

SERMON NOTES: A LIFE LIVED WELL 10 - CHURCH (Sunday 28 June 2015)

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 3:8-12

This grace was given to me—the least of all the saints—to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of the Messiah, and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. This is so God’s multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. This is according to His eternal purpose accomplished in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord. In Him we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

QUOTES

“The deadliest enemy of Western Christianity is not Islam or atheism but the infinitely complex process of secularisation. Or, to put it another way, choice. Long before digital technology, social mobility was undermining what the American scholar of religion Peter Berger calls ‘plausibility structures’—the networks of people, traditionally your family, friends and neighbours, who believe the same thing as you do.

You go away to university and suddenly almost nobody believes what you do, or did. Your siblings move to different towns, so you won’t see them in church any more. Your laptop plugs you into any social network that takes your fancy. Even if you’re born again as an evangelical Christian, life pushes you from one congregation to another. Many Evangelicals get bored and turn into nones... The mainstream churches can’t cope with this explosion of choice... religions invariably die, at least on a local level, when no one can be bothered to attend their services.”

Damian Thompson

“Our age tends to divorce spirituality from ecclesiology. We want God but we don’t want the church. However the great flaw of our search for spirituality and faith minus Church is ‘the unfronted life’. Without Church, we have more private fantasy than real faith... real conversion demands that eventually its recipient be involved in both the muck and the grace of actual church life.

What church community takes away from us is the false freedom to soar unencumbered, like the birds, believing that we are mature, loving, committed, and not blocking out the things that we should be seeing. Real churchgoing soon enough shatters this illusion, and gives us no escape, as we find ourselves constantly humbled as our immaturities and lack of sensitivity to the pain of others are reflected off eyes that are honest and unblinking.”

Ronald Rolheiser

“We are what we repeatedly do.”

Aristotle

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Challenge: Craft a habit that blesses into and builds the future.

- + How can I make the shift from prioritising cultural relevance to Gospel resilience?
- + How am I engaging in Church as a spiritual discipline?
- + Am I allowing Church to be a place where the Spirit is elevated and the flesh is crushed?
- + How is my participation in Church reorienting me to Christ’s supremacy and His kingdom?
- + What do the ‘muck’ and ‘grace’ of Church life look like to me personally? How am I letting God’s vision for the Church inform those areas?