

1-VIDEO: RESOLUTION TITLE

2-TITLE SLIDE

INTRO

Good morning!

We are continuing our series called Resolution. I know that it sounds like a good New Years Series, but really the whole focus is about bringing a different kind of resolution to our relationships. To resolve any heartache and conflict and tension.

Last week, we talked about something that you can and should be doing in all of your relationships. Whether you think there is any need of resolution or not, this is something that should be doing.

We should be building each other up. Speaking positively about each other and to each other instead of tearing each other down. And this is something that we do both externally, with our words, and internally, with our minds.

If we build each other up it can bring resolution, but it will also strengthen our relationships so that they do not need future resolution.

Today we are going to talk about something very similar. So if you don't have any conflict in any of your relationships and everything is going pretty great for you ... you are still going to need to practice this in your relationships.

So last week we said, "Build each other up" and this week we are going to say, "Become a servant"

SERVANT

When we serve someone, it is a way of saying, "I love you. You are important to me. I want to do this for you." Don't tell me you love me, show me you love me.

And one of the ways that we show someone that we love them is through acts of service. This is a great thing. This is one of the many reasons why Jesus says that He came. He says in

MARK 10:45

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⁴⁵For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

He came not to be served, but to serve.

This is a great thing. This is a way we say, "I love you." This is what Jesus came for. This is something that we should be doing. Being a servant should be as natural to a Christian as breathing. It should just be who we are.

So what keeps us from serving? What keeps us from living the life of a servant?

WHAT KEEPS US FROM LIVING THE LIFE OF A SERVANT

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WE WANT TO BE SERVED – We want to be served. We want to be lifted up. We want to be the ruler, not the servant. Serving is exhausting, ruling is rewarding. We learn this from a very young age.

I will hear my kids playing from the other room and one of their great points of controversy is that one of them is trying to rule. Barking out orders, demanding that things are done a certain way, or that the other one needs to go and grab this, get that, do this.

Then it continues throughout life. We want to be in charge. We want to make the rules. We want to be listened to and obeyed. We demand respect.

For how many of us this is how we parent?

I demand you to respect me. I just want you to listen and obey. Granted, some of the things that we say are essential that they listen and obey. Some of the things that we ask them to do is because we are training them for the rest of their lives. (Chores, jobs around the house, different responsibilities)

But often, we find that we have finally gotten a little servant that can run around doing things for us. Grab me this, get that, do this. And then you are sitting in the other room and they say, “Dad, can you get me a cup of water?” “No, you got two good feed.”

I can ask them to get whatever I want them to ask me to get and they had better not tell me no. But if they ask us ... ughh.

We want to be in charge, we want to make the rules, we want to be listened to and obeyed, we want to be respected, we want to be served.

The other thing that keeps us from the life of a servant is that WE DON'T WANT TO BECOME A SLAVE. We don't want to end up being someone's slave and acts of service have a way of turning into servitude. I have told you this before, but when Jen and I first got married I started looking at different responsibilities around the house and thinking ... we have to do these things for the rest of our life and I don't want to be the one stuck doing them.

If I wash the dishes 3 days in a row will I end up being the dishwasher for the next 29,000 days in our marriage (that's 80 years)? I don't know if I can handle that. So you give a little, but not too much because you don't want to become a slave. You don't want someone to walk all over you.

So what are we to do? How do we live the life of a servant knowing that we want to rule? How do we live the life of a servant and not become a slave?

RULERS

On one occasion, James and John, two of Jesus disciples that were brothers. These were two of Jesus' closest disciples. If you

remember they had a nickname, Jesus called them the sons of thunder.

Well the sons of thunder came up to Jesus one day to have a conversation with Him. They had something on their mind. They recognized that He is Lord. That He is mighty and that He is going to reign, I'm sure they did not recognize just how powerful His reign would be.

So they asked if they could sit at the right and left of Jesus while He ruled, while He reigned. And Jesus says, "You don't know what you are asking." And He goes on to explain to all 12 of the disciples the gravity of reigning next to Jesus.

MARK 10:42-45

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⁴²And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that

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those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and

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their great ones exercise authority over them.

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⁴³But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

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⁴⁴and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

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⁴⁵For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Is your desire to rule? Do you want to make the rules? Do you want to be in charge? Do you find that in your relationships you are always giving the commands and expecting them to be obeyed?

That is what those that did not know God would do. They exercised authority. But that is not how we, who are in Christ, are supposed to be in our relationships. We must be servants in our relationships and if you are first, then you must be slave of all.

Do you want to rule in your household? Do you want to rule as boss? Then it is not going to look how you think it will. It is not sitting on the couch and barking commands. It is not sitting in your office and demanding respect and progress.

Instead, ruling looks a lot like stepping out of our comfy place (For Jesus it was Heaven) and getting in with those that we have been called to lead. And not just get in with them, but serve them. Meet their needs. Help them to be successful, by pouring into their lives and their work.

SLAVES

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So I didn't want to get stuck doing the dishes for 29000 days. What was I to do? How do we protect ourselves from becoming slaves while serving? How do we ensure that people won't take advantage of us?

I was in school, reading a few books when I finally realized the answer to those questions. Jen and I had been married for two years and we had built up some animosity between us. And a big part of my animosity is that I had become her slave. Or at least that is how I felt.

Well I was reading some books and they had a few chapters on submission. Which led us to Ephesians and talking about husband and wife relationships. And then parent and child relationships. And then in chapter 6 Paul begins to talk about servant and master relationships. This is where it really hit me.

EPHESIANS 6:5-8

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⁵Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

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⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

14-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁷rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,

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⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Bondservant. This is someone that is bonded in service without wages. This in essence is a slave. And Paul says, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters.” Well duh. Their slaves. That is what they have to do. They have to obey. If they don’t obey there is punishment involved.

But listen to what Paul is saying here ... he says with a sincere heart ... not by the way of eye-service, as people pleasers.

We are good at eye service. Are they watching? Okay ... Ill go and do and serve. Oh, they are not around ... well then Im good. I hate doing this, I hate them, I hate that they lord over me, and our hearts are bitter.

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Eye service is service that you see, but not service that is really given. With everything. Heart and Body.

And Paul says, serve with a sincere heart ... rendering service with good will as to the Lord.

If you are afraid of being walked on, if you are afraid of becoming someone’s slaves ... then your acts of service need to have a heart change.

When I read this, I realized, you cannot take advantage of the willing. You cannot take from those that freely give. A slave who gives from a genuine heart and is serving with good will as to the Lord, is free, they do not have the burden of a slave.

HEART CHANGE

So I decided to do a heart change in my marriage. I decided I was going to serve because I wanted to serve. And since I had made my list of all of the things that I love about my wife – that we talked about last week – it made it easy for me to find in my heart all of the reasons that I wanted to submit to her. That I wanted to do and give and go.

Many of our relationships could use a heart change. They are in need of resolution because we don't want to give up control. We want to have that edge, so we have been fighting for master, king of the hill style relationships.

But Jesus tells us that we need to submit, we need to serve one another. We need to go so far as laying down our lives for one another. This is the words that He used and then His actions followed in perfect suit. He came to serve and serve He did. He came to lay down His life and lay down His life He did.

And if your relationship is not in need of resolution, it will be if you are not serving those that you are in a relationship with. If you are not genuinely serving them with a sincere heart.

HOW DO WE GET A SINCERE HEART?

How do we get a sincere heart? We look to Jesus. That's what we do. We look to Jesus.

Paul in his letter to the Philippians says:

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

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¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,

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²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

19-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

20-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have the same mind as Jesus, the same love as Jesus ... and serve, be humble, look to others interests. But where does this stem from? It stems from having encouragement in Christ, having comfort from His life, by having fellowship with His spirit.

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If you want a heart change in your relationship, it has to start with Jesus.

- If you don't know Jesus, you couldn't possibly serve others in the way He did. So start by knowing Him. Start by adding a little resolution to that relationship. Spend the next few weeks reading through the gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and get to really know the heart of Jesus.
- If you know Jesus, then be transformed by Him. Spend time in prayer with Him daily, continue to seek Him in scripture, to see Him in His Word.
- And then become like Him in your relationships and do it for Him. Do it in honor of Him. Do it because of Him, with a sincere heart.

CHALLENGE

Here is the challenge though. Here is where this gets challenging. If we are going to genuinely serve those that we are in relationships with ... then there have got to be some rules that we understand and are willing to recognize from the beginning.

- Just like in speaking kind words, when we begin humbling ourselves and serving ... it might be one sided. Don't expect anything in return. Don't think, well I did all of this so now I deserve this. That is not a sincere heart. That is not service as a bondservant to Christ.

- Know that you might be doing this for the rest of your life. You might always () whatever that is. You might always be the one cleaning the toilets. That is okay, and you will honestly be okay with that if you are serving with a sincere heart.
- Remember the relationship that is the most important. This way of life is between you and Christ. It will have tremendous effects on your relationships and it has the strength to bring resolution, but it is really service between you and Christ. So, if you are scrubbing the toilets and thinking bad thoughts about the others in the house, stop. Because you are not doing it with a sincere heart. Go and spend some times with Jesus. Go and reflect on what He has done for you. Get right with Jesus and then go try scrubbing the toilet again.