

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Better Together

PART

2

TITLE

A Community In An Age Of Contempt

SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:9-10



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Well, Providence family, it's great to see you. If you're a guest here with us, if you're over in Prisms, if you are online, we are also glad that you are here. In fact, if you are a guest, there's a lot of guests right now at our church family, we're really glad that you're here. And what you just saw is actually a tool that has been built to help those of us who are newer in the space just to figure out how do I connect, how do I grow in the Lord, how do I serve, and then how do I help take this gospel and go to people who've never heard it. And so, that's what that's for. We would love for you to be there next week at this hour.

And so, you can simply consider that if you have a Bible in your hand, turn with me to Romans 12. If you don't have one in your hand, there's lots of Bibles in these chairs near you. And I would simply say, if you don't have one of your own, please take that home as a gift. We would love for you to do so. Would you pray with me?

Father in heaven, we bow before you and we have come because we see that you are worthy and we desire to honor you to ascribe value to the worth that we see. And so, it's a privilege that we have enjoyed to read your word. It's a privilege to sing together. It's a privilege to greet one another, to welcome one another, and now it's a privilege to open up your word. And on this weekend of honor, we desire to honor you and that includes honoring what you find is honorable. We thank you, Father, for Martin Luther King in his life. We thank you, Father, for his work and for the things that you led him to see and to do. And we thank you for the movement that it created within the human heart. Help us to see things.

We thank you, Father, that we have a Bible as a result of that. We should have always seen them, but we do thank you that your word tells us emphatically that every one of us are created in your image. We have endowed inside of us, dignity of personhood. There's respect that is to be given simply because we are made in your image and we thank you and praise you as your word tells us to do so that in the womb you wrapped each one of us together and you even wrapped us with skin. And according to your pleasure and your purposes, your word tells us that you sovereignly wrapped each one of us with a skin color. It's different from one another for your ultimate pleasure and honor.

We confess to you that not only in our own personal life but as a nation and in all around the world is when we have a heart that is confused in sin, is that we don't see people with the value that we should. We trip over ourself and we confess to you not only that we have contributed to the chaos in the world, but we confess to you what your eyes see. And that is that in every place around the world, there's historical and racial and ethnic hostilities. And we thank you, Jesus, that you came to rescue us from ourself and from this tension that you came to the earth and you came as a baby. You were born, you were wrapped in skin. And we praise you that you gave your life, as Ephesians says, to break down the wall of hostility, not only between us and you, but between us and each other.

We thank you, Father, that you've made a new family and not only this local family called Providence, but your big family, the church. We thank you, Father, that one day that we will ascribe value to the differences that you have given us for your glory and honor. And so, would you help us to do that today? As we consider this idea of honor this morning, would you please help us, help us to see clearly for your glory and our good? I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

So we're in a series, Better Together. The idea is that God has given us all kinds of instructions of how to live life in community because we need each other. And I want you to think back to a time as we think about this idea of honor. When you were honored, maybe you were remembered, maybe you retired and someone gave you a watch or maybe you made a game-winning shot, your team got to the locker room and everybody honored you because of your accomplishments. I want you to think of a time that you were honored, you were recognized, you were affirmed, where you felt and were made to feel that you were indispensable to that community, whether it's to a family or to your church or to your team.

When you felt honor, what did it make you feel like? For most of us, we would add words like man, in that moment I felt significant or I felt seen. Someone actually saw me on the earth or I was heard or I was wanted, I felt desired. This is all really important because today 58% of Americans actually state that they feel noticeably lonely. And last week, we looked that loneliness is not necessarily being alone, it's the distress of feeling alone. It's the distress of feeling unseen, feeling disposable. A feeling in such a way that if you're in a group and then you can imagine leaving that group and then you imagine no one would care if you left the group or even acknowledge your absence, there's a feeling associated with that breach of desirability and that is the feeling of loneliness. It can happen when you're in a big group, people all around you, you can feel absolutely lonely.

And it's interesting, there's effect in this, really tragic effects. In fact, when you open up the Bible, the very first concern that God voices in the entire Bible is directed at human aloneness, it is not good for the man to be alone. And you look at what's happening in the world today, and loneliness has been proven now as a risk not only to physical health, not only to mental health, anxiety, depression, self-harm, heart disease, but also societal health. And as a result of that, there's more people concerned than God about the plague of loneliness in the world today.

Last week, what we looked at is sort of the big picture of the Bible. If you took the whole story of the Bible and you said, "What are the biggest acts or movements throughout the story?" You could find four of them. There's a creation account where God says, "I'm going to create the world and this is how it's going to be with dignity and honor." And then, all of a sudden, things fell apart. That's the second movement. It's the fall of man, when things broke. And then, there's the third movement where God Almighty made a savior. He sent a savior, His own Son, He came to the earth and He lived without sin and He died for us.

And then, there's a restoration, a period to where we are given not only a promise of a future heaven, but also instructions while we're still living on the earth, that we can experience some of that flourishing life again through restoration. And so, in the context of loneliness last week, we looked at these different movements, that God created each one of us in His image as relational beings meant for community. And then, we saw that we all sin against God and sin creates shame and shame leads us to instinctively want to hide or isolate from God and each other, which causes loneliness.

So God sent His Son, gave Him the name Jesus. He grew up as a man. He lived without sin. He loved people perfectly. He exercised wisdom perfectly. And then, He gave his life as a sacrifice for our sin. He was buried

in a grave. And on the third day, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, defeating the grave, defeating sin. The Bible says that He extends to us an invitation that if we would put our faith and trust in Him, that we would be forgiven of our sin, we would be given his righteousness, he would take away our shame that induces within us a desire to hide and isolate, and He would adopt us into his new big family called the church.

And then, we looked at the fourth movement and that is that because He's given us instructions, 59 of them that all include the words one another of how we're supposed to treat one another, live with one another is that we have the capacity, the ability with His power and His strength and His wisdom to flourish again even while we're here before we wait to get to heaven, where community will be perfected forever.

And one of these commands, these one another statements is that we are to honor one another. And so, today from Romans, I want to talk about not only honoring one another, but in our context, we live in an age of contempt. So we're going to put these together this morning and talk about how do we honor one another. My wife and I, we have three sons, and as our sons were growing up, they were in boy scouts, which meant that their dad learned how to tie knots, a lot of knots. And it's actually a really great thing. Some of you, you think you tie knots, you just have a great big ball of rope and you're like, that's my knot. That's not a knot, you're just moving rope.

But a knot, there's some real characteristics of knots and one of them, these knots, it's like the simplest knot there is, it's the square knot. It's super easy to tie, it's really strong, but there's another benefit to it. And so, all it simply is, and by the way, this will have a spiritual point at the end is that's it. And this knot has one intent and that is to take two ropes and tie them together. And what's interesting is when you tie them together, they're really, really, really, really strong. The more tension you put on it, the tighter the knot gets. But this is what's amazing about the knot is it's really easy to take apart.

Now, let me tell you about two ropes in the Bible that God always wants to keep together. Sometimes people call them indicatives and imperatives. Okay, so let me explain what those are. You open up the Bible and you're going to find some things that God did that he tells us to believe. It's a command. I want you to believe this. We're supposed to do it, but it's actually what he did that we're supposed to believe. It's an indicative. It indicates what he did. And then, there's imperatives and those are things that God said or commanded us, instructed us how to live that we are to do.

And it's like they're two different ropes. What He did that we are to believe and what we are to do on the basis, the fact that He commanded us to do them. Let me just give you one example of this. In Ephesians 4, he says, "Forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you." You see an instruction, something we're supposed to do, an imperative and it's connected deeply to an indicative of something that God has done for us. We are to forgive because we have been forgiven.

And this is really interesting because just like ropes, these two things you find within the Bible all over the place, they're really easy to tie together. I mean, don't that make sense? Like forgive, forgave, He did it, we do it. It makes sense, doesn't it? They're easy to tie together. When they're together, one provides strength for the other, and this is really important. The Bible never asks you to do anything that's surrounding that instruc-

tion. There is not evidence of what he has done that makes it possible for you to do it.

Most of us, we go like, “I had a quiet time.” And what we mean by that is I went on a hunt within the Bible for something I’m supposed to do because we assume that if I simply do it, my life is going to flourish. But here’s the problem, you have no power to do anything He’s asked you to do. And so, He has to actually fill us, empower us to help us to do it. And so, anytime you see an instruction of what you’re supposed to do, you’re supposed to go on lookout. I’m trying to teach you how do you study your Bible. On lookout, okay, surrounding it, the verse before, in it, or the verse after or after. Where is the evidence of the power coming from? What did He do that makes this possible for me to do?

But here’s the interesting thing about these commands is these indicatives imperatives, they’re really easy to separate and you can all imagine this. If this verse simply said, “Forgive one another,” you would be content. If it simply said, “As God forgave you,” you’d be content because we have an instinct to separate what God says must be kept together. And when these are untied, we lose power to pull it off, to do it like, “Man, I thought this was about honor and Romans 12.”

When we get to Romans 12, the text that I ask you to look at, what you’re going to find in that chapter, we’re not going to read it all, just two little verses out of it is you’re going to find there 36 imperatives, things we’re supposed to do. 36 of them. He just lines them up and they just, here they are, bam. But He’s so committed to helping us see that we can’t do it without Him, that He begins all of it with a very important verse and it’s verse 1 of chapter 12. Notice what He says, “I appeal to you therefore, by the mercies of God.”

In other words, He’s saying, look, in light of what I have just written you 11 chapters and if you’ve ever read Romans, the first 11 chapters are not about what we’re supposed to do, it’s all about what He did. It’s an explanation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And then, all of a sudden, we get to chapter 12 and from 12 to 16 is everything that we are supposed to do as believers in what He did and how we’re supposed to now live our life. It’s full of application, chapter 12 through 16. And a lot of people love 12 through 16 more than one through 11 because we’re all on a hunt for what we should do in the day. You cannot separate chapters 1 through 11 from the rest, and if you do, you lose power and that’s why He makes the connection right there. He ties a square knot and He says, “Look, I’m about to tell you a bunch of things that you’re supposed to do, but the only way you’re going to be able to pull them off is if you remember the mercy of God.”

How did we learn about the mercy of God? Let me just give you three highlights in those first 11 chapters to help you feel mercy so that you can then feel what he’s about to ask us to do, which is to outdo one another in showing honor. In chapter 1 verse 18 of Romans, we start with really bad news. He says, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by unrighteousness suppress the truth.” Every single one of us have sinned against God by actually suppressing the truth of His holiness, His righteousness, His justice, His love, His mercy, His compassion, and we sin against Him, His wrath is ignited towards humanity. This is where the book of Romans begins.

That’s bad news. You’re like, “Well, that only motivates fear. How could I be motivated by mercy?” Well, because chapter 3 verses 23-25 tells what God did even though there is anger. He says, “All have sinned and

fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as the propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.” These five underlying words are literally the most populated words in the book of Romans. He keeps talking about these things. And this is what He says, He said, “Each one of us have sinned against God in such a way that we have accrued a debt, a moral debt with a holy God, that we do not have the moral capital to be able to pay.” There’s a redemption price to free us from sin that none of us can pay.

And so, God Almighty and His love for us, in spite of His anger, in spite of the wrath that’s been ignited because He’s the offended party in the entire world. He put forward his own Son, Christ Jesus to be a propitiation. That means substitutionary sacrifice where someone gives their life in our place, someone pays our penalty, they pay our debt, and that’s what Christ did. He lived without sin and He gave His life as a propitiation and He shed His blood for us on the cross. He rose from the dead, and what it says is that He extended to us an invitation that everyone who would put their faith in Christ by acknowledging that they’re a sinner by repenting in their belief that they can save themselves by believing in Christ’s life, His death, and His resurrection, confessing Him as Lord of our life.

He says this is that He pays the redemption prize for us and He gives us a gift of grace and it’s that we are justified. It means that your sin is taken away and He gives his righteousness to your account, stuffs it into your heart so that when Christ, when God Almighty looks at you today, if you’re in Christ, He goes, “All I see is innocence. I see perfect righteousness,” because we bear the righteousness of Christ and because of that, because of that, even though the wrath of God is directed towards us, if we trust Him, the third piece, Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” No condemnation. This is mercy. We deserve condemnation and we don’t get it, that’s mercy.

So when we get to chapter 12, He says, “In view of this mercy, how do you treat one another?” Verse 9, “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” If you take notes, the first point is that Christ’s mercy compels us to love in a way that honors. When Jesus was on the earth, He was asked, “What’s the greatest command that God gave?” And He looked at the man and He says, “You ask for one, I’m going to give you two.” He says, “Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. That’s the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.” Up until that point, that’s the measuring stick. How much do you love yourself? In that same way, transfer it and love someone else in that way. You want a coat when it’s cold, look at a cold person and imagine you need to help them get a coat.

Two years later, the night before the cross, Jesus says a new command that I give to you today, and He says that you love one another. I can just imagine the guy’s going, “I think He’s already told us that, like love one another.” He goes, and all of a sudden the new part came, he says, “You’re used to the measuring stick being to love as you love yourself.” He goes, “But here’s the new measuring stick. I want you to love one another as I have loved you.” And then, He sums it all up and He says this, “By this, by this, all people are going to know that you’re my disciples if you love one another.”

So when we get to Romans 12 and you see that Paul is going to give instructions on how to respond, live our life in light of this mercy, it shouldn't surprise us that love would be a central part of these instructions, and indeed it is. He says, "Let love be genuine." Literally, not hollow. Then, He tells us how it cannot be hollow. "Abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good." This is what He means. If you say you love people and you don't abhor what destroys people, your love for them or affirmation of it is hollow. If we as a church family say we love people and we don't have an abhorring hatred towards human trafficking, we're liars. Our love is hollow. We're saying something but we really don't believe it.

And similarly, to say that we love someone and we don't pursue or hold fast to what is good, it is also a breach of love. It's hollow love. And so, in other words, there's people all around the world without the Gospel, they have no hope of putting their trust in Christ, and therefore they're absolutely exposed to the wrath of God. So for us to say we love people in the world and we don't get on a plane or we don't send people with our resources, we're not praying for our missionaries. In order to get the gospel to them, our affirmation of love for the people around the world is hollow.

And then, he says, "Love one another with a brotherly affection." We're like, "I wonder how we're supposed to do that." And then He tells us, "Outdo one another in showing honor." Honor, it can also be translated value or price, value or price, and this is what it means. To honor someone is to pay a price in response to their worth. Sometimes we're like, "Oh, he retired. You got a gold watch." And we think, "Oh." So when you accomplish something after a long period of time and someone gives you something in return, that's what honor is. And that is a demonstration of honor, but that is not the definition of honor. Otherwise, we have to wait a long period of time until people leave us before we honor them.

But honor, what is honor? Honor is to pay a price in response to the worth that we see in them. Sometimes you've heard the word honorarium. Someone comes, they speak or they make a deposit into us as a people and we're like, "We should honor and ascribe value to their worth." But honor is so much more than money. When you came in today and you walked in and the door was shut and you look back and there was someone who's coming in, if you saw within them a value that led you to stop, hold the door. You were paying a price because you have seen worth in another human being coming through, and then all of a sudden you're sacrificing and ascribing value to them as a human being. It's another form of honor.

We see this emphatically with the lure. We just sang to them and guess what's happening in heaven? People are singing to Him. What are they singing to Him in heaven right now? Revelation 5:12 says, they're singing, "Worthy is the Lamb who is slain." Notice worth. We see Him. He's right there and He's so worthy. So what should we do in response to our sight? "To receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." In other words, honor is given when worth is seen. We all give honor when something worthy crosses our eyes and we can see it. Well, the Bible tells us that each one of us are created in the image of God. This is why David, he actually writes Psalm 8 and he goes, "What is man, that God, you are so mindful of us?" And then he says this, "You have crowned him with glory and honor."

You've crowned him with glory and honor, and here's the question for you. How would we treat people if we saw the crown? You parked next to someone today who has a crown on their head, God says. Some of us, in order to get to our seat, we had to pass, "I'm so sorry about that." We had to pass through all these people in order to get to your seat. Did you look them in the eye? Did you see the crown, or were they just an inconvenience to you? Did you see the crown? How would we treat people if we saw the crown? My guess is we treat them all like a celebrity. We were like, wow, because we treat them like they're wearing a crown.

And so, just imagine this, let's just imagine I walked over here, I wasn't the pastor or speaking, I was just sitting there and I had some friends over here and I said, "You're not going to believe this. You're just not going to believe this. Michael Jordan's on the other side of the room." He's like, "No way. Really?" Some of us are like, "You have a high affirmation of him." You're like, "I think I'm going to move the other side of the room just to be a little closer to him. Where is, I've got to see him, I got to see him."

Now, just imagine that I came over to you and I said, "You're not going to believe this. You're just not going to believe this. You know Anne? Remember Anne, the image bearer, the mother of three, she's like right there, right there. Sammy, the high school sophomore, he's like right up there." Friends, were laughing because we don't treat people that way, and we don't treat people that way because we don't see people that way, because we don't see the crown.

You see, unlike most of the world that lives in a honor, shame culture, in the west, we assign value only to accomplishment and not personhood. We give days where like Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Day, and we should, we should pause and we should remember and we should think and we should learn. But every other day, we live in a culture of contempt. Contempt is the feeling that a person is beneath us. Its cousins are resentment and anger. And so, resentment, anger, and contempt, they're all really closely connected and you display one and so do I towards someone for a reason. Someone that we believe is above us, they're a boss or something. We don't feel contempt necessarily. We feel resentment. When somebody is equal to us in social standing, we feel anger and we feel contempt when we're convinced that someone is beneath us.

Contempt divides us into tribes, and therefore it creates loneliness. Contempt takes a piece of who a person is or even a piece of who we think they are and makes it the whole. You could be at a stoplight today and you look up and the car in front of you has a Trump or Biden sticker. And some of us, we look at that one piece of evidence about their life and on the basis of our convictions or idolatry, we can think something about them without knowing anything about the whole.

Think about this. They could be borrowing the car. They could also have just been diagnosed with cancer. They could also be wrestling with shame. They could have kids. They could have dreams and fears. They could be learning about the process. People are more than the fraction that we think we know about them. And when we treat people as though we know all about them, them by the fraction we think we know, we contribute to a culture of contempt. And this makes people lonely.

Let me just give you an example of this. There's a story in the Bible, a man named Jacob who marries two

women. Let me just pause the story and say that the Bible is against this. So there's things the Bible describes and there's things the Bible prescribes. There's all kinds of mess. When you open up the Bible and you're like, "Man, would God actually allow this?" Well, there's times when He's simply explaining the hot mess we made of the world that He had to come and send His Son to save us. And so, not everything that you read is like, "I should emulate everything," because you would be sinning all the time.

And so, a man has two wives. God didn't create it that way. When Jesus came here, He clarified, He goes, "That was never God's plan, my plan never." But he has two wives. To make it worse, they're sisters like bad decision upon bad decision, two sisters. And the Bible goes out of its way to tell us that one of them named Rachel was really beautiful, and then there was Leah. They also ran. It's like, yeah, they also competed. And Jacob loved Rachel, but not Leah. Now, think about this. She's in community, she's in a marriage, she's in a group, and yet she feels lonely. She feels unseen, she feels unheard, she feels as though she is disposable. "I could leave this and nobody would really care." So she was lonely in her own home, in her own marriage.

One thing she had going for though is that she could really create babies. Lord just gave her the ability to make babies and Rachel, at least for a time now. It's so interesting, this little sentence, she has her sixth son, brings her husband a sixth son. You can feel the ache in what she says, and this is what she says when she brings the sixth son. "Now my husband will honor me." You see what that means? Now he will assign value to me. Why? Because humanity assigns value on the basis of accomplishment instead of personhood. Paul says, "Outdo one another in showing honor," which means trip over one another as they're tripping over you to honor the crown that you mutually see on each other's heads.

The second thing I want you to see here is that Christ mercifully modeled how to show honor. We need an example of this honor, and nobody can give the example more than Christ. You see, it is the vision of Christ's mercy that empowers honor so we should imagine how he honored people. So before I show you just a few examples of this, let me remind you then of the ingredients of honor. If you're paying attention to what honor is and you know what it is, you're going to go, "I think I know what these ingredients are."

But this is what they are, first thing that has to happen is you have to see worth. You can't honor it until you can see it. You have to see somebody that is worth in someone, but then you have to feel it. There's some of us who see worth. I see worth, but if I'm apathetic towards you, then I'm not going to pay a price to honor you. So you have to see worth, you have to feel worth, and then you have to be willing to part with energy, resource, or time to assign value to that worth.

So let me show you this. And, Jesus, this is just beautiful. Matthew 9, all these verses will be up, but in chapter nine, verse nine, Matthew's there and he's a tax collector. No one wants to see him. He's lonely. Matthew is a guy literally, if he died, he knows that the entire Jewish people would not miss him at all because he's robbing them legally as a tax collector. He feels the weight of that every single night when he goes home. And suddenly his disciples, I should say, those of Jesus, they look into Jesus' eyes. They're like, "What's he looking at right now?" And he's like, "Oh, no, he's looking at Matthew." He saw a man. So He saw him. He called Matthew

sitting at the tax booth and He said to him, "Follow me."

This is amazing to me. It's like, well, did He feel anything toward him? All I can say in this example is He had to, and this is why, because this Matthew is this Matthew. The guy that wrote the book at the time, he's just a legalized thief. God looked at him and He goes, "There's capacity in you." What happens next? He sees value. He feels his value. In the very next verse, it's not up there, it says this. It says that he went to his house and he had lunch with all of his friends. The only friends he had were other tax collectors and sinners. He gave time and energy and even put His own reputation on the line because the Pharisees look at Him in there and they're like, "I cannot believe that he eats with tax collectors and sinners."

A few chapters later, He sees a huge crowd, a huge crowd of people. In chapter 14, He says, "And when he went ashore he saw a great crowd." So He saw, here, leaves no doubt, did he feel anything about them. He says that He had compassion on them. It's fascinating. There's a comparison now, his own disciples, there's like they saw the crowd. They just saw the crowd as a problem. It's like all these people are going to get hungry. Jesus says, "Yeah, they're going to get hungry." "How are we going to feed them?" He's like, "Why don't you just get rid of all of them?" He goes, "No, I want to ascribe value to them. How could we do that? Let me make bread and fish and feed all these 5,000 people."

One more, in Luke 7, He sees a woman who's already lost her husband and now her son has just died. They're carrying his body. Jesus could have said, "Oh, I see it. There's people dying all over the world, just another one." But no, it says that He saw her and He felt something of value and her compassion, and then He takes the time. He goes up to and actually raises the body back from the dead. What you see over and over and again, if you look through the life of Jesus is you see Him seeing people's value, feeling their value, and as-signing value eventually by even giving His own life to pay for our sin.

That leads to one last thing, and that is that Christ mercifully revealed the power of showing honor. He revealed the power of showing honor. Don't forget, it is the vision of Christ's mercy that empowers this honor. And so, we should see what effect does it have when you actually honor. I'm just going to give you one example of this, but the point is this, is that when you honor someone, it opens you up to the potential of blessing.

And I want to show you this in the life of Jesus, think of the mercy in this. This is the son of God who grows up and he goes back to his hometown. In Mark 6, this is what he says, "And He went away from there and came to His hometown, and His disciples followed Him. And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished, saying, 'where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him?'" In other words, we went to school with Him. Who taught Him all this? We didn't learn all this.

"How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' And they took offense at Him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.' And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on

a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. And He went about among the villages teaching.”

Here’s my point. When we honor somebody, we keep access to what they carry, and when we dishonor it, we lose access to what they carry. Think about the enormous loss. This is the Son of God who has the ability to teach the full counsel of God to heal people. And because they honored Him, it says that He went to other towns. He left and they lost access to all that He had in Himself. And all these other towns because they honored Him, they gained access to everything that He had.

And don’t you see? Every one of us are created with a certain kind of intelligence, every one of us. It’s not always the same kind of intelligence that everyone has been made with an intelligence. You dishonor that person and you lose access to enjoy part of that intelligence. You dishonor someone, if they have a good sense of humor, you lose out on a lot of enjoyment, probably a lot of great jokes. Someone may have the gift of wisdom, humility, discernment, ability, compassion. We dishonor one another, we lose out. But when we honor people, we get to enjoy the wonderful strengths that God has endowed upon each one of us. We only notice this though if you see people wearing the crown.

And so, with that, let me encourage you to consider a few things and then we’ll sing a song. First, application. Let me encourage you to consider the mercies of Christ. See friends, if you lose sight of the mercy of Christ, you’re going to lose power and motivation to be able to honor one another in a way that’s going to allow you and the people around you to flourish. Let me encourage you to think as a believer about the life of Jesus frequently, His death and His resurrection. Allow His example to inspire honor and to restrict apathy towards people. And for those of you who have never put your faith in Christ, I urge you today, consider how He has honored you by giving His life to provide you a means, a way to go to heaven, to be forgiven of all of your sin, to be rid of all of your guilt and shame. I urge you to trust Him, to consider His mercy.

Second, I urge you to repent as the Lord reveals any sin. Not if I reveal any sin or someone else reveals sin, but if you’re opening up the Bible and you’re seeing and God’s speaking, and he’s saying, “Look, I see the difference between how I’m living my life and what I see within how I’m supposed to be honoring people.” Whatever you see that’s out of step, then confess it to sin and repent. Is there anyone that you’ve dishonored, anyone that you had ignored, anyone that you have showed favoritism against because you perceive that they didn’t have economic means? Have you contributed in any way to the culture of contempt?

In July, we’re going to do a three-week series on politics because what could be more fun in an election year? And I’m going to tell you then, and I’ll tell you right now, this is actually one area where the Christian Church has actually given itself license to contribute to the culture of contempt by speaking dishonorably about human beings because we don’t see the human being as more than a bad policy. 1 Peter 2 says, “Honor everyone.” Then he says, “Honor the emperor,” or the president, the governor.

Let me just tell you right now, I’ll say it again. As I am often grieved, as many of you are right, God has told the leaders of the land to do three things specifically within the scriptures, to commend what God says is

good, to punish what God says is evil, and to protect the weak. That's their job. And I admit that I'm so often grieved by the leaders for not doing these things. But honor doesn't mean, when he says honor them, it doesn't mean that we agree with them or that we even commend their bad character or their bad policy that may be out of step with scripture. It means that we see our leaders as more than their policy. We pray for them as an image bearer, and we express honest dismay about what they're doing while still speaking about them as an image bearer of God who wears a crown.

Third, let me urge us to ask God to help us see and feel people's worth. It's a miracle for this to happen. C.S. Lewis says, "Don't you know there's no ordinary people." You're not sitting next to any ordinary person. They're all extraordinary. Everyone who opened the door for you is worthy of eye contact. Everyone you had to scoop by in order to sit down is worth saying hello to. They all have crowns on their head that you can't see. Just imagine how clarifying it would be though if we could see the whole world in black and white, but we could always see people in blue. Just imagine that. You walk in the room and everything's black and white except for human beings. Think of how clarifying it would be. We don't get that liberty or luxury, and so we need God to help us to see people and to feel their worth. So pray for that.

And finally, let me urge us to give energy to honor people. As God opens your eyes towards the value of people, part with energy, time, and resource to value them, to honor them. Welcome them. Make eye contact with them. Ask to sit by someone who may be sitting alone. Invite them. Listen to their story. Learn about them. Assume that they are more than the part that you see. Participate in a life group where people are there. Serve people. Leave parking spaces nearest to the building so that people who need the closer parking spaces can receive that. And imagine the love that we would enjoy and feel, and the apologetic that we would provide to our unbelieving lost city if we honored one another in an age and time of great contempt.

So let's pray. Father, we bow before you and thank you that in the most remarkable way that you would honor us by sending Christ to rescue us, help us to not lose touch with that mercy and help it to inspire and propel us to love and honor and treat people with respect and dignity. Help us to see the crown that you've placed on each of our heads because we're made in your image. And now, Lord, as we sing, would you help us to sing not only with joy, but as an expression that we believe what we've just heard? And would you use us, send us to be able to be a blessing to honor others? We pray in Christ's name. Amen.



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