

Well, today we are in our teaching time. We are going to continue on in our sermon series, The Conversationalist. And we're talking simply about building up our relationships, improving our relationships, improving our communication with those that we know well and maybe even with those that we don't know well yet. And so far in our in our series, we kind of have these building blocks.

And the first week we talked about speaking words of encouragement. And if you don't have anything nice, don't say anything at all. Scripture says that we should only say words that build up others. So that's important, right? I think we can all agree that that's a pretty important thing that we should try to do. Now, last week we talked about listening and we have two ears and one mouth for a reason.

And scripture tells us that we should be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to become angry. And again, we can probably all agree that we're not perfect at that, but it's probably something we should be striving to do, to do so this week. The third concept, the third building block of relationships, building up relationships. One conversation at a time is to treat others and see others and think about others in the same way that Christ does.

In other words, not only do we have to say words of encouragement, not only do we have to listen with grace, but we actually have to truly mean it. Now, this is one is probably a little bit more difficult like this is the standards for the way Christ treats people is pretty high. So our concept for today's teaching comes from Romans Chapter 15 verses five through seven.

It says, May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other, similar to Christ's attitude the way you can't glorify that way you can glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ together with one voice. So welcome each other in the same way that Christ has welcomed you for God's glory. Now, there are a lot of things I like about this passage, but I like that it says that if we're going to have the same attitude as Christ, then it's the God of endurance and God of encouragement.

But who is going to enable us to do that right? We don't have to do it on our own, thankfully. Now, when and if we have the same attitude as Christ, we are giving glory to God in those moments. So what's what is Jesus's attitude like? How does he interact with others? So we're going to turn to a story that is found in Luke Chapter seven and this is a really good example of an interaction that Jesus had with someone.

And in this story, we have three characters. We have Jesus, we have a Pharisee, and we have a sinful woman. Right. Ingredients for a really good story. So here we go. We're going to start a chapter seven, verse 36 through 50. But I'm going to stop and pause along the way. So if you're following along, I know that I'm going to be inserting some things.

Once upon a time, one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. After he entered the Pharisees home, he took His place at the table. Meanwhile, a woman from the city, a sinner, discovered that Jesus was dining in the Pharisees house. She brought perfumed oil, innovate made of alabaster, pours in first in first century Palestine, Pharisees were highly regarded, women were not, and this Pharisee could afford to host Jesus at his house.

And presumably the woman probably could not. Now, it could be said that this Pharisee invited Jesus into his home in order to trap him. Right. And we can we can believe that. Maybe because if we know of the role of the Pharisees in Jesus's journey to the cross, then this might be a likely situation that's

happening now. Although the Pharisee does have some respect for Jesus because later on in the passage we'll hear him call him teacher.

Now, the woman would have heard Jesus preaching in the streets or on the mountain or by the by the shore. And likely she heard a message on forgiveness. So she came knowing Jesus was at this Pharisees house. She came in love and in gratitude with the idea of a new life. She came in repentance, carrying her perfume in.

She was ready to show her gratitude to Jesus. Okay. Continuing on at 38, standing beside him at his feet and crying, the woman began to wet his feet with her tears. She wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured the oil on them. When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw what was happening, he said to himself, If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him.

He would know that she is a sinner. Jesus would have been reclining at the table. They had these kind of chaste lounge things. So he would have been on his side with his feet outstretched and the woman was behind him and crying and wiping his feet with her tears and pouring this perfume oil on his feet. Now, these would have been little, costly little vials of perfume, boom.

But she did it as an offering to the gift that he had given her by offering her forgiveness for her sinful ways. Now, the Pharisee sees what's going on and he is upset and he's label her a sinner. Right. He said she is a sinner. And he says that regardless of what her intentions were in coming to see Jesus, her repentance doesn't matter to the Pharisee.

He has a bad attitude toward her. But Jesus replied, as Jesus often does with a parable. So verse 40, Jesus replied, Simon, I have something to say to you, teacher speak. He said. A certain lender had two debtors. One owed enough money to pay 500 people for a day's work, the other owed money for 50. When they couldn't pay, the lender forgave the debts of them both.

Which of them will love him more? Simon replied. I suppose the one who had the largest debt canceled. Jesus said. You have Judge correctly. Now. This Pharisee named Simon heard the parable that Jesus told him and seemingly understood stood what Jesus was trying to teach. But then listen to the next line. Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, Do you see this woman?

Imagine, imagine that we got imagine this. Right? So Jesus is still talking to Simon over here, but he he turns to the woman probably with compassion and love, but he says to Simon, do you see this woman now? Of course, Simon. Simon, the Pharisee sees her, but Jesus is asking to see past her actions and see her as a beautiful child of God.

So Jesus continues on. When I entered your home, he said to Simon, You didn't give me water for my feet, but she wet my feet with tears and wiped them with her hair. You didn't greet me with a kiss, but she hasn't stopped kissing my feet since I came in. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has poured perfumed oil on my feet.

This is why I tell you that her many sins have been forgiven. So she has shown great love. The one who is forgiven little. Love, little. Now in this. In this time there would have been three things for a guest upon arrival. First of all, the guest would have placed his hand on the shoulder and gave it.

He would have given him the sign, the kiss of peace. Second thing, dusty roads and strappy sandals meant hot and dirty feet. And so the second thing would be that cool water would be poured over the

feet of the guest in order to cool and cleanse them and then the third thing, incense would have been burned or rose petals would have been placed on the guest head of Simon.

The Pharisee did none of these things that were customary in the time for a guest. Now, I don't think Jesus was saying that because he felt like he deserved them. That wasn't the point. The point was the point was made that there was a big contrast between what Simon did and what the woman did. So the passage concludes with these words.

Then Jesus said to the woman, Your sins are forgiven. The other table guests began to say among themselves, Who is this person that even forgives sins? Jesus said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Now, this story, this passage teaches us to different attitudes. One of the woman and one of the Pharisees and one understood the need for forgiveness, the need for Jesus.

And the other one was focused so much on the sins of another person, he didn't even understand his own need for forgiveness. He didn't understand his need for Jesus, His Savior. Now, we are often the Pharisee in this story. We simply lump groups of people together, sometimes calling them sinners. Sometimes we just lump groups of people together, like, well, all women do this or all men do this, or all children do this, or all people of this race, or from this country or those people who are in jail or whatever other labels we not God places on people, but when we put people in boxes, when we label them, we don't actually see the

person and Jesus clearly is telling us to look see this person before us. So how can we better see people now? Remember that time where that saying was children should be seen and not heard right. In fact, there is a law in Nebraska still on the books, law in Nebraska that children must not burp in church. And if that happens, a parent could be arrested for that.

But of course, this is not how Jesus sees children. Right. We think about the passage in in Mark ten, where people were bringing children to Jesus. And the disciples scolded them. Right. They're like, no, keep the children away from Jesus. And then and then it says, Jesus saw this. He grew angry and said to them, Allow the children to come to me.

Right? Don't forbid them. Right? They need this. They need to be near me. We do it right. We sometimes try to keep certain people away from the church or we keep them. We want them away from knowing Jesus because we've already labeled them. We know what's in their hearts, we think. But that's not having the same attitude as Jesus, you know, children and youth and young adults like the next generation of what's happening, what our church is going to be.

It's really important, right? They are so important. In fact, it could be argued that their opinions matter more than the opinions of long time church members in real life. It doesn't actually usually work that way because usually if you have seniority in a business or an employer, a workplace, right, you have a little bit more pull, you have a little bit more say what happens.

But being a disciple of Jesus means looking at the world differently. Jesus said, let the little children come to me. So how do we see people better? We haven't always done a good job of seeing people as God does, especially in this country. Now, throughout history, we've done some weird things. We we've created laws to try to define people or label people.

And just because we voted on it and we've made it a human law doesn't mean that it's right. Doesn't mean that it's just and it doesn't mean that's the way God sees it. There is a link, a law that was passed in Lincoln right in the 1800s. Now. Now, that's really not that long ago. If you think about the story that we just read about how our attitude is supposed to be like Jesus's attitude.

Right, thousands of years ago. But this was just hundreds of years ago. This law was passed in Lincoln and there was a similar laws that were passed in other cities around America, too. Is known now as the ugly law. And here's what it says Any person who is disease maimed, mute, mutilated, or in any way deformed so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object or an improper person to be allowed in or on the streets, highways, thoroughfares or public places in this city shall not therein or thereon expose himself or herself to public view under penalty of a fine for \$1 for each offense upon conviction of any person for violation of this

section, if it shall seem proper and just the fine provided for may be suspended and such person detained at the police station where he shall be well cared for until he can be sent to the county poor farm, right? Labeling people as objects is not seeing people as God sees them. This is not of Jesus. This is not what Jesus stands for yet in in our country, in our city, in our community, this was deemed appropriate.

This was deemed the right thing to do. But we are humans. And just like the Pharisee, we don't always get it right. Jesus said, Do you see this woman? Do you see this man? Do you see this child? Do you see this person? Do you see them with love? Do you see them with the very reason that Jesus came?

It's really easy for us to see the sin, right? Especially in other people. But it's harder to see the value of a person as Jesus's New Testament scholar and theologian and Te Right says this about the gospel according to Luke. And in this passage that we just read, he says, For Luke, true faith is what happens when someone looks at Jesus and discovers God's forgiveness and the sign and proof of this faith is love.

Now, most of the time. Most of the time, it's not our job to try to change others or even understand others actions. It's our job always because of our faith in Jesus to love as Jesus loves. Now, this could mean this might look like a praying before a different, difficult conversation. This could mean about maybe just taking a deep breath when we when we feel something kind of start to boil inside of us, when we think about a certain group of people or a certain purpose in maybe it's just a brief prayer, inviting the spirits to walk with us.

Our attitudes change our behaviors, and becoming more like Christ means seeing people like Christ and seeing people like Christ in in all of our conversations, seeing people like Christ when we are making laws or we are electing in voting for our elected leaders, it means seeing people as Christ does. And when we make decisions for the church in all that we do, because if we have the same attitude as Christ, it will be shown through our love.

Would you pray with me? Gracious God, this is this is not always easy. We fail at this all of the time. We fail this as individuals. We fail at this as a church. We fail it this as a community and a state and a country and a world. We don't always see people in the same way that you see them.

Our attitudes are our hearts are we. We look at things like we do, like the world sees them instead of how you see them. And so we ask for your help. We ask for your guidance. We want to have these

conversations that are making a difference in the world. And we want to speak encouraging words. We want to listen, but most importantly, we want to have the same attitude as you have.

Gracious God, be with us as we think about this, as we as we go to you in prayer this week, when we have difficult conversations or we're faced with something that's in our heart that that's just not quite showing love to one another, God, we ask all of this in your loving name. Amen.