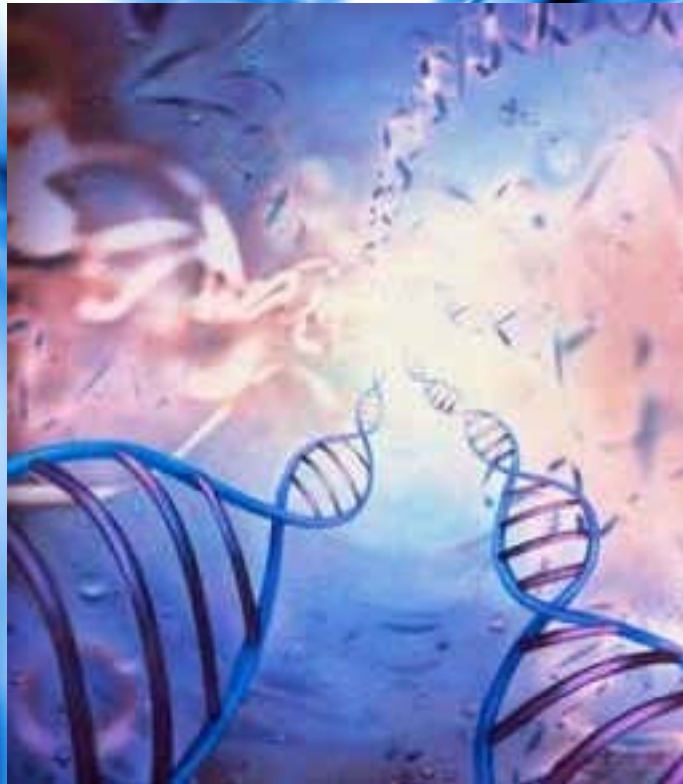




InFusion

Core New Testament Principles



Session 3

DNA: The “Irreducible Core”

Introduction

- Every living thing has DNA
- This genetic code determines what the life form will be like when it reaches maturity
- Genetic defects can impair, neuter or kill the organism

Three essentials drive the genetic code of the Church

- Everything in the Bible is important
- But the things Jesus said are MOST important
- And he summarized everything He said in three things, and these comprise the genetic code of the Church
 - Loving God
 - Loving others
 - *As you go*, making disciples

Three essentials drive the genetic code of the Church

- These three things we call "The Irreducible Core of the Christian Faith" (The "IC")
 - You can do *more* than this and be a Christian disciple
 - But we don't think you can do *less* than this and be a Christian disciple

Three essentials drive the genetic code of the Church

- We get these from two passages of Scripture: Matthew 22:37-40, 28:18-20
 - Jesus said these two Commandments (one from Deuteronomy 6:5 and the other from Leviticus 19:18) where the totality of the Jewish Scripture
 - "Another is like it" - laid along side, parallel, equal to
 - "Hang all the Law and the Prophets" - everything in the Torah & Talmud, the totality of Jewish Scripture depend on, and have expression in, these two things
 - The one posing the question had to admit he was right!

Three essentials drive the genetic code of the Church

- We get these from two passages of Scripture: Matthew 22:37-40, 28:18-20
 - Teach them how to observe (to do) everything He commanded - continue the incarnational discipleship based on His teaching and His life-pattern

What is a disciple?

- Someone who is
 - Devoted to Christ - the Person
 - Devoted to His Church - His people
 - Devoted to His Mission - His passion

What is a disciple?

- Many people in West say they are Christians, but few are disciples of Jesus Christ
 - It's not about believing in God, it's about being devoted to Him, and that devotion produces action
 - The demons believe, too: James 2:18-20

What is "Church?"

- "Relationship with a reason"
- **Modality** - Family/way of life (being):
 - Relationships
 - The Great Commandments
 - Reference Matthew 22:37-40 again (page 10)

What is "Church?"

- **Sodality** - Missional entity (doing):
 - Reason (mission)
 - The Great Commission
 - Reference Matthew 28:18-20 again (page 10)

What is "Church?"

- **Community** - Combination of the two ("both/and")
 - The Great Community
 - "*Koinonia*" - relationship with a reason, participation together in the reason
 - Acts 2:42-47

What is "Church?"

- The Church is a blending together of *being* and *doing* into *a way of life*
- What *you do* in Christ flows from who *you are* in Christ
- Or another way to look at it - what Christ does *through you* flows from who Christ is *in you*, how he expresses Himself

What is "Community?"

- Christian community is *a shared life together in Christ*, and embraces the "*both/and*" of *being* and *doing*.
- It is both "wine" and "wineskin": Luke 5:38-39
- The Wine is the *content* of the Christian life in community: *devotion to*
- The Wineskin is the *construct* (shape or structure) that emerges from the DNA: the way and means - *how they lived out* their devotion

What is "Community?"

- The Wine – *Devotion to:*
 - Apostle's teaching - “love God”
 - The Fellowship — “love your neighbor”
 - The Breaking of Bread - “lifestyle of interdependence”
 - The Prayers - “lifestyle of dependence”

What is "Community?"

- The Wineskin - *The shape the community takes is based on the answer to the following questions:*
 - How will you love God?
 - How will you love others?
 - How will you make disciples as you go?

What is "Community?"

- Simply put, the gathering of the Harvest is an ***outcome*** of a way of life, and not of "evangelistic" activities
- Form follows function - the *wine* (content) is more important, but still requires a *wineskin* (construct) or it will be lost
 - Whitefield vs. Wesley

What is "Community?"

- The outcome of a shared life together in community is a people living a life that is both loving and God-honoring which reflects Christ to those they encounter every day
- Most churches in the West focus on making changes to the *wineskin* (trying to attract people to services, be "relevant"), rather than ensuring that there is really any *wine*

Discussion

- How does the concept of the “Irreducible Core” challenge your thinking about: the Church? the Christian life? the work of the ministry?
- How do the definitions of: the Church, a disciple, and community challenge your thinking?
- "Wine & Wineskin": discuss the interplay of the two
- How is the harvest an outcome of the Christian life, both individually and corporately?