

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday November 7, 2021. "How to be a man who loves Jesus."

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're pushing through 2021, and as COVID numbers drop we are even more committed to gathering in person. A growing group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's, youth areas and coffee spot have been fully open also and we're seeing a good response. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

There is so much to try to cover in this recap to do it justice, it would be better if you just went back and read last week's devotion, and watched last week's message. In a nutshell here is what we said.

- Our society and culture has over time created an incredibly unhealthy understanding of what it means to be a man. We have turned a blind eye to bad behavior, being abusive, and generally creating and allowing unChristlike behavior to be considered normal.
- Men, allowed to behave badly, have hurt and crushed, (physically and emotionally), women for thousands of years. Who've been told and expected to form their 'selves' around the way men are.
- Men have been hurt by unrealistic expectations, and unhealthy patterns, which has taken its toll, as we have seen, in drug/alcohol abuse, suicide, emotional issues and more.
- There are many roots to this, but primarily it's; an unhealthy obsession with power, society defining 'maleness' as not being like a woman, a twisted exceptionalism, (cannot question this), that men are just that way. And worst of all an unhealthy, incompetent, distorted understanding of scripture.
- And a Jesus-centered understanding and reading of scripture is THE antidote to toxic maleness we see and experience in our society.

We believe the church has been negligent in speaking truth into this issue. Our young men and women are suffering because we haven't been courageous enough to call it out. This is an important issue of integrity and moral character that the church has to be front and center in addressing.

We asked these questions, but we wanted to ask them again.

What does it mean to be a 'real' man in our culture?

What does it mean to not be a 'real' man in our culture?

Why do you think these are the beliefs we have about maleness in our society?

III Sunday.

We revisited the passage we read last Sunday, and we pulled out some specific truths to help us address this unhealthy 'maleness' baked into our culture. Reread, **Matthew 8:5-13**, and answer. **What jumped out to you about this passage and how Jesus and the Roman Centurion related to each other?**

Did you see any behaviors that helped you understand what it means to be a decent person?

Kal pulled four truths to help men and women deal with an unhealthy understanding of maleness.

1. Know your limitations, and admit when you can't. The expectation to know all and be all, is crushing for anyone. Especially if you're a person who likes to get things done. Simply admit you aren't able...at the moment. The Roman leader knew when he couldn't do what he wanted to be done, in that realization it drew him to Jesus. You'll find Jesus when you get to the end of yourself.

2. Be brave enough to step outside expected societal norms. Imagine the invisible expectations the Roman leader had to push through to go to Jesus. We all belong to groups that have some very hard set concrete expectations. Right now we are yielding too much to culture defining and framing of what it means to be a successful male. (Strong, tough, successful, powerful, rich, winning, out hustling, out performing, out maneuvering, don't care what people think, dominating). There is an unhealthiness just accepting society's definition of 'maleness'. The Roman leader took the risk, stepped outside of cultural norms, to meet a real need. And Jesus met him in that place, and did the very same thing. Don't buy into how culture and society frame what it means to be a man. Let Jesus!

3. Ask for help and be honest about what you need...specifically. Men are notorious for not asking for...directions, or any help in general. The Roman leader wrestled with his situation, and knew he wasn't able to do anything about it. He saw in Jesus someone who could do something about it, voiced his needs to Jesus. An essential truth of learning to live in community is to ask for help at times. Also asking for help allows others to use their giftedness.

4. Continually seek Jesus. This is always...and for everyone. Unhealthiness of not seeking Jesus leads to being influenced more by society and culture, than we are by the life of Jesus. And often none of us can see it. We all **need a grounding, a center point, to help us maintain wholeness, centering**, when the world pulls us in all directions. Puts all sorts of societal expectations on us. But if we want to undo the expectations that society forces on us, then we need to have a better source for our value and worth. This is why **GATHERING/GROWING** in a community is so important.

And through all of these we've been asking two questions.

Why is this so difficult? How can we overcome it?

IV Challenge.

We're going to close this conversation with one question. **How can you be a part of the solution?**