

Unity Series - Week 2 – February 13, 2022
“Unity through Humanity”

MWK: Welcome Locations & online family (Superbowl Sunday / Valentines Weekend)

SJK: Beautiful Conference (May 6-7) & 20th Celebration (May 8th) – save the date & register for Beautiful!

MWK: Week 2 of our UNITY series – an invitation to the road less traveled...

- **UNITY: the state of being ONE.**
- What we are teaching you is not easy...because it's not what the world is saying. It's not even what our flesh/our sin nature wants. It's not what culture says...
 - “Get what you deserve” “Make yourself #1” “Fight to be right”
 - All of those things bring us to a place of sin and division

SJK: Jesus has a better way. *John 17:20-23 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ 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.*

²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ 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 says that because of his finished work on the cross, we can carry His glory – that when we have Jesus in us that His prayer was that will be brought to complete unity.
- Unified with God (love God, love one another).
- Because we love God, we CAN love one another.

MWK: This is what Jesus did. He opened the door and said, “follow me”– he became human and his prayer was that even though we are human, we could be one. We could live in unity!

PRAY

Title of Message: Unity through Humanity

Unity makes room for us to accept each other's humanity.

- Sinful, that we all fall short of God's glory because we make mistakes!
- From the time that we start to make decisions we want our own way
 - **ILL: 2 year old, “no” – who taught this kid to be like this?**

SJK: ILL: Married Couples – I had no idea just how “human” he was until we got married!

- How are we still unified when we have bad days, when we get realize we have triggers, when we uncover junk from our past?
- Our culture says: cancel. When relationships get hard. When the junk adds up, expose it, break up, gossip...divide...

- But as God's sons and daughters, we are called to live different. In marriage, friendships... *Colossians 3:12-14 "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.**"*

MWK: We want to remind us all today that we are God's chosen people. We are dearly loved by God our Father. We are holy through the finished work of Jesus!

- But we need model unity in relationships by being compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patience...and through LOVE – the love of God binds us together in perfect unity!

SJK: This kind of love isn't the world's love. It's not conditional based on what you do for me, it's a wide-open love that makes room for our humanity and still loves.

- **ILL: Last Summer - St. Louis Arch – restrictive. Claustrophobic. Can't be "me." Move around Amazing to get out and move around – to be Free – have fun - MAKE ROOM!**
- There is a blessing & promises from God that come with unity – in our marriages, in our friendships, in our small group, our locations, our church! (but we have to make room for it)

MWK: What does Unity through Humanity look like?

1. Makes Room for our Imperfections.

No one is perfect. When we enter relationships, we often think "roses & date nights..." but what we get is "bad attitudes" "unmet expectations" and "real life circumstances."

- **ILL: All of the sudden we realize, "What? She isn't perfect?" "My friend made a mistake."**
- **And kindness, patience, compassion can easily go out the door!**

SJK: Unity creates space for each other's imperfections.

- Are we restrictive or do we have **capacity** to embrace imperfections?
 - **ARCH ELEVATOR vs. The Room at the Top**
- Do we have a **reservoir** of God's love and grace that is big enough to hold others issues?
 - **When he shares his story of being racially profiled.**
 - **When she shares that people look confused because of her Spanish accent.**
- Do we have a **container** large enough to make room for our spouse as they are transforming?
 - **When he confesses that he's struggling with pornography.**
 - **When she shares that she was abused as a child....**

Philippians 2:3 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."

- Unity is not possible without humility.
- When pride is present, we are placing ourselves above our spouse, our friend, others.
- Humility creates a culture for unity, but pride creates a culture for division and disunity!
- **Two statements to check our humility tank: "I'm sorry" "I can see your point of view"**

MWK: Perfection isn't the answer for unity, forgiveness is.

¹³ *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.*

- **Forgiveness.** (when they hurt us.) Remember, we are human too. We make mistakes too. It's easy to forget how much we have been forgiven. Look at the plank in your own eye.
- **Grace.** (we can be kind and gracious). Judgement is a sin, but grace and empathy makes room for humanity!
- **I'm not saying that God isn't wanting to work a plan for growth, but what if that looks like doing it together in unity.**

SJK: Single people... In dating relationships, look for someone that you are compatible with, but also look for someone who has the capacity to help you in your humanity...

- To help you grow to give you room to fly, to be transformed, to help point you to Jesus!

What does Unity through Humanity look like?

2. Makes Room for our Differences.

- God made male & female – he made room for both of us to be completely different.
 - **ILL: Look different, think different, think about sex different, we are so different!!!**
- Genesis 2:18 He said that it would be good for us to be together – to help one another!

MWK: We can stay unified while having different beliefs in non-essentials...

- **EX: Sarah making Spaghetti (meat does not go on the noodles) / Different gifts (EX: Why don't you pay the bills? My Dad always paid the bills?)**
 - When we acknowledge our spouses' strengths, it doesn't diminish our own.
 - I don't lose anything by her being different and better at things than I am.

1 Corinthians 16:13 *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. ¹⁴ Do everything in love."*

- We can love each other's differences.
- Even though we don't agree, we can still be loving through it.
- **ILL: Matt's Illustration about reading "For Men Only"**

SJK: We all have preferences and we all have biases.

- **Preference:** *Preference implies choosing between two or more variables without a moral implication. Examples would include: broccoli over peas; purple over green; coffee over tea (Starbucks over Dunkin) – that may feel like a moral conviction for some!*
- **Bias:** *Any preference that someone has for something or against something & they favor it unfairly.*
 - **Implicit** – we all have it. It's unconscious. It's a part of who we are. Our experiences, education. How we view someone or a certain situation.
 - **Driving on a highway, see someone older "they are going to drive so slow"**
 - **"All women are soft and can't do certain things."**
 - **Explicit:** When we act out on those biases.

- **Start yelling at the old person and call them a derogatory name.**
- **“Because women are soft and can’t do certain things, you don’t consider them for this role.”**

MWK: Unity makes room for our differences. We all have preferences and Biases, but we are called to live in unity.

- **So, we need to back it out and simply ask where did that thought come from? Flesh? Your parents? Your insecurity? Fear?**
 - It starts here and if we don’t recognize where it began, then we can’t rewire how God wants us to live in relationships!
 - ...it’s Jesus’s foundation that He wants us to go from!!
 - That He made us all. He loves us all. And He makes room for our differences (back to Genesis – he said it would be really good)!!!

SJK: If you’ve been hurt by others who haven’t made room for your differences, God understands. He hurts with you. You can be angry and “sin not.”

- **Just go to HIM! Jesus can get in and heal those places that you think can’t be touched.**
- **In relationships (marriage or friendships) –**
 - **Be courageous and willing to say something “I understand that’s your perception. But that’s not who I am.”**
 - **The Word of God defines WHO you are. Get into the Word of God and know for yourself. He made you different and He loves you!**

MWK: *What does Unity through Humanity look like?*

3. Makes Room for Conversations.

Unity is not uniformity (if you would just be like me, then we could be unified).

- **No, the goal in relationships is not to think alike, it’s to think together!**
- **To talk. To listen. To have conversations. To be real and to really work it through together.**

SJK: *Romans 12:18 “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

- **ILL: You might think, “We don’t fight” true... but you also don’t “talk.”**
- **Not talking isn’t living in peace, it’s living in denial.**
- **“Peace” for the sake of harmony is just a room full of resentment & a blowup might be coming.**
- **Unity is being willing to have conversations that lead to peace.**

MWK: It’s natural to be afraid when issues come up. In marriages. In the conversation of racial reconciliation. I get it. We are afraid that we might say the wrong thing.

- **Fear freezes (paralyzes you), but faith and trust moves you.**
- **Even if you do offend your spouse or someone while trying, at least as it depends on you, your attempt is to live at peace through conversations!**

SJK: It does take maturity and security in Christ to talk and work through issues.

- Many times multiple conversations (**ILL: Give it 10 years...**)
- And we have to be aware (self-aware) of ourselves, of our own issues, our own triggers.
- And stay patient (love is patient).

MWK: In relationships, we have to work to Go from rage/anger/hurt to compassion and empathy...

- **James 1:19** *“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”*
 - In marriage or in relationships or - People are often times trying to “cry out” but it manifests through anger.
 - Even when our country feels divided
 - See the opportunity to love, not to be right.

SJK: Marriage reveals our capacity for pain... But every pain has a purpose when redeemed by Jesus...

- Does your marriage have the capacity for the cross?
- Sometimes we will give grace to everyone else. We can empathize with everyone else...
- But those who have hurt us... It takes the highest level of the cross for forgiveness.
- But there’s also the greatest level of return when we become more like Jesus!

SJK: Unity in our relationships comes when we create the capacity to love one another’s humanity because we understand how much Christ first loved us.

- We have to make room in our hearts to receive His love and give it to others.
- To our spouse, to our friend, to those who don’t look like us.

MWK: Invite all locations to STAND:

- **SALVATION**
- **BEAUTIFUL NAME: VERSE 2 (He didn’t want heaven without us) & CHORUS 2 (wonderful name)**

SJK: CHALLENGE TO EMBRACE OTHER’S HUMANITY

- Imperfections - forgive
- Love and accept our Differences
- Courage to have a Conversation

PRAY – UNITY THROUGH HUMANITY

MWK: **BRIDGE:** VERSE 3 (Death Could Not Hold you) CHORUS 3 (What a Powerful Name it is)