

## Christ the Center (2 of 4)

### Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the [recent sermons page](#) at our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

**Sunday, June 12th, 2022**

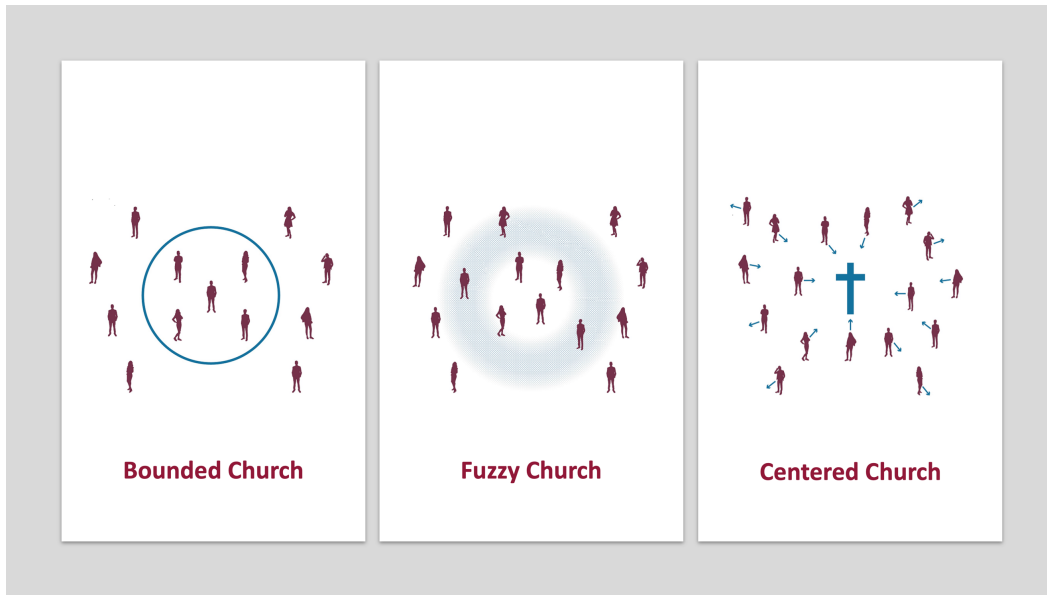


**Series Focus:** What does it look like to be a Christ-centered church that is faithful to the gospel? How can we be a church that doesn't obsess over boundaries or one that ends up erasing all lines that set us apart as faithful disciples? In this 4-part sermon series, we discover that Christ is the center of our community when we are pursuing him together, affirming historic Christian beliefs, and living out our values as Christ-followers, while simultaneously extending grace to those who are at different places on their journey.

**Sermon Title:** The Shriveled Fruit of a Bounded Church

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 15:1-21; Galatians 1:6-12; 2:19-21; 3:1-3, 19-29; 4:8-9, 17-20

**Sermon Focus:** Paul preached a gospel for everyone. It was a simple message about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Paul told the Galatians that God was creating a new family that included everyone who responded in faith, all because of the saving grace of Christ. But then this message was undermined by Jewish Christian "agitators" obsessed with the Law and line-drawing. In *The Shriveled Fruit of a Bounded Church*, Pastor David shares how the gospel challenges the bounded practice of community.



1. In this message on the Bounded Church, Pastor David began by sharing how the Apostle Paul writes against this practice in his letter to the Galatians. Take some time to read through the selected Scripture reading in Galatians. What new thoughts or insights do you have as it relates to the bounded church?
2. Just as the Jewish “agitators” wanted to enforce their cultural boundary-markers on Gentiles, we still see this sort of practice today in the church. What are some ways that you’ve seen a bounded paradigm being enforced and practiced?
3. Mark Baker says, “Most people draw religious lines with sincere concerns and motivations.” What do you think would be some legitimate concerns that move congregations to become more bounded in their practice?
4. Pastor David listed the following as “shriveled” fruit that the Bounded Church produces. How have you seen these in your own experience?
  - Promotes a portrait of God as a tyrannical overlord
  - Creates an atmosphere and culture of exclusion (us vs. them)
  - Breeds legalism, superiority, elitism, judgmentalism, etc.
  - Operates by conditional love and acceptance, fear, shame, etc.
  - Creates a culture that lacks transparency and vulnerability
  - Talks a lot about God's grace, but lives works-righteousness
  - Life changes tend to be *superficial* because they are motivated by fear of exclusion and pressure to conform
5. Be honest. Do you think there is any bounded thinking that distorts your view of God and leads to fear, judgmentalism, and the exclusion of others? What about at Grantham Church? Take some time to give these things to God in prayer.