

Week Two: Reimagining the Church

Participant Sheet

Session 2: Week of September 29, 2024

Households of Justice

Matthew 12:46-50

Brewster Baptist Church, Brewster MA

Note— It seems the word “reimagining” caused some confusion for a few people. The use of the word “reimaging” for this series was intended to help us think about the church in a deeper, more scriptural manner. We don’t want an understanding of the church that’s cultural and based on our limited experience, but rather one based on the richness of who we’re called to be, and all we’re called to do, as given in the New Testament. Through this series, we’ll discuss some of these Biblical images, metaphors, and phrases in the hope they will enlarge our understanding of the church, and help us to reimagine who God is calling us to be, and what the Lord wants us to do in a fuller more Biblical manner.

Connecting

Briefly - what does being a part of the church mean to you? What difference does it make in your life?

Background: The Gospel according to Matthew is a manual of Christian teaching in which Jesus Christ, Lord of the community known as the church, is described as the fulfiller and the fulfillment of God’s will as revealed in the Old Testament. Jesus is presented as Israel’s royal Messiah (1:1, 19:28; 21:9) in whom God’s purpose culminates, and by whose words and life his followers may gain divine forgiveness and fellowship. Much of the material that is unique to Matthew’s gospel has to do the Jews or the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies of which there are nine references (see 1:22-23; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10). The primary task of the church as it emerges in Matthew’s gospel is that of doing God’s will and in particular doing justice for the poor. For Matthew, the church is a household of justice, that’s his central image.

Matthew 12:46-50 (NRSV)

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, *“Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”* But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, *“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”*

Questions

1. What do you think of when you hear the word justice? How would you define justice?
2. As a group, read the following passages from the Bible that speak about justice, (*Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalms 9:7, 10:17-18, 33:4-5, 106:3, Isaiah 1:17, 9:7, 30:18, 61:8, Jeremiah 9:24, Ezekiel 34:16, Micah 6:8, Amos 5:24*) What do we learn about justice in these verses?
3. Why is justice important in relationships, in the church, in a community, in a nation?
4. Read these passages aloud as a group, *Matthew 12:15-21, 23:23-24; 25:31-46*. What do they tell us about Matthew’s understanding of justice?
5. Matthew is convinced that you can know the will of God and do it (see *Matthew 7:21-23, 12:46-50*). Why is the doing of God’s will and not just saying we believe so important to Matthew?
6. How is being a part of BBC helping you to grow into a life of love, justice, and mercy?

Praying for Each Other

Are there any joys to celebrate, any burdens we can share?

A sample prayer to close: *Lord, imprint more of your just character on our souls so we may see people and situations as you do. Give us more of your grace so we may treat all people in a way that honors you and as if they were Christ himself. Amen*