

“Tested Through Relationships (Part 2)”

Luke 3:21-22; Luke 4:1

Lesson #21

Lesson Overview:

The focus of this presentation is to discover the most challenging thing for yourself about loving someone else—to name our hurts, pain, and frustration in order to become healthy and whole. This word is designed to upgrade our faith, thus increasing the levee capacity from a Level 3 to a Level 5 – so that when the “Katrinas” come, we are not blown away.

Text: Luke 3:21-22; Luke 4:1

21 *When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened*

22 *and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*

Luke 4:1 (NKJ) – *Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.*

Subject: “Tested Through Relationships” (Part 2)

Subtitle: “The Announcement”

Relationship integrity is tied up in three things: honesty, dependability, and consistency. Those three things sit on the foundation of your “now.” Your “now” refers to present character represented through communication and information presented. The questions come:

- Who are you now and how long have you been who you are?
- What defines you?
- Are you walking consistently in your vision, destiny, and relationships?
- Is the vision you claim for yourself and family large enough for God to walk with you?

- God does not participate in things that are not large enough for Him to get the glory. If where you are going or who you are walking with is not large enough to need miracles or supernatural assistance, then God does not actively participate.

What is the truth about you, your relationships and vision? To embrace truth is to embrace Christ. There can be no spin with Christ. There can be no “gray area.” You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, thus allowing the broken to hold the broken, the hurting to comfort the hurting through the grace and mercy they receive from Christ.

True intimacy is the result of Christ in your communicating and relationship-building with others. Many times, honesty and intimacy may never be experienced between deserving persons for at least two reasons. Rather than seeking Christ in others, we seek:

- Number one, familiar bonds.
- Number two, ways to eliminate fear.

Come as we explore familiar bonds. Familiar bonds, in this context, refer to accepting and relating to people who have the same kind of spirit that we feel comfortable with. Our friendship, peer groups, ministries, and marriages are selected many times based on familiar bonds. We simply don't trust that which we are not familiar .

The greatest dangers in familiar- bond relationships is that they often take place and operate on a subconscious level while pulling individuals away from their created purpose—due to cloudy vision which delays destiny. Familiar bonds feed and create comfort zones. The truth of the matter is, you cannot stay where you are and go with the Lord.

We seek the familiar for selfish reasons. Number one, we want to avoid vulnerability, and number two, fear. We select relationships we are comfortable with while making an attempt to shape those we are in relationship with into who we want them to be. The problem with placing people on your potter's wheel rather than the Lord's Potter's wheel is after you have completed your process, you don't want what you created. Remember, the believer is always in the process of becoming and when you create, you create based on where you are. The Lord

creates based on destiny. Questions come, “What are you going to do with your creation when it is of no further use? What are you going to do when your perceived assets become a liability?”

Secondly, honesty and intimacy may never take place in relationships due to the unhealthy need to dominate the relationship to protect self, and not to appear weak or vulnerable. People meet people with an evaluation radar in place while hiding themselves. As a result, individuals enter into dialogue and never communicate. They assess each other, but neither person is present. They physically meet, but never touch, because the real person is safely secure behind the walls of Jericho.

Walls are designed to do at least two things:

- First of all, to keep others out.
- Secondly, walls will keep you in.

Some walls are constructed so well that Christ can’t even get in to minister to you. As a result, we have angry people filling the pews; angry people in leadership; angry people standing before the altar,; angry folk marrying angry folk and producing angry children; simply because they have locked themselves down behind walls. Now their deliverance— their power— is locked up in their pain. They are untrusting, dishonest, hurt, and frustrated in their relationship. When has the past had enough of your attention? You cannot move toward destiny if you keep living in the past.

The question comes, “How can you touch someone who cannot feel?” Our salvation mandates that we assist in the liberation of the captured, blind, and the broken. Why do you go through all the trouble and risk of being hurt and beat down trying to bless someone who does not deserve it or who has not earned it? Why should I move out of my comfort zone even though I have not grown and I have not been hurt either? Understand that the depth of your hurt cannot be measured.

The Starting Point

This warfare began with the announcement recorded in Luke 3:22. The announcement cleared up the identity of Jesus. As His Father comes on the heavenly P. A. system, the heavens opened. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form like a dove. God spoke directly to Jesus but it was not a private conversation; it was public: “You are my Son. In You, I am well-pleased.”

Step one is to clear up and be sure of whose son and daughter you are. And from the announcement moment, spiritual warfare is a daily occurrence. From that announcement-moment, storms will come. Some storms will come and leave as quickly as they come. Some storms will come and do little damage. Some storms will come and upgrade themselves from storms to hurricanes. Hurricanes are known to wreck and wipe out.

There is a great difference between a storm and a hurricane. A storm means that you fell behind in payments and lost your job. So, they foreclose on your house, put your furniture in the street; but a relative or a friend came along and picked up your furniture before the rain. They put you up for a few days while your unemployment kicked in—that’s a storm.

However, a hurricane means that when the divers (see James 1, KJV Bible) wind hit, it totally destroyed your home and wiped out everything you had. You lost your job. The unemployment ran out. You discovered sickness that is terminal in nature. Family and friends turned their backs on you. That is a hurricane.

A storm takes place in the city but a hurricane wipes out a city. City in this context means that there are other people around but the kind of hurricane I am talking about takes place in the wilderness, where you are all alone. In other words, there are people around you, but you are alone because no one can see what you see or hear what you hear.

Now the announcement will clarify your identity. Don’t allow your storm of hurricanes to define you. The trial—this test—will come to see what your levees are made of. Don’t allow your test, your storm conditions, or your hurricanes to name you. If you continue to complain and blame

others for the storm, the storm will name you. If you pick up negative habits, hurt others, and become destructive while waiting at the Convention Center or the Superdome for late help, your hurricane will name you. Don't allow what you got through, to name you or define you.