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[0 : 0 0] are we here to worship and to bow down before our king before our lord before our master have we prepared ourselves to hear from him this morning to see what he has to say to us however hard it might be to listen to are we not going to harden our hearts as we've heard a few different times if it's something that we hear that we go wait wait wait no I don't like that I do know why one more time I get something that I believe the lord wants me to share and I start studying that and it doesn't come together completely and I'm going why lord do you do this to me why do you wait to the last moment and he says mark because you're a procrastinator and so you want to procrastinate let's procrastinate so of course about five o'clock yesterday afternoon he finally it finally starts coming together about midnight

I go back to bed and get back up at I don't know what was it five o'clock this morning and put the final touches on it so but I know why now he didn't have me go in the original place that I was going to because James spoke on it out of Colossians 3 and I just went there's a sermon right there why didn't lord have James come up here and do it that was fantastic I loved it but if you guys would turn to Colossians we're going to go a little before chapter 3 we're going to go in chapter 1 we're not going to read it yet we've got to set this up a little bit so Colossians 1 is where we're going to be this morning you know when God says something more than one time what do you think that means?

you think he's trying to get our attention? you think he wants to us to pay attention to something? you think he wants us to get it?

do you think he wants us to listen up? which is the title of the message today listen up and you'll notice that there's no scripture reference in there because when I gave it to Ann I wasn't ready yet and now again I know why so when we hear something a few different times from God he's saying I want you guys to get it I want you to listen up so what is it that he wants us to get?

what does he want us to listen up about? well last week last week's sermon was about relationship and Rick's title was relationship revealed by prayer he told us about mankind being created to have a relationship with God with God himself he told us the key to having a good relationship was communication and in particular that communication for Rick showing last week was through prayer as he led us through the Lord's Prayer and in the Lord's Prayer and how we pray that it's an indication of how we pray of how we pray reveals our relationship with God and how it looks so with that in mind I was going to tell you let me back up for a second

[4 : 08]

God does desire a relationship with mankind that's why we were created in particular you your relationship with him this is the theme that God wants to get our attention about he wants us to pay attention to he wants us to get it he wants us to listen up it's about relationship that is what he's trying to drive home right now he is repeating himself about relationship he is repeating himself about relationship he is you get it alright so I was going to say let's once again turn to the book of Matthew chapter 6 I'm just kidding and let's look at the Lord's Prayer we're not really that was last week we're going someplace else today so our text like I said it's going to come from Colossians chapter 1 we're going to be looking at verse 13 through 23 so if you turn there here we go it's also of course up here for you if we could stand for the reading of God's word he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins he is the image of the invisible God the firstborn of all creation for by him all things were created in heaven and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together and he is the head of the body the church he is the beginning the firstborn from the dead that in everything he might be preeminent for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of the cross and you who once were alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds he has now reconciled in his body a flesh by his death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him if indeed you continue in the faith stable and steadfast not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven and of which I

Paul became a minister so reads the word of God father one more time we just ask that we would hear your words this morning that we would not turn away that we would not harden our hearts that we would be sensitive in Holy Spirit as you convict us just we ask that we just say thanks and we just look forward to what you do have for us this morning and because of Jesus and in his name we pray amen you can be seated your relationship with God and looking at this I found at least eight stages our relationship with God takes it changes as we grow in knowledge of him and so as I read these stages just think to yourself what stage am I in where do I fit into these stages because I see them as a progression sometimes they overlap each other sometimes we're in the transition of going from one stage to the next but just ask yourself that question as we're going through these the first stage

I see it as a broken relationship the relationship is between a holy God and sinful man Isaiah 59 2 tells us you going to pull that up I got he's not used to having to pull something up so I'm going to try because I've got a lot of scriptures this morning and I don't want you guys to have to flip back and forth of course make note of it in your notes but instead of having to flip back and forth I liked how Rick did it last week to where he had this scripture posted up here so in Isaiah 59 2 it says your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear that's our first stage of a relationship we're separated from God because he's a holy

God and we are sinful man are you in that stage or have you moved to the second stage which is reconciliation repentance forgiven where the relationship is a holy God and forgiven man that comes out of Romans 5 8 because we have a merciful God God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us in John 3 16 we know it for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life and then Romans 10 9 if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved that is fantastic we love this stage of the relationship we're saved we're redeemed we're reconciled to our father our relationship has been restored we can talk with him we can communicate we can pray to him fantastic we love it it's the beginning of a beautiful relationship yes a beautiful relationship relationship love it then this of course is where we now get into

Colossians 1:13 through 23 well it talks about what has happened that he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the beloved son without reading that whole thing all over again but that's where it all plays in and what it looks like our redemption fantastic we love it well let's move on to our third stage this is where we're hopefully pliable okay this is the relationship between the potter and the clay are we pliable and at this point our relationship starts getting a little uncomfortable because have you ever seen what a potter does to the clay to get it to get to what he wants it's a little it's an interesting thing to see

[12:55] Isaiah 64:8 says I am the potter you are the clay we are all the work of your hand we sang about that this morning a little bit about that that he is the potter we are the clay in this stage we are being molded the process of making and using us in whatever manner he desires picture that he makes the pot whatever he wants to make it into and he uses it for whatever purpose he wants if he wants you to be a spittoon so be it who are you to say no I was going to say a chamber pot but that also but if he also wants as it says in scripture if he wants to use you for nobility purposes so be it that's up to him he's sovereign he created you he can do what he wants with you amen but it's uncomfortable moving on to stage four where we're now a disciple and the relationship is between a shepherd and a sheep we're beginning to learn things

I'm not used to John 10:14 says I am the good shepherd I know my sheep and my sheep know me we begin to hear his voice and we're beginning to know recognize and know his voice and we follow him learning his ways becoming familiar with him and trusting him that he's going to lead us properly and gently that's that fourth stage of a relationship with God are you in that stage how about the fifth stage this one I don't like this one is the one the relationship of a bond servant it is the relationship of a master and a slave wait what master and slave

I like those other ones they're alright that clay thing is a little bit difficult following Jesus around that's pretty good because he leads me besides still waters and he feeds me and everything but this going into this bond servant thing I don't like so much especially when you start thinking about it and what it means and so I ask myself do I even want this type of relationship do I want to go there if I'm honest with myself as I look into it I must not want to get into it because I don't do it I haven't gotten into this depth of a relationship with my father I wish I did but I don't I'm selfish I want control of my life so the between the master and the slave 1st

Peter 2:16 live as people who are free we are free not using your freedom as a cover up for evil which we do but living as servants of God remember who we belong to remember we were purchased with a price you see while sheep stay outside servants get to live in the same house as the master serving him wholeheartedly we're going to come back to this one again but we're going to move on for a moment we're going to look at being a bond servant the sixth stage is now I like this one again we're going to move from bond servant into friend and the relationship is friend to friend pretty neat

John 15:15 says I no longer call you servants I like that because a servant does not know his master's business but I call you friends for all things that I have heard from my father I have made known to you is that what's happening in your relationship right now with God are you at that stage where you can grab a hold of this and understand what it means this is companionship with Jesus it's doing things together it's sharing it's a wonderful place to be in let's move on to the seventh stage one of family the relationship of the father not to mention our big brother and that of a son or daughter

[18 : 32] Galatians 4 6 tells us because you are sons and or daughters God has sent forth the spirit of his son into our hearts where we can cry James did this morning Abba father daddy can you address God like that can you tell him daddy I've got this on my mind I'm struggling with that I need help or daddy I praise you for who you are and what you do Abba daddy father proverbs 18 24 talking about our brother there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother and when you understand what that means and who it's referring to of course it refers to

Jesus sounds like a you go wow can we really call him our brother can we really call him our friend he says we can study scripture you'll see what it's!

part of that relationship being a family this is the stage where we truly start to realize we are made in his image and called his child but you know what it's also a time when we have greater discipline in our life he Hebrews Hebrews 12 5 tells us my son do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor be weary when reproved by him God disciplines those whom he loves are you in that stage of the relationship to where you are part of the family you realize it you realize you've been created in his image but because you are a son and a daughter that he disciplines you do you recognize that or do you get angry about it don't be angry about don't grow weary!

when he reproves you if he's not reproving you if he's not correcting yourself am I really a son or a daughter?

Good question see he sits me down for a talk with gentle instructions he's gentle about it he reproves my behavior my mindset my attitude my thoughts my habits keep going with it James read the list today those things that we struggle with is he reproving you of those is he disciplining you about those things do you hear his voice when he does let's go to this eighth stage marriage where we have the groom and the bride Hosea 2 19 tells us I shall take you as a bride unto me forever now this happens when Jesus returns to claim his bride the church which we are all a part of while waiting for this stage think about it what's happening the bride the bride's thoughts are about the groom think about it in a regular marriage okay if the groom is away and he's preparing the bride's thought is about the groom that's what she's thinking about her first love that's what she she has refocused her priorities where everything and everyone else pales in comparison she reciprocates his love for her she anticipates and readies herself for his return to take her away are you waiting for that are you anticipating that are you excited are you preparing yourself for that to be a beautiful bride

[23 : 19] I know that sounds weird to his dudes! that's just weird to me but okay but that's what it's about he sets the picture for us it's so cool so I ask again what stage of the relationship are you in now I said earlier that when you reach stage two that's an exciting time that's a wonderful time and if you've reached that you know what I mean but did you also realize that stage two with reconciliation forgiveness repentance that something else comes along with that if you think about it you you it'll oh yeah it does oh I get it now okay and that is let's see if we go to verse 27 of

Colossians and there's a mystery to them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery there's a mystery and again when we hear we go oh yeah I know that mystery at the time people didn't understand this because this is being given to the Jews and the Gentiles and that is which is this is the mystery which is Christ in you the hope of glory what does that mean Christ at the time of your confession that Jesus Christ is Lord at the time of your confession he comes into you the spirit of Christ comes into you aka the Holy Spirit that's what that means so the

Holy Spirit comes to reside in you we know that they didn't know that back then so it was a mystery but it's still a mystery it is least to me when I start thinking about it what is because what does that mean that the Holy Spirit comes to live in me what does that all entail what does that look like how does that play out in my life how does this part of the relationship look do we understand the implication of it let's see why it's so important I had something else written down oh there it is I knew I had something else good point Mark have you guys ever had a shallow relationship we have them all the time don't we with friends with co-workers with parents with children and a lot of times the reason why we have shallow relationships is because we don't know that somebody really wants to hear the truth we can't be honest with them we can't tell them things maybe they really need to know because they'll get angry about it or upset or same thing but anyway so we keep our relationships shallow because we can't talk about things we don't agree about the same thing so relationships remain shallow but as you noticed

God's not like that in our relationship he's all in he comes to live inside of us what a difference and why because he's going to change us as much as sometimes we don't like he's going to change us he's all in literally if we turn to to understand what this means deeply more deeply if we turn you don't have to turn there I got it up here 1 Corinthians 12 27 it tells us now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it you are the body of Christ and you're individually members of it what does that mean the Holy Spirit is living in us so we become one we're joined together in spirit and basically we are his hands and we are his feet we're whatever way the

Holy Spirit has chose to gift each one of us individually for the edification of the body for the building up and he can use us any way he wants if we we still have a free will if we allow him to if we let him!

[28 : 42] so hang on I'm rereading my notes just to make sure I'm not missing something this is where we have to remember that we've been purchased with a price it's our privilege to be used by him are you willing to go that deep into your relationship as to let him use you what becomes a mystery at least still to me is that he would choose to live inside of us and be joined with our spirit because the two shall become one right think about all that I mean all that plays in again I know it sounds weird but that's the truth of it this is how it looks and when he's using us when we allow him to use us hey you're standing in line and someplace and somebody can't afford something you see a mother trying to buy some stuff and she's got kids with her and stuff and she's fumbling through trying to find money and she just doesn't have enough keeps putting things back and all sudden step up the Holy

Spirit says pay for it you're being used by the Holy Spirit right pay for it and then you can say something simple like Jesus loves you he's the one who moved me to do this for you something very simple!

see what's also interesting about that is that when we allow the Holy Spirit to use us the way that he desires that that's a point in our life a moment of time in our life when our life is abundant have you ever done anything like that maybe not that type of situation but to where you've done something because you've obeyed and all of a sudden you become alive inside you're refreshed it's just if it hasn't happened hey pray about it say hey open up my eyes let me see take me where you want take my feet where you want me to go take my hands where you want me to go take my mouth where you want me to go I'll be obedient do we ask for that with our relationship getting back to the mystery this is where it becomes mysterious to me not so much that part about allowing the Holy

Spirit to use me because that's a great time I get a benefit from it when I do it but here's the dark side of it when you think about it this is the mystery why the Holy Spirit would join himself to us because in first Corinthians going back a little bit in chapter 6 verses 15 through 17 says do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ we know that shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute never or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her for as it is written the two will become one flesh but he who is joined to me or he who is joined to the

Lord becomes one spirit with him do you understand what's happening here again this is the dark side of it this is the mystery to me why would he join himself knowing that we're still sinners we still do things that we still think things that we still go places that we have things in our gut that are just eating us up there are people that we can't forgive because we're angry with them because we don't agree with them on something and so we get angry and so we cut off fellowship with them and nope I'm not going to listen those people that person that boss that employee that co-worker oh they make me so mad they don't do this man can you feel that can you hear it in my voice I can relate because

[33 : 46] I'm like that I'm ashamed of it these are areas I wished I could clean up because when I think about it and I'm involving the Holy Spirit in this now Paul is talking about one particular situation here about joining to a prostitute because that was the audience that he was addressing the Corinthians they were really big into sexual immorality they kept slipping back into it so he's trying to hit him hard hit him and say no this is what it really looks like so makes me pause and say am I doing that to you man it's a reality check for me it's a sobering thought when it comes to my relationship with him I want to go back also or go to also like

I said before looking at the bond! servant this again looks a little bit and just pondering this thinking about it okay because this is where to me it happens in this part of the relationship because when I'm saved I'm joined to the Holy Spirit with my spirit he lives inside of me however the stage of being a bond servant my master and me being the slave as a servant think about this you don't do as you please your time is not your own think about that that's what a slave is think you are not free to follow the whims of your personal dreams you are not free to indulge the cravings of your appetites as you wish you are not your own you belong to the master and that's why

I ask myself do I really want this type of relationship with God but you know what as bad as it sounds it's not bondage like we think it is we look at that and say I have no freedom anymore oh yes you do much more than you can ever anticipate because it's not bondage it's freedom as long as you can trust the master he is a good master he's not going to have you do something that you're not going to well he may have you do something to stretch you but you know what I'm saying he's not going to take you into some place or guide you some place that just ruins all your fun you can't ever watch TV you can't ever have friends you can't ever sing you know whatever your things are that you believe that the

Lord will take away from you if you submit if you move into that relationship of him being the master and you being the slave where he can tell you what to do and you're okay with it because you're saying it's all right it's okay he's got it you know some of us at least I did in preparing for this when I started thinking of all the different things that I caused the Holy Spirit to go through that I cry out inside I've sinned I've involved my Lord in things I shouldn't have I'm feeling horrible but you know what we're going to come to the

Lord's table today we're going to do it a little bit different today the emblems the elements the elements the bread and the wine the body and the blood I'm going to have them up here they're not going to be passed out to you you're going to come up here you're going to come to the Lord you're going to receive him so when I uncover these when I take the lid off and what I how I would like this to look is for you guys to come up don't rush up all at once otherwise we're going to have a big line and everything so and we're going to take a little bit of time so don't worry about it it's going to be anyway what I would like for you to do is come up here take the bread take the wine go back to your seat sit there put the cup inside of the holder in front of you because we'll be addressing that in a little bit but

[39 : 42] I want you to hold the bread and I want you to meditate meditate on what part what stage of the relationship you are in with the father with our master just meditate on that and also meditate about the things that we do on the dark side and just marvel that he still chooses to live inside of us and then when you're ready of course take the bread and then we'll not quite yet take the wine after that because we'll be taking the wine together taking the bread as an individual thing okay now I know see this there was a church that

I went to and they always did it like this you always became came before the Lord to to the Lord's table and you came up and got your own because it's personal it's between you and God to come before him and there was something that that did for me and I'm hoping that it does for you it was difficult at times feeling guilty feeling not worthy he says come on come to the table come to the table and so I know it may feel odd and different but I'm just asking you to humor me alright so with that when we partook of his body coming before him contrite asking for forgiveness of our sins and thanking him for what he did for us and because he doesn't leave us in a place of discouragement of condemnation of shame

Romans 8 tells us there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus amen in the book of Leviticus chapter 16 we're told about a day of atonement Yom Kippur it is one day in the fall when one man the high priest goes into one place the temple and when he goes into the holy of holies where the ark of the covenant is you know the ark of the covenant picture it in your mind and what's on top of the ark of the covenant what covers it the mercy seat an angel on either side so the high priest would go in this one day a year and he would take the blood of a slaughtered goat there's more to this than what

I'm saying but getting to the basics of it much more of it he would go in there with the blood of a slaughtered goat and he would sprinkle it on the mercy seat seven times now because it was the blood of an animal and because the meaning of the word kippur means to cover that's all that the sacrifice the blood of an animal could ever do was just simply cover the sins couldn't take it away it just covered it and then for a year that's why this was done yearly so if the priest did it properly if he was right with

God if everything went according to how God prescribed it to go then the priest would come out and stand before the assembly and he would say forgiven but again that was only for one time and just covering at one time just for that year but as we know that was just a representation of things to come and who is our great high priest none other than Jesus himself he is our high priest he went in to the holy of holies and what was the purpose of the when back in the old testament when he sprinkled the blood seven times on the mercy seat you get that connection the mercy seat you know what that means but

[45 : 49] Jesus he bled in seven places we think about it the crown of thorns put onto his head pushed into his brow or into his head there and the blood started coming down his face with that blood we are cleansed of our thoughts our bad thoughts that we have the things we say the things we take in our ears he covers the head the blood has taken away those sins then he was nailed to the cross blood coming out of one hand and then the other and he bled for the things we touch the things we put our hands to in life that are not right that are sinful and he bled from his back where he was whipped when he was scourged the blood ran down for those times to cleanse us those times to forgive us from those times that we turn our back on him when we're in a group setting or something and we have the opportunity to say something about our

Lord and we don't we back away from it or that we turn our back on him because we're angry about this or that because something didn't go our way we stop going to church we don't pray like we used to we don't get into his word like we used to he bled for that and then he had the spear thrust into his side and out came blood and water for those sins of unforgiveness when it's inside of our gut and we're just angry at people they don't do this right they don't do that right always pointing the finger at somebody else unforgiveness!

It's just deep inside of us we don't know how to get it out he bled for that and then his feet he bled to wash away where we go places we shouldn't be going and all this walking with people we shouldn't be walking with unequally yoked again what all that means not just the simple thing of thinking about it but the deeper thoughts of this he bled for us and it's his blood that covered not just covered but took away our sins oh glorious day he does not leave us where we're at he brings us joy because we have been forgiven he comes out and he says not just forgiven but forgotten our sins are forgotten as far as the east is from the west let us drink together in joyous celebration you're up all right we're up and we're all up

NING Thank you.