

EKKLESIA

We Are Family
Joel Muddamalle

- Open and prayer.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 and Joel's summary of the local church.
 - The local church can be defined as a "family". This family is unique and unlike any other. It's composed of different ethnicities and social strata—absolutely unheard of and unparalleled in the ancient world.
 - What's the purpose of this family? God has called this new creation "a family" or the "Ekklesia" to a counter-cultural community where brothers and sisters love each other as a missional witness to outsiders.
- Read Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 3:22-24. (Note the phrases with the words "in love".)
 - Joel spoke of God's pattern of love throughout the scriptures.
 - What are some other examples of the love of God that stick out to you from scripture?
 - Does love always have to look the same? If not, why?
 - Recall moments of God's love in your life and share how that informs and shapes your view of God.

The City of Thessalonica

- Joel talked about the significance of the city and how diverse it was.
 - Talk about the diversity of your neighborhood, workplace, school and community.
 - Does the diversity or lack thereof impact what type of relationships you have?
- Read Acts 17:1-6.
 - Paul, Timothy and Silas preached over three Sabbaths and many Jews and Gentiles believed.
 - Why did the authorities say, "These men have turned the world upside down?"
 - Hint: They were preaching the good news of the Gospel. When the Gospel is preached, the power of ethnocentrism is destroyed, and a new family is formed.
 - With this preaching of the Gospel, who lost all their power and influence?

The Ekklesia

- In Christ, we become a new family of diverse believers across all ethnic, social, political and economic backgrounds.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10. (NOTE: Joel pointed out that Paul often used the second person plural—you all or y'all.)
 - Why is this important for us to remember as we read Paul's words?
 - How has individualism impacted you personally (or your family) and what are the benefits of living in the context of this new family of God?
- The "Ekklesia" is a family that is knit together by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Joel said that the only way it could be possible for different people from diverse backgrounds *to become one blood is through the shedding of the Divine blood of Jesus.*
 - This means, being a family is dependent on the finished work of Jesus and living in the power of the Spirit.
 - What does it mean to “live in the power of the Spirit”?
- The image of the family shapes and informs our behavior and teaches us how to love one another.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9.
 - It was the love of Christ that brought enemies together and turned them into friends.
 - It was love of Christ that brought fragile relationships and turned them into a family.
 - It is the Love of Christ that teaches us how to love one another!
 - What are practical ways you can love and serve each other? (Hint: This is an opportunity for your TC Home Group to be vulnerable and share their needs. Help facilitate this conversation by leaders/hosts possibly sharing first. Also, if there are real practical needs, please don't miss this opportunity for your TC Home Group to help meet those needs.
- The Ekklesia is God's chosen means of proclaiming the good news of the Gospel.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 4:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:20.
 - How can the “family of God” be a missional witness to those who don't know Jesus?
 - Remember: We are transformed into a new family, to be witness to a broken and lost humanity, so they can see Christ in us and be drawn to Him.
- Close in prayer.

Soul tattoo: Get connected to the family life of Transformation Church through TC Home Groups.