

GUIDE:

- CHECK-INS: Introductions, check-in
- CARE: Needs in the group
- COMPASSION: What is the group planning? Are you inviting neighbours to join in?
- GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS Church-wide and group-only
- DIG IN: "Ice-breaker" question (group facilitator), discuss questions as a group
- PRAYER: Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. 1. Have you ever been on the wrong side of someone's line? What did that feel like? Was it a legitimate boundary in hindsight or an attempt for them to get their identity in judging you?
2. How does line-drawing in our life help us? Where does it create more problems than it solves?
3. Read some of the main passages and discuss what you are hearing.
4. The Pharisees during Jesus' time were obsessed with the boundaries, the markers of who is in the covenant and faithful and who is not. Jesus intentionally violated their boundaries. What does this tell us about the power of the Gospel?
5. It's easy to pick out conservative line-drawing, but progressives tend to draw lines, too. Why would progressive line-drawing also be a problematic way of understanding Jesus? (Note: we can name good things about the conservative and progressive impulses behind their relationships with lines).
6. Unity is not uniformity. Unity can exist without being line-focused or fuzzy. What do you think the challenges are by seeking unity beyond lines or fuzzy-set ways of being together?
7. Other thoughts? What is one thing you can apply from this teaching?

Being more concerned with lines and boundaries, rather than a set direction, causes unnecessary confusion. We begin laying a foundation in this series about finding our centre and how that brings true clarity about our direction. Rev. 22:13; Gal 2:11-15, 5:15-16, Acts 10:10-44.

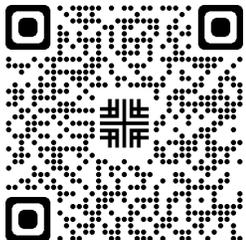
τέλος/Telos - Everything has a Centre, EVERYTHING.

"...to be human is to desire "the kingdom," some version of the kingdom....Our love is always aimed at some particular vision of the good life that has been pictured for us...there are very different versions of what "the kingdom" looks like...One core task of cultural discernment will to "read" the particular configuration of the kingdom that is assumed by different cultural institutions and narratives" (JKA Smith, DTK, 53-55).

1. Practices that shape us are communal/social
2. A telos is always ALREADY embedded in these practices and institutions. Practices carry a telos in them.

"We don't just "naturally" desire particular configurations of the kingdom; we are formed or trained to be aimed at particular configurations of the good life" (DTK, 62).

"There are no private practices; thus our hearts are constantly being formed by others, and most often through the cultural institutions that we create." Culture is an activity (DTK,71ff)..



CONNECT

- Need Prayer?
- Ask Questions
- Get information
- Make Comments
- Meet with Pastor Shel
- Sign-up for our weekly e-newsletter
- Join a Home Church

TODAY: BOUNDARY PROBLEMS?

Have you ever “crossed a line” with someone? Maybe they didn’t tell you, but they treated you differently afterwards. Sometimes those lines are connected to important emotional boundaries, but most of the time they are not. Guardrails are meaningless if they aren’t connected to a road, a centre, a purpose.

I want you to know why you should see lines (or the lack of them) as a distraction from what really matters.

All of us tend to have a false sense of security with lines. We feel that if we have strong lines then we have clarity. But what I’ve learned over the years is that lines are moveable and change. And lines tempt us to ask where they are? They want to draw all our energy too. Lines cause us to judge people subtly, shifting our focus from relationship to rules, or from relationship to rule-breaking. The lines are conservative but they are also progressive. Let’s explore why line-drawing does not produce what it promises.

KEY VERSE: Galatians 5:2 2 Listen! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you at all! [NET]
Galatians 5:2 CEB

Look, I, Paul, am telling you that if you have yourselves circumcised, having Christ won’t help you.

OPENING STORY - Circumcision and Haircuts

“[The] situation in the actual world is much more complicated than that. The world does not consist of 100% Christians and 100% non-Christians. There are people (a great many of them) who are slowly ceasing to be Christians but who still call themselves by that name: some of them are clergymen. There are other people who are slowly becoming Christians though they do not yet call themselves so. There are people who do not accept the full Christian doctrine about Christ but who are so strongly attracted by Him that they are His in a much deeper sense than they themselves understand....” CS Lewis

THREE WAYS

The Line-Drawing Ways

The questions behind the line-focused person, movement, or church:

- How close to the line...
- How much...

The false premise we have been taught by culture and ideologies: The Lines and the Lists are everything.

An Alternative to Lines - The Fuzzy Way

- Are we to focus on erasing lines?
- Everything and nothingness
- Fuzzy issues

Yes, we can respond to harsh self-righteous posturing of a line-drawing church by erasing the lines.

Yes, we can respond to fuzzy, no-line churches, by drawing bolder bigger lines. BUT there is another way.

A THIRD CHOICE - A BETTER, FAITHFUL WAY

- LOVE leads us to the centre
- The Unified Table pg 9ff In Galatians, Paul is not simply concerned about a Jewish-Jesus mashup new religion of faith plus works, but about unity of the church and “how principalities and powers were sowing division and enslaving people through judgement line drawing” (CSC, 10).

TODAY’S PAUSE

- Where are you looking for? What’s your focus?
- Eraser people??
- Gospel