

Approaching Others with the Gift of God

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Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 00] So let me begin with a question. I want, you know, the danger with asking a question like the one I'm going to ask is, it's so easy to overthink.

It's so easy to just go, oh man, you know, I don't even know how to answer this. So I want you to, you don't have to say it out loud, but I want you inside your own head to come up with an answer. And I want you to answer from your gut. Your first gut reaction to this question. Okay, so here it is. How good are you at forming relationships?

How good are you at forming relationships? Okay, you got your gut answer? Don't overthink it, okay? You can keep that to yourself, right? Because I think we might get a variety of different answers here.

Now, I doubt if you were to say on a scale of one to ten, how good are you at forming relationships? I doubt many of us are going to think that we're like a ten on that scale, that we're like this Dale Carnegie, you know, win friends and influence people.

[1 : 02] We're just masters of doing that. I would guess most of us would say that maybe we are average or possibly above average. I mean, after all, we know that one guy who just, the way he relates to people, you're like, oh man, how does this guy even have any friends?

How does he even have any friends? We know people who have, whose lives are filled with betrayal, with broken trust. We know people who blame everybody else for their problems. You know, there's that old saying, the common denominator to all your broken relationships is you, right? And so we know the one person who doesn't know that. They're walking through life and they're not good at relationships and they don't know.

And so we think, well, at least I'm not that guy. But I think maybe we overestimate our ability to form meaningful relationships.

We probably think we're a lot better at that than we really are. We overestimate our righteousness. We overestimate our wisdom. We overestimate our compassion.

[2 : 04] And I'm speaking to you this morning, not from a place of a guy who is a 10 on that scale.

I am not Dale Carnegie. I am not a guy who's got relationships figured out. I would probably have in the past answered average or above average, probably above average at forming relationships. I think the Lord has really been working on me in my life. And especially as I've come to know Jesus and to see how he forms relationships, I've come to realize that I actually feel that, yeah, I feel I probably maybe like a three or four on that scale.

If Jesus, because the truth is it's Jesus who's a 10. And boy, he is so good at it. He is so righteous. He relates rightly to other people. I'm speaking to you as a fellow learner.

What I want you to do is not learn from me, but learn from Jesus. I want you to learn intently how Jesus Christ, our Lord, how he formed relationships with people during his earthly ministry.

[3 : 11] And I've been reading the Gospel of John, just going through it with a fine-toothed comb, trying to learn from all his interactions with people, what healthy relationships, relationships that are framed by righteousness, what these healthy relationships look like in action.

Jesus of Nazareth, he is the human being, the perfect human being, the only person ever who is a true master of forming healthy relationships.

Jesus knew how to approach people with perfect love, speaking perfect truth, led by perfect compassion, tempered with perfect wisdom. There is no better teacher.

There is no better master. Jesus is perfectly righteous, perfectly good, perfectly without sin. That's what we believe when we say that he is God's Messiah, when he is the Son of God.

It's one thing to, you know, recite some creeds, to say that, yeah, yeah, yeah, I believe Jesus is perfect. He is without sin, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It's another one thing to say that's true. It is

another thing to see it in action, to see it in 3D, in full color, in flesh and blood, how Jesus actually feels, how he actually thinks and speaks and acts toward other people.

[4 : 27] And that's why we have the Gospels. One of the many reasons why we have the Gospels is we need to see that. We need to see God's law lived out in 3D and full color. My aim is to lead you through an encounter with Jesus that took place 2,000 years ago to show you, you know, what I'm learning as I begin to learn how I can follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and to become like Jesus.

Now, if you were at the Christmas Eve service, a lot of this is going to be some review. You know, you got to hear a lot of this that evening. I read something that I called a Christmas story. It is a story of Jesus approaching others with the gift of God. That is fundamentally a Christmas story. It is a story of Jesus approaching a Samaritan woman at a well in John chapter 4. And so if you want to go back, re-listen to it, because the focus of that story is just on who, on Jesus as a person and on how the point of preaching this as a Christmas story is to show you that Christmas is not an isolated incident, that this is the way Jesus always relates to people. He always approaches them. He always moves towards them in just a certain special way, a way that we're going to see today. And the whole point of today is to take that and now to ask the question, okay, if that is how Jesus lives, and if we are to become like Jesus, how do I become like that too?

[5 : 57] How do I start relating to people that way? How do we form relationships the way Jesus did?

How does the manner in which Jesus approached this woman show us the way of perfect righteousness? Now before I begin, I realized this morning as I was thinking about it, we might be thinking, what kind of relationships are you talking about?

Are you talking with people, you know, unbelievers who need to hear the gospel or need help? Are you talking about people within the church who maybe need help? And the answer to that question is yes.

Yes to all of the above. Because everyone needs the gift of God. Everyone needs to hear the gospel. Everyone needs to hear about Jesus Christ. Everyone needs to be reminded of that truth. This is all about how you can relate to each and every person in your life. This is about how you can relate to your brothers and sisters in Christ sitting here.

[6 : 57] This is how you can relate to your spouse, to your children, to your parents, to your friends, to a random stranger you meet on the street. Here's what we read in John chapter 4 verses 1 through 10.

You'll find this on page 888 if you're using the Blue Bibles our ushers handed out. Page 888 and John chapter 4 verses 1 through 10.

Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples, he left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

And he had to pass through Samaria. So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.

Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

[8 : 07] A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

The Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

This is the word of the Lord. All right. Now I'm not going to focus quite as much time on observing and interpreting the text as I did on Christmas Eve. I'm going to focus a little more instead on its application, its significance to us, to the relationships in our lives.

Like Jesus, you are called to bring the gift of God with an unconventional love. That's the single main truth we're considering today. Like Jesus, you are called, you are summoned by God to bring the gift of God with an unconventional love.

[9 : 28] We see four ways, and so this sermon we're going to look at four ways that Jesus does this in verses 7 through 9. Four ways that the Spirit of God prompts and empowers us to do the same things.

And as we go through those four ways, we're also going to find seven things that I call love defeaters. Love defeaters. These are seven lies that we tell ourselves, seven rationales or excuses that we give that hold us back from loving people in an unconventional way.

From loving, these are seven things that resist the prompting and empowering of the Spirit of God. So let's look at the four ways that the Spirit of God prompts and empowers us. First, the first way is this.

Like Jesus, you are called to move toward others. Like Jesus, you are called to move toward others. Notice what Jesus does here. The beginning of the scene, Jesus is sitting at the well. Now, he could keep, stay silent, he could keep his distance, but instead, Jesus approaches this woman. Now, put yourself in Jesus' shoes.

[10 : 39] You're sitting at a well, you're worn out, you're tired, this woman comes to draw water, what do you do? Especially with all the cultural baggage that comes with a conversation like this.

What do you do? You know, do you sort of like, hey, you know, nod your head and then just turn away or do you kind of like, you know, maybe make a little bit of room and smile a little bit and move away or do you just kind of ignore her?

That's not what Jesus does. You know, some of us might be a little bit too quick to get in each other's faces, too quick to say yes to an interaction perhaps. But, you know, my read on the culture of our church, my read on this is that our tendency is we probably give a little bit too much space to one another.

I think you and I give too much space to one another. That's a tendency of Canadian culture in general. I think we get that from a lot of different things, especially the larger culture.

We sort of live and let live. It's the Canadian politeness. You want to get along with everybody and so how do you do that? You kind of give everybody their space. I mean, there's lots of space in this country, right? So we want to give lots of it to other people.

[11 : 52] And that's how you live and let live and get along with everybody. But Jesus doesn't do that. That is not the way Jesus relates to people. Jesus doesn't keep his distance from people who need the gift of God.

I'll give you an example of kind of how just a recent sort of example of my own life when I was coming back from Christmas holidays and I end up sitting on an airplane seat next to a man and I could have talked to him.

In fact, I had a brief exchange as we were finding our seats. A lot of people pop in their earbuds immediately and so you're like, okay, well, obviously this person doesn't want a conversation and okay.

But what struck me is like this man didn't do that but what struck me is just this resistance in my heart to just about like how do I initiate this conversation.

It was so much easier just to not say anything. My instinct, my gut instinct is sort of keep my distance and I can speak from experience about why because there's seven love defeaters and some of these you might relate to.

[12 : 58] Some of these are much stronger in me than in other people. You might find that only two or three are significant to you but those two or three are really significant, are really powerful.

let me start with two lies that we tell ourselves two love defeaters related to this idea of moving towards others. Things that get in the way of the spirit stirring us up to move toward others.

Love defearer number one it's a lie that we tell ourselves. I have nothing to give. I have nothing to give. We think the other person well, they seem to be doing okay.

They're not a person in need. Or even if this other person is then maybe we don't have anything to give her. Maybe we don't have anything to give her. We just have got nothing that can really help. You know what? That is not true. That is a lie. If you are a true Christian, if you have been saved by the power of God, if you know the gospel of Jesus Christ, if you have his Holy Spirit at work inside of you and through you, if you have his strength and wisdom working in you, you have plenty to give.

[14 : 11] You have living water to give. You can be a spring in the desert, in the wilderness. You can bring the gift of God with an unconventional love.

You can speak a word of encouragement to strangers whom you've just met. You can model the kindness of Christ even to someone who's abrasive and antagonistic. You can speak the truth of Christ to a brother and sister here in the church.

In fact, one of the main reasons that's given in Scripture for why we get together regularly here on Sunday mornings is to do precisely that, is to speak to one another.

Hebrews chapter 10, we are commanded, let us consider, so think through, man, how can I do this? How can I do this? What can I say? How? How to stir up one another to love and good works.

Not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near. What brings you here?

[15:19] If someone were to ask you why you come here to church on Sunday morning, I mean, you could just sit at home or watch some preacher on TV or on the internet. What brings you here? What would you say? The answer, the answer we could give out of Hebrews chapter 10, this is not the only answer, far from the only answer, but one of the answers we could give is this.

I go to church because I have something to give. I go to stir up my brothers and sisters to love and good works.

I go to encourage them the day of our Lord's return is drawing near. They need to hear your voice singing. They need that encouragement.

Haven't, if this last month of tragedy in our church has taught us nothing, it's that we, your brothers and sisters, need you. Do not hold yourself back from them.

Do not neglect one another. Move towards one another. You're like a messenger returning from the site of an ancient battle. You're, you know, like, what's the guy's name?

[16:29] Pheidippides, who ran that first marathon delivering news of a great victory in war. Would you simply run back to Athens and then run into your house and hop into your bed and tell no one?

Or would you not run to your brothers and sisters, share words of hope and victory? They need to hear. The grave has no claim on you. They need to hear that from you because we are so quick to forget.

Because we are so quick to believe lies. There are people who need you. Do not miss this time together. You have an encouraging message of hope. You have a voice that can help them and a heart and hands that can help them, that can serve them.

That's what Jesus is going to do for this woman. Jesus refuses to believe love to feed her number one. He refuses to believe that he has nothing to give. Love to feed her number two.

Jesus refuses to entertain this one. Love to feed her number two is a lie that says, I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't move towards people. We think of ourselves as weak.

[17:39] Oh, I'm just weak. I'm powerless. I'm helpless. You know, poor me. We think of ourselves as people who don't have a choice. We're at the mercy of our circumstances.

I can't be expected to. You know, if anyone in Scripture is at the mercy of his circumstances, it's Jesus. Look at verse six.

What is Jesus conditioned right now? Jesus is wearied from his journey. And by the way, this is a journey where he's probably traveling through Samaria to avoid all the people who want to harass him and kill him.

That's why he's going through sort of what's quote unquote enemy territory. The Pharisees are after him. So he's gone. He's on the run. He's weary. He's worn out.

He's, he's, he's sat down. He is sitting by the well. Boy, you don't, when you're sitting down and you're that worn out, you don't want to get up again. And Jesus is doing it during the sixth hour.

[18:38] That's high noon under the beating Middle Eastern sun. Jesus is in energy conservation mode right now. He is listless.

He is thirsty. He is hungry. His disciples, you know, his boys, his posse, they've, they've left him alone because they got to go and find him some food, man. But Jesus, he refuses to think of himself as a powerless victim.

There is no self-pity in Jesus. There's no woe is me. I'm just so tired. I can't possibly talk to that woman. He doesn't think to himself, I can't do it. Jesus moves toward the woman. Now, how can he do that?

How can Jesus do that as weak, as overwhelmed as he is? Jesus can do this and he makes it clear later to his disciples when he tells them, man, I have food you guys don't know anything about.

Jesus can do this because he has living water inside of himself. His life, he has life in himself, life coming from somewhere. He is about to tell this woman that he is the one with the source of living water.

[19 : 42] Not her. He's the one who's got it. In him is a spring of water welling up to eternal life. And later in chapter 5, Jesus tells us, as the father has life in himself, so he has granted the son also to have life in himself.

And then still later, he tells his disciples in chapter 15, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. Like most lies, love defeater number two has a kernel of truth. Apart from Jesus, you can do nothing.

Apart from Jesus, apart from the spirit he pours out into us, that might be true. Maybe you can't. Maybe you can't move towards people. But if you remain rooted in Christ, you are, if you are drawing life from him, then you can move towards others just as Jesus did.

You have real agency just as Jesus did. Earlier this week, on Tuesday night, I watched a movie called A Hidden Life. It's based on a true story of an Austrian man.

[21 : 01] His name, Franz Jagerstatter. I feel like I should say that. It should sound really angry when I say that. He was a husband and father of three little girls and this man was drafted to fight as a soldier for Nazi Germany.

However, in order to fight, he was willing to enter. He had been in the army earlier. He was willing to enter it again. But to enter it this time, he was required to take an oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler.

He recognized that this was evil in the eyes of God. Now, all the other people in the town, some of them were pro-Hitler, a lot of them weren't really fans of the Nazi regime.

But, in the eyes of all the people in this town, they didn't really have a choice. And Franz didn't really have a choice. He should, you know, just swear the oath, just say the words, and then just get on with your life.

Say the words in order to save your own life, be there for your family, take care of them. But Franz knew that he had real agency. He was not a mere victim of circumstance.

[22 : 08] And so, as terrified as he was, he refused to swear the oath, and it cost him his life. It's very important for you to understand this.

You always have a choice. You always have a choice. Even when you were enduring suffering and hardship that you did not choose, even in the middle of that, where you feel powerless, the truth is that's not true.

You do have a choice. You always have a choice to honor and to obey God in that suffering, in that hardship. You can choose to love. Because if you are a true Christian, if you are abiding in the vine in Christ, you have the same Holy Spirit, the same living water, who empowered Jesus Christ.

If he can do it, you can do it, because you have the Spirit. Jesus refuses to believe love to feed her number two. He refuses to believe the lie that he can't do it.

Now, I say all these things about moving towards other people, knowing that perhaps there are some of us here, perhaps some of you here are too quick to take the world on your shoulders, to try to take Jesus' place as Savior, and to go in and save everybody.

[23 : 29] You're too quick to play Messiah, too quick to try to do that. Some of us learn, need to learn, to say yes a little bit less often, and say no a little bit more often, to stop trying to become the Savior of the world.

My observation, though, is that I think most of us, the majority of us, prefer to withdraw from one another, you know, keep your distance, from those who need help and hope, from those who need the gift of God.

That's the more likely way that we are forming relationships poorly. Like Jesus, you are called to bring the gift of God with an unconventional love. Like Jesus, you are called to move toward others. That's the first way that Jesus loves people. Now, if we understand the cultural context of that whole conversation with this woman, we see that Jesus is also pushing through some significant barriers as well.

He is a man, he is a respected rabbi, and a respected rabbi would never just publicly talk to a woman who wasn't his wife. You would just never do that. She is a woman.

[24 : 43] He is a Jew. She is a Samaritan. They're supposed to loathe each other with the fire of a thousand suns, right? There's just hundreds of years of baggage, of all sorts of grievances and

hatred, and back and forth.

And Jesus moves toward her anyway. Here's the second way we love like Jesus when we are prompted and empowered by his spirit. Like Jesus, you are called to push through barriers. Like Jesus, you are called to push through barriers. Now, our culture gives you plenty of barrier material if you want it. You may not realize it, but you are currently being trained by your culture, by the news and the media and all that you consume.

You are being trained to be quick to take offense at people who are different from you. You are instructed to assume the worst about them, to read into their motives, to read malice when there isn't any.

You are instructed to assume the worst, to look for barriers of religion, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, sexuality, politics, age, common interests, life experience, and to see all those things as stuff that keeps you away from other people.

[26 : 07] It turns out that a lot of people are different from you. Who knew? You know, wow, imagine that. It also turns out, surprise, surprise, not all these people who are different from you will be wonderful and kind in the way they speak to you.

Oh, they're not always like that. Imagine that. This woman certainly doesn't respond graciously to Jesus in verse 9. She takes the walls, the barriers that are already existing between them and she builds another layer of bricks on the top of that wall when she tells him, how is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

Think for a moment. Who are the people in your life that you have not moved toward, that you have kept your distance from because the barriers are too high?

There are two more lies related to this. Two more love defeaters that Satan wants you to believe so that you don't push through barriers. Love defeater number three is simple.

Oh, they're too different. They're too different. You think that, you know, these other people is in your eyes, you know, they're just basically aliens. Right? They're aliens from another planet, bunch of weirdos.

[27 : 26] You find them hard to understand the way they think. Just, wow, that doesn't make any sense. They're hard to understand, not just because they, you know, they don't have a weird accent like you do, right?

If you don't think you have a weird accent, I don't know, go to Newfoundland or something, they'll tell you there. We can, we are quick to think very instinctively that because other people are not part of our tribe that they are somehow less valuable, less worthy, maybe a little bit less human.

We would never say that. We probably would never admit that to ourselves but that's part of how the fall affects us. We think that way. You might have a little bit less sympathy and compassion for them but they bear the image of the living God just like you do.

Even within our own church, take a look around, are there people here who are different from you? There sure are and maybe you've told yourself, I can't really get to know that person.

They're just, they're just too different. I mean, I mean, you know, like I'm single, I don't have any kids and Carrie's got like four kids, you know, you know, I don't, I'm not that into mountain biking but Dustin, he just loves it, right, right, right?

[28 : 39] And I'm not, and I'm not old like Cam, you know. Sorry, man. I had to pick like one of the guys who I knew would be able to take that okay.

You know, we have these, we have these fake barriers, right? That we think are a big deal. You know how Jesus breaks through this love defeater saying they're too different. Jesus finds common ground with the woman.

Did you notice this? What does he do to find a common ground? He asks her for a drink because if nothing else, if they are otherwise a world apart from one another, Jesus knows they both need water.

That's something they have in common. When you talk with somebody else, no matter how different they are from you, look for things you hold in common. Find that common ground. If the only thing you share in common is that it's just a common love for a cup of cold water, okay, you can start there.

You can talk about that. And you might find if you are willing to ask questions and become a student of the other person and learn about them and listen to them, that they actually have more in common with you than you think.

[29 : 58] even the craziest people are really not too different from you. I don't just say that because you're crazy. I mean, even if you're sane, even the craziest people have things in common with you.

Jesus refuses to believe love defeater number three. He refuses to believe that he and the woman are just too different. And then, there's love defeater number four. I'm not supposed to do this. I'm not supposed to do this. That's the lie that the woman believes, by the way. Jews aren't supposed to talk to Samaritans. They certainly aren't supposed to ask them for a drink. I mean, Jesus' disciples go into town to get food because it's an emergency, not because they want to. It really is an unbroken law of the universe to her. You know, we know that sort of law. You know, water is two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen. For every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction. Jews have no dealing with Samaritans. These are the laws of physics, man. Maybe this woman has never envisioned having a conversation with a Jewish man.

[31 : 05] This is just outlandish to her. You and I, we're raised in a particular cultural context. You're raised with a lot of spoken and unspoken rules. Let me know about what tribe you're part of, who are the good guys, who are the bad guys, who you're supposed to talk to, who you're supposed to know.

Don't talk to them. Don't avoid them. Now, some of those are common sense rules. But many of them go beyond the commandments of Scripture. Many of them go beyond the principles of wisdom found in Scripture.

Sometimes, we load ourselves with guilt based on man-made rules that God never meant for us to carry. This happens especially when we fear other kinds of people.

There are certain kinds of people I'm not supposed to talk to. We follow man-made rules not to associate with them rather than fearing the Lord and following His law, the law of freedom. I was really struck by that several years back when I read *Gone with the Wind*, the novel, and I was really struck as it's set in the American South in Atlanta after the Civil War and how, just as I entered that world, how unimaginable it would have been to form a friendship with an African American or how unimaginable it would have been to go and talk to a prostitute or something like that.

[32 : 29] I've never read a book that just landed me so much in a world that was so much like the world Jesus was in. How unimaginable it was to go through these barriers and how horrifying it would have been in the culture to do that.

And I think it's possible that in your heart there may still be some of those barriers. Maybe in your heart there's certain kinds of people you don't form a relationship with because you tell yourself I'm not supposed to do this.

Jesus refuses to believe that fourth love defeater. He refuses to believe that He isn't supposed to love this woman or form a relationship with her just because she's a Samaritan and a woman. And I say all this knowing that perhaps some of you there are some of you here who I think maybe are too quick to get friendly with the world.

Too quick to bless and approve what is sinful. Too quick to welcome false teachers and evildoers. There is a place for keeping your distance from those who are trying to destroy the truth of Jesus Christ and keeping them from drawing people away from Christ.

Some of you do need to get a backbone and stand up to what's wrong. My observation though is that many of us we're content to deal with people who are exactly like ourselves.

[33 : 51] We keep our distance from people who need help and hope from people who need the gift of God. That's the more likely way that we form relationships poorly. Like Jesus you are called to bring the gift of God with an unconventional love.

Like Jesus you are called to push through barriers. Jesus is unconvinced by that love defeater. He doesn't buy that he is not supposed to do this. Now the third way out of four that Jesus loves people is he loves by leading with weakness.

Jesus has several different tactics when he wants to open a conversation with someone. One of Jesus favorite tactics is to ask a question. This time Jesus doesn't do that because love isn't a formula.

It takes wisdom. This time Jesus wisely chooses a different approach. He takes out another tool in his toolbox. Verse 7 Jesus' tactic is to make a request.

Give me a drink. Now why does he do that? Jesus does it because he decides that the best opening move in forming a relationship with this woman the best opening move is to ask her for

help.

[35 : 02] It's to express weakness. It's to express a need. Turns out Jesus needs water. And so that's how he leads a conversation. Like Jesus you are called to lead with weakness.

Like Jesus you are called to lead with weakness. Think of all the things that Jesus could have said. Jesus could have told her guess what?

I'm the Messiah. I'm God's anointed king. I can do all sorts of amazing miracles. Hey I'll see all that water in the well. Watch me turn it to wine. Boy he could have really won her over that way right? By showing how great she was. It's so fascinating in the gospel of John how actually Jesus almost seems reluctant sometimes to perform signs. Why? Because he sees there's a danger in leading with his strength and his glory.

It draws people but for the wrong reasons. Jesus doesn't do any of that. In fact this whole conversation is marked by his humility by his understatement.

[36 : 01] His supernatural sign that he gives to her in verse 18 it's actually really subdued. He tells the woman he knows her relationship status history. Jesus never once you know just elevates him as so beyond her.

He doesn't play the macho man. He doesn't demand her respect. He doesn't show off. By doing this Jesus by leading with his weakness rather than his strength Jesus avoids two more love defeaters. So here's love defearer number five out of seven. It's simple. I have to prove I'm worthy. I have to prove I'm worthy. That's a lie a lot of us believe.

You and I are probably used to thinking we just have this mindset when it comes to conversations. I need to prove myself worthy. If I'm going to form a healthy relationship with someone else I have to convince them that I'm awesome.

I'm worth their time. They need to want to be with me. Hey, maybe if all goes well, they'll admire me so much that they'll seek me out.

[37 : 05] Then some of the glitter from my robes will settle on them. There are certain times that you have to prove your worthiness. I'm not going to get face time with the Prime Minister of Canada unless I prove I've got something of worth to say to him.

There are times for that. But you and I, we try to prove our worthiness so much more than necessary. We try to let sort of drop hints and let people know what we're good at, what our strengths are.

We try to sort of show them off. One of my strengths is figuring things out. And if you hung around me for a while, you'll notice I probably do that a little bit more than I need to when I'm around you. It's a show of strength.

How do I prove I'm worthy? It's a fear of man thing. You want others to think highly of you. You want them to accept you, to approve you, to affirm you. Oh, this is an epidemic in our culture.

You long for these marks of glory that for you, glory feels good. Why is it that Jesus can deprive himself of glory for so long?

[38 : 11] How can he deprive himself of affirmation, approval, and acceptance? How does Jesus stay humble? How does he approach with a humble love? Jesus tells us in the next chapter in John chapter five.

He says, I do not receive glory from people. Wow. I do not receive glory from people. I have come in my father's name.

You receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God. He calls it exactly as it is. Jesus fears God.

Jesus longs for his father's acceptance, approval, affirmation, his father's blessing. That's the glory that Jesus longs for and craves. You too, if you are a Christian, a true Christian, if you have been called by your father's name, you bear his family name, if you really are a child of God, then you are worthy.

You have glory. You are free. You do not need to prove you're worthy by winning over another person. You have all the glory that you need. You have Christ in you, the hope of glory.

[39 : 27] What more do you need? Do you really need other people to like you more? Do you really need to win them over? Do you really need to lead with strength? Jesus is unswayed by love to feed her number five.

He is utterly confident in his glory, the glory that he has from his father. He is not interested in proving he is worthy. Paired with that is love to feed her number six.

I have to prove I don't need help. I have to prove I don't need help. That's a lie. I mean, you don't, you know, there's a lot of pride in this one too.

I mean, I don't want to be one of those needy people. I need to show that I've got this, I've got this, I've got it figured out. Sometimes we'll go through a lot more suffering than we need to because we don't want to be seen as people who need help.

I once knew a man who he was out of work for quite some time. He'd lost a job and he had a family to provide for. And so one of his friends from church was a good friend and this friend went and made some phone calls and he landed this man an interview for a really good job.

[40 : 46] You'd think he'd be grateful, right? In fact, he didn't even show up for the interview. And if you got to know him, you might figure out why. This man didn't like to accept other people's help.

He wanted to prove that he didn't need help. That was more important to him than getting a job. You might remember back in June of last year that I preached on the second Corinthians chapter one, how we become a people who can give comfort and help.

And one of the things that we learned from that chapter is that in order to give comfort to other people, we first need to learn to receive comfort from God and from other people.

In order to be a person who gives help, you need to be a person who willingly receives help. In order to form healthy relationships the way Jesus does, you not only need to give the gift of God, you also need to receive what other people can give you.

That's the way of Jesus. If that's not you, then you're not walking the way of Jesus. It's unrighteousness to refuse to receive help. For every one person in our church who is too willing to receive help, so yeah, there are probably some of us here who may be too willing to receive help, in fact, demanding it.

[42 : 04] I think for every one person like that there are ten who are too unwilling to receive help, who are too unwilling. You're going through stuff right now and you don't let anybody know about it.

You need a ride. You know, I've seen people who need rides to church and they won't tell anybody. They'll just stay home. Because they don't, oh, I don't want to be a bother. That's pride talking.

I don't want to be a bother. If that's you, I'm going to ask in the kindest possible way, who do you think you are? Are you better than Jesus? If he is willing to be a bother to this woman, if he is willing to ask for help, if he is willing to receive help, then you should too.

A servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Jesus completely rejects love defeater number six. He is not interested in proving that he doesn't need help.

And I say all this knowing that, you know, like I said, perhaps some of you think you're hot stuff. You're God's gift to man, and you're unconcerned about others' opinions. There are people like that, right?

[43 : 15] They're, you know, they're not worried about proving themselves to others. There are some people who, you know, you're simply jerks, and you do well to pay more attention to what others think.

But my observation is that's far less common than what's true of most of us, that we struggle with fear of man. We keep our distance from everyone else who needs help and hope, from those who need the gift of God.

Because we think we have to prove we're worthy, and we think we have to prove we don't need help. That's the more likely way that we form relationships poorly. Like Jesus, you were called to bring the gift of God with an unconventional love.

Like Jesus, you were called to lead with weakness. Now, here's the fourth and final way that Jesus loves people. If you found the last one hard, put on your crash helmet for this one.

We've already seen that Jesus, he is a Jewish rabbi, and he is asking a Samaritan woman for help. Now, in that cultural context, you know what Jesus is doing? He is exposing himself to being ridiculed or shamed by a person of lower status.

[44 : 32] This is like, you know, the high school quarterback exposing himself to getting humiliated by the skinny nerd, right? He's putting himself in a place of lower status, and that is exactly what she does to him.

Look again at what she says in verse 9. How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? Yeah. The woman is calling him out for what he's doing. Now, she's not exactly tar and feathering him, okay?

You know, this is not like the worst reproach in the world, but man, we avoid moving towards others for far less, don't we? She sure has taken the opportunity to put him in his place, and his possibilities of being swatted down, possibilities like that, that lead you and me to avoid approaching other people.

Like Jesus, you are called to expose yourself to humiliation. Like Jesus, you are called to expose yourself to humiliation. That's the way of the cross.

Remember love defeater number five, that one that said, I have to prove I'm worthy? Jesus isn't buying that one at all. Jesus is willing to let the Samaritan woman put him in his place.

[45 : 50] Jesus is willing to be shamed and disgraced. He will eventually be willing to be so shamed, so disgraced, that he will suffer the ultimate degradation, the ultimate humiliation, the ultimate shame by being nailed naked to a cross as a public spectacle.

And so we know there is one last love defeater, that Jesus is refusing to believe. Love defeater number seven, it's simply this, humiliation will ruin me.

Humiliation will ruin me. We do anything we can to avoid being shamed. Because we think that, oh man, if I am humiliated, that's it for me.

Life is ruined. You know, it's that teenage angst all over again. Oh, my life is over. Right? If, you know, it's ruined. I'm crushed forever.

If we don't receive glory from other people, if we receive shame instead, then our identity is stripped from us. Our life is sucked dry. Our confidence is shattered.

[47 : 04] And Jesus is not deterred by this. He is not deterred by love defeater number seven, by that belief that humiliation will ruin me. Why is Jesus not deterred?

Because Jesus has chosen to walk the way of the cross. We've mentioned before, last year we talked a bit about how the author Paul Miller refers to this as a J curve.

It is a journey that is shaped like the letter J. You go from a place of life and honor down into shame and death. And that is the way to life and glory because down in that shame of death, God raises you to life and glory.

That's why in Hebrews chapter 12, we read that we are to be looking to Jesus, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus endured the cross and he dismissed the shame with contempt. It had no power over him because he knew that there was resurrection joy, resurrection glory on the other side and he had his eyes fixed on that.

[48 : 31] He knew that he would not only be raised to life, he would be, he would ascend into heaven and he would be seated in triumph, in honor at the right hand of the throne of God forever and ever.

Is that not true? Did humiliation ruin Jesus forever? Yes or no?

Will humiliation ruin you forever? No. Why not? Because if you believe in the crucified and risen son of God, then you will follow his footsteps down into shame and death and God will raise you up to resurrection life and glory.

Humiliation cannot ruin you. So, like Jesus, you are called to expose yourself to humiliation because that is the way of love. That is how you bring the gift of God with an unconventional love, even to people who have the power to humiliate you.

And you know what's amazing about this? You've just defanged them of all their power. Because the grave has no claim on you. Shame has no claim on you.

[49 : 48] You are free forever. In all of these ways, Jesus brings the gift of God with an unconventional love.

You know what the gift of God is? It's himself. It's the spirit that he brings. It's his body broken for you.

His blood shed for you. If you believe in him, this means that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has bought your forgiveness of all your sins.

He has set you free from the penalty and power of sin. Free to choose to obey and follow our father. His resurrection has set you free to move toward others, to push through barriers, to lead with weakness, to expose yourself to humiliation.

You are free to bring the gift of God to others with an unconventional love. Praise be to God for his indescribable gift. Our father, we...