

Sermon for April 20, 2008

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: Matthew 14:13-21

Title: "Time"

Introduction: Did you all know that men and women are different? According to the Clarion Call website and other sources:

Women are more sensitive and more emotional. They are more caring and nurturing. Women are more easily sidetracked. They are more observant of their surroundings and are able to multi-task. Women try to "fix" problems in other people, whether or not the person wants fixing.

Men have one-track minds. They don't look to the left or the right. Men are compartmentalized ... they do one thing at a time and then move on to the next. They don't ask directions. They see something and they go whole-hog to accomplish it or get it. Men don't sense when someone is out of sorts. Men forge ahead and don't notice if they are hurting feelings or saying something they shouldn't.

Today we continue our series on Love Languages, and just like men and women are different, EACH OF US receives heartfelt commitment from the ones we love in different ways.

Dr. Gary Chapman argues in his book that there are FIVE main LOVE LANGUAGES. He says that every person receives love in one of these 5 ways. Although there are many dialects, all of us fall under these main five languages that we are talking about.

My three older daughters have different Love Languages. Each of them feels emotional love by different means. I need to know them! I want my daughters to know that they are loved by their Dad! That is important for the rest of their lives...

You know, Jesus shows us how to love people through the stories of His ministry. Remember last week we read the words Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth about how to love other people. Remember he was essentially describing who Jesus is ... the personality traits and practices of Jesus! 'Love is patient and kind and not jealous or conceited or proud. It does not keep a record of wrongs or try to keep score. Love is not rude or irritable, etc.' In other words, Love is NOT ABOUT ME!

At this time I invite you to take the insert out of your program. On one side you will find our Scripture for today and some room for extra notes. On the other side you will see an outline of where we are going today complete with 'Fill-In-The-Blanks'!! My hope is that you will hear something today that will be worth writing down and remembering how to say it to that person you wish knew how to love you!

Before we get to our Scripture, let me get you up to speed on what's happening in Jesus' life. At the place we pick up our Scripture in Matthew, Jesus has already preached the Sermon on the Mount; he's been training his disciples, healing people and arguing with the Pharisees/Leaders of the Church. Most recently Jesus has sent his disciples out on their own for kind of a training run. They went into different places and started getting a feel for what it would be like to teach about Jesus without Jesus there. Then, Jesus finds out that his cousin, John the Baptist has been executed by Herod Antipas.

You all remember Herod Antipas? He was the one who married his brother Philip's former wife, Herodias. She was the one who was so mad at John the Baptist because John said that they should not have married in the first place. She thought that John might convince her husband Herod to get rid of her. Then, she would lose all the power and money that came with being a ruler's wife. So, she asked for John's head on a platter and got it.

So, you can imagine what all Jesus is feeling. He is probably, first of all, exhausted from all the travel and teaching and healing. The disciples probably have a bunch of questions after their trial run in ministry. Then, Jesus is rejected by his boyhood friends in Nazareth. They did not believe that Joseph the carpenter's son could be the Messiah or anything special. Now, Jesus finds out that his cousin is dead. Remember that John the Baptist was not only Jesus' cousin, but he was also the messenger who brought the Good News about Jesus being the Messiah that the people had been waiting for. If they were willing to kill the messenger, surely they were willing to kill the Message!

All this weighing on Jesus mind and heart leads us into our words for today. It comes from Matthew Chapter 14:

READ MATTHEW 14:13-21 NOW AND PRAY!

Okay, so here's Jesus, tired and in mourning over his cousin's death and he takes his closest friends (disciples) and attempts to hide out for awhile ... get some down time. Jesus understands that if the Jewish people will allow the greatest prophet they have ever seen (John) die at the hands of Herod, then his chances are pretty slim. Jesus knows that He's next. Jesus has a lot to get alone and think about and talk with his closest buddies about ... BUT, what happens?!?

It's a small town! Everybody knows everybody else's business and the people around the Sea of Galilee have figured out where Jesus is going. They had good intentions ... they didn't know what all Jesus was going through. They just wanted more of Jesus time so that they could be healed and grow in their faith. So, they hurried by land around the Sea of Galilee to meet Jesus before he could even get out of the boat.

Did you notice Jesus' reaction? **JESUS STOPPED THINKING ABOUT HIMSELF AND SPENT TIME WITH THOSE PEOPLE!**

“Quality Time”

Sarah and I have different languages. Last week we talked about ‘Words of Affirmation’. That's one of my love languages ... if Sarah compliments me; I can get back to work and confidently accomplish the things I need to. Love Bank Full! Why? Because when she Affirms me with her words, I know that the one that matters the most to me, Loves Me!

Then, I feel great and she doesn't feel so great. As much as she appreciates my ‘Words of Affirmation’, it's not how her LOVE BANK gets filled up. I feel loved and go back to working and ministering to/with people and she feels empty. Why? One of her primary love languages is ‘Quality Time’ ... Time spent WITH her! I work all hours of the day and night and our times together are all over the board ... and short!

Now, as we begin to talk about “Quality Time” as a distinct Love Language, there are 5 things we need to know about Quality Time.

The first one seems like a given:

- I. Togetherness
 - A. Togetherness does not mean just being in the same room. You can be in the same room with someone else and not be spending time together.
 - 1. My daughters and I are together a lot, but me watching sports on TV and them trying to tell me about the book they are reading or something that happened at school is not ‘togetherness’.
 - 2. Being together with my girls means turning the TV off and listening to them.
 - B. Togetherness has to do with focused attention. It doesn’t mean that I have to sit and gaze into my daughter’s eyes while she tells me every detail of her day.
 - 1. It does mean that I have to turn the TV off and listen.
 - 2. It may mean that we go out and play softball in the front yard ... that is togetherness.
 - 3. The important thing emotionally is that we are spending focused time with each other.
 - C. If you are out with your spouse weeding the rock bed, it doesn’t matter who pulls more weeds.
 - 1. It matters that we spend time together in a mutual activity.
 - 2. It shows that we care for each other.

II. Quality Conversation

One of the dialects of “Quality Time” is “Quality Conversation”. Quality Conversation consists of two-sided dialogue where two individuals share their thoughts, experiences, feelings and goals in a friendly manner.

Now, remember; to be stereotypical, this language is much harder for men than women. The average woman speaks upwards of 25,000 words/day and men speak anywhere from 10,000 to 15,000 words/day. Advantage: Women.

Also, brain scans reveal that men are tuned in to external events while women are focused more on the internal. If we are going to talk about our feelings, guess what?!? Advantage: Women!

Men, if a woman comes to you with a problem, why do you think they are telling you their problem? Right! They must want us to solve it!

Wrong. Most women tell of their problems just to air it out, which drives men nuts! Men were created to fix stuff! That’s why we want to buy tools! We don’t buy tools so that we can sit and talk about the stuff that’s broken ... BUT, MEN ... That’s what many women want!

“Quality Conversation” is not like “Words of Affirmation” (last week). “Words of Affirmation” is about what we SAY. “Quality Conversation” is about what we HEAR!

Men, that means we need to learn to listen! Here’s how:

- A. What are you HEARING?
 1. Maintain Eye Contact
 - a. Practice focusing on the person talking. But, don’t use your creepy stare.
 - b. Focusing on their eyes helps keep your mind from wandering and let’s them know that they have your undivided attention.
 - c. We’ve all done it. “I’m listening ... I’m listening ... I’m listening ... I wonder who the Packers are going to pick in the first round of the draft...”
 - d. Or, “I’m focused ... I’m focused ...” and then you can’t help but look right over their shoulder at the nice car going by...
 2. Don’t Try to Multitask
 - a. Men, we are not good at it. Admit it. We were made to do one thing, do it well and then move on to something else.
 - b. If your daughter is talking to you about her homework, don’t try to catch the Brewer highlights on Baseball Tonight at the same time ... can’t do it!
 - c. Women, be kind to us. If you have something important to tell us and you know that we are busy (yes ‘busy’ includes sports highlights and fishing magazines), ask when would be a good time to talk to us!
 - d. Men, say, “Hey, I really want to hear what you are going through. If you’ll give me five minutes you can have my undivided attention.”
 3. Listen for Feelings
 - a. Ask yourself what emotion your spouse, child, mother is experiencing.
 - b. When you figure it out, have them confirm it by asking a question: Example: “It sounds to me like you are angry because I didn’t get the dog poop picked up. Am I right?”
 - c. That gives the other person a chance to re-word what they’ve said or say, “That’s right I’m mad!”
 - d. It also let’s the other person know that you are listening carefully and wanting to know their feelings.

4. Watch for Feelings
 - a. Watch for clenched fists, eye movement, tears, furrowed eyebrows, etc.
 - b. Sometimes body language speaks louder or different than the words coming out of their mouth.
 - c. Make sure you know what the other person is really feeling...
5. Refuse to Interrupt
 - a. Research shows that the average individual listens for 17 seconds before interrupting or throwing in their two cents.
 - b. If I'm really listening, I will give my undivided attention and not defend myself or state my position.
 - c. My goal is to understand what is being said, not to defend myself or set the other person straight.

III. Learning to Talk

- A. Oh, boy. We're back to our thoughts and feelings ... I don't know how many women I have who come to me and say, "I just wish my husband/boyfriend would talk to me (by 'talk' they mean 'share their feelings')."
 1. There are a lot of people out there that grew up in homes where sharing thoughts and feelings was not exactly encouraged. If anything, it was frowned upon.
 2. Many people were taught as children to hold their feelings—good or bad—inside.
 3. Nonetheless, if the one you love's primary Love Language is "Quality Time" and their dialect is "Quality Conversation", guess what you get to learn how to do?!?
 4. How do I learn to talk about my feelings?
 - a. Get in touch with your feelings... How?
 - b. Begin by noting feelings and emotions you have away from home ... at work, maybe.
 - c. Take time a couple of times a day to evaluate the feelings you have had for the previous three hours ... I was mad at Bob ... I was happy because things were going well ... I was disappointed that I was not chosen for that job ... I felt guilty for not speaking to Ralph.
- B. With practice, you can find your feelings and be able to talk about them ... I understand that this is a hard one!! BUT, if it is his or her primary Love Language ... it's worth it!

IV. Personality Types

- A. Another roadblock to being able to speak the “Quality Conversation” Language is our personality type.
- B. We may be in touch with our feelings and our emotions just fine, but if we still won’t talk about them, it might have to do with our Personality Type.
- C. There are two basic personality types with a lot of variations of the two. The first one is “The Dead Sea” personality.
1. The Dead Sea is in Israel ... Sanford and Ty and I floated in it a year ago. The Dead Sea is a body of water with no outlet. The Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea and just stops.
 2. Some people are like the Dead Sea. You can load them with information and stories and your concerns and your dreams and ambitions and It Won’t Go Any Further.
 3. This is the person that you ask, “What’s wrong? Why aren’t you talking?” And their answer is, “Nothing.” And They are Serious!
 4. A “Dead Sea” personality can drive in a car full of friends from here to Madison without saying a word and be perfectly happy!
- D. The other personality type is the “Babbling Brook”.
1. The “Babbling Brook” listens and sees things and less than 30 seconds later has opened their mouth to talk about it ... “Guess what I just saw?!?” “Do you know what I just heard?!?”
 2. If no one is with them, they will pick up their phone and call a friend ... if all else fails they will talk to themselves because they CANNOT NOT TELL SOMEONE!
- E. Do you know how many times a “Dead Sea” marries a “Babbling Brook”?
1. Best date for a “Dead Sea” is a “Babbling Brook” ... they don’t have to say a word. They don’t have to start a conversation. The night ends and they were able to be quiet and yet the date went well.
 2. Best date for a “Babbling Brook” is a “Dead Sea” ... they could talk the whole time without being interrupted! They got to share so much about themselves and what they’ve experienced that they feel intimate with the “Dead Sea”.
 3. Problem: Three Years into marriage, “Brook” is wondering why on earth she doesn’t know anything about her husband and why he doesn’t share. “Mr. Sea” has way too much information and is wondering if she’ll ever be quiet and give him a break.
 4. GOOD NEWS: Dead Seas can learn to talk and Brooks can learn to listen. TACTIC: Share three things with each other every day. Brook, you cannot share your third thing until Mr. Sea is done with all three!

- V. Quality Activities
- A. Some people feel most loved when they get to do stuff together with the one they love! The idea is to be together, do things together and give each other your undivided attention.
 - B. Quality Activities include anything one or both of you enjoy. If this is your friend or child's love language, do something you know that they enjoy ... with a GOOD ATTITUDE!
 - C. Three essential things involved in "Quality Activities":
 1. At least one of you wants to do it.
 2. The other is willing to do it.
 3. Both of you know why you are doing it – to express love by being together.
 - D. How do I find the time? If it's important, you will find the time...
 1. Is it difficult? Yes.
 2. Does it take time to plan? Yes.
 3. Does it mean we might do things we don't enjoy? Probably.
 4. Is it worth it? Yes! Absolutely!
 5. What's in it for me? Memories of the things we've done TOGETHER and she knows that I speak her Love Language fluently!!!

Quick suggestion for couples who are not "TOGETHER" ... start with a "History Night" ... Agree on 5 questions from our past that you will ask each other to get conversation going:

1. Who was your best and worst teacher in high school and why?
2. What was a time when you knew one or both of your parents were proud of you?
3. What was the worst mistake your parents ever made?
4. What is your best memory of your childhood?
5. What is your worst memory of your childhood?

That'll get you talking...

Next Week: SHOW ME THE MONEY!!

Let's Pray...