

DO UNTO OTHERS

SERMON NOTES: MAY 5, 2024
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This morning's message focuses on
"How we treat other people"

The bible has a lot to say about How we treat others

There is an expectation, that when we come to Jesus

We will discard our old attitudes towards other people and embrace what I call "God's New Rules of Engagement"

I want to give you something to talk about this week

Let me quickly read 3 short passages of Scripture so we can get a bead on what we are talking about

Colossians 3:12-14

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Stop for a second: Living Word Moment

As God's people. This is how I want you to relate to the people in your life and the people in this world: be compassionate, be kind, be humble, be gentle and be patient. Put up with people, forgive them and love them...

Ephesians 4:31-32

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Philippians 2:3-5 BE A "DO NOTHING CHRISTIAN"

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Now there are so many more Scriptures I could read

But I want to spare you and myself the pain

We all come to the Lord - Just the way we are!

And the way we are, shapes the way we treat other people

Our relational rules have been shaped by things like:

- Our family dynamic
- Our experiences in life: Hurting people hurt people
- What we have been taught
- Our cultural background

In every family there is a certain set of family dynamics or rules by which we learn to operate

These dynamics form our Code of Conduct in relationships

And affect our attitudes and the way we treat others

How Men treat women for instance
How Women treat men
How we treat Strangers
Our attitude toward other races
How we relate to People who have hurt us
And people who, in our opinion, have issues People who aren't as cool as we are
People who believe what we believe
You name it.....

When we come to Jesus

There are changes that need to be made to the Relational Rules we live by

The golden rule is: (He who has the gold rules????)

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

But my rule us:

Do unto others as they have done unto you Or Do unto others before they do unto you

God's rule is: Forgive as I have forgiven you

But My rule is:

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

We don't say it that way - We say "He hit me first"

My rule is:

It's easier to get forgiveness than to get permission

My rule is: You don't ask mom for money, you ask dad

My rule is: Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow

My rule is: Get all you can, and can all you get"

And the list is longer than you can imagine

It has been observed that certain people from certain nations have similar tendencies, that have been ingrained in them culturally and now they have certain attitudes that govern their lives and relationships and so some believe they have to:

Always Mind their own business

You never ask personal questions

Don't make a spectacle of yourself

You must always stay in the background

You Never fight back

Others: You always fight back

Never trust and elf....Gimly/Lord of the Rings

Let me show you a funny verse found in Paul's writings to Titus: Paul had left Titus in Crete to influence the culture

Titus 1:12-13

He paints a very unflattering picture of your average Cretan:

12 Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."

13 This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith

Cretans have been influenced by generations: They tend to be liars, brutes, lazy gluttons

But Timothy: I want you to Rebuke them sharply, because these things need to change
Lead them out of these old patterns of behavior

And this can apply to so many nationalities

Norwegians are like this (don't get me started)

Germans are like that, New Yorkers? Red Necks? Native Americans?

Hillbillies? Texans?

Rebuke them harshly so they can be sound in the faith

Certain family and national dynamics can influence - How we relate to

Our kids, Our co-workers, Our fellow students in school And even our friends

After a while we learn to read each others relational rules

Some people have a "Don't kid me rule"

Some people have just the opposite

Make fun of everything

Some people have no trespassing signs

My life is none of your business

Some have the opposite

They live by the TMI rule

Some are too compliant, Some are too stubborn

Most of us really aren't aware of the rules that we adopted. They are just automatic

But they can affect our ability to develop "close" relationships: in life and in marriage in church

They affect our ability to trust!

And sadly they can cause us to have relational conflicts:

We can Keep stepping to the same landmines with our spouse or your child or
your boss

We were a "no touch" family: It was a rule....

No hugs, No good bye kisses, Not even pats on the back

It took years for me to break this rule in my life and I still sometimes struggle with it

That is why I am a big hugger

BUT NOW WE HAVE FOUND JESUS OR MORE ACURATELY "JESUS HAS FOUND ME"

And: All of a sudden there are new rules

We should say: "Hallelujah, I can't wait to live by the law of love"

And be compassionate, gentle, humble, kind, patient and forgiving

But Many of us stubbornly or ignorantly hold onto our old relational rules

It's the clash of Two Kingdoms
So Sometimes I am a Christian
And Sometimes I am a Norwegian
Or a German, or a Cretan!

The Old Rules can get in the way of the new Or can pollute the new and make life confusing

We can live by God's law of love in some areas And live by the old rules in others

I am one person at church and another at home.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY
SOME THINGS HAVE TO CHANGE

Here's an inconvenient truth:

The Bible does not separate how we relate to God From How we relate to people

The true health of our relationship with God
Is determined by, or revealed by our relationship with people

To put is simply:
If you truly love God, you will truly love people

The health of our relationship to God is graded by
How we relate to the people in our lives

A few verses:

Matthew 5:23-24

"Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there, remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."

God says, "Don't talk to me until you talk to them"
Talk to the hand, until you go and work on this!

1 John 4:7-8

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Don't kid yourself,

If you think you've got this thing going on with God
And you hate somebody: You are confused
You cannot separate these two relationships

John 13:34-35

“A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

It doesn't say

By this shall they know that you are my disciples:

“If you attend church regularly”

“If you read your bible and pray”

“If you witness to your boss”

People will know you follow me by the way you treat other people

There came a time when a certain lawyers asked Jesus

Matthew 22:36-39

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus replied; “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind”

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love you neighbor as yourself””

The second is like it?

You've got to be kidding! The second is nothing like it...

What has how I love my God got to do with how I love my neighbor, my husband, my boss, my enemy?

And besides: We didn't ask for a second commandment

Jesus is saying “I can't give you one, without the other” They are interrelated

That's disturbing:

Because if the most important thing is to Love my God

No-one can question me on this

If I say I love God

Nobody really knows but God

But love my neighbor as myself?

People can grade me on this one

All throughout the New Testament

Jesus and the Apostles are reaffirming this

If you have it going on with God

You'll have it going on with the people in your life

This is what it means to demonstrate your faith

By your works

And This is pretty much what the book of 1 John is all about

It's a lot easier to just have religion that focuses on God and leaves everybody else out...

One of the things some people don't like about the church is

That it is too personal.....

They enjoy an environment where it's

A little bit ethereal

A little bit theological

A little bit liturgical

A little bit traditional

A little bit sacramental

And I feel a connection with the invisible God....

But please don't get personalor ask me to get personal

I want to be connected with God

But please don't try to connect me with People

But I hate to tell you (For your sake)

Jesus is not going to let us get by with that

There are a vast number of Scriptures that have to do with our connection with people

And our Code of Conduct with People

As a Christian

- If I really understand how much God loves me
- If I really understand the sacrifice He has made to redeem me
- If I really understand how much He overlooked to forgive me and include me in His family

If I really understand this:

I lose my excuse not to accept you

And love you And reach out to you

I understand how much He loves you

Because I understand how much He loves me...

A Christian who doesn't Love and Accept others Just doesn't get it....

As we begin to get it -- Everything changes in our lives

When my Old set of Codes and Rules gets in the way

I need to be ruthless with them

I know how I used to respond or react, when stuff happened

But I am a new creature in Christ

The Old creature is passing away

The religious leaders of the day actually thought

That the more spiritual you were

The more you distanced yourself from other people

They wanted to divorce the vertical from the horizontal

Religious people shunned certain people And they were scandalized when Jesus

Showed love and Fraternized with the untouchables...

Ephesians: Eph 4:1

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Calling = Invitation

You have been invited to a relationship with God
Based on unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness

Now God is saying:
I want you to live a life worthy of that invitation

The Apostle Paul is saying
“For those of you who said yes to God’s invitation,
Along with that invitation, are certain expectations
“Live a life, worthy of, congruent with, in synch with
God’s invitation to you.....

Instead of listing the religious expectations
He begins to list the relational expectations

Eph 4:2
“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”

God wants us to put others ahead of ourselves
To which we can say “But he doesn’t deserve it”
That’s true, but neither did you

God wants us to love our enemies
To which we can say:
“But Lord, they are my enemy for crying out loud”

But you were also God’s enemy
When we were yet enemies, Christ died for us

To live a life worthy of Christ’s invitation
Is to do for others what Christ did for me

Eph 4:3 says
“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”

Make every effort to keep the peace
Be tenacious

We live one big new rule

John 13:34 A new commandment I give you “Love one another as I have loved you”,
by this everyone will know you are my disciples”

Sometimes it seems unreasonable -- Not fair
That God would ask me to forgive
That God would ask me to forbear
That God would ask me to be patient

That God would ask me to offer unconditional love

After all they have done to me
After the way they have treated me
After the way they have ignored me

But forgiving others is the gift you give yourself
And it is the way to living in the peace of God

And it shows the world who God is

Give this some serious thought this week
And let's ask God for his Grace to put this into practice
First with our wives and kids
And then in every other relationship in our lives

Let's pray

Mother's day next week. We are going out of our way
Infant dedication