Friendship Redefined

Week 4 We need to shift our attention to who is here.

Mike Colaw

I want to circle back around to the new liturgy we introduced last week based on John 13:35.

Here is how it will work. I will say the first part and you can respond.

Worship leader:

How will they know that we are Christ’s disciples?

Congregation:

By our love for one another.

Just a reminder this whole series coincides with the book we produced for the church family. Each chapter aligns with the weekly sermons.

Let’s do a quick review so far.

Week One: We are made to be interdependent not independent.

Week Two: We are made for human touch.

Week Three: We need to learn to talk about what is really in us.

Week Four: We need to shift our attention to who is here. (Make sure to read the Chapter this week!)

Illustration:

Let me introduce you to a phrase. Life lust. Life lust is when you endlessly scroll through social media feeds and think:

I wish I had those vacations.

I wish I had those friends.   
I wish I could make that kind of money.   
I wish I could have a spouse like that.   
I wish I could have a body like that.

I wish…

I wish…

I wish…

Let’s pause today and think about what actually is. Grab a Next Steps card and respond to these inquiries.

1. Write your family members names down.
2. Write the names of some of your friends.
3. Write the names of a few coworkers.
4. Write the names of your neighbors.
5. Write down the name of your church. (John 13:35)

Lectio:

The book of Esther.

It’s the 5th century BC. The Persian Empire is the greatest Civil power the world has seen to date. King Xerxes I (Ahasuerus in the Bible) has brought Esther in to become the queen of Persia without knowing her Jewish identity. The story’s antagonist, Haman, a high-ranking official in the Persian court, hatches a plot to kill all the Jews in the empire due to his hatred of Esther’s cousin, Mordecai.

The critical moment comes when Mordecai learns of Haman’s plot and communicates the danger to Esther, urging her to intervene with the king. However, approaching the king uninvited could result in death, unless the king extended his golden scepter to the person, signifying mercy and the right to speak.

Let’s pick up the story here.

Esther 4:14–16 (ESV): For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” 15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, 16 “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” [[1]](#footnote-2)

Meditatio:

Esther faced two options: to assume the life and identity of a Persian Queen, hoping to survive the Jewish slaughter, or to acknowledge her family and position as gifts from God to embrace.

Which life would Esther choose? She chose to embrace her reality as purpose. Many don’t.

I believe one of the enemy’s most effective tools to make Christians ineffective is the lust for another’s situation. Your mind is filled with wishful desires for another’s life instead of passionately engaging with the one you have.

Illustration:

One of the most powerful moments of my life happened when I was a boy. The story I share I do so only because my father has shared it before. My dad is amazing. Honestly, he is an incredible leader and always has opportunity to go be busy somewhere else. When my brother and I were younger dad was gone, a lot. One day when he had to leave again my little brother looked up at him and asked this question.

Why do you always have time for everybody else but not for us?

Something in my dad broke that day. His eyes and heart were drawn to what he actually had in front of him. His boys.

One of the greatest things I ever heard my dad say was this.

“I’m here.”

Not only physically present, but as a new way of viewing his life purpose.

Actio:

Information vs. invitation.

I often offer you information to consider. Ideas to wrestle with. Today is different. I am not merely offering you information; I’m offering you an invitation to engage with the life you actually have.

Will you accept it?

Look at your list again.

1. Family. “I’m here.”
2. Friends. “I’m here.”
3. Co-workers. “I’m here.”
4. Neighbors. “I’m here.”
5. Church. (John 13:35) “I’m here.”

Actio:

(Next Steps)

What is God speaking to you as you look at this list?

1. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.1Jn1.5-10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)