



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

Good Morning Church!

This morning we are continuing our **Brandywine Together** sermon series, which is focusing us on the beauty/necessity of church community.

Last week Pastor Nate opened this series by talking about the importance of church togetherness.....that the Christian church is God's plan A for our world and that there is no plan B. He talked about the importance of the church...1) Regularly Meeting Together to Know Christ 2) Help each other grow in Christ 3) Go into the World for Christ.

And so last week the ground floor was laid with regards to the importance of the church in the world,

and God's plan for the church in the world.



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

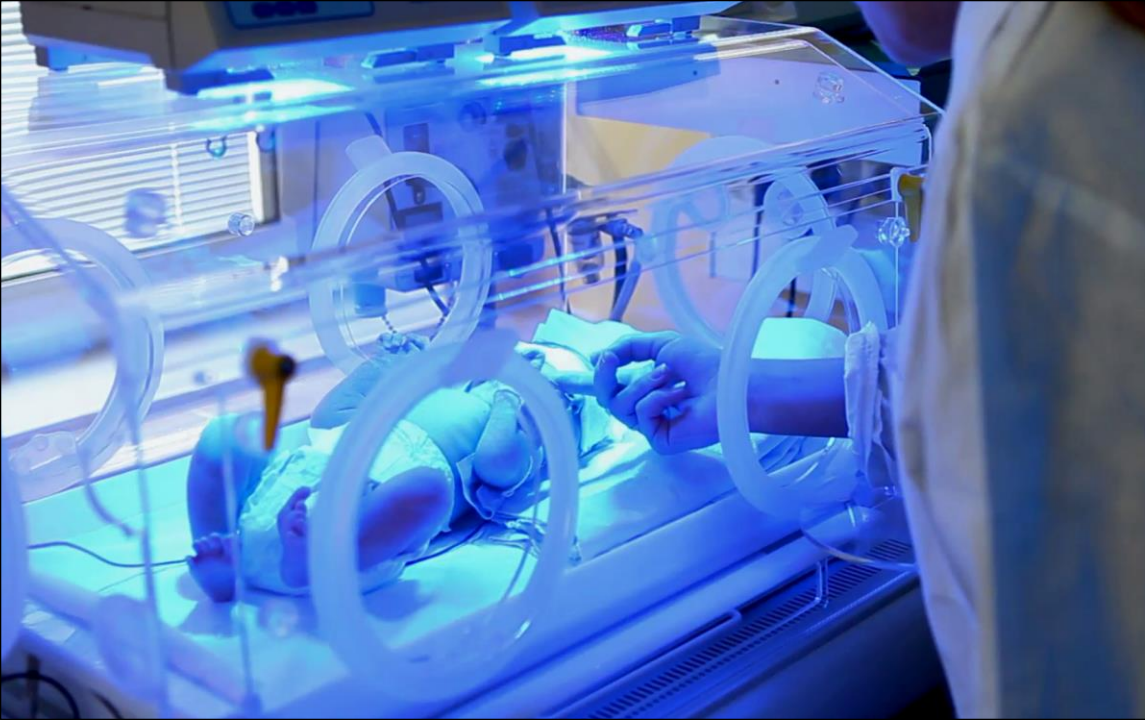
PURSUING BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

And this morning we are going to build upon that foundation by emphasizing THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL COMMUNITY.

Now, some of you might be asking, “What exactly is Biblical Community?” And while there is no Webster's Dictionary definition of Biblical Community, one of the best layman definitions I've heard is that Biblical Community is an “incubator for Christian Discipleship,” meaning that when Biblical Community is happening, disciples are being made/grown.

Illus:
You know, my mother in-law is a NNICU Nurse. She takes care of premature babies who still need the

environment of their mothers womb, or
else they would die.



You see modern medicine has developed incubators for premature babies that mimic the environment of a mother's womb. My mother-in-law and other NNICU nurses like her use these incubators to allow these premature babies to grow strong lungs and other vital organs so these children can thrive, when they would otherwise perish.

And you see spiritually speaking the scriptures describe the same dynamic playing out within the confines of the church.....except the incubator isn't just something we merely sit in like a church, but rather it is a community of believers we belong to.....and within this BIBLICAL COMMUNITY we grow together, we gain strength together, we have the

opportunity to THRIVE TOGETHER. *[When Nate talks about us being a Greenhouse, this is the same concept].*



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

PURSUING BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

And so what I hope to demonstrate this morning is that BIBLICAL COMMUNITY ISN'T JUST SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS NATURALLY/ORGANICALLY, BUT RATHER IT IS SOMETHING TO BE PURSUED TOGETHER.

And you see church the idea of PURSUING something, carries with it the notion that you are an ACTIVE PARTICIPANT ENGAGED IN BRINGING THE OBJECT OF YOUR PURSUIT INTO BEING.

And since we as church leaders believe that PURSUING BIBLICAL COMMUNITY TO BE VITAL FOR THE FUTURE OF BRANDYWINE...we want to invite you all to join us in this pursuit.

3 Goals

1. Explain what Biblical Community is and isn't.
2. Demonstrate how Biblical Community was lived out in the early church (Acts 2).
3. Cast vision for how the pursuit of Biblical Community will both glorify God and bless our lives.

PURSuing BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

And so our goal for this morning's teaching is 3 fold.

1. Explain what Biblical Community is and isn't.
 - lots of misconceptions
2. Demonstrate how Biblical Community was lived out in the Acts 2 church.
3. Cast vision for how the pursuit of Biblical Community will both glorify God and bless our lives.



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

PURSUING BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

Now, when it comes to pursuing Biblical Community, the good news is we as human beings naturally love PURSUING COMMUNITY...and this human trait transcends age, demographics, geography...we are community based down to our core.

As a sign of this, raise your hand if you are a part of some sort of social group?

Nearly everyone on the planet is apart of at least some form of social gathering.

What we are engaged in right now is, among many things, a social gathering.

You see we are drawn to do social/relational things.....because we are made in the image of our

deeply relational God.



Do not advance this slide until I say“Actually I think we have a photo of those characters.”

This was such a great show ;-)

Now, I don't think I need to do much more to convince you that community is a part of our DNA because I think that part is obvious.

However what I want to focus on this morning is the path that leads to **BIBLICAL** COMMUNITY. And my aim is to inspire you to join with us on that path.

Again, the reason why we are emphasizing this as a Pastoral team is because we truly do believe that the **CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS THE HOPE OF THE WORLD.**



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

PURSUING BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

But in order for us to deliver on BEING that HOPE we must continually endeavor towards BEING the type of church Christ envisioned when he commissioned his Apostles to build His Church.

Alright, so let's talk a bit about what Biblical Community is and what it isn't.

Please turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 2, we will be starting in verse 41. Our text is going to pick up on the heels of the Day of Pentecost, just after Peter's dynamic sermon.

What we are about to read is a glimpse of the very first Biblical Community.....and it's from this foundation that we will derive our understanding of

how we might pursue Biblical Community
ourselves.

ACTS 2:41–47

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the

We read in Acts chapter 2 starting in verse 41.

Read:



43 And awe came upon every soul,
and many wonders and signs were
being done through the
apostles. 44 And all who believed
were together and had all things in
common

Continue Reading:



45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they

Continue Reading:



47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Continue Reading:

ACTS 2:41–47

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the

One of the very first things we see here back in verse 41, is that upon receiving the word and being baptized, these new believers devoted themselves to the Apostle's teaching and fellowship. **They quickly got serious about the work of becoming Christlike.**

Now, the canonized Bible as we know it didn't exist back then, but what these new Christians did have were the teachings of the Apostles. And so they devoted themselves to understanding Christian doctrine TOGETHER.....but NOT JUST THAT.....we see here that they also fellowshiped TOGETHER.

When it speaks here of the fellowship, to the breaking of bread...this is a clear reference to sharing the

communion table TOGETHER...
remembering the sacrifice of Christ
TOGETHER.



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

Pursuing Biblical Community Requires

And Church what we see from verses 41 & 42 is that
Pursuing Biblical Community Requires DEVOTION.

These are people who were devoted to their own
personal discipleship.....and also that of their
neighbor. And this devotion trumped all others.

I want you evaluate the things you are most devoted
to in life...you can always tell what you are devoted to
because it's manifested in how you spend your time,
how you use your talents and where you place your
treasure.

Illus:

**This week I had a good friend Mike Skipper interview
me for a Graduate class he's taking. Mike had to**

interview several Pastors concerning their initial call into the ministry.



43 And awe came upon every soul,
and many wonders and signs were
being done through the
apostles. 44 And all who believed
were together and had all things in
common

Re-Read. 

And so after we hear about the Early Churches devotion and tight fellowship...we read here in verse 43 that *awe* came upon every soul as they experienced what God did in response to their devotion.

It's amazing to think that the people who experienced this first Biblical Community were themselves astonished by how BIG GOD SHOWED UP.

Now, this is the same pattern we see throughout the entire Biblical Narrative...devotion to God is followed by AMAZING DISPLAYS BY THE CREATOR. Think of the Exodus, think of Jericho...think of God's deliverance of Daniel.

When God's people are devoted to Him just stand back

and wait for the awe, because its coming.



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

Biblical Community must be rooted in a common

And I think that what we learn from the early church in this way is that ***Biblical Community must be rooted in a common sacrificial love.***

It is clear that the first Biblical Community was willing to sacrifice for one another. But all throughout the NT epistles Christians are exhorted to live this way. As evidence of this...5 times in John's 1st epistle he writes that believers are to love one another.

1 John 3:16-18

⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth

1 John 3:16-18 reads:

⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

Biblical Community must be rooted in a common

Imagine what we might be able to accomplish in Wilmington and the entire Brandywine Valley if we each loved our neighbor as ourselves...you see church I believe that every bit of the AWE mentioned in verse 43 would come to fruition if we live out Biblical Community in this way, right here, right now.

We want Brandywine Valley Baptist Church to have distinction in the way we work, in the way we speak, in the way we serve and long suffer with one another. We want to be known as the church that is rooted in sacrificial love just like that of our savior.

Wouldn't it be amazing that instead of being referred to as THE CHURCH NEXT TO THE Y, instead we are known as the church that really delivers on the

community Jesus died to make possible.



And this vision isn't what Pastor Todd or Pastor Nate wants for our church, this is God's idea.

Brandywine Together isn't just a catchy title for a membership drive.....this is how the body of Christ is supposed to function.

Illus:

I want you to imagine that right now no matter how old you currently are, that God is going to give you 50 more years of life.....and imagine that from now until the time you go home to be with Jesus, your life is lived in such a way that you have a direct impact on the culture of Wilmington and the greater Brandywine Valley. Imagine that. That you lived in such a way that your life, your 50 years of life lived in

faith actually changed the culture of our community.



Wesley had just enough time to get in between the rails himself (shielding the young man with his own body) before the 5 cars of the train, carried over them both.

He and the young man barely survived.

Wesley was deemed the “Subway Samaritan” by the New York Times.....and became a national symbol of what it looks like to LOVE ONE’S NEIGHBOR AS THEMSELF.

***These stories grip us,** because it is rare (in our world) that someone would sacrifice themselves for someone they don’t even know.....Wesley could have died trying to save this young man, but he said it*

was worth the risk, he couldn't sit on the sidelines and just watch.



BRANDYWINE TOGETHER

There are people in our very community [all around us] who have fallen on the tracks.....they are lying wounded.....and a big train is coming for them.

Will we be the type of church who jumps into the fray.....engages in risky ministry with the hurting, and hiding.

Will we invite the “difficult person” into fellowship, knowing full well that it might cost us something.

You see I believe that we want to be that type of church, because that is the type of God we serve.

1 John 3:16-18

⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth

Remember [again] 1 John 3:16-18 reads:

⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

“One Another” Commands that foster Biblical Community

- Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12)
- Outdo one another in showing honor (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Comfort and agree with one another (2 Corinthians 13:11)
- Serve one another (John 13:1-20; Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
- Be honest with one another (Colossians 3:9)

And so I want to begin to close our time this morning by looking at some practical application of this.....something we can put into practice TODAY that will move us towards living out BIBLICAL COMMUNITY.

And so on our screens are a number of “one another” commands that are found in scripture.

“One another” commands are biblical instruction concerning how we are to interact with one another. And we see here that we are to.....[unpack list]



If all of us do this in concert, BRANDYWINE TOGETHERwe will be the type of community Jesus envisioned His church would be.....for our benefit and His great glory.

And so, Why not us? Why not now?

Pray: