July 9, 2017

Series: Keys to Life-Giving Relationships

**Life-giving Humility**

John 13:1-17

*Growth Track Step 2 - Finding Freedom - Small Groups*

**Intro:** An exampleor illustration of humility …

What is humility?

If we go back and look at the big picture -

* Jesus knew He was coming to the end of His ministry and the end of His life.
* In John 11 - He goes to Lazarus … raises him from the dead …
* In John 12 - Jesus is at dinner, Mary comes in and anoints His feet - this she does for His burial …
* He enters into Jerusalem to shouts proclaiming Him king …
* He begins to talk to His followers about His coming death … they don’t understand …

We’re talking about Keys to Life-giving Relationships

* Life-giving Desire
* Life-giving News
* Life-giving Honor
* Life-giving Belief

Mutual desire is a key to a Life-Giving Relationship - applies to our relationship with God.

We’ve got great life-giving news that leads to a great relationship!

Our relationship with Jesus is a relationship of honor.

Belief is required for this life-giving relationship.

**Big Idea: Mutual humility leads to a life-giving relationship.**

As we look at John 13 we see one of the greatest examples of humility in history.

Leading up to that act we see this:

**> Jesus knows God’s plan when others don’t.**

John 13:1 - Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father…

At the beginning of His ministry … at a wedding … Mom wanted Him to take care of the family … out of wine … He had not yet done any miracles yet, but she knew He could do something. He said, “My time has not yet come.”

He knew that when He started showing the power of God in His life, there would be enemies that would want to kill Him.

There were other times in His ministry where He responded the same way …

Now, when no one else knows what time it is, He knows His time has come.

In knowing God’s plan, He fulfilled God’s plan completely - and that involved loving His followers completely -

John 13:1 - … He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.

**> There was an enemy with a counter plan.**

John 13:2 - It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

That will be revealed further in the next message -

**> Jesus had been given total authority from God.**

John 13:3 - Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God.

This is huge when we see what Jesus is about to do. This is the key of humility. No one had an opportunity to be more humble than Jesus, because no one has ever had an opportunity to be more proud than Jesus!

You may be proud … reasons to be proud …

But you don’t have reason to have more pride than Jesus had!

* He was the Son of God!
* He was God walking around on earth!
* He was perfect!
* He never sinned!

Mary probably struggled with pride because Jesus never went through the terrible twos! Jesus never had a rebellious teenager stage!

It probably was frustrating sometimes for his parents that He was so perfect!

He healed anybody He wanted to, and they had the worst diseases -

Boy - I’ve seen God use people and seen them get prideful! It’s ugly!

I’ve seen it in me - and it’s even uglier!

He raised people from the dead! What kind of rush would you get from that!

No one has ever had the opportunity to show more humility than Jesus because no one has ever had more opportunity to be prideful than Jesus!

But for all that reason to be prideful - with all that authority given to Him directly from God - here’s what He does -

John 13:4-5 - So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. then he began to wash the disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

I’ve never liked foot-washing services …

* I’m a legalist … I disagree with the interpretation …
* I avoided one at college once …
* I’ve avoided several since then …

Just a few years ago, I was in a meeting where I could not avoid it. There was no way I could get out of it. I was going to have to endure it. I was going to get my feet washed …

My friend, Jerry Van Auken, Pastor of the First Evangelical Presbyterian Church here in town, sat me in a chair, knelt in front of me, took my feet into a basin of water, and washed my feet.

It was one of the most moving, most humbling experiences I’ve ever had to have someone do that for me. I saw his humility and servanthood.

This has nothing to do with the interpretation … no one there was making it an ordinance, a doctrine - it was an illustration - of humility. And humility gives life to our relationships.

Pride destroys our relationships.

You think you’re better than someone else, you will never develop a deep relationship with that person. But if you regarding them as deserving of being served more than you think you deserve to be served - you will serve them - and in serving them you will build a deep relationship and bond with them.

To wash the feet was an act of the servant … stinky and dirty … We are not told that anyone else even thought to do it.

John 13:6-11 - When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

Jesus replied, “You don’t understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.”

“No,” Peter protested, “you will never ever wash my feet!”

Jesus replied, “Unless I wash you, you won’t belong to me.”

Simon Peter exclaimed, “Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!”

Jesus replied, “A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you.” for Jesus knew who would betray him. that is what he meant when he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

Jesus said, “You don’t understand …”

How often that is true of us -

The Message … “My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene.”

Now, after washing their feet, Jesus speaks to them trying to make His point abundantly clear.

John 13:12-16 - After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, “Do you understand what I was doing? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because that’s what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message.”

Jesus takes the role of a lowly servant - then says, “Do you understand? Let me help you! The messenger is greater than the ones who carry the message.”

In other words - even though I have done this menial task - I’m better than you! I’m greater than you! And even though I am so far above you, I have gotten down as low as I could get to serve you - and that’s my example of how you should serve one another.

If anyone in this room thinks they are better than anyone else - you’re wrong!

If anyone in this room thinks someone else in this room is not worth being served by you - in the most menial and lowly way - you are wrong!

If anyone in this room thinks that anyone in our community is not worth our serving them in any way in which they have need - we are wrong!

If you look at someone and think they are not worth being served - you will not have a healthy, life-giving relationship with them.

If you are in a marriage, and you don’t have the attitude to serve your spouse - to wash their feet - to scratch their back - to clean up their puke, or other worse things - if you don’t have the attitude to serve them, your relationship will not be healthy and life-giving.

**If you feel you are struggling with pride, find someone to serve!**

If you are thinking of anyone right now whom you don’t feel worthy of serving, find a way to serve them and quick!

1st John 4:7-12 - Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love - not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

John 13:34-35 - So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

As screamed to Charlie Brown, “THAT’S IT!”

John 13:17 - Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

What do they know now? We do we know now? What are we going to walk away from here with?

We are not greater than God. We are not greater than Jesus. We are not greater than those around us.

If Jesus can wash the feet of His disciples, there is nothing below our dignity to perform in serving one another.

We will build deep, strong, lasting, life-giving relationships with one another, when we serve one another in humility.

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