June 4, 2017

Series: Keys to Life-Giving Relationships

These keys will help you in all relationships, but ultimately we are talking about the greatest relationship - a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Mention Today’s Growth Track - Knowing God - Baptism - Baptism next Sunday

**Life-giving Desire**

John 12:1-11

**Intro:** We believe in and talk a lot here about life-giving relationships. Not all relationships are life-giving, so we want to provide people with opportunities to enter into relationships that will bring them life and not death - encouragement not discouragement - joy not despair. We get enough of those things through so many other experiences in our lives.

We've talked in the past about two trees that were in the Garden of Eden - the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We’ve said that we want to live in the Tree of Life - we want to be partaking of and sharing the life that God has to give us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represents all of our ways to get right with God on our own terms, with our own ideas - our lists of right and wrong - do this, don’t do this -

But that tree kills! We are not made right with God by what we do - we have done plenty wrong to not be right with God, so we are made right with God only by His grace.

We don’t want to live our lives with the idea that we have to do a long list of things in order to please God. He loves us no matter what. We do what we do to please Him in response and thanksgiving for His love for us and all He has done for us.

As a metaphor, living in the Tree of Life would mean keeping our minds living in God’s good Word -

Philippians 4:8 - "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."

Living in the Tree of Life is living in innocence, not shame. We accept that God has forgiven us of our sins, so we don’t have to run and hide from Him anymore. We share that love with others by loving them and not condemning them. We don’t play the blame game of victimization.

What do you think of when you hear the word “extravagant”? Someone who overspends unnecessarily? Do you think of one of the fanciest hotels & most expensive hotels you can think of in one of the large cities of the world?

Do you think of someone wearing diamonds and jewels?

Do you think of a large mansion with more rooms than anyone could possibly need - 6 kitchens & 17 bathrooms?

Let’s remember this - God owns everything. He owns all the cattle on a thousand hills, and He said, “All the silver is mine and all the gold is mine.” Every ring on every finger in the world belongs to God, and the diamonds that are not yet mined.

He’s prepared a place for us where the streets are paved with gold - Hollywood only has glass shards in asphalt to make the streets shiny - heaven is going to be a little more extravagant than that!

**Extravagant** - [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com) - spending much more than is necessary or wise; wasteful: an extravagant shopper.

2. excessively high: extravagant expenses; extravagant prices.

3. exceeding the bounds of reason, as actions, demands, opinions, or passions.

4. going beyond what is deserved or justifiable.

Here’s my message this morning -

**Big Idea: Extravagant Desire is a key to a Life-Giving Relationship.**

A mutual desire can lead to a great relationship.

God has an extravagant desire for you, and He wants us to return the desire.

Andy Griffith: When someone marries you, the polite thing to do is marry them back.

**T.S.:** 4 Extravagances in this story teach us this.

* 1. **Extravagant Relationship**

John 12:1-2 - Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. A dinner was prepared in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him.

Why? Because Lazarus was dead and now he is alive! Look what they do - they have dinner! They have relationship! A relationship with someone who was once dead and is now alive is an extravagant relationship!

In the OT, Elisha and the Woman of Shunnem … It will be all right … Elisha raised the boy to life … later there was a famine and she had to leave her home for 7 years - when she returned back, she went to the king to reclaim her property and when she walked in, Elisha’s assistant was telling the king all about the resurrection from the dead, so she got her property back!

It’s hard to deny someone a piece of land when they’ve already had someone raised from the dead!

Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to Mary, to His disciples, spent 40 days with them teaching them more - ate breakfast with them on the beach - sent the Holy Spirit to live inside His followers.

We have the opportunity to have the most extravagant relationship of all - with the God who died - and rose again -

He invites us!

This is what today’s Growth Track Step is all about!

Once we are in this relationship we can have -

 **2. Extravagant Worship**

John 12:3 - Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus’ feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

In Mark Jesus was at a similar dinner and a woman came in, did the same thing except the woman in Mark poured the perfume on His head, and what she poured on him there was the equivalent of one year’s wages.

You might not be able to relate to pouring perfume, but you can relate to one year’s wages. She gave an offering of worship worth one year’s salary!

I don’t know if you make $20,000 or $100,000 - or more or less or somewhere in between - but I think for all of us, if we gave one year’s pay to the Lord that would be an extravagant act of worship!

Would it be extravagant to take one year’s salary, buy perfume with it, and pour it on someone’s head or their feet? That’s even more extravagant than writing a check or making an online donation!

What can I give God that would be extravagant worship? What can you give to God that would be extravagant worship?

Extravagant worship will deepen and strengthen your relationship with God.

Paul wrote about a very poor church -

2nd Corinthians 8:3-5 - For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.

It’s about what we have, but it’s about so much more. It’s about us. Have you given yourself to the Lord? Are you willing to do whatever He asks of you, without argument, without reservation?

Abraham & Isaac …

Moses - go back to the place where they wanted to kill you …

Peter … there is coming a day when people are going to take you where you don’t want to go …

What are you willing to do for Jesus that would be considered extravagant worship?

One couple, the first year they were married, had very little. At the end of the year they received a very large bonus. As soon as they received it they had a sense that it wasn’t for them. Think of all the things they could have done - you might have done - but they sensed it was not for them. So they went to the church told the pastor, told him they believed they were supposed to give it not knowing where it was supposed to go. They gave him the check and he told them, “Yesterday I met with a widow in our church that can’t pay her mortgage. The company is getting ready to foreclose on her. I wrote the amount down.” The amounts were the same.

Extravagant Worship leads to this kind of relationship - this stuff is fun!

If you **don’t** have extravagant worship, it will lead to another extravagance:

 **3. Extravagant Greed**

John 12:4-6 - But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, “That perfume was worth a year’s wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.” Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself.

I first wanted to say, “Extravagant Idiocy” - “Extravagant Stupidity” - Those who fit also - But the bottom line here is Judas had extravagant greed -

This is a temptation for all of us!

This is the enemy of generosity and it will destroy your opportunity to have a deepening relationship with Jesus. We all have to overcome this because we are all born selfish.

Now, it sounds very admirable to say that we want to give money to the poor, but Judas wasn’t really interested in that.

Think of this - someone drives by house and it is very nice - they comment on how nice the house is. Another person in the car says, “Yes, I know that person. The person who owns that house is a strong believer. They really love the Lord!” The first person says, “He ought to sell that and give it to the poor!”

Why don’t THEY sell their house and give it to the poor? Be careful that you don’t slip into the same attitude as the one who betrayed Jesus!

Judas is trying to cover up his own motive and selfish greed by pointing the finger at someone else who is extravagantly generous with their worship.

Jesus answer, “That’s really none of your business.”

***Worship Team cue:***

 **4. Extravagant Desire**

John 12:7-11 - Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

 When all the people heard of Jesus’ arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

When Mary poured this perfume on Jesus’ feet, she didn’t even know what she was giving her gift for - Jesus said she was doing it for His burial -

When they took Him down from the cross it was Passover - no time to prepare His body - that’s why those ladies were going back the first Easter morning -

She was doing something that otherwise could not and would not have been done!

This woman had an extravagant desire for Jesus - for forgiveness.

Jesus had an extravagant desire for these people.

They had an extravagant desire for Him!

Serving God is not about what God can do for us. It’s about what we can do for Him. It’s about laying down our lives for the Kingdom of God.

Judas had a desire to gratify himself that was greater than His desire to deepen his relationship with Jesus.

Jesus has an extravagant desire for you!

Zechariah 2:8 - …whoever *touches* you *touches* *the* *apple* *of* his *eye*—

Often, like a husband’s desire for personal & physical intimacy with his wife can sometimes be greater than hers, Jesus’ desire for intimacy with us is more than we desire Him.

He loves you! He wants you! Whether or not Mary realized it, she was pointing to His death! He died for her! He died for you! He suffered leading up to the cross … and on the cross … so that He could have a relationship with you! That’s extravagant desire!

Romeo & Juliet … wanting to be united in death … Lovers wanting to die to be together forever … Lovers willing to die for one another …

Those are all pale imitations, and sometimes our spiritual enemy uses them to bring destruction, but God loved you enough to die for you - coming in the Son of God, Jesus Christ - That’s an extravagant desire!

How is your desire for Him? How does it match up with the desire of this woman?

How does it match up with the desire of Jesus?