

2025-02-09 - The Danger of Church Entitlement

Summary

The sermon discusses the Free Methodist Church's stance on inclusivity and addresses the issue of entitlement in church settings. Pastor Thomas uses the example of moving comfortable seating to the front of the church to illustrate how people can become possessive over church spaces. He emphasizes that God, not human status or wealth, determines who receives honor, and that the church should be welcoming to all people regardless of their background or circumstances.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss your Word, help us examine our hearts and remove any sense of entitlement or pride. Open our minds and hearts to understand what it truly means to be welcoming and inclusive as your church. Guide our discussion and help us see where we might need to grow in humility and acceptance of others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's your favorite seat in your house and why is it special to you?

Key Verses

- 1 Samuel 2:7-8
- Luke 14:7-11
- Luke 11:43
- Matthew 22:8-10

Questions

1. Why do you think people tend to become territorial about their seats in church?
2. How can we balance showing appreciation for long-time members while still being welcoming to newcomers?
3. What does it mean to you that God is the one who gives honor, not humans?
4. How can our church be more intentionally welcoming to people from all walks of life?
5. What barriers might prevent us from truly welcoming everyone into our church community?
6. How does the parable of the wedding banquet challenge our assumptions about who belongs in church?
7. In what ways might we unconsciously make others feel unwelcome in our church?
8. How can we maintain both inclusivity and safety in our church community?

Life Application

This week, challenge yourself to sit in a different spot at church than usual. Use this as a reminder that church isn't about our comfort or preferences, but about creating space for everyone to

encounter God. Additionally, look for opportunities to welcome someone new or different from you into conversation or fellowship.

Key Takeaways

- God, not human status or wealth, determines who receives honor
- The church should be welcoming to everyone, regardless of their background
- We must guard against attitudes of entitlement in church settings
- True humility means putting others' needs before our own comfort
- It's God's role, not ours, to determine who belongs in His church

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for reminding us that your church belongs to you, not us. Help us to be a truly welcoming community that reflects your heart for all people. Give us the courage to set aside our preferences and comfort for the sake of others, and the wisdom to see everyone through your eyes. Make us instruments of your inclusive love. In Jesus' name, Amen.