

Fil-Am Community Church
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Sermon Three, Choosing Intimacy

Good morning Fil-Am Community Church, it is so good to see you here this morning, for time sake let us get into the word of God, but more importantly let us get the word of God into you!

****View Video clip****

In Luke Chapter 7, we read about two people who encounter Jesus on very different paths.

Jesus is invited to eat at Simon the Pharisee's house. He is one of the few Pharisees who openly joined Christ's followers,

- He had acknowledged Jesus as a **teacher**, however,
- He had **not accepted** him as his personal Lord and Savior.
- His character had **not changed**,
- There was no **transformation**,
- And his principles were **unchanged**.

Saints it is not enough to know about Jesus, you have to have that **personal relationship**, and know him not just about him...

It was also noted that this was also right after Christ had raised Lazarus from the dead, causing the Pharisees and Sadducees to take note, of this man with the ability to raise the dead, heal the sick, give sight to the blind etc.

There were many followers of Jesus who thought that at the Passover just a week later that he would be crowned as King.

Because of this a council of Priests and Pharisees were called, since the raising of Lazarus, the sympathies of the people would be in favor of Jesus, so

it would be dangerous to seize him openly, so they plotted to seize him **secretly**.

While all this plotting was going on in Jerusalem, Jesus was asked to the feast at Simon the Pharisees house.

Because of everything just mentioned there would be those who came to this feast closely watched his movements and some of them with **Unfriendly eyes**.

When I invite someone into my house there are typically a few things that always happen, I **greet them** with a hand shake or a hug or a kiss at the door depending upon what type relationship we have. I also ask would they like something to drink and show them into the living room. If they have never been there I might also let them know where the restroom is at.

This is what is called **common courtesies**.

In Christ's day and age guests were received with a **kiss**, given a bowl of water with which to **wash the dust** off their feet a possibly a little **perfumed oil** for their hair.

Simon didn't offer any of these common courtesies to Jesus.

Simon doesn't give Jesus a kiss when He walks in, though that was the custom, at least on the hand. Typically the custom would've been to wash the feet of your guest or to have a servant do it. Jesus' feet went unwashed.

Oftentimes when you had a guest, especially a distinguished guest, you would give them some inexpensive olive oil to anoint their head. That was their custom. **None** of this happened for Jesus.

Simon the Pharisee considered his opinion was important in establishing the credentials of Jesus, however, what should have concerned him was Jesus' opinion of him.

So Jesus is eating at this house of this **pretender**, and in the middle of their meal there is an uninvited guest.

The Bible tells us in Luke 7 that she's a known sinner, a woman of ill repute. She walks into this house and she is **weeping** and she is **crying**, and she falls at the feet of Jesus and the tears are now dripping off her cheeks and onto the dirty, muddy feet of Jesus that should've been washed by the Pharisee.

She sees that they're not washed; she sees how her tears are making the dirt run off of His feet, and she undoes her hair.

So with her tears she washes His feet and with her hair she dries His feet. She begins to kiss them, crying, broken. She pulls out a jar of very expensive perfume and she pours it on His feet.

This woman who showed such an **extravagant love for Jesus**, although she had not been cured of leprosy, or restored her sight, healed her husband or raised a child from the dead, however she knew who Jesus was and had washed his feet and dried them with her hair because he had **saved her** from her sin.

The scripture does not tell us how and exactly when she came to believe in Christ, however it is not difficult to imagine how she became sick of her work and who she had become.

Perhaps, she had been in the crowd and heard Jesus say, *"Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Matthew 11: 28-29

The woman's love **was great** because she was very aware of how much she had been **forgive** from.

Those of us that have been through **some things** know how very grateful

we are for a loving savior who accepts us with open arms.

Simon's coldness and neglect toward Christ showed how little he appreciated the mercy Christ had always so freely given. He thought that he had honored Jesus by just inviting him to his house.

He did not recognize Christ as a **representative of God**, while Mary a lowly sinner had been pardoned, he was a sinner unpardoned.

Let's freeze that moment; we'll come back to it. Keep this story in mind as we talk a little bit about intimacy.

I'm not sure if you know this or not, but when a baby is born, it cries, and when I say it cries I really mean it cries **a lot**. One reason is because it does not know how to communicate besides crying, that how it usually communicates what it wants or needs.

Now I am just speaking in generalities now to protect the innocent, but when a baby cries, the father figure from the male persuasion typically has no clue as to why the baby is crying.

Men typically go through a process to try and eliminate what's wrong, we typically try giving them a bottle, check their diaper, pick them up, hug them, try and talk to them, whatever we can to make the crying stop.

As a last resort we will change the television from the UFC fight or football to some silly cartoon....

The difference is when Shirley or any other woman would walk into the room and hear the crying, she would know automatically what the problem was, she would listen and say she's tired, or she needs her bottle, or needs changing etc.

And is by some magic, as soon as what she said was done the crying stopped!

Mothers have a **different set of ears** when it comes to their children,

they are able to hear and sense things the males are not. They have a connection that only a mother could understand.

In fact, there's almost no relationship more intimate than a mother and her baby. Because a mother is able to know and understand her child's wants and needs in a way that **no one else can**.

I am sure you have been in a room when a baby was crying and you can see the baby is passed between person to person (**Hot Potato**) all trying to figure out the right combination to make the crying stop, and it is usually when the baby's mother or even another mother gets them that the issue is resolved.

That is an example of a very, very, special intimate relationship, knowing and being known completely, and that is the relationship that God wants with us...

In a picture, that's intimacy. And until you've witnessed or been in that kind of relationship, you won't know what intimacy is.

I could read you the definition, explain where the word comes from or how the word is used, but you wouldn't really know what intimacy is. You would just know about intimacy.

1) God Knows You Intimately

Probably the best Biblical word for intimacy is the word "know." It is first used in the context of relationships in Genesis.

Genesis 4:1, KJV, says, "*That Adam **knew** his wife Eve.*"

The Hebrew word for "know" here is the word "**yada**'."

The definition for yada' is "to know and to be known completely."

But the NIV translates the word a little differently,

Genesis 4:1: NIV says, “Adam **lay** with his wife Eve...”

Genesis 4:1 NASB says, “Now the man Adam had **relations** with his wife...”

You get the picture. That is our context for yada’.

It’s this intimate connection on every level. **To know, to be known.** I think it’s a beautiful picture.

There are other Hebrew words that could have been used, words used later in Scripture referring to the physical act, or even procreation, but here it is this intimate connecting. One Hebrew scholar calls it, “**A mingling of the souls.**”

It’s hard to understand this however, here is another illustration that might help, the subtle differences between a brand new couple and a couple who’ve been together for a long time.

If you happen to go to a restraint and watch the two different types of couples, one being a **young couple**, whether they are dating or newlyweds, the differences are usually not noticeable.

These couples are typically all over each other. Snuggled up close, talking to each other gazing intently into each other’s eyes, hanging on each other’s words, and listen saints neither of them looking at **Face Book** on their phones... Can I get an Amen?

They were making jokes, almost lost in each other’s conversation, they didn’t care. They were there to enjoy each other’s company.

Now the other end of the spectrum is the **elderly couple**, the ones who have been with each other longer than they have been apart. You could see that they had spent their lives together. They didn’t speak as often but did most of their talking with their eyes or even just insignificant gestures.

To the average onlooker they didn't say a word, nothing, however they had a connection, a way of communicating with each other that was not lost in words.

For them, just **being together** is ample space for connection. They're able to communicate without saying anything.

They were able to connect because they **share an intimate bond** and knew each other in ways the younger couple has yet to understand.

If you trace the usage of yada' through the Old Testament, you'll find that over and over again, this is the same word that's used to describe **God's relationship with us.**

Over and over, yada' is the word that's used to describe how God knows you and how He wants to be known by you.

If you really understood that this is how God wants to know you on a personal level would completely change the way you see your relationship with God.

Thinking of it that way I need to rethink my relationship to Jesus, and make sure it is not a weekend fling. It's not a casual encounter. It is a **deep knowing**, this is intimacy.

David uses the word yada' about six times to describe how God knows us in Psalm 139. He writes:

*O Lord, you have **examined** my heart and **know** everything about me. You **know** when I sit down or stand up. You **know** my thoughts even when I'm far away. You **see me** when I travel and when I rest at home. You **know** everything I do. You **know** what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord.*

You know, David speaks to God in this intimate way. It says,

- God, you know how I feel,
- God, you know how I hurt,

- God, you know what I'm thinking.

Remember it says in John 10:10, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I came that they may have life and have it **abundantly**."*

Saints not only does God want to know us intimately he also...

2) God Wants You to Know Him

While it's crazy that God knows us that deeply and intimately, it's even more crazy to me that God invites us to know Him.

James 4:8, *"Draw near to God and He will **draw near** to you..."*

God wants His soul to **mingle with ours**. For some wild reason, the Creator of Heaven and Earth has offered an invitation to you and me.

He's opened his heart and said,

- I want you to **know me** more closely and minutely than you know anyone else.
- I want you to **know my heart**, to connect with me on a level that can only be reached through the most vulnerable intimacy.
- I want our **souls to come together**,
- I want both of us to know the other **deeply and wholly**."

Many of us have a hard time knowing how to deal with intimacy. We can do pretty well at avoiding it, but when it's right in our faces, some of us kind of lose it. That's why it's not surprising that one of the most common responses to intimacy is fear.

You could understand that, right?

Honestly, intimacy can be pretty **scary**, because it involves allowing yourself to be **vulnerable**. And many people fear intimacy with others and with

God because they know that vulnerability and pain go hand-in-hand. So many people have experienced a **betrayal**, or a crushing blow from someone close to them. They opened up, they made themselves vulnerable, and then someone let them down.

And when we make ourselves vulnerable to God, we know He's going to find some things that **we're not proud of**.

That's why many believer keep the topic on Jesus or some other impersonal topic, so they don't have to deal with him on an intimate level. As long as it is not talking about me I'm ok but when I start to get challenged personally I flee.

*Psalms 19:7-10, ⁷ "The law of the Lord is **perfect**, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is **sure**, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are **right**, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is **pure**, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is **clean**, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are **true**; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are **more desirable** than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb."*

Think of the sinful woman in Luke 7.

A woman of ill repute, she knew she had sin in her life that made her unworthy to touch the Messiah. And because we've all fallen short, we know that God's going to look into our lives and find things that He doesn't condone. So it kind of makes sense that many people would be afraid of that vulnerability.

We dealt with this issue last week in Sunday school with the youth and described It a way they might be able to understand it, when someone is in the pool and they start to struggle and it looks like they are going under they look to the lifeguard for help.

Now the life guard is not going to stand there on the side lines and say, you

know if you had waited 30 minutes after you ate before going in, or if you had stayed within one arms distance from the pool you wouldn't be in this problem.

They are going to dive in and pull you to safety, he or she may remind you later of all the things you did wrong however when you are drowning you need help not a lecture.

Christ is the same way, he will jump right in meet you right in the **middle of the problem** and save you, not stand there and mock you but open his arms wide and receive you.

Saints understand that there's so much more gained from intimacy with God, because then we know that He's there with us through any pain we endure. That comfort, knowing that God's with you, can only come through intimacy.

In addition to wanting to know us intimately, as well as allowing us to know him intimately, we need to understand the difference between Fans and followers.

3) Fans Choose Knowledge, Followers Embrace Intimacy

Hebrews 11:6, *"And without faith it is **impossible** to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."*

In church, we've often failed to embrace that kind of intimacy with Jesus.

Instead, we've created a system focused around learning, not unlike Simon and the other Pharisees. Admittedly, our default setting is knowledge, not intimacy.

Think about it: We love having Bible Studies, many of which include some kind of workbook that includes a curriculum for working through a particular book of the Bible.

Sermons are accompanied, often with an outline members can fill out or follow.

Private Christian academies have been established all over the world, ranging from grade school to graduate studies, all of which offer different courses that study God: theology, Greek, Hebrew, etc.

Don't get me wrong: studying and learning from God's Word is invaluable. Jesus referenced, read, and quoted all kinds of passages from the Old Testament, ample proof that he had studied God's Word with great care and diligence.

However, we can't expect knowledge to replace intimacy, even though we often try to.

And I think we try to substitute knowledge for intimacy because knowledge is so much easier. It's easy for us to say, "Well, I know about Jesus," but He **wants** to know us.

As the youth remedied me last Sunday during Sunday school it has to be a **heart thing** not a **head thing**.

*1 Peter 5:6-7 NIV, ⁶ "Humble yourselves, therefore, under Gods Mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he **cares for you.**"*

That's where we find Simon the Pharisee. He **knew a lot** about Jesus and his teachings, and he wanted to learn more. He calls him Teacher, emphasizing that he's most interested in learning from Jesus, not opening up to Jesus.

Simon sees all this woman does for Jesus, her embarrassing actions, and the Bible tells us in Luke chapter 7, verse 39 that, "When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is, that she is a sinner.'" And he says it to himself.

But Jesus, who knew Simon's thoughts, answered him, "Look, I came in the house.

- You **did not** give me a kiss, not even on my hand. She hasn't stopped kissing my feet.
- You **gave me nothing** to wash my feet with, and she is washing my feet with her tears.
- You **gave me no olive oil** for my head; she has poured perfume on my feet."

And people can just see the **brokenness** of this woman, and then Jesus turns to this woman and He says, "*Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace.*"

Simon brought Jesus to the meal, but all he wanted was **knowledge**.

He wanted to keep things shallow, and he defined his relationship by not washing Christ's feet, not caring to kiss him, not being willing to anoint his head, but this woman was willing to open up to Jesus. She made herself **vulnerable**, being totally willing to open up and let Jesus know her.

So will you let Jesus know you?

Will you embrace the close and intimate relationship He wants to have with you?

Because with that intimate relationship comes forgiveness and transformation, release from the bondage of Sin and its grasp on your life, from that intimate relationship comes Freedom, comes liberty, from that intimate relations comes Eternal Salvation, something only followers truly experience.

Let us pray...