

Tom's Items: Bible, *Laser, Water, Prop?

June 10, 2018

"AVAILABILITY"

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS - Part 3

Purpose: Hearers will know – being with someone who is going thru crisis is vital to their well-being & builds relational bounds. Hearers will be attuned to others in need/crisis & respond with authentic concern & care to ensure the others' well-being.

INTRO: **Fall of 1994**, my wife & I bought our first house in Lexington, SC.

- Had qualified for a mortgage just above sale price – Yet, house need new roof.
- I had helped friend put on a roof & made deal with homeowner to do it
- Thought it would be an easy job, yet turned into more difficult than on counted on.
- Rainy month put me behind schedule & used sheets of plastic to prevent leaks.

One morning I stopped at house & water was coming thru ceiling into the light fixtures.

- Most people I knew were working & called a guy named Al I thought available
- He had just gotten to sleep after working a night shift & I apologized to him.
- Wasn't sure what I was going to do until about 20 minutes I heard car pull up.
- He had on overalls & asked me what I needed. We went on the roof & stopped leak.
- He sacrificed his sleep & comfort to get me thru a crisis and back to place of peace.

T.S. My experience with the leaking roof & friend Al is not an isolated event.

- You may be able to relate it to an experience in your life.

All of us experience need, pain and even crisis at various times in our lives.

How others respond to us during those times often makes the difference as to whether we become better or bitter.

Fortunately for me, Al came thru for me & I ended up "Better" after the experience.

T.S. Cont. our Series "Building Successful Relationships," Our topic "Availability,"

- flows nicely from last week's Message "Interest" in which Pastor Randy emphasized showing Interest in others as a positive way of practicing humility.

"Availability" builds upon Interest by doing what is in another's best interest!

"Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NASB)

This well-known Verse is grammatically written as a *Present Active Imperative*,

- It's not just a nice idea, but an active Command from God to be done now.

You may recall the discussion on Faith during our MOVE study on the book of James.

Chapter 4, Verse 17 states “He who knows the Right thing to do & does not do it,
To him it is sin.

T.S. Besides obeying God, there are additional benefits to fulfilling this Command.

**Making room in our lifestyles to be available when another person is burdened,
lessens the weight of their hardship and builds emotional bonds in relationship.**

ILL: January of 1990, wife Jully gave birth to our first Child, a baby girl named Caleigh. We had gone thru Lamaze birthing Training together & were excited about the birth.

- About 10 hours into labor things weren't going smoothly & had concerns.
- After 15 hours Jully was rushed out for emergency C-Section surgery & I was scared.
- I was at an Army Hospital in Fayetteville, NC with not biological family within hours.
- I called a gentleman from church & told him what was going on,
- He said to me, “Do you want me to come over there?” & I said “Yes.”
- He stayed with me & prayed with me thru to birth of Caleigh & ensured all was well.
 - It meant the world to me that he was present when no one else could be.

George did for me what Jesus commanded us in John 13:34

**“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another,
even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”** John 13:34 (NASB)

The commandment to love one another was not new.

To love like Jesus was profoundly new.

T.S. Jesus spoke these words to them after He had washed their dirty feet.

Meeting another person at their point of need is usually not glamorous &
Often it can be messy & even unpleasant.

This new love was demonstrated by Jesus' life and illustrated by a parable: Good Samaritan

25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying,

“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

26 And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?”

27 And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

28 And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”

But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Luke 10:25-29

Knowing the two greatest Commandments is good. Seeking to justify ourselves is not.

Jesus commended the man for his answer & exhorted to practice these Commands.

- Yet, the Lawyer who asked the Question seemed to have difficulty with
- the Concept of Eternal Life based upon Loving Relationships & wanted Jesus to define the term "Neighbor" narrow enough so he could fulfill the Command his own way.

T.S. Yet, this only proved the Lawyer was lacking the knowledge of God's righteousness.

As stated by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians:

"when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding." 2 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB)

Jesus understands the human tendency to measure a person's righteousness by their outward appearance and actions in comparison to other humans in their own community and culture.

T.S. This type of comparison is relative, usually leads to pride or guilt, not Availability. Jesus gave a parable illustrate what love for a Neighbor truly looks like.

³⁰ Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.

³¹ And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

³² Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,³⁴ and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

³⁵ On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'

³⁶ Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"³⁷

And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same." Luke 10:30-37

ILL: Let's put some Context on the Story by considering the Location & terrain in which it takes Place.

GRAPHIC #1 – [1st Century Israel]

You can see Jerusalem parallel with the Top of the Dead Sea, almost centered from Med.

- Jericho is Northeast of Jerusalem, walking distance about 17 Miles.
- Distance between the

GRAPHIC #2 – [Road between Jerusalem & Jericho]

- What made this journey difficult was the terrain & contrast in Altitude.
 - Jerusalem is 2,500 feet Above Sea Level & Jericho over 800 below Sea Level.

It is a rocky Terrain, full of Crevasses & Caves, perfect hiding places for Robbers & Thieves.

- A person being robbed on this road was not unusual, behaving as the Samaritan was.

By using this Parable to illustrate true love & righteousness that pleases God,

Jesus flipped the culture and comparison game on its head, much like the money changers' tables in the temple.

The **Love that pleases God is that which springs from a compassionate heart.**

T.S. It is not about outward appearance & religious activity!

The Priest & Levite were religious & appeared to be righteous, yet lacked compassion; They avoided the Wounded man rather than helping him.

The Principle Jesus taught us is simple.

- If we encounter a legitimate need & have the ability to meet the need, I should.

Referring back to the Lessons from the book of James:

¹⁴ What use is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. James 2:14-17 (NASB)

Good works do not earn us salvation, yet done in love, they demonstrate that we possess it!

*Listen to Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

The Bible is very clear that Salvation is a Gift from God based upon belief in what Jesus Christ accomplished for us in His death, burial & resurrection.

Yet, God created us for a purpose & once we possess Salvation, we are equipped to do it.

*Listen to the next verse, Ephesians 2:10

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

T.S. It is not a Question whether or not we are to be available to meet the needs of others.

The real Question is where we are to focus our energies, individually & corporately.
Jesus said,

"For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me." Mark 14:7 (NASB)

The needs are great & can easily overwhelm us!

No one can meet all the needs around us, yet everyone can serve to help someone in need.

- Isn't this the philosophy of Starfish Kenya that is helping improvised children?

T.S. One of the ways we know what to do is found in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

We are typically most effective helping others in the same areas in which we have experienced help from others and from God Himself.

ILL: My wife Jully oversees the Christmas Outreach we do each year at Gateway.

- She raises Funds & collects the names of Families with Children that don't have the finances to buy significant gifts for them.

I typically end up helping in the effort, sometimes reluctantly because of the situations I get myself into.

- Christmas of 2014, we had requests for 6 bicycles that Jully found at Wal-Mart. James Huckaby has a pick-up truck & he meets us at Wal-Mart.
 - We find the 6 Bicycles & I take left off of the Racks & line them up in the Isle.
 - No Problems, right. There are 3 of us & 6 bicycles. We each roll two of them.
- Except, I failed to mentioned Jully is recovering from foot surgery & riding a Knee Scooter. & did I mention that James had Heart Transplant surgery a few Months before.
- He is not allowed to exert himself.
- Being the great man of faith I am, I slip out of the back of Auto Dept. & hitch ride home!

No, actually I tracked down a Wal-Mart employee, yet he doesn't work in Toy Department. By the time we were done, all 6 bikes are in the back of the pick-up truck & James has his Shirt up in the Wal-Mart parking Lot witnessing to the 2 Employees about his new heart!

T.S. What motivates my wife to do the Christmas Outreach & leads to awkward situations?
 - If you have already guessed, she grew up in a military family with 9 children.
 Her & her siblings often didn't get the nice gifts their friends & classmates got.

Something stirs in her when she becomes aware of a she in need that she can help.

ILL: I have the honor to oversee the Care & Prayer Ministries at Gateway Church.

Q - Who would you guess lead out small groups & volunteer at Celebrate Recovery?

People who have found help for their Hurts, Hang-ups & Habits & are giving back.

Q. – Who do you think lead our GriefShare Ministry?

Q. – Who do you think lead our Divorce Care Ministry?

Q. – Who do you think leads the Brain Injury Support Group?

Q. – Who do you think is going to be down front to pray with others if & when I stop talking?

Q. – Why do people serve on the Comfort Ministry, providing a reception after a funeral?

Q. – Why do people make visits to hospitals & to our homebound people?

There are other ministries of Gateway that reach out to our Community & the Homeless.

- We normally have on-going needs in our children's Ministry & Nursery

Q . What about our Middle & High School Students?

*None of us can do everything, yet all of us can do something.

Two Questions:

What are the areas of life in which God has helped you, both directly and through others?

Who are those in your family, church, community and world that need the help you can give?

CONCLUDE: Another added Benefit of Availability is the impact it has on a watching world.

After Jesus said to “Love one another even as I have loved you.” He went on to say “By this all people will know that you are my Disciples **if** you have love for one another.”

Practicing Availability is a means of Evangelism. When people see the Love of Christ thru the lives of His Disciples, they are drawn to Him!

At Conclusion of Service, our Prayer Partners will be down front to hear your needs & pray with you.

If you are new to Gateway or just like to stop & say Hello, I will be our Next Steps Area with some friendly folks to say Hello to you.

If you are looking for Resources to help you grow in your Spiritual Life, head out to our Next Steps Area where you will find help from people there.

Let us pray!