

Theme: We are called to community, serving one another and putting the needs of the community ahead of our own, but the iWorld encourages radical individualism.

## I. Intro – Walmart Food Stamp Theft, and Mortgage Bankers

- A. October 13, 2013 - Mansfield and Springhill LA
- B. Computer glitch - no balances on Food Stamp cards
- C. Walmart let people shop - robbed the store bare
- D. One woman - 49 cents on card, \$700 in cart!
- E. In 2008 worldwide recession caused by bankers giving loans they knew were bad
- F. In both cases - self-interest caused community problems - in one case worldwide problems
- G. How do we build community? How does the iWorld make this difficult?

## II. The Call To Community

- A. Community - a major theme in Philippians
  - 1. Our verse is a call to community  
Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4
  - 2. The major reason for the letter - appeal to unity  
I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Philippians 4:2
    - a. Apparently a schism between these two women
    - b. Many scholars think this lies behind the letter

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then **make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.** Philippians 2:1–2

- a. Paul's joy complete if they have unity
  - b. The lead in to our current verse
  - c. Many other verses in Philippians
- B. Community - a major theme in Scripture
- 1. Not good to be alone - created for community  
The Lord God said, "**It is not good for the man to be alone.** I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18
    - a. Created in the image of the Trinity - the Divine Community
    - b. We were literally created for community
    - c. I taught a whole series on this during the early summer
  - 2. Community is better than isolation - wisdom writings  
**Two are better than one**, because they have a good return for their work: <sup>10</sup> If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But **pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!** <sup>11</sup> Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But **how can one keep warm alone?** <sup>12</sup> Though **one may be overpowered**, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

3. The command to gather as community for worship  
And let us consider how we may spur **one another** on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup> **Let us not give up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but **let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching**.  
Hebrews 10:24–25

4. The multi-generational community in Scripture  
I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old — <sup>3</sup> what we have heard and known, what **our fathers** have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from **their children**; we will tell the **next generation** the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. <sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our **forefathers** to teach their **children**, <sup>6</sup> so the **next generation** would know them, **even the children yet to be born**, and they in turn would tell **their children**. Psalms 78:2–6

5. The church - the Body of Christ - community  
Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27

6. Revelation - the garden has become a city!

c. The requirement for community - considering others  
Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4

1. There is always a balance between the needs and desires of the individual and the needs and desires of the community

2. Community does not mean we never consider ourselves

3. Community DOES require considering others - not just ourselves

4. Community DOES require that we be willing to do what is best for the group rather than just what is best for ourselves

5. If personal needs & desires always eclipse the needs & desires of others, there is no community

### III. The Individualistic iWorld

A. America has always had a strong emphasis on the individual

1. We were a nation built by frontiersmen expanding west - and they valued individual liberty

2. Our Declaration of Independence stresses individual rights

3. Many of our states were started by those who left previous areas for individual liberty

4. All of this is good - within limits

5. And all of this was balanced by a strong sense of community ties

B. In recent years, the balance has tipped decidedly towards individual rights rather than communal responsibilities

1. We can see this in many spheres of life

a. Legal - court cases over-ruling huge majorities to mollify objections of the few

b. Sports - athletes demanding huge salaries, leave teams constantly

- c. Lack of shared entertainment - radio replaced by iPod, TV by DVR, far more options - less shared community
- d. Communal/civic engagement - *Bowling Alone - The Collapse and Revival of American Community*
  - 1. Study of how much less community involvement beginning in late 60's/early 70's
  - 2. Less involved politically, civically, religiously, in workplace, volunteering, etc. - down in every area

The dominant theme is simple: For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into ever deeper engagement in the life of their communities, but a few decades ago—silently, without warning—that tide reversed and we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current. Without at first noticing, we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities over the last third of the century. - Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*

- 2. We are becoming more and more individualistic as a society, and experiencing less and less real community

#### c. How technology has undermined community

- 1. Mobility - commuting; moving - reduces chances for community, especially long lasting community
- 2. Globalization - business with the world, not just community - reduces local relationships
- 3. Mass market - box stores, chain/fast food restaurants - reduces relationships
- 4. E-commerce - don't even interact with people now
- 5. Sherry Turkle - big fan of technology, who has become increasingly uneasy to what it is doing to real community

- 6. Technology is seductive when what it offers meets our human vulnerabilities. And as it turns out, we are very vulnerable indeed. We are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other. We'd rather text than talk. - Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together - Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other*
- 7. Note: I will talk about the difference between face to face and technologically mediated relationships next week

## IV. Applying the Word In the iWorld

### A. Do we see our need for real community?

- 1. We were created for community - in the image of the Divine Community
- 2. This is a consistent call in Scripture - for Christians it is a redemptive as well as creational command
- 3. Some are more social than others, but EVERYONE needs community
- 4. Do I recognize this - or think I am exempt?
- 5. There are no exemptions - everyone needs community

### B. Do we see the costs of real community?

- 1. Do not be deceived - real community costs!
- 2. Real community takes time - relationships have to be a priority

3. Community requires that I consider the needs of the group - not just myself
4. Real relationships have ups and downs, tough times
5. Am I willing to pay the costs of real community?
6. Am I willing to pay them over time - or just move on when the bill arrives?

c. Do we see how the iWorld undermines real community?

1. An indulgent, self-centered culture destroys the foundations of community (last week)
2. Technology makes it easy to substitute fake community for real community (next week)
3. Am I following the radical individualism of the culture - or embracing the call to community?
4. Am I willing to make community a priority in my life?
5. Do I make building relationships one of the highest priorities in my life?
6. Small groups and other fellowship opportunities outside of Sunday meeting are essential. Apart from regular involvement in these, community will not happen.
7. A great opportunity this week - the bonfire harvest celebration

May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children.  
15 May you be blessed by the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalms 115:14–15

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4

## Community In An Individualistic World

Philippians 2:4  
October 27 2013  
Prayer  
Palm 115:14-15