



## Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

### The Future of the Church: There is More

11/22/2020

*"This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.'"*  
Jeremiah 6:16

If we are to move into the future God intends for the Church, we must stop being hindered by labels and categories. Categories can be good for helping us define and know what to expect, but at the same time categories contain a depth of history and connotation with them. This past Sunday, Pastor Bill spoke extensively on two well-known categories for the Church: evangelical and charismatic. He asked for us to consider which category we find ourselves being drawn to. But I must admit, for me personally, both of these categories contain a lot of baggage. In my own experiences, evangelicalism has come to be associated with a large grouping of churches and people who use Scripture for their own benefit and often act very unChristlike. On the other hand, the charismatic movement has connotations of elitism and exclusion, focusing only on emotion and lacking depth. Labels and categories are not unique to the modern church.

When Jesus walked the earth, there were similar categories. The Pharisees had a deep knowledge of Scripture but neglected to understand the heart behind the laws. The Essenes were another sect of Judaism in Jesus' day who completely isolated themselves from society believing they could be more pious by living in seclusion. The Zealots were a political sect of Judaism who were concerned for the national and religious life of the Jews, actively opposing Rome, and leading these Zealots to even despise the Jews who sought peace.

However, as Pastor Bill often reminds us, "The abuse of something does not negate the use of it." Perhaps you find yourself deeply connected to the history of either evangelical or charismatic churches, or perhaps you have been deeply hurt by people connected with these labels. It is important we recognize our history, determine what good we want to hold onto and be willing to let go of the negative. Pastor Bill gave us 10 areas of emphasis from each stream. How can we let these help us move beyond the label?

- Expository preaching
- Prayer is essential
- An emphasis on the authority of Scripture
- God speaks today
- The kingdom of God is not yet fully here
- The kingdom of God is here in part
- Spiritual growth is a process
- Worship is participatory
- The gifts of the Spirit are for today
- Small groups renew the Church

#### **So Consider...**

1. Take some time to discuss and acknowledge the background and history of those in the group? How has it helped shape you into who you are?
2. In what ways does your history with these categories/labels leave aspects of fear?
3. Think about these 10 areas of emphasis. Which ones do you feel connect closest to you? Which ones do you need to open yourself up to more fully?

#### **Take Action:**

Select one of the 10 areas of emphasis to focus on this week. Identify your history & emotion surrounding this area, and pray about how God might reveal how this can be used to strengthen his Church.

With Thanksgiving - Sherri Walker