

Unity - Part 1
"Unity through Teachability"
February 6th, 2022

- It's good to be back!!! - I have been recovering from eyelid surgery!

? Have you ever noticed how different we are?

- Thinker / Feeler, Introvert / Extrovert, Male / Female
- Teaching the Boys... "You just need to know: Girls are different!"
 - We are all SOOO different, and yet we are called to live in UNITY.

- Today we are launching a brand new 5 weeks series called, "Unity... an invitation to the Road Less Traveled."

- In the last prayer Jesus prayed b/f He went to the cross, He prayed for Unity.

John 17:20-21 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

v. 22-23 "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

- Jesus' whole desire was that we would experience UNITY!
 - So the WORLD (who is so divided & filled w/ Hate and Sides) would know that the LOVE of God is REAL.
- Jesus wanted us ^{to be} ~~We are~~ ONE* so more would come to know Jesus & follow Him...because they see how much we love God & each other!
- That's why Satan fights against it so much!

PRAY

- We are living in Unprecedented Times.
 - Not since the Civil War has the United States been so divided.
 - Back then there was no social media so even that was different.
 - But families, communities & people groups were divided like they are today.

- That is why we are going to keep teaching on what God's Word has to say about the topic of UNITY!
 - We are all about following Jesus & leading each of us into His Word.
 - So, this series is not Political, it's not Agenda-Filled,
 - It's going to be Powerful & Spirit-Filled!!!
- Over the last 2 months, I have read over 500 pages of Bible-based material on Racism, Politics, Immigration, and every topic in between.
 - In the last 2 years: Well over 1,000 pages of content & material!
 - Sarah & I & our Team have been on a Journey & it's been so powerful!
- Over the next 5 weeks we are inviting you to "Go on a Journey with us!"
 - Everywhere Jesus went, He invited people, not to "Have it all together," but to simply, "Follow Him on a Journey."
- Over the next 5 weeks we are going to Dare to get Uncomfortable,
 - We're going to talk about some Uncomfortable things.
 - As we do, the temptation is going to be to want to run, or shut down, or zone out or fight back. - Resist that urge! - Stay planted!
 - We believe God wants to do something profound in each of us, but it can't happen if we run from it.
 - Over these weeks, some words or phrases are going to come up against what we think we know & in those moments we are going to want to "Cancel" or run away.
 - Me using the word "cancel" just now evoked something, didn't it?!? (See what I mean!)
- Let me encourage you whenever you feel uncomfortable or nervous or angry or upset, ask:
 - ? "What am I feeling right now?" - ? "Why do I feel this way?"
 - ? "What's going on IN ME that I don't like or is uncomfortable?"
 - Then ask: ? "What is the Holy Spirit trying to stir in me?"
 - ? "What is the enemy trying to do to me?" – Lie to me, Bring Fear
- Let me Speak to the Biggest Fears happening in the Room right now:

- White People - To be called or thought of in any way as racist.
 - That's not what's gonna happen in the next 5 weeks!
- Black People, Hispanics & Asians/Mixed Race - To be made to feel Unsafe, Unwelcome, or Inferior or Ostracized in some way. (Staff)
 - To think that your color or your story doesn't matter in this conversation.
 - I want you to know that *It Absolutely Does!*
- When it comes to conversations about Race & Diversity, some people just want to "Ignore" it...
 - *"If we don't talk about it, then it's not so bad, right?!?"*
 - It's a lot to handle / It's super complex / Let's just not talk about it!
- But Ignoring something Never makes it go away, does it?
 - FINDING A LUMP / NOT OPENING BILLS / CHECK ENGINE LIGHT
 - UNDER-PERFORMING EMPLOYEE / TOXIC RELATIONSHIP
 - Ignoring Hard Things never makes things Better...

Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children."

- What we ignore can forfeit our Witness & Effectiveness in the world!
- We as Jesus followers are called to live different than the world around us.
 - But what does that REALLY mean?
 - It means that what's written in *This Book* matters the most to How we Live our Lives!!!
 - More than Hannity or Tucker or Anderson or Scarborough.
 - More than Trump or Biden or Huckabee or Lemon.
 - Here at NLC, we believe THIS BOOK is the Ultimate Authority on how we are to live.
 - And when we get to Heaven, this will be the mirror that God holds up to our life. ? How did we live as followers of Jesus?

So... What is Unity? - Unity is Not Uniformity!

- Unity in the Family of God is: **"Strength through our Differences!!!"**

- SCIENTIFIC FACT: ALLOY METAL IS STRONGER THAN PURE METAL

"Metal alloys are made up of differing atoms, unlike pure metal, where the atoms are all the same. This makes it harder for the atoms to move around in metal alloys, which is why they are typically much stronger and harder than pure metals."

- We become the answer to Jesus' Prayer for Unity when we find Strength through our differences, not when we find Division through our differences!!!

- 1 of our 5 CV's as a ch: "Better Together!" & we thoroughly believe that!!!

- No matter your Age, your Race, your Socio-economic background, your God given Gender – we truly are better when we come TOGETHER!

- MWK PERSONALLY - I know I am!

- I am better because I have others around me in my life that aren't all like me. (Not all just White Men but Diverse - M/F, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Different Backgrounds / Life Experiences, etc.)

- B/c we love Jesus, we Unified & we make each other Stronger!

- I AM Stronger because of it!

? So where do we start? - It all starts with us

*** Embracing an Attitude of Teachability! (I wrote the book, haha)**

- 2 Definitions of Teachability:

1) A desire to learn & a willingness to change.

- What's your numbers right now?

2) Being willing to relearn that which we think we already know.

- There's a story in the Bible where Peter actually believed he knew better than Jesus... It happened at the Last Supper!!! (Explain as you go!!!)

John 13:4-5 "He (Jesus) got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a

basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

v. 6-8 "He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

v. 8b-9 "Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

- Peter thought he knew better than Jesus!
 - He was obstinate - *NO Jesus! You're not allowed to wash my feet!*
- But when Jesus showed him a Different Way, he was open & teachable & said, *"Then wash all of me!"*
- Peter gives us a Model for what it's going to take to be in Unity.

(25:00) What it takes for Unity:

1. Unity takes Humility.

A. When Peter was faced w/ info & a perspective he didn't know before & hadn't thought of before, he was Humble enough to admit it.

- So many of the Issues facing our World today are Happening b/c of a Lack of Humility in the Hearts of People.
 - We have to lay our Pride aside if we are ever going to hope to find a place of Unity.

C. MIP:? Are we willing to humble ourselves before God and others and admit there may be things we don't know?

- About our spouse? (Promote next weekend!)
- About other races? About people's background & culture?

I Corinthians 8:1b "Knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up."

- IOW, when we think we know, that's when pride sets in, but Love plays it different!
 - Love leaves People & us BETTER than we were before!!!
 - That's Teachability!!!

2. Unity takes Maturity.

A. Peter wanted to be like Jesus more than he wanted to be Right.

- That's why he said, "Wash my whole body."
- MIP: ? Can that be said of us?

B. *"True Spiritual Maturity is holding on to opposing thoughts at the same time and not losing our Peace or Identity in the process."* - MWK

- TSM: *"My entire existence isn't threatened b/c we don't agree!"*
- *"My worldview isn't shattered b/c you and I don't agree."*
- This is why we Cancel each other, but...
- It doesn't have to be that way.

C. When we agree that "Jesus is the way, the truth, & life," then we can Vote Differently & still be in Unity!

- We can Approach Issues like Masks / No Masks or Vaccine / No Vaccine & still stay in Unity & Love!!

D. Thank you Leaders & Church Family for Staying Focused on the BIG Things as we have navigated these ~~challenges~~ last 2 years!

- Your Maturity & Staying in Love has made it possible for us to Move Forward even when we don't agree!

E. True Maturity says, *"I don't see it how you do, but I Respect & Honor your point of view."* - That's what we're going for!

— RESOURCE PAGE! — Take a Step!

3. Unity takes Empathy.

A. Jesus knew that if Peter didn't understand Empathy, then he would never be able to live in a Post-Resurrection world!

- Empathy is a Backbone to our Christian Faith!
- We, as Christians, are called to Empathy & Compassion.

John 13:35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

- Not our buildings / bumper stickers / or politics / or great ch. services

B. When we Empathize with Someone we Enter their World and Validate their Story.



**** To validate someone else's story does not in any way diminish our story, it just makes us like Jesus.**

- In that moment, it's not about us!

C. "I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT ITS LIKE TO BE A PASTOR" ILL.

- I can't imagine having 1,000's of eyes & opinions & people judging and scrutinizing you every week.

- When he said it I teared up!!! Why?!?

- B/c he entered my world & cared about my pain!

- You can't possibly understand what it's like to be me, but I'm so grateful you see what I've experienced!

D. That's what Jesus did... In order to be in relationship with us, He came down, entered our world and felt our pain!

- Aren't we so glad we He did!?!

E. He's simply called us to do the same with those whose stories are like us AND with those whose stories aren't.

- RESOURCE PAGE: w/ so many Resources for all ages!!!

- Books / Why I recommend them... - Interviews

- We'll keep adding to it! - Parent Resources!

Conclusion:

- Jesus prayed that we would be "One" & be in "Unity."

- That happens through **Teachability / Humility / Maturity / Empathy!**

- Now... how are you feeling right now?

- Excited? Anxious? Nervous? Angry? Upset? Relieved?

- God is trying to increase your Self-Awareness and bring you to a place of Greater Freedom.

Next week: Sarah & I are taking this Unity message to our marriages!!!

Time of Prayer: (SONG: Run to the Father)

Repent - I haven't been open & that has hurt the heart of God.

Rebuke any Lies or Fear

Commit to Openness & Not Running during the weeks of this series.

God, MAKE US ONE – We want to follow Jesus in every area of our lives

God, would You Heal anything in us that isn't from You.

- We want your Best!!!