

REAL Relationships: Respect

Sermon series can be found at asburybham.org/sermons

Scripture Reading

1 John 4:7-12

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

Summary

This past Sunday, my wife, Rev. Julie Holly, preached about respect in our core relationships. She reminded us about how respect, itself, is founded in love. We must have some level of care for the other person in order to truly demonstrate that we respect who they are and what they have to share. Julie reminded us that when we feel respected, we often feel that we are taken seriously, that we feel truly heard, and that we feel as though we are being treated with kindness. When we offer some of these very same signals to others we have the opportunity to help those relationships grow.

John reminds us that we love because God first loved us. In fact, he goes even further and says that when we do not love, we do not know God.

Respect can be seen in the same way, since they are connected. We can offer respect to others because each and every person is a child of God and created in the image of God. Each person’s worth is based upon a higher authority than our own flawed opinions.

We can demonstrate respect in our core relationships by truly listening to and understanding the words of others before we offer praise or disagreement. We can ask for more information so that we know why they feel that way before we begin offering insight. We can demonstrate respect by being honest with one another — speaking the truth in love as we have been directed by Scripture.

What does respect in a relationship mean to you? How do you know that you are respected? And how do you demonstrate respect in your relationships?

Discussion Questions

- Rev. Julie Holly connected Christian love for God and others (agape) to our respect of God and others. How are respect and love intertwined?

- When people feel respected, they often feel that they are seen, heard and understood. How are good communication skills helpful in demonstrating respect for someone else? What does disrespectful communication look like in contrast?

- Rev. Julie Holly mentioned that Christians are called to step out first (in grace) in order to treat others with respect. She mentioned that we should do so to those who have wronged us like tax collectors, to people who have betrayed us like Judas, and to those who were not there when we needed them like Peter (among others). Why is it so difficult to be the first person to demonstrate respect in difficult relationships and why does it matter so much that we do it?

- How can larger organizations like a Sunday school class or congregation demonstrate respect for each and every member?

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 this sermon series, we are unpacking how our most important relationships can thrive through commitment, oneness, respect, and evolving together. This week, as we explore respect within relationships, consider adding the following practices:

- Respect often is connected to a sense of our own self-worth being valued by another person. Consider how being created in the image of God is connected to someone's self- or sacred- worth. Spend time reflecting on how you learn to see people more as God sees them. Pay attention to anything you are learning about yourself, someone else, or God. Talk with God about what you are noticing.
- Revisit this question - "How can larger organizations like a Sunday school class or congregation demonstrate respect for each and every member?" What organization are you part of that may need for you to demonstrate an extra measure of respect this week?