



Intentions: Part Five
“The Layered Heart”
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Ok. I am going to need some help here. Social media, its just going so fast. I had a hard enough time letting go of myspace and making the switch to facebook. I never really got twitter very well though I am still occasionally trying, then came instagram which was awesome because I like pictures. I

still haven't downloaded or tried this snap chat business and now I hear that there is another platform... I am like four social networks behind.

I am just figuring out what this hashtag thing is all about. I've posted hashtags forever but haven't really understood why beyond the fact that I am mindlessly following the path. I figured it was one of those, “blind following the blind things...” like, does anyone actually know why we do this? But I have a hashtag question.

What is #VSCOcam?

And why do some pictures have that hashtag and others do not?

And what is #igers?

and is that different from #igersdaily?

and what is the reason people hashtag both?

Its all so stressful.

If there is one thing that social media has taught us, its this: you can be anybody you want to be on the other end of the computer screen or cell

phone. You can project any image. You can wear your heart on your sleeve and puke your guts out to everyone who knows you about every moment in your life... you can set up the most perfect picture and try and convince the rest of us that your life is way way better than ours.

And then we can all get jealous because you are at the beach, and we are at work. Because you got an awesome haircut, and I haven't cut my hair since I moved to Detroit.

And the thing that is so bizarre about the generation we currently live in is that we are the most connected group of people in history. We have these huge circles of friends online, we can get ahold of information at a moments notice. everything is a google search away. We always can be right in the middle of each others world simply by getting on facebook.

Yet we are more lonely than ever.

We are more connected, and more disconnected, than ever.

An article was posted about the game "world of warcraft" - about how there is this community of people built online around a game based on interaction, while you sit in your parents basement all by yourself. The term they used for it is: "Collective Solitude"

People coming together to be whoever they want, for a bunch of people who don't actually know them at all.

And I wish I could just say that it only looks like this is where our generation is going... but the reality is we are already there.

but we avoid real connection like the plague.

We create worlds that are not entirely real to avoid having to live a life that is.

And this "pathetic" existence is something entirely new in the last 15 years. The incredible technological advances made recently have created a new form of "social," one that does not require us to be anything at all, but rather, to only requires us to project something.

"To appear good, without actually being good."

To avoid community at all costs.

It has created a generation that actually struggles to talk to new people. To make new friends... to even answer the phone when it RINGS or to go for a walk without headphones in your ears.

Yet all the while **this generation, that is so connected, yet disconnected, says that the most important thing to them, is connection.**

Is community.

So why are we such closed people, if our deepest desire is connection? How much of what we've learned, needs to be unlearned?

When will we come out from behind the computer screen and instagram filters, stop proclaiming our own steadfast love (Proverbs 20:6), and just start being faithful to one another?

And that is what today is all about. Stripping down the layers that we put up around our lives, and finding true community together.

We are going to explore a passage from a letter that Paul wrote to the Philippians... Philippians 2:1-13

"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the **same mind**, having the **same love**, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name

that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**”

It is safe to say that this is one of the most, if not the most complete descriptions we get all in one place, of not only what Jesus did for us, but who he is, where he came from, why he did it, and even what he was thinking through all of it.

And yet it is dropped seemingly in the center of this conversation about community. About how we treat others better than ourselves. About how we relate to each other.

Look at the way Paul starts this:
If there is ANY encouragement.
If there is ANY comfort from love.
If there is ANY affection.

If its there at all. If somewhere among you exists these things (encouragement, comfort, affection), complete my joy by being of the same mind... have the same love... being in full accord and of one mind.

Complete my joy, by being ONE.

Only a few verses before that, in Philippians 1:27 Paul says that he wants to hear reports of them “standing firm in one spirit, striving SIDE BY SIDE for the faith.”

Working together. In 2:12 he starts by saying, you have always obeyed, you have done a very good job of this while I was here... You have done a good job of this in my presence but now, even more in my absence... Do this even more. Be a brighter community than you ever were when I was here. Have one mind. That would complete my joy.

So Paul starts with an appeal for unity amongst the believers, he then explains what he wants their intentions to be when he says be of one mind.. be ONE, that is what will make his joy complete... and then in verse 3 and 4 he shows us what that looks like to be ONE. (Philippians 2:3-4)

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Look out for each other. Not just yourself. Not just what you are going through... look around. What is your neighbor going through? What is the person next to you facing? Is there any way you can make it easier for them? Is there anything you can do to help? Paul is saying here, whatever concerns your neighbor... whatever concerns one of your members... it should concern you all.

So why is today called the layered heart? Why not the communal heart or the community heart or the united heart?

Because this is what happens to our hearts:

We know what God has called us to do. We know what he has put into our hearts to do... but the fact is that any God sized dream, you will never be able to achieve it on your own. You need Jesus. And Jesus will bring the people into your life that will help you. The bible says that he uses community as his avenue, as his channel for your dreams coming to fruition... He exists in the midst of community... he functions in it. It is the church. But the problem is, that even though we know what we are suppose to do, we know we are supposed to be one with each other... we know we are supposed to carry each others burdens, and do nothing out of selfish ambition...

We get hurt.

Someone in the church does something and it stings. and so we put a layer around our heart, and say, “That person will never hurt me again... because I wont let them in again.” and we don't.

Then someone else hurts you. and you do the same thing, you put up another layer. And soon, you decide, "I am not going to let anybody in."

And now you have this little bubble around you...

and your relationships become very surface level... There are a few people who you have known your whole life that you still trust, but you don't really let anybody new in anymore.

And then a parent gets sick. And everything you've ever known changes... someone close to you dies... someone else moves away. And suddenly you find yourself not wanting to commit any of yourself to people, because they always either leave you, or hurt you, or let you down..... and it leaves you empty... because you pour yourself into these relationships. You empty yourself into these relationships.

And there is nobody there to refill you.

and so this bubble, it gets thicker and thicker... you think its a protection bubble but really its killing you. Really, it is killing your dreams. Really, it is rendering your life useless.

And then what public life you do maintain becomes one about appearance. About only letting people in so much as they can see your strengths... but after all that you have went through, there is no way you are going to let them see you for what you really are... or what you are really going through now.

And that is how **Appearance has killed community.**

Now we hide behind our screens. Our profile pictures and our statuses. We don't process things together because we don't want to appear weak. It is human nature to want strength. To approach life from a position of strength, or at least the appearance of strength. The only problem is, that when all we are used to is being the strongest... being the best... being the example... is that when all of the sudden we don't feel strong anymore, we get sick, we get hurt, our heart breaks... we stumble... make a big mistake.. we don't know where to turn because our whole lives have been

about impression, so we don't actually truly know anybody. So at that point, we work harder than ever to impress.

And honestly, I think Christians are worse than everyone else about it.

We always hear that divorce rates among Christians are just as high, if not higher, than non christians... and new reports have been coming out disproving that... saying, thats not true... and thank God for that... but I think for a lot of Christians at the core of their marriage is a rule that they are living by, and its making them miserable.

And if the only thing stringing together your marriage is a covenant, then hold fast to that, but remember, you didn't just make a covenant to STAY. you made a covenant to carry each others burdens. To fight each others battles. To defend each other and to love each other.. The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:22-33 that marriage is essentially the picture we get here on earth for what the relationship between Christ and the church is... Paul calls it a great mystery... He uses the word profound. It's something amazing, unlike anything else in the world. But sometimes we forget that. We forget who the person is that walked down the isle that day. We stop working at things because we forget what we are even working for, and a lot of Christians are stuck in crappy marriages that they hate and they wont get help for the same reason that they wont get divorced...

because Christians have a reputation to maintain.

We had friends in New York, a married couple with kids and they served alongside us and living there, it just got so hard. it was hard on their marriage, it was hard on their family, it was kind of in a way killing them to be there... and they made the right decision for their family, and they left the city before it swallowed them whole...

but as i was talking to my friend about why they were leaving, I heard so many things from him, that had been going on in my life... between my wife and I, and our kids... And i couldn't help but think, man, why didn't we talk sooner? Are we not all going through the same things? Yet its just so hard to speak up.

So we all lived in our own little bubbles. And made everybody think that we are great. Our families are great. Our jobs are great. Our lives are picture perfect...

Maybe, if only one person, one time, would have just been honest... we could have helped each other through this. Maybe. Maybe if we tried this now, we could save some marriages... Before people get to that breaking point when even their reputation is not worth the struggle.

Maybe we could help people enjoy their marriages more...

Enjoy their lives more...

Maybe we could help people enjoy their time in Detroit more.

if we carried each others burdens like Paul says to do in Galatians 6:2, but we never can carry each others burdens, if we don't know what they are. If we never share with each other... If we put on such a front in our own lives that nobody feels safe talking to us about the things going on in their lives.

That is why what Dawn talked about last week is so important. Transparency. You can never have an intentional church moving toward a tangible goal together if you don't have transparency because you will never actually be going after anything TOGETHER.

Island Christianity... Facebook Christianity... Individual Christianity... It just doesn't work.

Richard Rohr says (in his book "everything belongs"):

"The primary philosophical and spiritual problem in the West is the lie of individualism. Individualism makes church almost impossible. It makes community almost impossible. It makes compassion almost impossible. We've overdone this notion of the private self; it has become the only game in town when its not the game at all. I need to recognize that I'm in a river **that is bigger than I am**. The foundation and the flow of that river is love. Life is not about me; it is about God, and God is about love. When we don't

know love, when we don't experience love, when we experience only the insecurity and fragility of the small self, we become restless."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says that two are better than one! It says woe to him who when he falls has no-one to pick him back up.

We are going to fall. And the world is going to fall around us and when that day comes our individualism will not be able to save us. We think we are protecting ourselves, but really we are setting ourselves up for disaster.

Larry Crab in his book encouragement (which I recommend you read) says:

" We meet at the level of our layers, determined to remain safely hidden behind our protective maneuvers. Our primary commitment is to avoid exposure, to appear acceptable, to deal from a position of strength.

When Christians interact from behind defensive masks, they experience layer-to-layer fellowship. This is like lovers kissing through a pane of glass. After chatting from behind our layers, we feel unsatisfied, distant, untouched, superficial-

and safe."

But who is going to pick up the one who somehow manages to stand on two broken legs? Trying to look strong when in reality there is no way you can hold your weight on that foundation for long? Let someone come alongside you. But We are so scared of losing control. You may maintain responsibility over whether or not your legs eventually give out... but never had control over it in the first place. So why not let someone else carry some of that weight. Because in the end, you aren't safe alone. You feel safer, until you feel alone.

Paul says his joy will be complete when he sees the church standing together. He is telling the church, you guys have a lot in common. And you should have a lot in common. And the sooner you acknowledge that you have a lot in common, and you realize that the more you get to know each other the more you will like each other... the more you will be able to do for Jesus... and that is what will make me happy.

That is why this summer, our church is focused so heavily on community. We are going to do things together... here at church, out in the city, in peoples homes. We are having a BBQ today, another July 5 and another August 23. We are going to make ice cream floats the last Sunday of each month. We are going to start working on the patio outside. We are starting a Facebook group just to spontaneously plan things... so myself or any of you can just jump on there and say "hey everyone... tomorrow my family and I are going to go bowling in Dearborn at 7pm... we would love for you to join us."

We want to spend the summer becoming better friends. Building relationships with people so that when we fall, we know who to turn to. When we see others fall, we are quick to pick them up again. They are our friends.

The passage that we read through at the beginning... we have been plowing through it today... this last part is one of those verses that I think has been manipulated in so many ways its ridiculous.

Ravi Zacharius, who is an amazing bible teacher said this one time and it really stuck with me... In fact, it was another one of those lines that really made me think "we need to do a series about this..." He said, "**you have to have intent before you get content.**" - you will always be able to find content to support your intent. Content comes easy. Any and everything can be manipulated to serve a purpose. Including the bible. Including the precious word of God.

This set of scriptures is one of those, especially the part I am about to go over with you... its one of those passages that people have found content within to match their intent, and have used it to justify a way of life that is different from the way of God that the bible describes.

And normally, if I find myself in an environment that involves some sort of correction or going to someone with a concern about an issue in their life... after they have done the whole "look at the giant bag of charcoal in your eye before you address the speck in mine" thing they usually quote me this verse... "Work out YOUR OWN salvation, with fear and trembling." And they will tell me that, "I am just working out my own salvation."

"This is what it looks like, for me."

"And just because it looks different for you, doesn't mean you should look down on me, for what it looks like, for me. "

But can I just be the one today to stand before you and just kill that logic. Its poisonous. Its deadly. and its wrong. Straight up.

I am not always going to go this deep into a scripture, but this one, its just necessary. Its so necessary.

Greek. We are going to the Greek.

Work out is the word "katergazomai" (Cat-er-gaz-a-my) and it means to perform.

Wait a second? To perform? Wasn't that what our entire third week was about? Isn't the definition of hypocrite just an actor? Someone who plays a role... who gets on the stage and who acts? Who projects?

Yes.

Thats why Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites, because he was saying, when it comes to the things of God, you are acting.

But there is no avoiding projecting something. You will project something. You will perform. So when you perform, **PERFORM HONESTLY**. Be who you are when you are with others. Show us who you really are.

So, as you perform your own salvation...

Salvation is the word "soteria" (so-ter-e-a) - and it means deliverance, preservation, or safety.

So as you work out your own deliverance... as you work out your own preservation, as you perform your preservation... do it like this.

With fear.

and with trembling.

Fear tends to be a bit of a complicated word. Throughout the old testament we read over and over again about “the Fear of the Lord.” - Does God want us to be afraid of him?

In the old testament, the Hebrew word used for fear is the word yir’ah (YEERah) - but it means something much more than just being afraid. yir’ah is also the word used for reverence throughout the old testament. The word fear entails feelings such as honor, respect, reverence, awe... They are all words to help us grow in our intimate knowledge of God. Its the acknowledgement that he holds the world in his hand. So that is the Hebrew. (see, understanding the language of the bible, chapter 3)

The word here that Paul uses that we translate as fear is the Greek word Phobos (Fa-bas). And the definition of Phobos (Fa-bas) is “Reverence for ones husband”

Now remember this... we are a christian community. If you aren’t “saved” then you are not working out your salvation. We are so happy you are here and we want you here, and we would love to tell you more about Jesus, about you can have a relationship with him... but if you aren’t a Christian, then at the moment, salvation is something that you need to find... or needs to find you, you are not working it out, that part of your life doesn’t exist yet. So we are talking about Christians here... followers of the way.

And if you are a Christian, you claim Christ... you bare his name... you are part of his church...

and the church is the bride of Christ. Christ is the husband of the church.

So as you are performing your preservation...

Perform like this:

Out of reverence for Jesus. Out of reverence for the things of God. Of the law which Jesus did not come to abolish but to sustain by properly interpreting.

Out of reverence for those red letters that our bible translators graciously provide us with.

And trembling.

The Greek word for trembling is the word Tromos,(Tra-Mas) and here is what it means. This blew me away. (Tra-Mas) Tromos is “used to describe the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability completely to meet all requirements, but religiously does his utmost to fulfill his duty.”

Brothers and sisters, perform your preservation out of reverence for Jesus, knowing that you on your own can never, ever meet the requirements... and even though that thought overwhelms you to the point of anxiety, try your best anyway.

for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure....

Notice this, it is God who works in you. to will and work for HIS good pleasure. Not for your pleasure. For His. We tend to read the bible through such a selfish lens when in reality the whole thing speaks to being anything but selfish. It speaks to how you can do what pleases God, not you. How you can serve God, not yourself. How you can serve others, not yourself.

But get this. Each and every time the word “you” is used in this set of scriptures, it is plural. Every time. He is never, not once, not at any moment in this set of scriptures, talking to anybody about them being an island working themselves out by themselves. Thats not what he is saying.

Ben Witherington says it this way in his commentary on this scripture: “Here Paul is not exhorting individuals to work out their private or individual salvation all by themselves. That much is clear. But he is talking about the community helping one another work out their personal salvation.”

Paul was not saying:

“Jacob. Work out your salvation... by yourself.”

“Dawn, work out your salvation... by yourself.”

“Justin, work out your salvation... by yourself.”

Paul David Tripp says this in his book *Dangerous Calling*: “Autonomous Christianity never works, because our spiritual life was designed by God to be a community project.”

We are in this together. You will never convince me that your problems aren't bigger than yourself. Never. You will never be able to convince me that you have a hold of your problems because that's the essence of trembling... it's the essence of (Tra-Mas) Tromos... YOU DON'T! You don't have a hold of anything. You aren't enough, but Jesus is enough. And Jesus gave us each other because on our own we aren't enough. Even in the garden... Adam... it was just him and God and God said, this is not enough! It is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18)

If you spend your whole life working out yourself by yourself, nobody will ever know you. Your husband will never know you. Your wife will never know you.

John Powell once said once that on his parents' tombstone, he could have easily written these words: “Here lie two people who never knew each other.” (Abbas Child)

How sad. How sad to be married to someone you never actually knew.

How sad, to sit in the same pews next to the same people for years, and never actually get to know them. Never get through that first layer of surface community.

How sad, to think for even a moment that we are better off alone than we are to let others into our lives. To die in our problems rather than to confess them and be healed (James 5:17). To convince ourselves that we are ok because we have been supporting our own intent with content that supports it, or is manipulated to support it.

How sad to be an island. All your life.

How sad to walk alone... next to hundreds of others who are also walking alone. All facing the same types of issues but all too proud to make themselves a case for it.

That just can't be Courage Church.

We need to be a home where nobody ever feels alone. Nobody ever walks alone. Nobody ever cries alone. Nobody goes through amazing victories alone, nobody goes through SIN alone... and incredible hardships and sicknesses alone. We need to be a home where the word "alone" is thrown out entirely. It may have its place, but it has no place here.

Last Thursday Zach went to the hospital. It was a quick deal, he went in for a day and was discharged before the night was over so in that time I didn't get a chance to get out to Royal Oak and see him. But me, being the tangible person that I am, that bothered me a lot. If someone is sick, you should visit them, and Zach is my friend. So that was Thursday afternoon into the evening...

There was a kid in New York, his name is David. He was one of our camera operators. Super kind guy, always smiling, always excited, always asking how we were, how the kids are... always telling me how beautiful my family is. They (the dream center) had met him at a bible study that they started doing at one of the shelters we worked with. David was 24 years old, had no family in America whatsoever, and lived in a home for people who were coming out of mental facilities (he was schizophrenic) but were not quite back into society yet. He had lived on and off of Rikers island which is the jail there, for years.

But he loved Jesus. He loved our church.

And literally, that evening that I didn't get to the hospital to see Zach before he got let out, I got on Facebook... and saw a whole bunch of pictures of David, pictures from his funeral.

I right away wrote a friend in New York and they called me immediately to explain what had happened. David had been dead for four weeks. According to the New York Times, The police showed up at his house,

because he was a suspect in a robbery case, and they showed up to arrest him. David didn't want to get arrested, so he ran. And when they cornered him, he fought back, he took one of their radios and began hitting them with it when finally one of the officers fired a single shot, that went into his torso, and killed him.

One bullet.

David had no family. Nobody even knew he was dead. His body laid essentially unclaimed for quite some time... but after the second week of David not showing up at church, my friend Matthew, he noticed. "This is not like David." So he started looking for him. He went to all the places that he knew David hung out... he called all of the people he knew to call, and nobody could tell him anything. He wondered, "maybe David was arrested again" and he searched and searched and came across an article about an unnamed man who was shot at the facility David lived. He dug a little deeper and figured out that it was David.

No family. Nobody looking for him. Nobody checking up on him. But the church went looking for him. The church did research, and fought to figure out, what happened to our friend? Is he ok?

And they had a funeral. Four weeks after he had died, last Thursday. And my friend told me that the funeral, it was just a few of the people from the church, and a bunch of lawyers and reporters trying to interview people and see if they could turn it into another big story... But for my friends, it was a day to honor a man who was not perfect. Who was not really even all there... but who was a part of our family.

I heard all this, over the phone, sitting in the red church van, fighting tears in front of my family. And when I think about David, I think... Who out there would go looking for me if I didn't show up? Who would I go looking for, after only a week or two of not seeing?

The next morning, I took my daughters to the park and as I was watching them play, I got the message that my Pastor, Pastor Brad Reed... that his father passed away... 56 years old. We had been praying for him for a really long time, and in the last few weeks his condition just got worse and

worse. And I thought about my friends in that community... about how everything hit them, all at the same time... my eyes swelled up in that park and as much as I wanted to fight the tears, they were coming... for all my hurting friends.

Then, that night. Same exact night, I get a call... More bad news. Another situation that hit even closer to home.

Again, I am fighting back tears I am barely able to talk on the phone, my kids are yelling at each other and I am just standing there as tears lightly run down my face... So overwhelmed as I listened to the report on the phone.

“Don’t tell me that. Not today.”

I am not exaggerating. This all happened in my world in less than a 24 hour time period. and I just went numb. I text my wife the news (because she was up here studying for the message last week), so she asked me to come pick her up, and then I didn’t say a word to her when I saw her. I didn’t even know what to say. What to do. I didn’t know where to begin to start processing all of this. I shut down from the overload.

I say all that not for a pity party or to try and break your hearts. I say all that to say that typically, at least in my experience, when it comes to the sorts things like tragedy... When it rains, it pours. And it becomes extremely easy to drown.

I say all that to say that I need community. Our family needs community. We need friends. You need friends. You need people that can bare your burdens, and you can bare theirs. You need people who will go looking for you when you aren't around... You need people who will cry for you even from hundreds of miles away because you are family.

Jesus made this possible. Actually, Jesus made this mandated... The greatest commandment... love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. The Great Commission... go into all the world... make disciples. Build communities with people. Discipleship, it happens in community. That is where it happens. It doesn't

happen in the lecture hall, or in the podcast. That is information. But transformation takes place in relationships. It takes place when we work it out together. And not only did Jesus command these things of us... he empowered us, equipped us, and emptied himself as an example for how we should treat others.

(Philippians 2:3-8)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourself... Look not to your own interests... but to the interests of others... Why?

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The thing that makes this set of scriptures so incredibly powerful, is when it is talking about Jesus, it talks about his mind. It tells us a little behind the mind of Christ... and it tells us, "have this mind."

This whole series we have been trying to work out our minds. Work out our intentions, what is in our heart? What is in our heads? What are we thinking? Why are we doing what we are doing?

Well here it is... what is in Jesus' mind? Have that.

Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped... literally it means a thing to be kept. Jesus had equality, and yet he didn't keep it. He had it all, but he didn't keep it. He laid it down, so he could bare our burdens.

Are you just completely finished emptying yourself into other people and feeling like nobody is filling you? Jesus can relate. He emptied himself, so he could fill us.

He took the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. This is fascinating, and has incredible implications. The bible says that Jesus

Christ is fully God and fully man. He never stopped being God, even when he came in the flesh. But he took on flesh and blood and relied entirely on his Father. There is a moment in Acts (10:38) that talks about Jesus and it says that Jesus went about doing good, and healing people... but first God anointed him with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Think about that. There is such significance to the fact that Jesus made himself a human. He felt things humans feel. Remember the verse in Hebrews we talked about a couple weeks ago? (Hebrews 4:13-16) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Do you feel alone? Jesus felt alone. Isaiah 53:3 says that "He was despised and rejected by men." Luke 5:16 (NIV) says that Jesus would often withdraw to lonely places and pray.

Has somebody hurt you? Have you been hurt by community?

Jesus was hurt by his community. He was betrayed by one of his closest friends Judas. He was denied by Peter, one of the three that he poured everything he had into. He can relate to that hurt, and he still says that the church... the body... united... His bride... is the hope of the world. Even with the betrayals. Even with the mistakes and the blemishes.

He made himself nothing. He made himself feel. He made himself completely dependent on God. He didn't do those miracles on his own... God anointed him to them them.

so when we serve him and we work out our salvation with trembling... that's all that means... we admit that we are empty. We can't do it on our own. We are nothing unless he fills us. We can never be what we dream of or what we are called to in ourselves.

and you know what is amazing? Jesus tells us in spite of that, (John 14:12-13) "You will do greater things than even I have done!"

Why? Could it be, Because there are many of you? Because you are my body. You are my bride. You are one with me. You have the same Holy

Spirit, and there are so many more of you! To Jesus, it was always about establishing his church. The church was always supposed to carry the message farther than He was ever able to go.

He took the form of a servant.

Everything sandwiched in the middle of all of this community stuff that Paul is talking about, is our example of humility. Our example of what it means to serve one another. Our example of the type of community we should have.

Jesus served people. So we should be serving people. Jesus said blessed are the poor in spirit. blessed are those who mourn... blessed are the meek. blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those persecuted for righteousness sake.

These are the ways of Jesus. This is the mind of Christ. And what does Philippians 2:5 say? Have this mind. have the mind of Christ. If you don't have this mind, lets work together... toward this mind. Lets repent. The word repent, it literally just means "to change your mind"

Change your mind, and start living again. Start loving people again. Start serving people again. Start opening up to the community God has placed before you again.

Friends, this entire series has been all about our hearts. About our intentions. About why we do what we do. Well we do it because we are the bride of Christ. We are his representation here on Earth, here in Detroit, to a dark and lonely city who needs a bright and loving savior and that is precisely what we have.

Lets be intentional about developing these types of habits... about having this type of community.

One that serves. One that is built around the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. One that takes the bible seriously when it says Jesus is your example of love... Love this way. Lay down your life for your brothers.

(1 John 3:16-17) - If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, HOW DOES GOD ABIDE IN HIM?

He doesn't.

Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, for us.

And this is how the world will know that we belong to Jesus....

“If you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)