

Series: Wholehearted
Message: Our Core Values
Date: October 7, 2018

Here is how we define core values: **Core values are shared biblical convictions that that guide and shape all that we are and all that we do.**

The first and foundational core value, upon which the four that follow rest is that we are...

1. We are... Word Centered

Definition: Because God has revealed Himself through the written Word (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) and the Living Word (**John 1:1-4, 14**) we place the Bible and Jesus at the center of all we are, and everything we do (**Colossians 1:15-20**).

2 Timothy 3:16-17 reads...

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

This verse describes what we know as the Doctrine of *Inspiration* – That God "breathed" the Scripture (inspired) through those who wrote it. Unlike any book on the planet – these words are God's Words, a revelation of Himself, inerrant, infallible, authoritative and sufficient for all matters of life and faith.

Being a "word centered" people is demonstrated in the following ways...

Demonstrated by:

- Submitting to the authority of Scripture in all matters of life and faith
- Practicing expository preaching as our primary means of teaching the Scripture
- Equipping and encouraging all to personally read, understand and apply the bible daily
- Pointing people to Jesus through every book of the Bible

What is expository preaching? Not just going through the Bible, book by book. But it is **how** we teach the Bible.

Expositional preaching begins with a historical-grammatical and literary understanding of the text, in its context, as the author intended the original audience to understand it. Only then is the ancient text brought to the modern reader for personal application, which will always find its ultimate fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus.

If I tried to boil that down, it might sound something like this:
Expository preaching is explaining what the Bible meant then, what it means now, and why it still matters.

2. We are... Spirit Dependent

Definition: Because we cannot do anything apart from Jesus (**John 15:4-5**), and He has given us His Spirit who empowers us to fulfill His mission (**Acts 1:8**), we will depend wholly on the Spirit to do in and through us "greater works" than He did (**John 14:12**).

Demonstrated by:

- Equipping people to understand what it means to be "filled with" and to "walk by" the Spirit in all of life. (*Holy Spirit Series this time last year...*)
- Growing as a prayerful people who truly "pray without ceasing." (*40 Days of prayer*)
- Believing God for what only He can do...and acting by faith on that belief (*what is unexplainable in your life and mine...apart from the work of God?*)
- Continually shifting our trust from our own resources to God and His promises

3. We are... Better Together

Definition: Because God Himself exists in eternal relationship (**2 Corinthians 13:14**) and made us in His image (**Genesis 1:27**) we refuse to "go it alone" in life or leadership, but rather, we "go together" pursuing relationships marked by kindhearted humility, and mutual dependence (**Colossians 3:12-17**).

Demonstrated by:

- Pursuing healthy team ministry, knowing that no one person has all the gifts
- Making group interaction a priority in every learning environment
- Calling all to at least one “group setting” where you are known, and know others
- If possible, so far as it depends on you, being at peace with all men **(Romans 12:18)**

When people ask me why be in a small group, my answer is that *God is in a small group – and I’m being serious*. I understand there are seasons when being in a group just does not work, but that never negates our need to be in relationships where we are known and know others.

4. We are... Courageously Real

Definition: Because our sinful tendency is to “hide” what is true about us **(Genesis 3:7-8)**, and because Jesus condemned hypocrisy in the strongest terms **(Matthew 23:25-28)**, we choose to “take off the mask” and rest in our true identity in Christ, being honest about the struggles and joys in the life of faith **(Psalm 119:174-176)**.

Demonstrated by:

- Leadership vulnerability – leaders and teachers being real about our own struggles and joys of faith
- Providing safe environments for people to be appropriately vulnerable and honest – starting with our weekly worship gathering
- Making all Psalm types (lament, praise, thanksgiving, royal/messianic, wisdom, imprecatory) integral in our public and private worship.
- Grounding our faith in our true identity in the gospel and in Christ, freeing us from the need to hide behind a false ideal.

To be courageously real, means in the appropriate context, removing the mask, putting away the “ideal” we think we need to project...and give to others...who we really are, because it is who we really are that God is changing, and God will use to give hope and life to others.

5. We are... ***Not About Ourselves***

Definition: Because we were made for God's glory and not our own (**Isaiah 43:7**), and because Jesus most fully glorified God in His own service and sacrifice (**Mark 10:45**), we will live for God's glory and the good of others (**Acts 20:24**).

Demonstrated by:

- Making decisions based on the priority of God's glory and purposes instead of our own
- Leveraging our money, time, and resources with radical generosity
- Cultivating a clear outward focus toward those who do not yet know Christ
- Pro-actively looking for opportunities to speak for those who have no voice, stand up for the poor and destitute, and do justice for all who are oppressed (**Micah 6:8; Proverbs 31:8-9**)

This is what Jesus meant when He said in **Mark 8:35**...

³⁵For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life *for Me* and *for the gospel* will save it.

Not About Ourselves constantly reminds us that life, true life, abundant life, the life we were made for is not found in what we achieve or accumulate for ourselves, ***but in giving our lives away for God's glory and the good of others.***