

Phil 2:3-8

Falling in Love ... Requires a pulse  
Staying in Love ... Requires a plan.

Falling in Love is about attraction... but staying in love is all about the right action.

Last week we asked the million dollar question. "Is it possible for 2 people to fall in love and stay in love forever?"

We think it is possible, maybe not probable, but ultimately that is what we desire. No matter how many bad relationships we have been in we still look for it and long for it.

Jesus helps us by telling us that we need to make Love a "What" not a lot... A Verb.

Then He add the practical, how to information. Love (VERB) one another... The way I Loved You!!!

Not the way your parents, or grandparents, or culture, or peer advise tells us... the way He loves us.

Today we are going to take and in depth look at what that means. Now I will tell you this is challenging but it is wonderful.

When you find yourself pushing back from this... when you think of loving someone else in this way... when you think this is way to hard and you want to give up... Ask yourself this question. "How much would I love to be loved and treated this way?"

Even though it seems like you are asking me to do what seems impossible... would I want to be loved like that? Oh Yeah, Absolutely.

Imagine if 2 people came together and decided to love each other the way Christ loved us... that is the way to STAY IN LOVE.

Philippians 2:3-8

This is a theologically rich and deep passage that is filled with meaning. This is how Jesus loved us. This is what it looks like to love like Jesus loved.

Now these are general instructions that could be applied to any and all relationships, but I want us to apply them through the filter of that One special relationship with that someone you want to STAY IN LOVE with.

**Philippians 2:3** - We could stop right here and not go any further and change our relationships. It says,

*"Do Nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit."*

Selfish ambition = Competitiveness, to build ones self esteem  
Don't interrupt the story if they get the details wrong. Let her tell the story wrong.

Here is the hard part. The part that seems impossible to us.

*but rather, in humility value others above yourselves.*

Literally, Act like she/he is more important than you.

Have you ever been someplace where someone was more important than you? Yes, you have...

Pastor, hold on, "Are you talking about that there are some human beings that are worth more than others?" Nope, that is not the point of this passage.

He is saying I want you to think about a time when you went someplace and where around someone who in that context was more important than you.

Let me give you an example. Have you ever been to a wedding when you were not the Bride or the Groom?

Standing in line to talk to you. Stand when you walked into the room.

I hate to break it to you... You were not the most important person in the room.

President of the USA, National hero, or a famous author.

You would admit that that might be one of the greatest moments in your life. You might even say I am so honored to meet you.

How do you treat someone like that? You defer to them. You don't interrupt them, you don't correct them. You don't try and improve their posture, You even laugh at their jokes even if they are not funny. You defer to them.

The key word is respect. I am going to treat you as if you are more important than me. You show them respect in what you do and don't do. You defer to them.

Paul says that is how you treat that someone special in your life. Every single day, every single situation, every single decision, all the time, you respond as if you believe they are the most important person in the room. They are more important than you.

Wait a minute pastor; I think they might take advantage of me. They might. Well I don't know if that is going to come back my way. It might not. - That's not really any of your business actually. This is how you are to treat them.

Think about your most valued possession, How do you treat that possession? We are careful with it. We are careful about how others treat it. We are protective. You treat it special! with a sense of AWE.

When you first met and fell in love you did this naturally. Have you met her.... Awe. He called ....Awe. There was a sense of ... Oh, I don't want to mess this up. You treated them with care. This is fragile and precious. Kind of like holding a baby for the first time.

You know how to do this. It was natural at first, but those who STAY IN LOVE, continue to do this.

They learn that what came naturally at first, must be maintained INTENTIONALLY! Every single day, every single opportunity, they treat the other person as if they are really more important. They decide "YOU COME FIRST"

Verse 4

*Not looking to your own interest, but each of you to the interest of the other.*

Now this is hard for me! I am mostly interested in the things that interest me. I am not naturally interested in things that are not interesting to me. You are the same way!

Paul says, you as a decision, very intentionally, express interest and develop interest in the things your loved one is interested in.

This is a big decision to make, Am I going to look toward my interests, or am I going to look toward their interests? Am I going to just put up with and half listen with one ear to what you are interested in or am I going to listen and then move in that direction.

That is what you do when you want to STAY IN LOVE. You don't put up with their interests, you learn how to become interested in and express interest in what they are in to.

You know how to do this! When you fell in love you all of the sudden became interested in the things they were interested in. Running, Fishing

Now I know that sounds so ideal. And you want to discount that. At this point, Paul the writer of Philippians kind of reads our minds and says, "I bet they are reading this and saying 'Nobody does that'"

Paul then takes us to Jesus and begins to illustrate for us how Jesus loved us! Because HE is the model. Hence the title, "Re-Modeling".

Here is the model.

Verse 5

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.*

In other words, "I want you to approach your relationship with the same attitude as Christ approaches His relationship with you!"

*Who being in very nature God ... (HE was God)*

*did not consider equality with God something to be used for His own advantage.*

This is HUGE! You are in a relationship and you naturally think, Well I am at least 50% of this relationship. I should get at least 50% of the attention. (Yea right, we want 100%) I am at least as important as him/her. I have at least certain rights. I should at least get something out of this, right?

Paul says Jesus is walking around the earth in His physical ministry and not once does he pull the "God Card". Not once does He use who He is to gain the advantage. Not once does He say, wait a minute, Do you know who I am? I'm Jesus! Not once does HE leverage who he was for His own sake.

I am tempted to do this all the time. You are too. I work hard to bring home the money, the least you could do is .... I take care of the kids & the house, The least you could do is .... We all have leverage points.

Paul tells us I want you to follow Jesus in this. Jesus was the most important person in the room every time. He was always the bride. He was always the hero. He was always the celebrity. HE was always the Rock Star. He was the most important person in the room and HE NEVER leveraged that for His own sake.

That is the MODEL!

Verse 7

*Rather, HE made Himself "nothing"...*

Another version says "He emptied Himself"

Kenosis... He emptied Himself of all His rights, everything that He had due Him. He EMPTIED Himself.

You know what we say in our culture? He is so full of himself; She is so full of herself. 2000 yrs ago Paul wrote, "He emptied Himself." That is the model.

*He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, (VERB) being*

*made in human likeness.*

He didn't have to do any of that. Why? Why would He do that? What was He up to? What was the point?

Verse 8

*Being found in appearance as a human he humbled Himself.* (verb)

He made a decision... He humbled HIMSELF. HE decided to place Himself under! He decided to submit. He decided to subordinate His will & rights! Guess who he humbled Himself to... YOU & ME!

He humbled Himself by...

In other words, what did this look like? What did he do? Come home earlier for dinner? Pay more attention during conversations? Stay on budget? Pick up the kids without being asked?

Before we answer that question let me ask you. What have you erected in our mind that you say just cant do this. What is too difficult for you? What do you say in your mind is too difficult to ask?

What did he do to create and maintain this love relationship with you and me?

*by becoming obedient to death - Even death on a cross!*

Let me see if I can explain his. In a sense Jesus had a dilemma. The dilemma was this, I can either maintain my rights, status and position, maintain my glory and what is due me, maintain getting my way (and by the way he was always right). I can maintain everything I deserve but have NO relationship with humanity.

Or, I can dip into their world in order to establish a relationship, but to do that I have to give up what is due me: rights, respect, & glory as the Son of God.

But, **I cant have it both ways!** I can get everything I am due, but have nothing to do with them. Or I can become one of them, submit myself to the creature. In order to pay for their sins and pave a way for a relationship with me, But I can't have it both ways!

When Jesus died on the cross for your sin. He put your deal ahead of His deal. He put your forgiveness ahead of His Glory. He put your greatest need ahead of what He rightfully deserved. He put you/me first. He submitted Himself to us! And not only that but we were not even close to equal in the first place.

But the dilemma is, "If I want relationship, I have to die to who I am" To maintain who He was would mean no relationship with mankind.

Your heavenly Father through His Son, Jesus, opted for relationship over respect. Over demanding His own way, over all the glory He should have received. He couldn't have it both ways... And you can't either.

Now the truth is we cannot have it both ways! Not with God and not with others. You see in order to have a "STAY IN LOVE" kind of relationship 2 people need to submit to each other. That is the most amazing thing ever. God created the potential for it but not just the potential.. He sent His son into the world to model it for you and me.

The reason you can accept Jesus as your Savior and leader is not just because God sent Jesus into the world but that He submitted Himself on your behalf and paved the way for you to be forgiven and to be able to call God your heavenly Father. HE opted for relationship over His personal rights.

#### Invitation:

So here is the question? How's your relationship with Him? Many times we ask are you saved? But that is not the real question. Do you have a relationship with Him? Not religion, What is your relationship with Him?

If you would like to have a relationship with Jesus today, I want to invite you to start that relationship with Him by submitting your self to Him, by saying a prayer.

*God, I thank you for sending your Son to save me of my sins. I submit my life to. I ask you to be my forgiver and leader of my life.*

#### Conclusion:

Let me close with this... I have done a lot of counseling in my ministry. And one of the things that breaks my heart is how often I see couples who treat each other poorly... Where the husband talks down to his wife, or the wife treats the husband like he is a child.

And I have seen this in public. I would venture to say you have too. I have seen people rail on each other - giving instructions - talking down to one another. As I hear them speaking to one another my heart aches! The interesting thing is this, Most times everything they say is completely correct, they are totally right in what they are saying. They might be giving complete instructions, reminding of what happened last time that they forgot to follow those instructions. And if you were to ask the reasoning for it they would probably be able to explain the situation and give a reasonable excuse for why they are being so emphatic. It would make sense and seem reasonable, But, what a horrible way to live.

Now I don't know the whole story ever, but what I do know is at some point in time they felt it was acceptable to be disrespectful to their spouse. Even though the details are correct they cannot have it both ways.

You can spend the rest of your life being right, making a point, winning the argument, getting them in "shape" but you will not be in love at the end of the process!

You can support your angle and approach, you can sit down with a counselor and be absolutely right, every single time and still lose the most important person in your life.

Jesus did not come into the world to be right! He came into the world to submit Himself for our sakes. And by submitting Himself and dying on a cross for our sins, He discounted the opportunity to be right. HE could have nagged everyone to death, and been right every single time. But He knew you can't have it both ways. This is hard for us!

At some point in the relationship you have to decide what is more important, Being Right or being in relationship.

I am not saying that you cannot have a disagreement or even talk about offenses, but what I am saying is if you want to STAY IN LOVE you must place that person in your life on the top. And you must learn to treat them as if they are the most important person in the room even over yourself.

No matter where you are at today, whether you are a believer, a seeker or a skeptic, I know this about you. You want to be loved like this. You long to be treated this way. With respect and care in your relationships. It only happens when we apply the truths of God's word and learn to LOVE (VERB) one another.

How many of you would say, I need to do this, this week with the people I love. How many of you would say that by raising your hands?

Let me pray for you!