



May 10, 2020

Title: *All for One*

Scripture: Galatians 3:26-28

Introduction to Analog

Analog is designed to be a tangible way to take a deeper look into each week's Sunday morning message. *Analog* can be used by individuals, friends, couples, or small groups to further discussion and exploration of the Sunday teaching. May this tool help you to connect with God as we continue on this journey of following Jesus together.

Teaching Season

We are on the fourth week in a season of teaching entitled: *Everything and Everyone*. God exists in relationship. Relationships are central to what it means to be human. Our universe is held together by the energy of all things being in relationship. Everything and everyone exists in relationship to something or someone else. This teaches us we do not have a choice about being in relationship, but we do have a choice as to what those relationships will look like. As a spiritual collective, this is our invitation, to practice relationships with one another – to live as a family, a community.

Overview

Paul is writing to a group of people who, like all of us, have religious, gender and social identities. And he argues none of that matters. All the labels, the divisions, the identities and classes are irrelevant, for all are in Christ. Which means, there is only one. There absolutely is NO them, there is only us. Whether Jew or Gentile, gay or straight, Republican or Democrat, far or near, liberal or conservative – regardless of race or gender or social class or _____. It does not matter, for in Christ, we are one.

What if we focused on questions that did not divide, but came together around the table? What if we asked, "How can I participate in the divine life to be an agent of reconciliation and healing in the world?" "Can we agree on our need for the reconciliation and peace of Christ in how we relate to one another?" The answer, of course, is yes. We all need these things. And, in Christ, all the divisions cease.

Theme

All are one; think about that. What would it look like if we actually embraced the oneness of God as we relate to one another? Especially as we relate to those who are not like us?

Opening Question

You may want to use this Opening Question as a way to start your discussion with your group. It is the kind of question everyone can answer and points toward the theme of the rest of the discussion. *From this past week, describe an encouraging encounter with another person.*

Questions for discussion

Here are five questions for discussion or reflection. Don't feel like you have to cover them all. The Spiritual Practice for this week could be very meaningful for you or your group, so plan on 5-10 minutes for this exercise. If you are using this in a group context, read through these questions before your group meets to familiarize yourself with this material.

1. *Read Galatians 3:26-28. The Galatian church was experiencing division, a division that is inherent in being human. In his letter to the church, Paul sought to offer a remedy for that division. How would you summarize what he offered as the solution to division?*
2. *We tend to view (and often blame) others for causing division in our culture. "It is not me or my group that is causing this problem." Why is it so hard for us to acknowledge how we contribute to the division in our world?*
3. *Read I Corinthians 12:12-26. What stands out to you in this description of unity that might help us experience more oneness with each other?*
4. *Read this statement by Richard Rohr:*
"Unity is diversity embraced, protected and maintained by an infinitely generous love. It takes grace and love and the Spirit to achieve unity. Uniformity can be achieved by coercion, shame and fear. Unfortunately most churches have confused uniformity with true spiritual unity for centuries. But church formed in this way is, by definition, is not the church." - Fr. Richard Rohr, Unity In Diversity

What do you think "unity over uniformity" looks like? Why is it so important?

5. *Brainstorm: What can we do to help create more unity and oneness in our world in spite of the differences that divide us? What is one thing you would like to do to promote unity and oneness?*

Spiritual Practice: Breath Prayer

Materials Needed: A watch or phone to set a timer.

Preparation: Read through the following material and decide on an amount of time for the practice of breath prayer (something like 3 minutes).

In Genesis 2 we are given a beautiful picture of God creating the first human. It says that God took the dust of the ground, and like a Great Sculptor, formed a human body. However, this beautiful masterpiece was left unfinished until God leaned over and breathed into the creation's nostrils "the breath of life." Then – the Scripture tells us – this dust creation became a human being.

The breath of God marks our very humanity. Moment-by-moment we are sustained by our Creator, and yet how much time can pass without even considering this truth and the incredible nearness of God?

Breath prayer is an ancient Christian prayer practice where the practitioner aligns a short prayer to the rhythm of their breath. This short prayer is then repeated over and over. This practice invites us to slow down and pay attention to our breath, It reminds us that God is always present with us...as close as our very breath. By the way, this practice has been shown to improve personal health.*

Sample breath prayers:

IN: *Creator God*
OUT: *there is no division with you.*

IN: *Lord Jesus*
OUT: *have mercy on us.*

IN: *God of unity*
OUT: *may we be one.*

IN: *Lord Jesus*
OUT: *heal our divided world.*

If you are using this in a group context, ask the each person to choose one of these sample prayers, or to come up with another they want. Then invite everyone to sit comfortably, close their eyes, and to simply become aware of their breath – to slow it down and notice its cadence. After a few moments, invite everyone to quietly pray their short prayer with the cadence of their breath, in and out, over and over. Take 3 minutes or so for everyone to quietly pray. Close the time by simply saying "Amen."

To learn more about Breath Prayer: <https://gravitycenter.com/practice/breath-prayer/>

*https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_focusing_on_the_breath_does_to_your_brain