

Approaching Other to Help

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[0:00] Well, this morning, we want to take a look at, and the weeks ahead as well, what it looks! In regard to the way out of addiction.

In previous lessons, we looked at what it looks like to travel down addiction's road. How it begins, we heard some information that I presented to you from my studies and also from some testimonies of individuals who traveled that road and were reaping the consequences of that.

And they declared and spoke of how they began that journey down addiction's road. We also took a look at what it looks like along the way, and then what some of the consequences at the end of that journey looks like.

Last week, we started looking at the journey out of addictions, and we focused on the importance of having a point of reference that we're going to minister from, and when it comes to, even if it's our own lives and our own struggle that we're having in addictions, but also as we're called to help others as well.

What's going to give us that point of reference that we work from that will direct us in how we listen to people, how we speak to people, how we counsel people, the advice we give, on and on we go.

[1:25] And we need that point of reference. And the point of reference that we determine we need to work from certainly is Christ, the gospel.

The individuals need to become a true worshiper of God in union with Jesus Christ. And that's the point of reference that Jesus worked from when he met the Samaritan woman at the well and eventually directed her to the importance of God was looking for those who would worship him in spirit and in truth.

And in all the struggles that she was having in life, you know, he wasn't counseling her about how to have right relationships with men. He was taking her back to the core issue that needed to be dealt with, that would have great influence on the rest of her life.

And did she need help in those other areas? Well, certainly she did. But we weren't at the point, and Jesus wasn't at the point where he just wanted her to change one idol, exchange one idol for another.

No, he was looking to bring her back to the real issue of life and what all humanity is about, and that is about worshiping God and living that out in everything that we do.

[2:46] So that's the reference point that we want to work at. So this week, again, we want to begin looking at the people involved in this journey out of addiction.

And very rarely, if ever, does someone come out of bondage of addiction on his or her own. So there's going to be another person involved, someone who has been observing the individual, is beginning to see something in their lives that would give indication that this person is really caught.

Wherever he is or he or she is on this path, this journey of addiction, someone else has observed it and wants to move in the direction of helping that person.

So we're going to be taking a look at what is that person's responsibility, but then also what is the other person's responsibility, as he listens to a plea or a call from someone else to them to turn around and go down a different road, that road, of course, faith in Jesus Christ.

Most people who are on this journey, or, again, wherever they are on the journey, have that tendency to hide the addiction, their enslavement, and that's something we're all familiar with as well.

[4:10] We understand that. It started right from the beginning. Adam and Eve hit as well that they thought that they could deal with their new circumstances, and can you imagine what it was like at one point without sin in any aspect of their lives, and now living out of hearts that were so different in new circumstances in their relationship, and all kinds of things happening that they had never experienced before, and they're having to now respond to these situations, these circumstances, both outwardly and inwardly, out of thinking that was distorted now and affected by sin.

So what do we find them doing? Well, we find them running from God and hiding and trying to discover and make ways to deal with the shame of their sin and very ineffectively doing it with fig leaves.

Certainly it would have been better for them to run to God and seek his help, but they didn't do that. But we can give thanks that God came to them and ultimately to us as well to deliver us from our futile attempts at living life in a fallen world and also helping others to come to Christ.

Well, in due time, God did come in the person of Jesus Christ. So what we see in Christ really forms the basis of our response to others.

We want to look at Christ, and we can give thanks again that God has provided his word, the narrative of God come in the flesh so that we can see God himself in our world reaching out to people.

[6:11] And we can see that in the word of God. And as we open the word and even hear about it, whether it was Friday night or even this morning, we see that in the person of Christ there was this willingness and a readiness to reach out.

So when I think of what needs to be true of me, even before or if I am going to reach out to someone in need, I need to have that willing, ready spirit to do it.

So that's what we want to take a look at this morning. I think without that commitment and that readiness of heart and mind, it's unlikely that I and that we will move outwardly to help others.

So we want to consider how can we be made ready. Certainly, ultimately, it's a work of the Spirit of God who indwells each true believer, and we can be thankful again that God has made that provision where he has come to dwell within that true believer and provide the power, all that we need now to live godly in Christ Jesus.

And he gives us those desires, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. For our part, we are to do, as it says in Hebrews 12, 2 and 3, fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

[7:41] And then later on it says, consider him. So as we open the scriptures and want to think and plan on how we reach out to others, that's what we want to do.

We want to look on Jesus, to consider him. So that's where we start this morning, with some careful observation and contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ that, again, has direct bearing on how we also live in this world.

Now, you can spend weeks on this. I'm spending, what do I have, maybe 25 minutes left to do that. And so in a very limited way this morning, we're going to focus on just three aspects of the person of Christ that I think will help us and prepare us and ready us to be those individuals.

And the first one is through a contemplation, a consideration of the love of Christ and how it was displayed toward us. It's appropriate that we come to this lesson at this special day.

What bigger manifestation of the love of Christ could we have than him coming and ultimately dying on the cross?

[9:01] But even before he was there, he had to have a ready mind in order to be willing to do that, to eventually do that. And that's what we're looking at this morning.

Do we have ready minds to move in a direction of helping others? Jesus did, Romans 5.8. God demonstrates his own love for us in this.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. So he didn't wait for us to kind of clean up our act a little bit better so that we would be a little bit easier to be around.

While we were yet sinners, he came and he died for us. Ephesians 5.2, the Apostle Paul writes, And live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

So we'll see a little bit later on as well that the importance of that gave himself up. Again, that all happens out of a readiness of mind, a love, a commitment for us certainly, but ultimately for the Father above all and what the Father has given him to do.

[10:20] So we were the ones in desperate need. We were the ones living apart from God, suppressing the truth, pushing it away, and pursuing God's substitutes, making that exchange that Paul wrote about in Romans 1.

And God knew our condition, and he had plans to move in our direction, to reach out to us and rescue us from, as it says in Colossians, this domain of darkness, this place that we think is so beautiful and wonderful is really characteristically a domain of darkness.

And so we need to see it in new eyes. Someone was sharing with me how they were working with someone who was caught in addictions and trying to encourage them to come to Christ and consider the truth, consider Christ and the gospel, and the person just would not have anything to do with it.

No, that's not where I'm at. I don't see that as the reality in which I need to exist in order to overcome this addiction. I mean, that's the domain of darkness.

Not seeing through the darkness of his own heart in order to really see the reality of what he needs in the person of Jesus Christ. Well, Jesus, he gave himself up.

[11:41] He wasn't forced to do it. And what he did, there was a willing handing of himself over as a sacrifice to God for us. So now we as well, as we contemplate Christ, we are commissioned by God to manifest that same love.

1 John 3.16 This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

I mean, that's the obvious conclusion there. This is what Jesus did. He laid down his life for us. We ought, I mean, obviously, that's the thing that makes the most sense of anything here.

If you're looking for some direction in life, well, Jesus did this. We ought to do this as well for our brothers. But we don't stop there just with our brothers.

In Galatians 6.10, Paul wrote to the people there and said, Therefore, as we have opportunity, let's do good to all people. I mean, what is the greatest good we can do for all people?

[12:45] But that is to introduce them to Jesus Christ, to show them the way of true life. And then he says, Especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

And will believers be caught in addictions at times? Well, certainly. We can all say amen to that. We've experienced it. We've been on this journey. We've been on this journey at some point.

And hopefully have experienced and have walked down that, or taken that exit of repentance and turned back to Christ and his counsel.

And we need to practice that repentance even as believers. When we find ourselves in that habit of making those choices and decisions that would indicate, Uh-oh, you know, I've taken on a God substitute here.

And I need to turn back. Well, can we really do that? Show that kind of love of Christ?

[13:48] Well, again, Paul, writing in Romans 5, 5, indicates that we can. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who he has given us.

So you would be right in concluding that, I just can't love that way. If you were making that conclusion based upon drawing from your own well of love and affections.

But we're not as believers. And God has seen that that would be an insufficient well to draw from. And so he's given us the Spirit of God to dwell within us.

And with the Spirit of God dwelling within us, his love is there. And out of that ministry of the Holy Spirit, God's love can pour out from us as it was poured in us, out of his great love for us.

So we do have the resources in the Spirit of God dwelling within us to pour out God's love to those who are undeserving, just as we were undeserving.

[14:51] And someone manifested the love of Christ toward us. So we're not drawing out of our own resources, but the love of God that is within us. Well, a brief contemplation of the love of Christ.

But let's go on to something else. A contemplation, consideration of the humility of Christ. There's a set of verses that we've looked at before, Philippians 2, 5 through 11.

And I don't have all those verses here, but he says, Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. So he's leading them down to this place just in making that statement. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

And so they might be thinking, Well, what is that? And then he gives them the answer to that. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on the cross.

So Paul is leading these people down this path of understanding what servanthood looks like. And he's going to show them some human beings as well who manifest the same humility that Jesus did.

[16:10] But he starts out with the person of Jesus Christ and telling these people and us as well, this is the attitude that you're going to need to have that's going to need to dwell in you if you're going to be this kind of servant that, like Christ, might be called upon to humble yourselves unto death.

Probably not death on a cross, but some indeed had to in the past, but something that might seem very difficult for us to do, to give up.

It all starts with cultivating this attitude of humility that we find in our Savior Jesus Christ. So as we take on that attitude of humility, we also move in the direction of helping others.

We don't hold on to even valuable things. I mean, what greater value was there that Jesus could hold on to than to be there with the Father in heaven in that kind of ongoing praise and adoration and fellowship there in heaven.

But he didn't consider that that should be something that he should hang on to so tightly that he wouldn't humble himself and go to the cross.

[17:22] And so we as well. What are some of those things that might even be of great value to us that we hold on to so much that we hesitate reaching out to others?

Well, we need to contemplate the humility of Jesus Christ and that kind of mindset if we are really going to be Christ in the world today to those around us.

The position of a servant certainly isn't a position that in our culture today that is held up as something to aspire to.

I could have done a better job of it as a parent in teaching my children what servanthood looks like.

Not that my daughters turned out terribly. They turn out very nice. But I have to offer that clarifier since she's right here. But you see, even how she turns out isn't the determiner for what I do.

[18:27] I still need to be helping my children understand how servanthood plays a part in every sphere of their life.

I think it's foundational, really. And it has a bearing on the way and even why they learn.

Why do they go to school? Why are they getting the education that they need? Well, if we just make it all about making money, then that's going to be a wrong priority.

But if we make it that, well, this is a way in which you exemplify Christ in the world today. Even if you end up being a CEO or whatever in the company, really you're still a servant to all those people below you.

So why they learn, why they do their job, why they play sports, why they develop relationship with others, and so we end up with a society really that's self-focused with each one pursuing and doing what's right in his own eyes because of what benefits him or her.

[19:40] So teaching our children about the place of that kind of heart, that heart of humility that will have a great impact and influence on why they learn and work and play and everything else and hopefully equip them for seeing Jesus in the greatness and majesty of his humility.

So we wanted to help them connect these two terms, servant, leader. And we wanted to arm ourselves as well with this attitude of a servant. This is what was in the life and the person of Jesus Christ.

He said in Matthew 20, 28, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life a ransom for many. So he had that willing spirit and a specific way in which the service would be carried out.

So that's how we're preparing ourselves, thinking, okay, this is Christ, this was what was true of him, this is what needs to be true in me, Spirit of God, work with that within my heart.

What would that look like today as we consider the day in school or the day at work or the day at home or wherever we are? How would that manifest itself? So I'm starting with a ready spirit of humility and service, but also thinking very specifically of what it's going to look like through my day so that I am ready to live out that humility of Christ.

[21:12] John 10, 17, the reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life in a specific way only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord, willing spirit, humble spirit, both of them going together there.

And so we as well, contemplating the great humility of Jesus Christ in order that we would have that ready, willing spirit to move out in a specific way in reaching out to others who are in need.

At whatever level of need, it's again not just those in addiction. We're teaching our children, how do you serve your brother today or your sister today? Well, why don't you set the table for them?

And why don't you feed the dog today? Or on and on, why don't you go out and pick up the dog piles today? You know, the lowest of the low job on the property and the one you're looking for somebody else to do, willing, ready spirit, cultivated within me.

I don't have to be asked. I'm out there going and doing it myself because I've considered the person of Jesus Christ and what that looks like. Well, contemplating the love of Christ, the humility of Christ, but also need to be ready with the words of Christ.

[22 : 27] Luke 12, 49 through 50. He says, For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. So, he knew that what the Father had committed to him is that which leads to eternal life.

I mean, how could we give someone something less than that? And so he was committed to giving them ultimately what they needed most in order for effective, effectual, lasting change to take place both in this life and throughout all eternity.

And that's what the Father had commanded him and that's what the Father Christ has given us. The way of life, the words of life, of transformed living for people that we minister to.

So as he was faithful to communicate truth to people, so we also need to follow that up. And as the Father commanded him, he's commanding us.

[23 : 44] Matthew 28, 18 through 20, toward the end of that section, he commands them after, tells them to make disciples, baptizing them. He says, and teaching them everything, teaching them how to obey everything I've commanded you.

Sound familiar? What the Father gave to Jesus, Jesus giving to us. Are we convinced that we have the word of life? Well, yes. And so with the word of life, the words of life, we are ready mentally to go because we are confident that what I'm taking this individual is something that could affect certainly their life here, but their eternity, throughout all eternity.

So am I ill-equipped when I'm just taking the word of God? Well, no, not at all. I'm most effectively equipped with the truth of God's word. Now, do I need to learn how to handle that tool?

Well, yes. I need to learn everything that's in that, in God's word, and how to speak it at the right time, what needs to be drawn from the word of God and presented to a specific individual in a specific way.

There's lots of other things to consider, but bottom line is we have what is sufficient that people need. And that's what Paul encouraged Timothy with as a young minister being challenged in his ministry.

[25 : 13] He encouraged Timothy to, listen, give the word of God out faithfully. Do it in season, out of season. Do it on an ongoing basis. And in chapter one of 2 Timothy, or no, chapter three, he describes what their society is going to be, look like, what it looks like for him to minister, but not just him, but all that would come after him in the last days.

He said, people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

You feel overwhelmed? That's what Paul is doing here with Timothy. He's overwhelming him with the severity of the conditions in which he's going to have to minister the word of God.

And he's not necessarily doing that to discourage Timothy, but in light of the conditions, he also encourages Timothy with the resource that he has.

in the latter part of that chapter in verses 15 through 17, and we're just picking up in verse 16, he reminds Timothy of what he has.

[26 : 38] All scriptures God breathed, and he's useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So God described for Timothy this society that is so horrendous in the way it's living and broken and distorted, but he's reminding him of the resource.

You have the very words of God that are sufficient to equip a person for every good work in life. And so we can be encouraged with that as well, that we have sufficient resource in the word of God to dispense that to those who fit these different categories that he's listed in chapter three and be confident again that we're not giving them something less than what they truly need, but indeed what they truly do need.

And Psalm 19 would be another section of verses. Just listen as I read to you some of the words that describe God's word.

He uses words like perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, sure, altogether, righteous. And because of that, it's able to transform a person's life.

[27 : 58] And the way he describes this transformation, he uses words and phrases like this, reviving the soul, making the simple wise, giving joy to the heart, giving light to the eyes.

They're in keeping with God's word, and in keeping of God's word, there is great reward. So as we think of where we want to help someone come back from and what we want to bring them to, Psalm 19 describes all that the person really needs and how it is found in the truth of God's word.

And all the benefits, we looked at all the consequences that are waiting at the end of the journey of addictions, now he's helping us understand what are all the consequences, the blessings that are at the end of a person who builds his life on the word of God.

God's And that's what we want to pour out to people and help them consider and ask, what is it that you really want? What are you looking for as you indulge yourself in this addiction, whatever it is, substance or activity, and they describe this, describe this, and this, and this, and this, and you think, as somebody said to me, how is that working for you?

Is that really producing? No, it's not. And even if it did produce a measure of what they're looking for, it still wouldn't be right, foundation, because it would only take them for a measure of time, life in this world, and wouldn't bring them to the place of truly being a true worshiper of God.

[29 : 40] While we have the sufficiency in God's word, just three areas that we could contemplate this morning. The love of Christ, the humility of Christ, and the words of Christ.

Are we ready with those three aspects of the person of Jesus Christ so that we're ready? You know, I'm ready to move out, and I'm probably not ready yet.

Well, let's focus on what really will help us be ready, what will make us ready, and that is looking into the face of Jesus Christ in his word.

Well, as we are ready to move out, we're still left with this question of when do I reach out?

And that's a difficult question to answer. You don't always know when a person has started down this road of addiction. temptation. And we heard that from some of the testimonies that I played for you, and I've heard it numerous times on other testimonials that I've listened to online, and how people are so good at hiding even the beginning stages of this journey.

[30:58] But it won't stay hidden forever. It will be revealed at some point. It will show up in various areas of their lives.

And we could see that through some of the consequences that I listed for you. But let me read for you just briefly this morning, and I won't be able to get through all these this morning.

But what are some of the indicators that might be going on in a person's life that would help me realize, uh-oh, you know, it is getting a hold here in this person's life.

There's something really there that I was maybe suspicious about. And just to draw us an alertness to that, because again, as I say, it won't stay hidden over the long haul.

And rather than start some of those, just let me give you a couple examples, and then we'll start these next week. Let me finish with these. A quote by Ed Welch, our ability to detect addiction cannot come from our own abilities to detect lies and addictions.

[32:16] Rather, it comes from the fact that God loves us and often exposes our sins so others can see the danger we are in and help us move toward safety. So that's a good thing when it's exposed.

I had the opportunity with Kate and Gage this past week to be watching them and we were sitting there at lunch and so I was talking over this concept with them, how it's good when our sin is revealed and they understood that and how they don't like it that we talked about.

What is your first reaction when you do something wrong? Is it usually you run and tell mom and dad that you did something wrong? No, it's not. What is it?

We hide it. We don't want them. So we considered the goodness of God in bringing it to light and helping them, their parents see because that moves their parents in the direction of helping them which is what they desperately need at that point.

Help in the person of Jesus Christ and learning how to live out their new life in Jesus Christ. Well, there's some other examples but you're being very kind and not holding up your watches to me at this point.

[33:32] And so we have to finish there so I'll pick up here next week as we take a look at some of these other ways in which just questions we can ask to help us be more alert to detecting when the individual has starting to be overtaken with an addiction.

Well, let's close in prayer. Father, how we give thanks for you, your greatness as God. Nothing is hidden from you.

My sin, Father, from years past and even present, how gracious and good you are to reveal it, to move in our direction in particular, especially, ultimately, the person of Jesus Christ and him taking that penalty for our sin, that we might come to true life and walk in newness of life.

Help us to do that as we focus on Christ even this morning and throughout the week, Father, that we would be Christ in the world today until he comes.

In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.