

BETHEL CHURCH

SERMON NOTES

March 30th, 2025

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Scripture Reference:

Philippians 4:8- "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me - everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you."

WHY PRACTICE?

Why be concerned about my testimony and how I live. Why live out my faith?

GOD LOVES ALL PEOPLE

John 3:16 says "For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

The bottom line is that God loves all people. And His expectation of us is that we'll love people just like He does.

John 20:19 "That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! 'Peace be with you,' He said."

These followers have denied Him and abandoned Him and doubted Him.

But when He comes to them, He doesn't judge them or condemn them or look down on them. He speaks peace to them.

Question to consider:

What's keeping you behind locked doors? What's keeping you from living out your faith?

Here are the very first words Jesus speaks to His followers after He's raised from the dead.

John 20:21 "As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you."

He commissions them, 'As the Father sent Me, I'm sending you.'

Jesus is sent because God loves people. And just as Jesus is sent, He sends us.

We represent God in this world.

WE LOVE GOD BY LOVING OTHER PEOPLE

The second reason to live out our faith is that we're loving God by loving His people!

Matthew 25:14 says "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone.

The master 'entrusted' his money to them. He trusted them. And God trusts you.
God put a deposit in your life, and He trusts you with it. You've got something to offer.

Matthew 25:40 "I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!"

Jesus says, we're doing it to Him. We're doing it to God- That's how we practice.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. What does Philippians 4:8 teach us about shaping our thoughts and attitudes as Jesus followers?
2. What are some practical ways to focus on what is true, noble, and praiseworthy in daily life?
3. How can practicing Philippians 4:8 help us reflect God's love to others?
4. What are some barriers that keep us from fully loving others the way Christ loves us?

WHERE DO WE PRACTICE?

Where do we actually live out our faith?

1. INSIDE THE CHURCH

Our first context for living out our faith is in the church. And when we live out our faith in the church, our purpose is service and discipleship.

When we're with people who already follow of Jesus our dual purpose is to be their servants and to grow their level of discipleship.

1 Corinthians 12:12 "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So, it is with the body of Christ."

He's saying that God's church is like a body. *And every person has a part to play.*
And because every person has a part to play, we need to play that part.

2. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

We must live out our faith outside the church!

When we interact with people outside the church, our faith has the purpose of showing people, who maybe don't know Jesus, just how beautiful He is.

And we want to be a true representation of His character.
We are called to love people unconditionally.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Jesus calls us to love all people—how can we actively show love to those who are different from us?
2. As followers of Jesus, how can we take action this week to love and serve people outside the 4 walls of the church? What are you committing to this week?
3. In what ways can we be intentional about seeing others through God's eyes?
4. What are some barriers that keep us from fully loving others the way Christ loves us?