for the defense. It is the one called to be a companion, an intercessor, or a comforter.
2. **On Christ the Cornerstone**— (New Age trigger warning: What I’m about to relate is a concept of Geometry, and not anything New Age, although, as with many concepts, the New Age has often perverted and kidnapped the principle.) Christ is known as the “cornerstone” of the building which is the church. Quoting David, he also calls himself the “...stone which the builders rejected [which] has become the head of the corner.” Knowing only the most rudimentary concepts in architecture and building, I was always puzzled as to why the builders would reject the cornerstone. Does not a building have four sides? Is not the cornerstone the first to be laid? It is always God’s nature to provoke questions like this, and I’ve learned to be patient. In due time, the Teacher brings better answers than I could ever find on my own. I want to relate here a concept that was first introduced to me when I was studying Eschatology, the study of end times, and specifically *dispensationalism*, a nineteenth century theory that describes the ages of man, and the ways God treated the children of Adam in each age. In his book, *The Greatest Book on Dispensational Truth in the World*, 1920, (https://www.amazon.com/Greatest-Book-Dispensational-Truth-World/dp/0001473727/ref=sr_1_1?crd=24C44Z6D88CK9&keywords=clarence+larken+The+greatest+book+on+dispensational+truth+ever+written&qid=1693151651&prefix=clarence+larken+the+greatest+book+on+dispensational+truth+ever+writt%2Caps%2C113&sr=8-1) a title I had to own, Clarence Larkin spends a chapter discussing the Great Pyramid in Egypt, and the remarkable, prophetic revelations found in its dimensions. He points out, rightly, that the Great Pyramid is missing its capstone. I am not an advocate of “dispensational truth,” nor an advocate of the theories. Clarence Larkin lays out the theory graphically like no one else, so flaws that arise are easier to understand. However, some of his ideas bear reflection. He posits that the building into which the church is being built is actually a pyramid, and the capstone is actually missing, because the building is still being

built. Indeed, the builders would reject the capstone of a pyramid because there is no value in a pointed stone, as a flat stone must be laid upon flat stone. The capstone will only have value when the building is completed...at which point the building **will perfectly resemble the capstone** once the capstone is placed where it was designed to sit. Look up Zechariah 4: [6](#)So he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts. [7](#)What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain. **Then he will bring forth the capstone** accompanied by shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’” [8](#)Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [9](#)“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent me to you. [10](#)For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven eyes of the LORD, which scan the whole earth, will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.” Some thoughts: Zerubbabel is a direct descendant of David, in exile at the time of the writing, whose name means “Born in Babylon.” If Zerubbabel is to bring forth the “capstone” to complete the building, what is Zechariah foreseeing? Do you think we see the “plumbline in the hands of Zerubbabel” today? What are we building, and what are we using to measure our work? If Jesus is this cornerstone, the missing capstone, what must our building look like in every way? A pyramid is geometrically similar to its capstone when all its sides are in perfect ratio, and all corresponding angles are congruent. The building grows to look like in every way like its head.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 25:37-40
Tuesday: John 1:9-13
Wednesday: Psalm 36:8-10
Thursday: Ephesians 2:13-16
Friday: Ephesians 2:17-19
Saturday: 2 Corinthians 5:19-21
Sunday: 1 Peter 2:5

(Scribe’s note: I have been told that the SOAP method is most effective when limited to two to four verses. Study is most effective when context is clear. At times, I might include more verses for the purpose of clarity and context. You are free to take the verses that speak to you and respond in the context of that verse. Just to clarify: the side-effect of dwelling on God’s word is real freedom. As with the notes themselves, this task is to be a joy for you. If at any point you feel you are not “doing it correctly,” your grade has already been determined. You ARE A+ already because you are reading these words.)