

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: The Good Life
November 6, 2022

Life in Our Relationships
1 Peter 4:7-11

⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Well, when I got to Baylor, one of the things that I was most excited about was living in a dorm room. Because I just spent 18 years living with my parents, which was great. But I was excited to live with 400 of my best friends all together, this was going to be like summer camp, all year long, I couldn't wait because now my best friends wouldn't just be in the city that I lived in, but the place where I live, they would literally just be right across the hallway. And it was a blast. We got to hang out whenever, we had a lot of fun. Until I stopped having fun. Because the more I got to know some of these guys, the less I wanted to be around them. Let me just tell you about a couple of them. One of them thought he was going to make it big musically. He was one of those. So, he would wake up early on Saturday morning, and he'd play his guitar and he'd sing, waking up the rest of us. He just had no social awareness. And then there's another example where I got my backpack on, left my dorm room, and was going to class, and I see these two guys in the hallway with a watermelon. And they just take this watermelon, and they start throwing it against the wall. They just like pick up the pieces and throw it against the wall again, pick up the pieces and throw it against the wall again. There's like hundreds of watermelon pieces in our hallway, and it sat there for about a month as just rotted. Truly. I know, the thing is, I know I could have picked them up, but I didn't.

Another story. So, where I live, there's just two showers near my dorm room, which caused the line. But early on in the school year, one of them ran out of hot water. So, there was just always a really, really long line every single morning because only one shower worked. But later in the year, in fact, almost when the school year was over, we found out that one of the guys we lived near had taken apart, like, the faucet handle and switched it around so cold was hot and hot was cold. So he got that shower all to himself all year long. Truly. The thing is, the more I got to know these guys, the less I wanted to be around them. Because I was like, man, my life would be so much easier if I didn't have to deal with you guys. Like, if I didn't have to put up with you guys, my life would be better and easier.

And I know a dorm room is an extreme example, but have you ever been there before? Maybe it was a group project and you're like, "Man, this would be a lot easier if I was doing this by myself." Or maybe it's at work, and there's just people you work with who are really, really frustrating. You're like, "Man, my life would be so much easier if I just worked alone." Or maybe it's your life group and your life group has been really, really frustrating and difficult. And you're like, "Man, my life would be so much easier if I didn't have to deal with these people."

But here's the thing, just because it's easier, doesn't mean it's better. Because we're in this sermon series called "The Good Life" where we're explaining what it looks like to experience life to the full and abundant life, a good life that Jesus has to offer us. And this week, I was just thinking about some of the best moments that have ever happened in my life and a few snapshots came to mind. My rehearsal dinner, our wedding day, the birth of our child, a few sporting events, going to the Baylor national championship game, a few vacations with my friends and my family. You know what's true of all of those best moments in my life? They were only great because people were there. In fact, as I was looking at this list and trying to think of the best moments in my life, at least for me, and I know I'm an extrovert., so it might not be true of everyone. At least for me, I couldn't think of a single best moment in my life where I was alone. Because you see the good life cannot be found in isolation. And in this sermon series, we've been talking about how to experience the good life through stewarding our bodies well, our thoughts well, our gifts well, our work well. And today we're going to talk about how to steward our relationships well. Because the good life cannot be found in isolation. The good life is found through deep and meaningful relationships.

The problem is many of us don't have them. We don't have those deep, meaningful relationships. Some of you, you're just feeling like man, I am all alone. I've got no one around me. Then there's a whole other group of people where you're like, man, I have a lot of people around me. But I don't really feel like I'm fully known. Like, I don't have deep, meaningful relationships. I've got people who are around me, but not anyone who's really doing life with me. And we're at this really interesting time in history where we are simultaneously connected to people on the other side of the world, and yet disconnected to our neighbor. We're both hyper connected, but yet we're truly disconnected and COVID has made this worse. COVID has created the three Is. COVID has created infection, inflation, and isolation. And COVID, has really created these three different things. It's brought about church at home, church online. I know we got thousands of people right now watching online. It's also created working from home. It's created curbside pickup, like at HEB. You don't even. . . I know it's great, we're cheering about it, but think about this, we do this every week. I was there last night doing it. But think about this, even normal conversations in the grocery store don't happen anymore because we stay in our car. While there are great things about watching church online and working from home and curbside pickup, there's one glaring negative. It's removing us from people. And it's creating something, like it's happening right now. Right now, things are happening. Look at this, 61% of Americans say that they feel lonely. 61% of Americans feel lonely. And the younger generations feel more and more and more lonely. Look at this stat, 79% of Gen Zers feel lonely. 71% of millennials. 50% of boomers. It might be because of this. Seven hours a day, Americans average seven hours a day in front of a screen. Look at this next stat. Today, 49% of Americans have three friends or fewer.

12% say they have zero. But look at what it was in 1990. It says this, in 1990 27% of Americans had three friends or fewer, 3% had zero.

You see we're getting lonelier and lonelier and lonelier. It's happening in our day, and it's happening quickly. Why is that a problem? Well, scientifically, loneliness has a strong link to creating depression, anxiety, obesity, and suicidal thoughts. Persistent loneliness reduces average life expectancy, listen to this, by more than two times as much as heavy drinking and more than three times as much as obesity. Lonely people are more prone to Alzheimer's disease. See loneliness is a health problem. I want to show you one other thing. Check this out, in 1999, 8000 people died of overdosing on opioids. 8000 people in 1999. Look at what it was last year, 75,673 [opioid deaths in 2021]. What does that have to do with loneliness? Listen to what an expert says this is not a Christian, this is just what an expert says about this topic: "The oxytocin we experience from love or friendships, or sex is chemically replicated by this drug. It's a shortcut of the happiness we might ordinarily experience in a good and fruitful communal life". And since we don't have the real thing, we've settled for a fake thing. And our loneliness is killing us. You know, I found a quote from a theologian this week, who says it clearly, and plainly, he explains why this is bad for us. His name is God, and he says this in Genesis 2:18, "**18The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone'**". . . Again, it's this weird thing. It's almost like God knows what he's talking about. It's almost like we're seeing it play out. It's almost like the more we do the opposite of what He says, the more we realize that what He says is true. It's not going well for us living in isolation, because we weren't meant to live in isolation. We were meant to reflect God and to live in community because this is what God says a chapter before in Genesis 1:26. He says, "**26Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.'**" Have you ever noticed that before? What God says, He says, "**Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.**" He wants us to look like Him. And what does He look like? Even here, at the very beginning of time, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit aren't off doing their own thing. They're in it together, as a sort of community.

And then Jesus would come thousands and thousands of years later, He'd show us how to live. And what's the first thing he does in his ministry? What's the very first thing as He starts off his ministry? What's the first thing He does? He finds 12 people to do life with. And what's interesting is, these guys just made his life more difficult. Many times, they would just end up getting in the way. It would have been far easier for Jesus to do it alone, it just wouldn't have been better. Because it is not good for man to be alone. Because the good life cannot be found in isolation.

So today, we're going to look at what scripture has to say about creating deep, meaningful relationships. And we're going to learn from a guy named Peter. We're going to be in 1 Peter chapter 4. And the reason we picked Peter is because Peter was really an expert on relationships and community because Peter got to do community with Jesus. He was one of those 12 disciples that Jesus picked to do life with every single day. But it wasn't just that, Peter also got to experience the community, the deep community found in Acts. Where the people of God were together with each other, eating, and drinking and praying together every single day, and what we're going to read is Peter's going to say something like, "Guys, I've experienced this, and it's better. It's good. We were meant to do life with people." So that's why he wrote it, but who he wrote it to is also really important because while the church was together, every single day in

Acts, persecution began to happen on the church. What happened was the church spread out all across the globe at that point. And this is who Peter is writing to. He says this in 1 Peter 1:1, he says, **“1Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.”** See, the church has scattered. They're no longer all together. So what Peter is going to say is, no matter where you are, it's important to get together with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Whether there's two of you, or three of you, or four of you, you need to make sure you get together and do these things, so that you might have deep, meaningful relationships. Whether you're in Cappadocia, or Waco, Texas, this is how to create deep, meaningful relationships. Let's see what he says in 1 Peter, chapter 4, verse 7, he says this, **“7The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins”**. So, we started that chapter, that section by saying, the end of all things is near. Remember, you're either going to die and go be with Jesus, or he's going to come back and be with you. No matter how old you are, the time is short. In the grand scheme of things, our time here is short. Therefore, we have to have eternity in mind. And Peter says, if the end is near, we must, above all else, love each other deeply, which is the first thing we can learn about having meaningful relationships. Point number one, meaningful relationships can come from loving one another deeply.

1. Meaningful relationships come from loving one another deeply.

The issue is many of us aren't used to experiencing a deep love. Because there is a loneliness that you feel whenever you're all alone. But there's also another type of loneliness that you feel when you have people in your life. But you don't feel loved deeply. You don't feel truly known because you're just used to shallow relationships. Because shallow relationships are the norm. Because it's easier to talk about how Baylor won last night, and how the election is coming up on Tuesday, and it's easier to talk about the weather. And those things are fine to talk about. But it's not fine if that's the only thing you talk about. Because when you're only talking about things going on out there, you're not talking about anything going on in here, and you can't experience deep love through superficial relationships. So, if you want to experience deep love in your relationships, make this one change to them. If you just make this one change to your relationships, I think you'll begin to have deeper relationships and it's this: only spend time with people you intend to share eternity with. Only spend time with people you intend to share eternity with. Peter says at the beginning of this passage, he says the end of all things is near. You need to make sure that eternity is in mind. Therefore, only spend time with people you intend to share eternity with. I hope you hear what I'm saying. I'm *not* saying only hanging out with Christians. I'm saying there are two types of people that you hang out with. There are people that you spend time with who know Jesus and you're using that relationship to spur them on closer to Jesus, or you're hanging out with people who don't know Jesus and your purpose in that relationship is to introduce them to Jesus. You're using your relationships for the purpose of making sure you get to the end, you get to the same end goal. Because if eternity is in mind, if the end of all things is near, we need to use some urgency and intentionality in our relationships. We need to go deep with each other because we want to make it to the end together.

You know, JP does a great job of this. And this week, I was on a on a long car ride with him. And early on in the car ride, he just asked me, “Nate, what's the most challenging part of your life right now? Like, when you lie awake at night, what are you thinking about?” And that took our conversation a completely different direction than if he would have said, “Nate, what do you think of the new T Swift album.” Like, he took us, and in a moment from the shallow end, to the deep end. Because he wanted to know what's going on in me, he wanted to love me deeply. Because if you know someone deeply, you can love them deeply.

So, here's a test for you to figure out if you have shallow relationships, or deep relationships. If I were to ask you to write out everyone in your intimate family, and everyone in your life group, just write them down on a sheet of paper, and then say, write down for each person, what their number one prayer request would be. Like, if I were to ask them, everyone in your life group and everyone in your intimate family, what's the one thing you want the people in your life to be praying for? How many of those do you think you would get right? The issue is for us is that I think many of us wouldn't get very many of them right. I think for many of us, we're not used to talking about deep stuff like that. We're used to staying on the surface because the surface is easier. It's a whole lot easier to talk about how A&M lost again, and by the way, they're paying Jimbo \$9 million, and they've already lost six games, it's amazing! I'll talk about that all day long because it's easy and enjoyable for me to talk about. But easier doesn't necessarily mean better. We got to move from the shallow end to the deep end. And you don't need to go deep with everybody. You don't need to immediately do this in the in the commons. But you need to make sure you're going deep with somebody, with some people. You need to make a shift in your conversations. Because these questions aren't easier, they're better. They're awkward to ask. We need to start asking things like, “Man, what's the most challenging thing in your life right now? What are you learning about in God's Word? How can I be praying for your marriage? What are you praying about for you? Is there anyone that you're discipling, anyone that I can be praying for in your life?” Those questions are harder to ask, but they're better because they move you from the shallow end to the deep end.

I want to show you one other thing from these verses, when Peter says, “**Love one another deeply,**” that word deeply count, it has a double meaning in the Greek. Because while it means deeply, it also means to be stretched out. So, it's like what Peter is saying here is you need to love with depth over a long period of time. The problem is, the deeper you get to know someone, the deeper you love someone, the more you realize how sinful they are, how broken they are, how many problems they have, and how many burdens they have that you're going to have to carry if you stick around long enough. And as a society, we've just kind of learn to bail when things get hard. In fact, one study on loneliness that that I mentioned earlier, they concluded this, again this is not a Christian study, but this was their conclusion. They said that this survey shows that Americans report fewer close friendships than ever. So why is this happening? The two greatest factors of isolation and loneliness are that Americans marry much later and are more likely to move around often. So rather than sticking with the same people in the same place, breakups have become the norm. Having a bunch of jobs is the norm, moving churches is the norm, moving towns is the norm, and the norm is not working. And if you are an adult and you continually move places and move people, like you always kind of have a different friend group, I think the problem isn't with the place or with those people, it's probably something within you. Because while the world is used to flakiness, the Bible calls for commitment because biblical

relationships are sticky. As believers in Jesus, we get to tell the people in our life, “Hey, I’m going to be there for you today, tomorrow, and the next day and the next day and the next day. I’m going to offer you a lengthy love.” Why? Because in our relationship with Jesus, He said, I’m going to be there for you today, tomorrow, the next day and the next day because I’m the same yesterday, today and forever. He’s offered us a steady love, so that we can go and offer a steady love to others. And that means we don’t write people off quickly. When they make a mistake, we don’t just move on because, look again in verse eight, it says, **“Above all love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins”**. And you see, when you love someone for a long time, they’re going to sin against you. But you got to hear this, love’s first response is not to leave. This is what Jesus taught us. In Romans 5:8 it says this, **“But God shows His own love for us, that while we were still sinners, Christ”**. . . bailed on us. No, no. . . **“Christ died for us”**. He saw our sin and stuck around anyway. See, this is what deep love is, when we practice loving the less than ideal in others, we begin to look more and more like Jesus. But I do want to mention one caveat. There are some relationships that are hurtful, harmful, and dangerous that you should remove yourself from. But make sure you’re not removing yourself completely from others. Make sure that you make those decisions in community, that you are with people, because it’s not good for you to be all alone.

So point number one, the first thing we can learn from this passage is meaningful relationships come from loving one another deeply. Well, how else can we have meaningful relationships? Look at what it says. We’re just going to read this next verse, verse 9, it says, **“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling”**. Now notice what it doesn’t say, it doesn’t say if you have the gift of hospitality. He just says, offer hospitality and do it without grumbling. And here’s why this matters. I’m about to say something that’s offensive to many of you. But I think it’s worth it. Whataburger is completely overrated. [laughter] It is. For some of you that love it so much. When was the last time you were there!? I was there a week and a half ago, and my experience was about the same as every other time I’ve been there. I walked in the doors, went to the cash register, nobody was there. And after a few minutes, someone finally showed up, and it was like a burden to them that I had showed up in their store. I finally placed my order, chicken fingers with barbecue sauce. And then I sit down. And wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Finally, I get my meal. There’s no barbecue sauce. So, I politely, I’m a pastor, I go up and ask kindly for barbecue sauce. She rolls her eyes at me, and then goes and gets it and then gives it to me.

A few days later, I was at Chick-fil-A. Happened in the same week. And I was there, I was going to meet with a college student, and just so you know much of my time as the college pastor is spent waiting on college students to show up to meetings because they show up late. This specific time I was sitting in the same spot. I always sit in the Chick-fil-A by campus. And the guy didn’t show up. So, I got stood up which is kind of embarrassing as an adult I’m getting stood up by a 20 year old or whatever. Which is fine, it’s just what happens in my job sometimes. So, I go up to order. And the guy there, I don’t think he goes to Harris Creek, I don’t think he knows me, but he noticed that I’ve been waiting around that I had been stood up. I placed my order, and he said, “Hey, it’s on me today.” [awwww] Yeah.

Where do I want to be more? [laughter] I want to be in the place that seems to want me to be there. Because when you’re hospitable to people, it connects people, because you feel loved by

them. This stuff really, really matters, which is number point number two. The second thing we can learn from this passage is meaningful relationships come from offering hospitality, joyfully.

2. *Meaningful relationships come from offering hospitality joyfully.*

It doesn't just matter; it can actually change lives. There's a woman, her name is Rosario Butterfield, she wrote a book called The Gospel Comes with A House Key which I would recommend to you, I would recommend you reading it. And this is her story, and really in her own words. She was a Syracuse professor, and in her words, she was an open lesbian, feminist at the time. And she had written an op ed to the local newspaper, attacking a local ministry. And an elder at a local church had got that paper and that day, he brought it into the pastor's office, slammed that newspaper down on his desk and said, "We need to do something about this. We need to stick up for ourselves. We need to fight back against this". And so, the pastor said, "I'm going to do something about this." So, he wrote her a letter, inviting her over to dinner. And she got it and the only reason she said yes is because she was doing research on how hateful evangelicals are. Which is interesting. She's like, "Man, this going to be free research for me." So, this pastor and his wife have her over, and they simply have a meal together. And they just get to know her. They don't press in, they don't mention the article, they just get to know who Rosaria is. And then they invite her over again the next week, and the next week, and the next week, and the next week, and they have her over every single week for two years. And after two years, she goes to their church and accepts Jesus. And now she's a pastor's wife. You see, her life wasn't changed through an argument, it was changed through an open door. And while that pastor very easily could have pushed her away, he loved her enough to bring her in.

You see, this is what we're called to do as believers in Jesus. Looking again at the passage, it says this, "**Offer hospitality to one another, without grumbling**". You know what it doesn't say? It doesn't say, offer hospitality to one another if your house is perfectly clean. It doesn't say offer hospitality to one another if you've got an expensive bottle of wine and you're a really good cook. It doesn't say offer hospitality to one another, if you've got a big enough house. It says offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Do it with love and warmth. But there's one other thing I noticed about this passage just last night. I've been looking at it all week, but last night, I was like, "Oh my gosh." It says offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. It says that, because it's assuming that you'd have people over that you would otherwise grumble about. Like when we have our best friends over, I'm not bummed out or grumbling. You know, when I am grumbling? When I have people over that I just don't really enjoy, that I don't get along with that easily, that we don't have a lot in common with. And honestly, I don't think I have the gift of hospitality really, when I'm home, I would rather just be home. I would. Because it's really hard to host people, specifically people that you don't necessarily have a lot in common with. It's hard to do hospitality well. So why should we do it? Like, especially with people who have nothing to offer us? Why should we do that? It's because we've got a God in Heaven, who saw us and we had absolutely nothing to offer Him. In fact, all we had done is harm him and hurt him. And what he did is he flung open the doors to his house anyway. Because this is my story, and I bet it's yours. Luke 15, I ran away from God spent his money and then this is what happened next for me, and if you know Jesus for you. "**But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.**"²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against

heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’²² **But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”**

You see, hospitality is one of the best ways to display that you understand the gospel, because it shows that we understand that the only reason we've been invited into God's house is because he chose to invite us. He didn't ask us to provide anything. But instead, he provided his own son so that we might have access to the house of God. And then in Revelation, it says that one day, we're going to go up and be in Heaven. And we're going to celebrate at the wedding feast of the Lamb, where we are going to eat and drink on God's dime forever. So, when we have people over, when we take them out to the meal, when we offer them hospitality, it's us showing, 'I know what God's done for me.' He welcomed me in when I didn't deserve to be welcomed in.

You know, we have an opportunity coming up. I don't know if you know what happens this month, but we've got Thanksgiving in a couple of weeks. Who needs to be invited over to your house? Notice what I said, I didn't say "Who do you want to invite over to your house?" Who needs to be invited over? Who needs a seat at your table? Maybe it's a life group member who doesn't have family in town. Maybe it's the coworker who no one really enjoys. Who needs to have a seat at your table? Who can you love deeply? And here's just one other tip on hospitality. In fact, I also learned this from JP. There's two different ways of being hospitable. One is you invite them over and say "Hey, make yourself at home. We got drinks in the refrigerator." There's another type of hospitality, though. It's the type of hospitality that grabs the drinks and says, "Hey, I got water, Diet Coke, and sweet tea, which one do you want?" Make them feel like you want them there. And it will create meaningful relationships because point number two, meaningful relationships come from offering hospitality joyfully.

Let's see how else we can have meaningful relationships. In verse 10, it says this, **“¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”**

So, remember, a couple of weeks ago, we talked about using our gifts in order to experience the good life. This echoes that notion. This passage says you should use your gifts. And then in verse 11, it says, **“so that in all things, God may be praised and receive glory.”** So, if you want to live your life in a way that gives God glory, you have to use your gifts. And here's a list of some spiritual gifts. This isn't all of them, but this is a lengthy list of them. Check this out. These are a list of spiritual gifts: teaching, encouraging, generosity, leadership, speaking and interpreting tongues, words of wisdom, healing. You know what's needed in order to use those gifts? People. You can't use your spiritual gifts in isolation. So, if you are living in isolation, there's a cap on how much you are glorifying God in your life, because He's asked you to use your gifts so that He might be glorified. Because the grace of His gifts are wasted on you if they only go to you and not through you. The grace of His gifts are wasted if they only go to you and not through

you. He's made us to use our gifts on people around us because point number three, meaningful relationships come from serving one another faithfully.

3. *Meaningful relationships come from serving one another faithfully.*

You know, one thing that will keep you from meaningful relationships is if you approach them with a “What's in it for me?” mentality versus a “How can I use my gifts to serve others?” mentality. The problem is many times in my relationships I'm not primarily thinking, “How can I best glorify God here?” Because in my flesh, I'm typically thinking, “Man, do I enjoy them? Do they make me laugh? Do we have a lot in common?” Like, that's what's going to make me stick around them. But if you're a believer in Jesus, we don't primarily approach relationships looking to receive, we primarily look to pour out. Because Philippians chapter 2, “**⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!**” And if we're going to take on the same mindset as Jesus in our relationships, we need to know how He treated us. He didn't look at us and say, “Hey, what can they give me?” He said, “What can I give them?” And although he was equal with God, He made himself nothing taking on the very nature of a servant so that he can meet our needs, and therefore, glorifying God in Heaven. And going back to verse 11, Peter says this, “**¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides**”. So, in our relationships with one another, we should speak how God speaks and serve how God would serve.

So, think about this, when Jesus was around, well I guess he's still around through the Holy Spirit, but when he was physically present on earth, how did he treat people? What did He do in His relationships with the people around Him? He became a student of them, and then treated each person in his life differently. To the leper who wouldn't come too close in his shame, He reached out towards him and healed him. To the Pharisees, who everyone else feared and flattered, Jesus spoke plainly to them, calling them hypocrites. And to Peter, when Peter says, “Jesus, you will not die,” Jesus said, “Get behind me, Satan.” But then when Peter thought he had disqualified himself, He comes to Peter and says, “Hey, feed my sheep, you are restored.” You see, Jesus treated each person differently. He became a student of their needs, and then met them accordingly. And this is what we're called to do as believers in Jesus. Become a student of the people in your life group. Become a student of the people in your family. Figure out what their needs are, and then say what God would say, and serve how God would serve so that God might be glorified, and you might be unified.

So, in summary, point number one: meaningful relationships come from loving one another deeply. Point number two: meaningful relationships come from offering hospitality joyfully. And point number three: meaningful relationships come from serving one another faithfully.

When I was at Baylor, one of my favorite events that we did all year long was the school-wide dodgeball tournament. It was a really, really big deal. At the beginning of the year, like hundreds of people would come watch. It was held at our gym. And it was really, really fun. And one year,

we had made it to the, I believe it was the quarterfinals. And in our match, as the match went on, I was the only one left standing on my team. It was one on four at this time. And I'll never forget what happened next. Because I was in the corner with a ball and I'm like, I'm going to figure out how to do this. So, I run from one end to the other, I throw a ball and as I throw the ball, I get hit with another ball and we lost. Why? I was a sitting duck. There was no one to have my back. I was the only target. We lost immediately because it was four on one! I had four guys who wanted to take me out, and they did because I was all alone.

You know, one of the verses that we based this sermon series on is John 10:10. It says Jesus came so that He might give us life to the full. He wants us to give us an abundant life, a good life. Do you know what He says in that same verse? Right before that? He says, **“The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.”** The next chapter, in 1 Peter chapter 5, Peter says there's an enemy that prowls around like a roaring lion who seeks to devour you. You have an enemy who wants to take you out. He's going to do everything he can to make sure you don't make it home. And while you might say, “Man, my life is so much easier if I live in isolation.” He's looking at your life going, “Man, it's so much easier on me if you live in isolation,” because if you don't have anyone who's got your back, if you don't have anyone who knows you, it's so much easier for him to take you up because you're a sitting target. You're all alone. With no one to have your back. You see the problem is we get comfortable with isolation because we underappreciate that there is an enemy who wants to take you out. He wants to steal, kill, and destroy everything in your life. And I'm preaching to myself here, do not let your preferences, your laziness, or your circumstances keep you isolated. Because remember, it is not good for man to be alone.

Even today, I'm reminded of this on All Saints Day. I'm reminded that the only reason I know Jesus is because there have been people who have surrounded me and introduced Jesus to me. And I want to make sure that I continually have people who point me to Jesus, and I want to use my life to point people to Jesus as well. Because I want to make sure that all of us make it home together. And if we're going to do that, we need to make sure we go at it together. Let me pray that we would.

Father, thank you for your word, that you've shown us the way we should live. God, you don't desire just an average life force, you desire a good life for us. But God, I also know that the good life in You is different than what the good the good life in the world would be, or even how I would describe the good life. You've just shown us how we're designed to live. I know that for many of us, man community is scary, relationships are scary. But God, may we just be reminded that it's deeply needed for us. That you've made us to live life together. So God, may we be that person in someone's life. Just again, think about All Saints' Day, as people who have pointed us to Jesus, may we be that person to someone else. Whether we're an extrovert or an introvert, may you use us, big or small, to help people follow you. And may You give us people who would help us follow you as well. May we not go at it alone, because we're not meant to go at it alone. And God above all else, we just want to thank you that no matter our season or situation, we are not alone, because Jesus is alive and He's with us, and He's for us, and it's in His powerful name that we pray. Amen.