

REAL Relationships: Commitment

Sermon series can be found at asburybham.org/sermons

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!"

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgement against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

Summary

The practice of Holy Communion described in First Corinthians is a bit different than the practice you might find in churches today. Instead of handing out a piece of bread and a sip of grape juice, first century Holy Communion included a full meal served with bread and plenty of wine. What we read is that some in the church, likely the more wealthy among them, show up early and eat all the food and drink all the wine before others show up.

Instead of treating it as the meal of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, they were treating it like a potluck supper and those at the end of the line could just eat what little was left over. Paul points out that this demonstrates a lack of commitment to brothers and sisters in Christ and a complete misunderstanding of the purpose of the meal.

Our core relationships can be like this. We might have started out with all the right intentions to be considerate to one another — but we have lost our focus on commitment. We take one another for granted — and we begin to tend to our own wants and needs instead of those of the other.

Paul's answer for the Christians in Corinth is to treat all of those in the church as equal guests to the table. That lesson applies to commitment in our Core Relationships: commitment is not about being stuck with someone. It means to stick with someone. To invest into their life.

What does commitment in relationships mean to you? And how does God's commitment to us demonstrate how we should show our commitment to others?

Discussion Questions

- When the wealthy Christians showed up to the Lord's Supper meal in Corinth and ate all the food and drank all the wine, how did that show a lack of commitment to their brothers and sisters who could not show up early to the meal?

- Healthy relationships are said to make us "happier and healthier" as they provide opportunities for us to develop support systems as well as friendships that help us grow and mature. Why is commitment an essential part of building the trust that is needed to achieve all of these benefits from real relationships?

- True commitment is about sticking with someone and not just being stuck with them. Commitment is about keeping promises, but it is also about investing in the relationship and making room in your lives for one another. In what relationships are you more likely to be actively committed and in what relationships are you less likely to be actively

committed. What are the differences in those relationships? And do any of them need to change?

Prayer by Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and love. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus. Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. Amen

Practice

In his sermon, Pastor Mike shared ways to demonstrate commitment. Spend time considering each point. What can you do this week to help build the space for relationships to thrive?

Spend real time together, not just being around one another.

- What does 'real time together' mean? Intentionally spend real time with at least one person this week. Afterwards, reflect on the experience. What was it like? What did you learn about the person? What did you learn about yourself?

Don't avoid conflict, work towards healthy compromise.

- What is healthy compromise and is it important to you? Is there someone in your life that you need to have a healthy discussion with?

Don't keep score, keep care.

- Keeping score may feel good in the moment but often damages relationships. Practice replacing "keeping score" with words of affirmation or gratefulness for the other person. Later, reflect on the conversation. What was it like? What did you learn about the person? What did you learn about yourself?