

Facing the challenges of Friendship Series "Stand by Me", message 3 of 4

Scripture used: Mark 15:16,17; Luke 10:27-37 NIV

OVERVIEW

Last week we learned that a healthy church community produces many Jesus-like friends: Laying down my life for another - this is a radical concept, as is being part of a church. We also talked about how we find and build such friendships. *Be it - with others, in the world, with generosity, in speaking truth in love. Be a Jesus-like friend to Jesus.*

Today, we discuss: What are the challenges of a friendship? It's not easy – especially with broken friends or if you've been broken. It's vital to stir love into the mix of a friendship and into all elements of our lives - otherwise it's like trying to make Kool-Aid without stirring in the sugar. And next weekend, instead of meeting here at NBCC, we will all be stirred into the community during our "Beautiful Day" weekend of service.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Be vulnerable to others.** *Put others first, even if they take advantage of you.* And be careful of the judgments you make - because you might find yourself in someone else's story. What if the priest had heard about someone else being robbed and beaten the week before on that same road and had "second person" post-traumatic stress disorder as result? Ask, *"Is the risk is worth it?"* Martin Luther King, Jr. taught that the priest and Levite each asked themselves, "If I stop to help, what will happen to me?" *Jesus is suggesting that we act radically.* For example, in premarital counseling, you have to put everything on the table and realize that if you say "I do," you will be hurt eventually in some way. We're all crooked, but God has the ability to take a crooked stick and use it to make a straight line - just look at the disciples.
- 2) **Be sacrificial for others.** The best relationships involve this element of sacrifice. But can you do this without being codependent? Yes - Look at the Samaritan. Ask, "Is my sacrifice helping?", or "Will it help?" Remember that later that day, the Samaritan took care of the victim and then left him in the care of others.
- 3) **Be accountable.** *Be accountable to one another,* just as the Samaritan made himself accountable to the innkeeper by paying in advance and promising to cover future costs. *Push past your resistance;* ask, "Does the accountability lead to a better future?"
- 4) In conclusion, Jesus said, "Love one another". The place to begin is in the church community - a place with shared risk, shared values, and shared vision.
- 5) Next weekend about 1,300 of us will have the opportunity to join with several other churches to impact our community during our "Beautiful Day" service. Please sign up on our web site.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** What are some of the friendship difficulties that Jesus faced?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** What are some ways to make friendships between imperfect people endure?
- 3) **DO** In your closest friendships, which areas (from the three main points above) can you work on? And - how will you sacrifice your time and energy next weekend as an act of worship?

PRAYER

Share answered prayers from this past week and pray for each other for the week to come. Pray for next weekend's "Beautiful Day"