Your Part Matters

# (Psalm 92:12-14)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. I’m so glad to have all of you with us here today because your part matters and we’re celebrating the difference that Jesus is making in our lives together. Today I want to talk to you about what the Bible says about being planted in God’s house, because a lot of people go to church week after week without being planted and without finding fulfillment. They go to church and go home without understanding why we do what we do or what’s going on behind-the-scenes.

For example, our mission statement speaks volumes about who we are and why we do what we do. At Christ’s Community Church we are reaching, connecting, and equipping people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. And so, we understand God’s highest calling for us as followers of Christ isn’t to go to a destination, but to be conformed to the image of Christ, to bear fruit, and reproduce ourselves. In fact, Jesus said it this way in John chapter 15, speaking to those who had committed to following him, he said,

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last” (John 15:16).

And what Jesus is talking about here is a unity of mission together as the called-out ones. You see, he has called us, equipped us, and appointed us to go and bear fruit that will last forever. And so, together as the church, as the body of Christ, we are uncovering the mystery of God’s purpose in our lives. We do this by being planted in the house of the Lord, gathering together to be encouraged, to be built up in our faith as we hear the Word of God, and being strengthened in his purpose to go out and bear fruit.

You see, here’s what the Bible tells us in Psalm chapter 92, verse 12 says,

“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green..." (Psalms 92:12-14).

In these three verses, the Holy Spirit through the psalmist shows us what it means to be planted in God’s house and to be living the life that God intends as we connect with one another as a spiritual family. You see, this is so important because we live in a world that is so disconnected, separated, and isolated. And so, if we’re not planted in the house of the Lord, it’s easy to find ourselves feeling as if we have been uprooted from everything that is secure.

Psalm 92 describes the value of being planted in the house of God, belonging to something greater than ourselves, being a spiritual family where we can flourish, grow, and bear fruit that will last. And that’s why we want to come together as members of the body of Christ and to covenant together as partners. You see, we come together by faith and the Bible says that we are,

“Members together of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3:6).

And so, we are members of his body, each one of you is a part of it, because as we came to faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit began a work in us which the apostle Paul describes this way,

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

So consequently, spiritually we are now fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household through faith (Ephesians 2:19). But as we talk about covenant members, partners, it’s coming together around what we believe, the object of our faith, because what we believe is important. And so, we need to be focused, because we can’t be all over the place, having all kinds of belief systems and still have any form of unity. And so, your part matters, you’ll want to be planted, and that’s why we covenant together.

The concept of covenant is basically coming together around what we believe is important. Biblically, this word is used with reference to God's revelation of himself in the way of promise or favor to humanity. And so, a covenant is an agreement between two people or groups that involves promises on the part of each to the other. Just as God’s promise to Noah after the Flood is called a covenant, we have the account of God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis chapter 17. And as we continue flipping through the biblical narrative, we find the covenant of the priesthood in Numbers 25 and the covenant of Mt. Sinai in Exodus 34. Each covenant is confirmed with an oath, accompanied by a sign, and consists in the giving of blessing. In entering into each covenant, God is witness to the transaction and it is made in his name.

In the same way we talk about covenant members as being those who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior with the evidence of having had a new birth, they have publicly professed their faith having a believer’s baptism in water, they have completed all four sessions of Church 101 being in agreement with Christ’s Community Church’s purposes, values, strategy, and structure; and they have signed and submitted the membership covenant committing before God and the church to do the following:

Number one, to protect the unity of their church by acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, and by following the leaders.

Number two, to share the responsibility of their church by praying for its growth, by inviting the unchurched to attend, and by warmly greeting those who visit.

Number three, to serve the Ministry of their church by discovering their gifts and talents, by being equipped to serve, and by developing a servant’s heart.

And lastly, number four, to support the testimony of the church by attending faithfully, by living a godly lifestyle, and by giving regularly.

Today I want to invite you to covenant with Christ’s Community Church in 2019. I want to encourage you to be planted in the house of God, because we believe that is God’s will for you and this is an important decision. Now, I’ll have to admit that I haven’t always made the best decisions myself, but there are three decisions that have impacted my life in a majorly positive way.

The first decision was when I said yes to Jesus Christ. That was an amazing decision, the best decision I ever made, and today everything in my life has been impacted by that one decision.

The second-best decision was when I asked my wife to marry me. I’ll admit that I was afraid to make that commitment, but she said yes and I have discovered that so much of life is determined by who you decide to do life with especially within the context of the marriage covenant.

And then the third best decision was when I committed to God’s family in the context of the local church. Other than saying yes to Jesus and marrying Dana, the best decision was the day that I was planted in the house of God.

Looking back now and considering the opportunities and experiences of these past 19 years so much of my life has been defined by being committed to the local church. You see, Psalm 92 is not only descriptive of our experience together as the church, but it’s a great image of what happens when you’re committed, when you’re planted in the house of God. And I’ll tell you that every year I get older it sounds more and more appealing, because the Bible says that those who are planted are flourishing, they’re blessed, they’re prospering, they’re connected, they’re emotionally engaged, because they’re making a difference and their lives are fulfilled.

Now, some of you might be thinking, “Well I go to church, but I don’t feel like I’m flourishing,” and so I want to encourage you today because your life is like a seed. In other words, you have tremendous opportunities and the potential to grow, to flourish, to multiply, to produce fruit, and be a blessing to others. But here’s the thing, a seed that’s not planted has the potential to do nothing, to be unproductive, unfruitful, and unfulfilled. And so, we need to recognize that a seed can only grow, you can only be fruitful, number one, if you’re planted.

## 1. Be Planted

Now, during Jesus life on earth, he told many parables, which are simply stories that illustrate a spiritual truth. In other words, a parable is a story with a meaning beyond the surface level meaning. For example, in Matthew chapter 13, Jesus told the parable of the farmer sowing seeds, but he wasn’t telling the story so that his listeners would know how to farm, he was teaching them spiritual truths in a way that they could understand. And so, by comparing the word of God to a farmer sowing seeds he was teaching them in a way that was easier to understand, apply, and grow in faith. In verse three he said,

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up” (Matthew 13:3-4).

And so, that seed never reached its potential. Then, in verse five he says,

“Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants” (Matthew 13:5-7).

Jesus tells us that some of the seeds sprouted, they popped up, they started to grow, but then life got difficult, the worries and concerns of life choked the potential out of that little plant. In other words, some people have potential, they start to grow, but they can’t take the heat, so they shrink back and wither. Other people start to grow, they start to flourish spiritually, but the bills, worries, and struggles of life choke out their potential. But then Jesus continued in verse eight,

“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:8).

And the potential of that one seed was unleashed because it was planted in good soil. That’s what the psalmist was saying, “They’ll grow like a cedar planted in the house of the Lord, they’ll flourish..." (Psalms 92:12). And so, when we allow God’s word to take root in our lives, living according to his Word, it’s that seed, the word of God that fell on good soil, that will flourish, developing relationships, discovering opportunities to serve, and recognizing that God has given them gifts to be used in the context of the body of Christ. And so, instead of just going to church, they use their gifts in the church, and suddenly it’s not a destination, it’s not just a place where they go, but it’s an identity they can embrace because they’re planted, and so number two, their roots grow deep.

## 2. Growing Deep

Very simply, the more you hear the word of God, the more you know the word of God, the more it takes root in your life, the better you are equipped to face the struggles and challenges of life brings. It’s not that suddenly life is perfect, but when the storms come, you are able to withstand the storm because your roots are deep, you’re strengthened in the faith, and you’re built up in Christ (Colossians 2:7). And so, when the constant day-to-day battles are wearing you down, the Word of God has taken root in your life, you can persevere with confidence because you’re not, “surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Suddenly you realize that there’s a reason for the things that you’re going through and you’re not the only person in the world with problems, but through your trials you can learn to identify with Christ.

When you allow the word of God to take root in your life, not by going to a building, but by being planted in the house of God, you’ll find strength and wisdom to face life’s challenges. As you join together with others, loving, serving, and praying for one another; allowing the word of God to take root by listening to preaching and teaching, you will become as Jeremiah describes in chapter 17,

"He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17:8).

Here’s what happens as we’re planted in the house of God, our roots are going deep, they’re going way out and intertwining with others beneath the ground. And so, what’s happened is that there’s this massive support system that sustains the growth above ground. In fact, there may be some of you right now who have some heat in your life, maybe it’s a health issue, a broken relationship, or a financial decision. Others of you might say that you’re in a drought, things have dried up, and maybe it’s your job or your business opportunities, but things are not flourishing as you’d like. And Jeremiah tells us that even though you may face opposition, a trial, or a setback, when you’re planted and your roots grow deep, you won’t be bothered by the heat or the drought, because you’re connected to a source that is greater than any problems on the surface. Your roots are growing deep into the body of Christ and together we’re able to support one another, pray for each other, help each other, and number three be fruitful.

## 3. Be Fruitful

You see, the Bible says the righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they’ll grow like a cedar planted in the house of the Lord, they’ll still bear fruit in old age, they’ll stay fresh and green, because their roots have grown deep. Jeremiah said it this way,

"It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17:8).

And so, what is this fruit? Well, the Bible actually says a lot about fruit, much more than we have time for today, but Jesus said, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). “By their fruit you’ll recognize them” (Matthew 7:16). “No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine” (John 15:3). “If a man remains in me and I in him, he’ll bear much fruit” (John 15:5). “This is to my father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8).

The apostle Paul contrasts the acts of the sinful nature with the fruit of the Spirit in his letter to the Galatians. He tells us that it’s not our own natural fruits, but it’s a spiritual fruit that comes from being connected to Christ, being connected to the spiritual vine, we in him and he in us. And so, Jesus produces spiritual fruit in us that Paul said would be recognized as,

“Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

That is why it’s so important to be planted in the house of God, because your roots grow deep, and you’ll be faithful and fruitful when heat comes or even a year of drought. And so, you may be having a tough time or be in a really difficult season but because you’re connected to that spiritual vine love still comes out. No matter what you’re facing, you can still experience that overflowing joy as James tells us,

“Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2).

You can do that because you're planted, Christ is working in you, and he has appointed you to go and bear fruit. And so, in the context of your church this fruit is not just for you, but to be a blessing to other people, because your love and your joy is contagious, your peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness are attractive, building relationships, and the word of God is bearing fruit in you.

When we covenant together, you’re planted, your roots are growing deep, you’re bearing fruit, and you’re recognizing divine opportunities all around you to make a difference. And it’s exciting to realize that your part matters, that God chose you, and that Christ’s Community Church is not just a place that you go, but this is your family. You’re needed here because you matter, you’re able to pray for somebody, be generous, be a voice of encouragement, because that’s what God created you to do.

“We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

Suddenly you’re recognizing that you’re not just saved from your sins, but you’re saved to make a difference in this world for the glory of God. Your life is a seed, you have great potential, and so I want you to encourage you to get connected and be planted. God wants you to flourish knowing that your roots are deep, your faith is strong, your brothers and sisters are praying for you, you are needed and you are loved. You are part of something bigger than yourself, because you don’t go to a building, you are the Church.

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