Community Group Discussion Guide

Ekklesia, part 6, Rich Barrett

Observation

1. Have someone read John 17:20-23. What specific concern did Jesus express in His prayer in John 17, and what did He say would result from believers living this out?
2. Have someone read Matthew 18:15. What is the first step Jesus instructs for addressing conflict between believers?
3. Have someone read John 13:34-35. In the sermon, what practical example was given to illustrate how humility and service demonstrate the gospel more powerfully than arguments or moral performance? [54:39]
4. What two categories of offenses did the sermon highlight when discussing how to handle disagreements? [01:00:32]

Interpretation

1. Why do you think Jesus emphasized unity among believers as the key way the world would recognize God's love (John 17:23)? How might division among Christians undermine this?
2. How does addressing conflict privately (Matthew 18:15) protect both the dignity of the person involved and the unity of the church? What risks arise when this step is skipped?
3. Rich said, "Loving one another in costly ways becomes an undeniable sign that Jesus reigns." [57:13] Why might sacrificial love be more persuasive than intellectual or moral arguments for skeptics?

4. Why might secondary issues (like baptism practices or political views) become divisive if elevated above Jesus' core mission? How does this distract from the church's purpose?

Application

1. Is there someone in your life you've avoided addressing a conflict with directly? What practical step could you take this week to pursue reconciliation in humility? [59:49]
2. What "secondary issue" (e.g., preferences, politics, traditions) have you unintentionally treated as non-negotiable? How could refocusing on Jesus' command to love others shift your priorities? [01:04:08]
3. The sermon asked, "Who do I need to forgive?" [01:03:48] Is there a relationship where bitterness or gossip has taken root? How might choosing forgiveness free you to reflect God's love more clearly?
4. When have you experienced or witnessed a group of believers loving one another in a way that drew others toward Jesus? What specific actions made that love tangible?
5. How could your small group practice "submission" or "foot washing" (serving one another in humility) in a practical way this month? What would it look like to make this a habit? [56:55]
6. The sermon warned against letting contempt grow. [01:04:45] Are there people or groups you've begun to view with disdain? How could praying for them soften your heart and align you with Jesus' prayer for unity?