June 25, 2017

Series: Keys to Life-Giving Relationships

**Life-giving Honor**

John 12:20-36

Mention today’s Growth Track - Step 4 -

**Intro:** Have you ever had trouble understanding someone …

* They talk with their mouth full …
* They talk soft …
* They are too intellectual …
* Maybe they’re from a different country or culture …

John 12:20-21 - Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.”

“Meet” - Grk - to see; (know, consider, perceive, understand)

The Greek people had a very different culture from the Jewish people.

One God vs. all the mythological gods, which they didn’t think were mythological …

Now, these Greeks had converted to Judaism … now they hear about Jesus …

John 12:22 - Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

To “meet” Jesus is to understand Jesus - and understand what it means to follow Him.

**Big Idea: Our relationship with Jesus is a relationship of honor.**

John 12:26 - "Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.”

Honor - Grk - to prize … fix a valuation upon … to revere: - value.

**T.S.:** There are four expressions of honor in this passage - and in understanding them, we will understand more about Jesus - In understanding these four expressions of honor, we will “see” Jesus!

* 1. **It was an honor for Christ to die.**

John 12:23-24 - Jesus replied,“Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. (be honored) I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.”

Christ’s “glory” - honor - is in giving new life through His death.

When He went to the cross, there was an argument over what sign to put there - often it was was charge of which the person had been declared guilty -

For Jesus: “This is the King of the Jews” - the Jewish leaders didn’t like that - Pilate said, “What i have written, I have written.” - Isn’t this the reason you wanted me to have Him crucified?

This was His honor!

A Crown of Thorns - Ira Stanphill

*There was no crown for Him of silver or of gold*

*There was no diadem for Him to hold*

*But blood adorned His brow And proud its stain He bore*

*And sinners gave to Him the crown He wore*

*He did not reign upon a throne of ivory*

*But died upon the cross of Calvary*

*For sinners there He counted All He owned but loss*

*And He surveyed His kingdom from a cross*

*No purple robe He wore His bleeding wounds to hide*

*But stripes upon His back He wore with pride*

*And from the wounds there flowed A crimson cleansing stream*

*That was a cover for the soul unclean*

*A rugged cross became His throne*

*His kingdom was in hearts alone*

*He wrote His love in crimson red*

*and wore the thorns upon His head*

John 12:24 - I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.

Consider this passage carefully:

Romans 5 - Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.

 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

 When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned… everyone died… the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ... Adam’s sin led to condemnation, but God’s free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

 Yes, Adam’s one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ’s one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

 God’s law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God’s wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God’s wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How much we needed and need Jesus!

We are hopeless without Him!

And it was an honor for Him to die for us! And we are honored that He would choose to do so!

This is a relationship of honor!

Realizing this and remembering this should cause us to live more appreciatively - more thankfully - for what He has done for us! Don’t take your forgiveness for granted! It was an honor for Him to honor you by giving His life for you so that you could be forgiven of sin, made right with God, and have an eternal relationship with God!

Jesus looked past the cross -

Hebrews 12:2 - …Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.

It was an honor for Him to die for us.

 **2. It is an honor for us to follow HIm.**

John 12:25-26 - Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

Which life do you want - this one, or the next one? It’s your choice. You can have and experience good things here - but they are not the goal and they will not last.

Life is eternal - bodies will die but souls will live forever. If you accept the honor of following Him now, you will live forever with Him, with blessings unimaginable -

Paul - not allowed to speak of what He saw -

John - limited as to what he could write …

If you go for everything this life has to offer, you will ultimately lose it, and possibly lose the blessings of the next life as well. Eternity in judgment is not a good trade off for temporary pleasures in this life.

Matthew 6:19-21 - "“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

The goal of this life is to follow Jesus - all other goals are second to that and all other goals should support that and help us accomplish that goal.

 **3. It’s an honor to face hardship because of this relationship.**

John 12:27-34 - “Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name.”

 Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

 Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

 The crowd responded, “We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?”

Jesus knew what was coming - but He didn’t run away -

Gethsemane …

When that voice spoke from heaven, it was more an assurance for the people than it was for Jesus. God wanted them and He wants us to understand this - God wants us to understand Him and Jesus - to have a personal relationship with Him - to know Him!

Jesus was trying to tell everyone what was going to happen, but they couldn’t comprehend it.

Douglas MacArthur spoke of the honor of dying for the country - May 12, 1962, Farewell Speech to West Point Academy -

“… in memory’s eye I could see those staggering columns of the First World War, bending under soggy packs, on many a weary march from dripping dusk to drizzling dawn, slogging ankle-deep through the mire of shell-shocked roads, to form grimly for the attack, blue-lipped, covered with sludge and mud, chilled by the wind and rain, driving home to their objective, and for many, to the judgment seat of God.

 “I do not know the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory their death. They died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in their hearts, and on their lips the hope that we would go on to victory. Always, for them: Duty, Honor, Country; always their blood and sweat and tears, as we sought the way and the light and the truth.”

How much greater an honor to go through difficulties due to our relationship with Jesus, since He considered it an honor to suffer for our salvation.

Matthew 5:10-12 - 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.

1st Peter 4:12-14 - Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.

 If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

* It was an honor for Christ to die.
* It is an honor for us to follow Him.
* It’s an honor to face hardship because of this relationship.

 **4. Maintaining this relationship leads to the ultimate honor.**

John 12:35-36 - Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.”

 After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

What does He mean when He talks about walking in light and walking in darkness?

John 8:12 - Jesus spoke to the people once more and said,“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

Matthew 5:14-16 - You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Walking in the light means we live following His teachings.

It is one thing to say we follow Jesus - it is another thing to actually do what He says.

How do we make sure we are doing this?

You’re doing it now - study the Bible - it is His message.

Plug into small groups where you can study more, learn more, learn from others through their lifestyles, by doing things together, by sharing life together.

It’s one thing to say, “I’d like the gift of eternal life!” - then accept it - it’s another thing to continue to live according to Jesus’ teachings and grow in understanding of how He wants us to live -

Part of that is influencing others - not just waiting for the next life to come - but MAKING A DIFFERENCE in the lives of others so that they can have eternal life as well -

Everything we do is pointed to that - that needs to be your ultimate goal - not just getting there - but taking others with you!

MacArthur: “Everything else in your professional career is but corollary to this vital dedication. All other public purposes, all the public projects, all other public needs, great or small, will find others for their accomplishment. But you are the ones who are trained to fight. Yours is the profession of arms, the will to win, the sure knowledge that in war there is no substitute for victory; that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed; that the very obsession of your public service must be: Duty, Honor, Country.

 “… Your guidepost stands out like a ten-fold beacon in the night: Duty, Honor, Country.

 “… Always there echoes and re-echoes: Duty, Honor, Country.”

I would apply all of that to Making a Difference in other’s lives so that they can have the assurance of eternal life as well.

**Concl:** Our relationship with Jesus is a relationship of honor.

* It was an honor for Christ to die for us.
* It is an honor for us to follow Him.
* It’s an honor to face hardship because of this relationship.
* Maintaining this relationship leads to the ultimate honor - eternal life.

Have you received that honor?

Are you making a difference in the lives of others so that they can have this honor as well?