

October 7, 2007

A Glimpse of Heaven
Revelation 7:9-12

We not only live in a broken world, but also, a fractured world.

You can see God's heart for the Church in His calls to Unity:

John 17:23 – “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

Ephesians 4:3 – “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

Colossians 3:14 – “And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Genesis 2:18 – “It is not good for the man to be alone...”

In fact everything about our Faith is grounded in relationship – our relationship with God, played out in our relationships with one another.

It is unavoidable – we were not created to live/be alone in this world – the Law of God – So, on earth, God has given us a Community – **the Church**.

Jesus – inaugurated a new day – you can see this in the calling of His disciples, and then later at Pentecost (Acts 2).

It has been that way ever since whenever the Gospel is central and Jesus is present, there is a sense of hope for those who are lost in the isolation of their natural contexts.

The Gospel alone breaks down the barriers that exist because of sin – and it forms a New Community – One New People who find their identity in Christ.

Community on Four Levels:

- Worship
- Small Groups
- Diaconal Ministry
- The Lord's Supper – Grace Toronto

So you can see why the heart of God is grieved when the Community of Christ is divided...

And I think... the only glimpse of heaven we have on earth is when the people of God live out the Gospel.

The Gospel teaches that through Christ we have been given a new context – a new community. This community of Christ demonstrates that there is hope – something else, something better than what we might otherwise presume to be our irreversible 'lot' in life.

And whenever we live out the Gospel to one another and in our world, Christ permeates us, rather than our natural contexts – and with that the wreckage and fragmentation of this fractured world begins to fade. On earth, Christians rehearse heaven – they offer the hope that Christ alone brings – a hope for emancipation.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer – Life Together – “The prisoner, the sick person, the Christian in exile sees in the companionship of a fellow Christian a physical sign of the gracious presence of the triune God.”