

iii. When others have the same acceptance before us that we now have before God, we too are viewing them in Christ!

iv. A safe community is a place where it is safe to be broken... to bring our brokenness out of hiding.

C. It is in this way that true spiritual community exists. (3:15-17)

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Why do we need to have our lives hidden with Christ? What is the significance of the “Since, then...” in Colossians 3:1?
- Why do you think spiritual community is often elusive and difficult to find? What are the hindrances? Which hindrances are you most prone to?
- Discuss the implications of the Solzhenitsyn quote on the first page.
- How might the sins listed in 3:5 sabotage spiritual community? What about those in 3:8-9a?
- Why does our forgiveness in Christ make it safe to expose our brokenness?
- How do verses 3:12-14 show us that true spiritual community will grow out of understanding our acceptance before God?
- How have you struggled in finding a spiritual community? Have you found it? Do you desire it?
- Explain the meaning of the Bonhoeffer quote on pg 3 of the notes.
- Have you ever felt a need to share something about your life, some need you have, some temptation you are facing, and you were with someone, or a few close individuals, but you didn't feel safe? Explain.

## The Church: A Spiritual Community (Part 7)

### Creating Spiritual Community

Jerry Cisar — April 30, 2017

Text: Colossians 3:1-17

### Introduction

A. Cain's Punishment: A Restless Wanderer

B. Colossians 3:15-17 describes that community.

### I. We've Been Hidden, So We Don't Need to Hide (3:1-4)

- A. You no longer need to hide, for you've been hidden.
- i. We hide our brokenness.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn: *“If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them! But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”*

- ii. In Christ, something has been done which makes it safe to come out of hiding.

B. **We no longer need to hide because we've been forgiven!**

- i. “Since, then” refers back to 2:12-15.
  - a) We no longer need to hide our sin because we have been forgiven.

- b) As glorious as this is, we can't stop there. Now we need to change the entire orientation of our lives.

C. True spiritual community can only occur in a context where forgiveness is understood.

Larry Crabb: *Why is spiritual community so rare? I suspect it has to do with the requirement of brokenness. We'd much rather be impressively intact than broken. But only broken people share spiritual community.*<sup>1</sup>

- i. The parable of the sheep and goats. What is the common denominator of all those who are listed as the least?
- ii. What is necessary for us to treat them as the sheep did in this parable?

## II. Ways We Sabotage Spiritual Community (3:5-11)

- A. In these verses we have two different lists of vices.
  - i. Hidden Sins of Shame that Die as We Walk in the Light (5)
  - ii. Sins of Relationship which Divide (8-9a)
- B. We hide because we want affirmation... we crave affirmation.
  - i. Evidence we haven't incorporate the Gospel into our lives.
  - ii. Affirmation is all about how I am perceived by others.

<sup>1</sup> Crabb, Larry. *Becoming a True Spiritual Community: A Profound Vision of What the Church Can Be* (Kindle Locations 640-641).

- C. The ways we hide.
  - i. We hide behind congeniality.
  - ii. We hide in conflict.
  - iii. We hide behind conformity.
- D. We hide because we don't feel safe.

## III. Ways We Create Spiritual Community (3:12-17)

- A. Safety in community grows out of our acceptance before God.
  - i. Chosen ones of God. (Isaiah 42:1; Luke 9:35)
  - ii. Holy (Luke 4:34; John 6:69)
  - iii. Dearly loved, or beloved (Matthew 3:17)
- B. Spiritual community is created as we clothe ourselves with Christ!
  - i. This is how we wash one another's feet!
  - ii. Safety in community grows out of what Jesus Christ has made us. (Colossians 1:2)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *"One is a brother or sister to another only through Jesus Christ. I am a brother or sister to another person through what Jesus Christ has done for me and to me; others have become brothers and sisters to me through what Jesus Christ has done for them and to them.... Therefore, the other who comes face to face with me earnestly and devoutly seeking community is [the brother or sister] who has been redeemed by Christ, absolved from sin, and called to faith and eternal life. What persons are in themselves as Christians, in their inwardness and piety, cannot constitute the basis of our community.... Our community consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible* (Kindle Locations 646-652).