

Marriage, Dating, and Relationships...oh my!

Relationships: A Life Source

John 4:1-26

October 28, 2018

Focus: Life is about relationships

Intro paragraph: The foundation of dating and marriage and family and friendships is how we do relationships. "When you have the Life Source, you can be a life source"

Special Notes: Youth Sunday (Immersion Baptism)

MESSAGE:

Welcome and intro...

Today is week three of a series of messages focuses in on our relationships. The first week we look at marriage and covered the basic components of a covenant marriage according to Ephesians 4. Last week we look at dating and established some ground rules for dating and what our dating lives should look like. You can go to our website or our new app and find the videos of those messages and all of the other messages we've done.

So, today, let's wrap up this series by talking about relationships in general and establish some godly rules for all of our relationships. Every relationship we have is valuable and how we treat each other is a sign of who we are and how we are following God. People on the receiving end of our understanding of how God values people and relationships should know that God is love and that they are loved. So...let's dive in.

I've been told that scuba diving is an amazing thing and that someday I should try it. I'm adventurous enough to give it a try some time. I'm told by people who scuba dive that there is an extensive training that must take place because there is an inherent danger to scuba diving. If it's anything like sky diving the training last for hours and covers all of the things that can go wrong and all of the signals that are used with the others you're diving with so that you can communicate with each other. Once trained you get to experience the depth and beauty of the ocean.

Like Jesus sending out the disciples, you are never to dive alone...it is a team sport. And if one person gets in trouble or runs out of air – the training covers how you are supposed to signal to each other, share air as you slowly climbing to the surface back to the surface before panic sets in, which is really dangerous.

Being in a relationship is an adventure. It takes you to deep places. It grows and develops with time. Whether it's a friendship of some kind, a partnership, our family relationships, a dating relationship or marriage...all of them offer depth and beauty but, that also means that with great investment comes some dangers. Being 60 or 100 feet underwater can allow us to see some truly wonderful things but, it can also be dangerous.

As your relationship goes deeper it becomes more beautiful and more dangerous.

Like being underwater, the further you go in your relationships, the more you depend on your air, your life source. A life source is something that provides life to us from outside of ourselves. And we all have a life source in the God we worship. Today, I want you to know that every relationship you are in is one that God has allowed in some way. Some of those relationships didn't go very deep before they ended. Others went very deep and we discovered that we couldn't breathe there. Some relationships have stayed on the surface and we've enjoyed them. And other relationships have shown us beauty and wonderful things about life.

In every one of those relationships, God has been there for us, giving us a source of life that He often asks us to share with others. God fills us up with His life and then encourages us to give it away. In Psalm 23 there is a line that says, "my cup overflows." I think this is God's way of saying that I will fill you up in such a way that it spills out into every relationship you have. When you are in touch with the source all of the blessings God is pouring into your life – it tends to overflow into every relationship you have and you become a source of life to others.

"When you have a life source, you are a source of life.

Have you met those kinds of people who light up a room when they walk in. They are a joy to be around and you find yourselves hoping they will be at the party or the get together or the board room table. They bring something energizing to every conversation and when you're with them, you feel like you were getting blessed. God calls all of us to be that person in every relationship we're in but, that means our relationship with God must be our source or being that kind of person will wear you out. We only have so much air to give. If it flows from THE life source then it will never run out.

Let's look at a situation in the Bible where Jesus poured out his love into the life of a person one day and it changed an entire region. In John 4 there is this incredible account of Jesus talking with a woman at a well in the Samaritan region of Israel. This is a really significant part of the Bible because this kind of conversation usually wasn't appropriate. It shows us how far Jesus was willing to go to reach people and it tells us just how much Jesus loves people who feel that they are far from God. So, Jesus starts talking to this woman as she comes to fill a water jar. We're told that it is at a time of the day when water should have already been collected. As a matter of fact, collecting water would have been like going to Starbucks back then. The well was a hang out where you met up with people to chat, get caught up on life and family and to see how everyone was doing. But, this woman, she comes to the well at a time of the day when no one is there, most likely because she is not a popular woman.

The Bible tells us that she has multiple husbands, and that she is living with a man who she isn't married to. Now, there are several reasons that could have been happening to her. Life expectancy in first century Israel was not as long as it is for us today. People just didn't live as long as we do. So, it could be that she's lost several husbands and she's gun shy to marry

another one. It could be that she is not a very nice woman...that she's got issues and no man will stay with her because she's hard to live with. It could be that she's a bit a woman who like to travel from one man to another and finds it hard to stay with one man. Scholars suggest that it could be that she is unable to have children or that she has not given birth to a male child. In this culture, the woman is blamed and can be done away with if she cannot "produce." It could be that the man she's with right now is not willing to marry her because she's "damaged goods." No matter what the case, Jesus sees into the depth of her soul and sees the beauty of this woman and he begins to talk with her about the "life source" for her soul. At first, she doesn't get it but, then the light bulb goes on and she realizes that he's using water as a metaphor for a spiritual thirst and spiritual life.

As Jesus talks to her he shares his life source with her. Through this conversation he lifts her up. She was out of air and Jesus restores her, brings her back to the surface and allows her to breath again. In doing so she discovers God again. She discovers that God loves her and wants good things for her. She is renewed, restored, refreshed and invigorated. The Bible tells us that she is so energized by her revived relationship with God that she leaves that water jar she carried there to fill up and went back into the village to tell everyone about Jesus.

Look, if we're going to be good at relationships, if we're going to good at loving people, we need to love God first. We need the relationships we have here on earth to reflect the relationship we have with our Heavenly Father. If you've got some relationship issues this morning, if there's something going on between you and another person, you and your spouse, you and your best friend, you and a co-worker...the only way you are going to navigate your way back to a place where that relationship is healthy is if you first get your relationship with God in its proper place. Maybe you feel like God has left you or that – like this woman – maybe you're not good enough. Maybe you've never connected you're the condition of your relationship with God to the condition of your relationships here on earth.

The relationships we have on earth should reflect the relationship we have with our Heavenly Father

Look at it with me in this way...this has been helpful for me. We have relationships in two directions happening at the same time. First, we have a vertical relationship with God that is essential to life. The air we breathe is because of God. There is nothing we have that hasn't first come through God's hands before it came to us. You are here because God loves you and because God is the source of all life. Our relationship with the source of life, that vertical relationship, must first be in tact if we're going to doing anything else. If not, we will do life out of our own knowledge and strength and that is a receipt for disaster...ask anyone who's tried.

The second, we have horizontal relationships...connections to people here on earth. Those relationships with the people in your life are valuable and important. They mean the world to us and God calls us to do our best to be the person other people need us to be. The only way we can do that is if our vertical relationship is good. Only then we can give ourselves away to all of the people around us. Like the woman at the well, when we connect to the life source we

can then become a life-giving source for others. She first had her relationship with God put back in place – her vertical relationship, and then, she ran into the horizontal relationship in her village. And when she did, the Bible says that many believed in Jesus because of her. Lives were changed because of her. They asked Jesus to stay with them and they went deeper with him...all because of her.

Each one of the relationships we have here on earth can be a source of spiritual increase or spiritual depletion. You know what I mean, right. Some relationships raise our hearts and our spirits up and some just empty us of everything we've got. In order to keep healthy relationships as an imperfect person who is interacting with imperfect people (I know some of you want to nudge someone right now) we need guardrails that keep us from falling off the relationship cliff that some people bring into our lives. That might mean you limit the amount of time you spend with certain people drain you and increase your time with those who lift you up. It might mean you cut some relationships out of your life and look for ones that bring godly wisdom, counsel, friendship to your soul. These guardrails are the precautions you can put into your life like caller ID or scheduled visits.

We need guardrails that keep us on the right relationship path.

Our relationships are so valuable. They mean so much to us and they mean so much to God. God is hoping that today, your relationship with Him is strong. That your vertical connection with God is good. God is also hoping that all of your horizontal relationships are good too. Maybe you're here today and you need to work on both of those relationships...vertical and horizontal. Maybe your relationship with God has been just sitting there on the surface and it's time it's renewed and deepened. Maybe you need to touch from God this morning to remind you that you are still loved, that there is nothing you could do that would stop him from loving you. Maybe this morning you need your relationship with God be in a better place.

For some of us in the room today – there is a relationship out there that is broken, hurting, damaged, and needs healing. It could be a family relationship, or a work relationship. It could be your marriage or a child who has drifted and it's time to bring that relationship back.

[Call people to the front to pray or be prayed for their relationships]