Life Group Notes
Sunday 12th March 2023

Speaker: Scott Taylor
Title: Titus: God's Relational Church
Passage: Titus 3:12-15

In our final week of our Titus series we looked at Paul's final remarks to Titus before he signs off, and we see they are very warm and personable. From the preach we were able to see something of why we do church as we do, why we have some of the values that shape what we do and see how we can continue to be a church that represents God's Relational Church.

Names: All our names are written in the Lamb's book of Life, but there are some that for a period of time that are known. The names mentioned display something of the diverse nature of his people. The people mentioned are from different places (Greece, Asia Minor and North Africa), would have had different upbringings, but they are brought together by the gospel. They are friends and contemporaries of Paul, but 2 of them only get mentioned once in the Bible and that is here.

Relationships: These names ultimately represent warm relationships. The Kingdom of God does not advance purely on sound doctrine but on relationships. Our Triune, relational God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), could have sent us tablets of stone to usher in the new covenant, but he didn't. Instead he came and lived amongst us displaying the relationship that is readily available to us. He showed us what it is to be in relationship with our Triune God and with each other. He is the one that made the relationship possible through his death, resurrection, ascension and outpouring of his Spirit. Many of our values are based around how we do relationships – being generous, being real, being accepting and being courageous are all relational things.

Fluidity: In the passage as we acknowledge names and relationships, we also see there is fluidity. There is coming and going. Some will be sent others will be received. Scott told the story of how we now have relationship with churches in Croatia. All based around relationships and names. He talked about the families that we call our Beyonders who we have sent out on the mission field and we were able to pray for them. He spoke about how our beyonders were the outworking of the prophetic runways and bees that have been spoken over us as a church. We are now living the reality of this. People have got on planes and gone, worker bees taking the pollen of the gospel. Likewise God has added people from the nations to us, planes have come, bees have arrived with afresh expression of the Gospel to be missionaries to the UK. Praise Jesus!!! There is even fluidity as we come on a Sunday to be refuelled and then disperse amongst the town to take the Kingdom with us.

Stability: If there is to be fluidity there needs to be stability. For people to go, people are needed to stay and build. Paul is wanting the churches in Crete to be resourcing churches, stable like Antioch and Jerusalem. He wants the people of Crete to be ready to do good works, to work our generosity financially, with our belongings, with our homes, with our words and with our time. Our names may never turn up in the history books of Christianity of Reading or beyond , but we all get to take our place as faithful follows of Jesus Christ, devoting ourselves to good works, and sound doctrine, bringing the Kingdom of God wherever we may find ourselves. People who are willing to do the long haul and be only 80% or even 60% happy with church life because we are mature enough to know that church is not just for us. We are the ones who recognise, it's not about what I take from church but about what I bring to make my contribution. We get to be ready.

Suggested Questions:

1. What did you hear in the message that was new or a timely reminder?
2. Why does it matter that God's church is relational rather than structural?
3. Where have you been involved in the fluidity of the kingdom? Do you feel called to this?
4. Stability does not mean static – if you resonated more with the stability, what can you do to be ready and to help build a church that is able to send?