August 23, 2026

ON THE WAY TOGETHER

Finding & Extending Belonging *in Jesus' Family*



SERMON: When Belonging Gets Messy
SPEAKER: Pastor Jeremy
CORE SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:1-11

WATCH SERMON | SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMARY

Community is messy because people are messy. (And that includes us!) From Philippians 2:1–11, we explore three movements toward becoming the kind of people who can love imperfect people like Jesus: from self-focus to others-focus, from being served to being a servant, and from self-protection to trusting God. As we live this out, God isn't simply helping us build better relationships—he is forming us into a different kind of community, one that becomes a signpost of the belonging God offers and points people to Jesus, the only one who can satisfy our deepest desire to belong.

SHARE

Think of a time when a friendship or community didn't turn out the way you expected. What were your initial hopes, and what changed? How did you respond when things got messy?

READ

Read **Philippians 2:1-11** aloud together as a group.

DISCUSS

Feel free to pick/choose what is most helpful for you. Remember the goal is to have rich, relational, authentic, Jesus-centered discussions.

1. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?

2. In Philippians 2:1-2, Paul begins by reminding the Philippians of their secure identity in Christ before giving instructions about community. Why does Paul ground his call to unity in their belonging to Christ? How does this theological order (identity before action) shape the way we approach messy relationships?

3. Look closely at Philippians 2:3-4. What's the difference between "selfish ambition" and healthy self-care? How do we discern when we're protecting legitimate needs versus when we're insisting on our rights at the expense of the community?

4. Pastor Jeremy shared the parenting illustration about holding tightly to his right to be respected versus choosing to love his kids in the way they need. Can you think of a relationship where you're currently holding onto a right that Jesus might be inviting you to lay down? What makes that so difficult?

5. Philippians 2:6-8 describes Jesus' choice not to "use his equality with God to his own advantage" but instead to become a servant and humble himself to death on a cross. What does this reveal about the nature of God?

6. Pastor Jeremy emphasized moving from self-protection to trusting God. What's one thing you're trying to control in a relationship that God is inviting you to trust Him with? What would it practically look like to let go of control in that situation?

NEXT STEPS

- **Perspective-taking:** This week, identify one relationship where you've been focused primarily on how you've been wronged. Practice asking: "What's their side? What's their story? How might they be experiencing this?"
- **Lay down a right:** Choose one right you've been holding onto (the right to be understood, the right to an apology, the right to be right) and prayerfully ask Jesus what it would look like to lay that down and serve instead.
- **Trust over control:** Identify one outcome you're trying to control in a relationship. Write down what you're afraid will happen if you let go, then pray daily this week: "God, I can't control this, but I trust You with it."

PRAY

Take time to pray together as a group.

- **Confession:** Invite people to silently confess where they've been self-focused, demanding their rights, or trying to control outcomes in relationships.
- **Intercession:** Pray for specific messy relationships represented in your group—that God would give wisdom, humility, and courage to love like Jesus.
- **Trust:** Pray that your group would grow in trusting God with the things you can't control, believing that He vindicates and cares for those who entrust themselves to Him.

CONNECT

As we learn to love imperfect people and create authentic community, consider how your group can serve alongside others at Cornerstone. Check out **The Hub** for upcoming opportunities to **connect**, **serve**, or participate in **workshops** that help us grow as a community of belonging.

CLOSING

Community is messy because we're all messy. But God doesn't just want to make us better at relationships; He wants to make us more like Jesus. As we become the kind of people who can love imperfect people even when it's hard, we become a signpost pointing others to the belonging we all ultimately need: Jesus Himself.