

"STOP THE UNDERSCORE"

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**THAT'S
NOT
HELPFUL**
A KESSID TEACHING SERIES

Today is the last talk in our "That's not helpful" series...

- We have been talking about Spiritual Postures that are not helpful!
- How not having any training is unhelpful...
- How being unwilling to hold another person's vulnerability is unhelpful...
- How being unwilling to bring a "touchable" contextualized Christ into your sphere of influence is not helpful...
- And how sharing everything that comes to your mind out loud is not helpful. Consider what it might be like to shut your mouth and take punches as good as you throw them. This is what Christ did!

So, to close the series, we are going to bring, with as much clarity as possible, what 'Spiritual Posture' is most Helpful!

- **Disclaimer!** This also means that today's talk is primarily for those already walking with Christ. Everyone else is invited into the conversation as well.
- When it comes to walking alongside, and so ministering to the world, I believe there is one overarching helpful Spiritual posture, if well mastered, that could change every Christ follower from an often-unhelpful person to an almost always helpful symbol of Jesus...That is...

"The spiritual posture of Love, also known as the ability to 'Read the Room.'"

The Bible has this to say about Love...

(Vs) John 13:35 – "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

(Vs) 1st Corinthians 16:14 – "Let all that you do be done in love."

- Over and over and over we are called, prompted, and reminded to love the world like Jesus loved...

(Vs) John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

- It doesn't get much simpler than this... And yet for so many, it is so very difficult to do!

I believe it is because we have made Love something it isn't.

- We have turned it into "approval" ... It isn't!
- We have turned it into "acceptance" ... It isn't!
- We have turned it into "participating" ... It isn't!

Lastly, and this is the one I find the most offensive...

- We have turned it into something "Hyper Spiritual" ... It isn't!

Why do we do this... act like loving people requires a sign from God?

- ... We always act like God needs to lay out in a vision Who, What, When, Where, and Why we should try and love the hard-to-be-around people in our lives...
- This makes us look like crazy people!
- We ask for God to give us a sign. "Just any sign! Til then, I'm going to just put you into the closet!"
- **Listen!** Jesus died for you, and He didn't have to. He did it because He loves you!
- That's your sign! That's the vision laid before all, and the only reason you should need to love deeply!

"Loving people, and so 'Reading the Room,' is simply being aware and willing to set down something you cherish, your own pageantry, so that someone else can experience God's love in their own unique way."

There are so many examples of Christ teaching us "how to read a room" while He was here on earth ministering to lost and lonely people!

- The same exact sorts of people we are still ministering to today...
- Jesus feeding the 5,000 – (Vs) *Matthew 14:13-15*
- The first thing that jumps out at me about this part of the passage is that it's the disciples that appear to first notice the needs, not Jesus...
- And then say... "Send them away, Lord!"
 - Allow us to be the responsible leaders you have called us to be...
 - Allow us to manage these people well...
 - Allow us to do your work... of removing them from your presence!

Sound familiar? – Yes, it's the Church's voice again...

- **FYI:** I'm not picking on the Church because I dislike her... I'm picking on the Church because she is the anointed presence of Christ to this world... She should know better! She should be better!
- Jesus agrees with me ... (Vs) *Matthew 14:16-18* – But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They said to Him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And He said, "Bring them here to me."

Jesus responds by reorienting them into a different posture...

- A Posture that changes The Space or "Room" they're in.

- It's at first a Confusing posture. Why are we doing this? ...We don't have enough!

This is the thing about loving hard-to-be-around, needy, messy people...

- It will always start out confusing and like you just don't have enough Love to go around.
- When we feel this way we are supposed to do as they have done here ... Move ourselves into a posture of bringing our concern to Him.

(Vs) Matthew 14:19-20a – "Then He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And they all ate and were satisfied..."

- I wonder if at this point the Disciples were like... "Why were we surprised? ... We know He always does this!"
- This is perfectly normal... Everyone experiences God this way... Because even when you expect it...
- "Sometimes the movements of God will catch you by surprise."

I want to pause here and ask an important question... as my youngest daughter likes to say... "What's up with all the Drama?"

- Jesus could've just satisfied the hunger... with a snap! But no! Really think about it!
- How many people would grab food from the never depleting baskets before the crowd started to pick up on what's going on?
- Think about the Joy and Laughter and Celebration that would be felt rippling through this crowd!
- And every time those miracle receiving eyes would look back to Jesus as His expression exclaimed in return... "I am God, and this is what I do for you!"

The entire experience is filled with Loving Pageantry from front to back...

- A visible Romance between Christ and His people, expressed through Love and Laughter... Even as it ended!

(Vs) Matthew 14:20a, 21 – "And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children."

- ... 12 Baskets, 12 tribes of Israel... C'mon!
- When God loves people... He doesn't just love them more than enough...

"God loves us exactly more than enough!"

It's all more and more Pageantry pointing toward who He is...

- ... showing them something that would impact them, in their own unique way.

"God has always used Pageantry to bring Glory to who He is!"

- ... All of it proclaiming, "I am God, and this is what I do for you!" This Jesus that we follow. He has story after story like this one, filled with Joy and laughter and life giving invitations...

But Christ's own Pageantry is not what He came to proclaim...

- Because eventually another crowd would stand before him... A crowd that would scream 'Crucify, Crucify!' Another crowd that He could have used His power on. With the snap of a finger, He could have blinked them away into eternity!

But instead... He knows He will Love them!

- That He will set down all the pageantry, and instead allow them to drag Him up a hill and nail Him to a cross...
- In this way, He will show them something they have never seen before, something that would impact them in their own unique way... Once again proclaiming, "I am God, and this is what I do for you!"

This is the way we as Christians are called to operate in the world...

- We are called to see who stands before us and then bring what is needed, so that people around us can experience this love of Christ...

But for that to happen as it should, we must, through Love, Read the Rooms we are in...

- Every Church Service, Small Group, Home Life, Prayer Time, and Bible Study are all places filled with beautiful Pageantry offered before God.
- But, as Christians, these places can become what defines who we are, instead of what we are willing to set down for God to reveal Himself to someone in their own unique way...
- You may say, but those are my "Sacred Places." – Yes, yes, they are...And I'm not suggesting you set them down forever, only when the Lord requires, allowing God to change your Bible Study, Prayer Time, or even Church service!

Everything you see in this room is "Loving Pageantry!"

- The lights and the sound, symbols, etc... It's all Pageantry!
- As a member of His creation and through love, I try and bring it forward, week after week, in hopes that it brings Glory to God.
- I watch and listen for Joy and Laughter and Celebration, as it's poured out before Christ week after week...

But that does not mean it is the only way a Room like this can be read.

- ... Not a Chance! God isn't limited by me or my feeble attempts...

I do this out of Love because it's how I'm made... But that doesn't mean I need this to experience Him and His presence!

- ...Or that I can't give it up when asked...

- This room has changed... But God hasn't!
- He isn't less here than He was before!
- That's because one way isn't "More Right" than the other... It's just my Pageantry set down for others to feel loved.

God works like this in all the rooms He leads you into...

- And He won't send you there without His presence...
- Instead, He will bring...

"Exactly more than enough!"

To experience this, you will be required to bring all your concerns, and perhaps even vulnerably... Stop the Underscore.

- Standing alone with just Him and your own set down pageantry...
- Can you see, that if we apply all the principles we've learned throughout this series to the wrong room at the wrong time, we will have missed the point?
- How if we don't understand how to read the room through Love, we will bring something to the table that's not needed... Or worse, not bring something we should have...
- **When we reach the end of what we know, that's where we find God.**
Find that place... and love them...

MESSAGE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

PONDER

1. What about the message did I feel...
 - Inspired about?
 - Convicted by?
 - Sadness, grief, or loss about?
 - Curious about?
 - Hopeful for?

EXPERIENCE

2. Did anyone have a "Wow!" moment during the message that resonated in you? If so, what was it? (Could be a new scripture/Bible story you've never heard, a profound concept, etc.)

LEARN

3. What new/fresh thing did I learn about God? What new/fresh thing did I learn about myself?

APPLY

3. How can I challenge myself this week with what I've learned? What might responding well look like?