

MSG: COLLECTIVE LOVE

SCRIPTURE:

SZN 2: REVIVAL THROUGH LOVING

Matthew 22:34-38 NLT

“But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, ““You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.”

INTRO:

PERPETUA & FELECITY

203AD

It's 203AD At this point in history, civil war is a threat to Rome and to appease all sides, Emperor Septimius Severus seeks to promote religious harmony. Historian Justo Gonzalez writes that Severus' plan was to embrace syncretism by allowing "...all gods were to be accepted as long as the acknowledged the "Sun" that reigned above all."

As the emperor's policy is enacted, it clashed with the monotheistic beliefs of Christians. Believing their worldview would hinder his plan for unity, "Severus decided to stop the spread...and thus outlawed, under the penalty of death, all conversions to Christianity..."

It is during this time two new converts, Perpetua and Felicitas, enter our scene. Though these amazing women eventually become martyrs, their death inspired the early church for centuries.

Perpetua and Felicity were 3rd-century North African Christian martyrs executed in Carthage around 203 A.D. during Septimius Severus's persecution. Perpetua was a 22-year-old noblewoman and mother, while Felicity was her enslaved assistant, pregnant at the time of their arrest. They are celebrated for their unwavering faith, documented partly in a diary written by Perpetua herself—one of the earliest surviving texts by a Christian woman.

The Arrest and Background: Both were preparing for baptism while arrested with other young Christians in Carthage. Despite her father's desperate pleas to renounce her faith, Perpetua refused.

Imprisonment and Motherhood: Perpetua was nursing an infant son in prison, while Felicity gave birth to a daughter just days before their execution.

Martyrdom: They were martyred in the arena during gladiatorial games, initially attacked by wild beasts and subsequently killed by the sword.

Legacy: Their story, *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, is a significant, detailed account of early Christian martyrdom.

Perpetua and Felicity's shared sacrifice in the face of death highlighted the early Christian belief that faith transcends social status, as a noblewoman and a slave died together as equals

THEY HAD A COLLECTIVE LOVE!

Last week we introduced our evolved Mission statement, over the next several weeks we'll break down the four elements of our Mission and how that plays out in our church so that we can take the next steps to Maturity and growth with Jesus.

....Let's discover What I'd like to call, COLLECTIVE LOVE

FORMER:

KNOW GOD —> WEEKEND SERVICES

EVOLVED:

LOVE GOD —> COLLECTIVES

1. COLLECTIVE LOVE IS PASSIONATE

Matthew 22:37 NLT

“Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”

LOVE GOD WITH PASSION!

Acts of the Apostles 2:42 NLT

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.”

WE PASSIONATELY PRAY

WE PASSIONATELY PRAISE

Ephesians 5:18-19 NLT

“Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.”

WE PASSIONATELY PREACH

2 Timothy 4:2 NLT

“Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.”

2. COLLECTIVE LOVE IS PAINFUL

Matthew 5:10-12 NLT

“God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. “God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.”

PAIN IS EXPECTED, BUT NEVER NEGLECTED

-God sees you, when...

YOUR OBEDIENCE HURT YOU

one of the Roman soldiers taunts her by saying, “You who are in such suffering now, what will you do when you are thrown to the beasts, which you despised when you refused to sacrifice [to other gods

FELECITY...

She responds with a radical declaration, “Now it is I that suffer what I suffer; but then there will be another in me, who will suffer for me, because I also am about to suffer for Him.”[

PAIN IS TEMPORARY, TRANSFORMATION IS PERMANENT

Psalms 30:4-12 NIV

“Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. When I felt secure, I said, “I will never be shaken.” Lord, when you favored me, you made my royal mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed. To you, Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: “What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness? Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me; Lord, be my help.” You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever.”

3. COLLECTIVE LOVE IS PURPOSEFUL

Matthew 5:3 NLT

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”

PURPOSEFUL LOVE IS FRUITFUL

THE EVIDENCE OF GOD’S LOVE IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

PURPOSEFUL LOVE IS FORGIVING

Matthew 5:7 NLT

“God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

PURPOSEFUL LOVE IS FULFILLING

Matthew 5:6 NLT

“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.”

Who’s down for COLLECTIVE LOVE...

