

Travis and I were talking the other day that the best parts of our life can be directly attributed to the institution of The CHURCH. Institution is the correct word, but I would prefer FRIENDSHIP OF THE CHURCH. This is the reason I am invested in and protect this FRIENDSHIP!

I didn't have a group of friends literally carry me to Jesus, but almost. If not for the encouragement of church members, FRIENDS, I probably don't go to college. If not for the church, I probably don't meet the best friend of my life, whom I've been married for 19 years.

For what friendships at NPC do you give God thanks? The goal of Jesus Christ for us is FRIENDSHIP. We are in the best business of the world, to save souls for FRIENDSHIP! The key insight that I learned from the Master of Science in Church Management from Villanova University is that the Church must be the Business that all other businesses aspire to be! Why pay a person \$1 Trillion, when we offer the Way, the Truth and the Life? No secular business offers that! Conclusion, we are not communicating and demonstrating our value above all other aspects of life.

I believe the reason these friends are remembered is it points to the fact that faith is more than an individual's beliefs, faith is communal, faith is a community, Jesus builds the Church, FRIENDSHIP. John testifies that the night before Jesus' arrest and betrayal, Jesus celebrates Passover with His best-friends and after dinner He gets up from the table and begins to wash His FRIENDS' feet. Jesus teaches us, "No one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's FRIENDS." "No longer do I call you servants but FRIENDS."

Interestingly enough, Luke testifies that Jesus calls this paralyzed man, "FRIEND!" Jesus is impressed by the FRIENDS' faith, it doesn't mention the paralyzed man's faith. Our faith can heal and save others. And these friends work to get him saved! These FRIENDS carry him. They know he needs Jesus and are willingly to go at extreme measures to get him to Jesus! Its what FRIENDS do.

For what friendships at NPC do you give God thanks?

Let's meet another FRIEND that Jesus saves in Luke 7:36-50.

Friends desire the best for the other. For what do you give thanks that Jesus changed about you? The reason I love Jesus Christ is because He is the person who desires the best for me. And like any good coach challenges, encourages and makes me aware of behaviors to change to live well, but not only to live well, to flourish. Jesus doesn't want us to live- anyone can live. Jesus desires for us to flourish into eternal life, purposeful life, intentional life, FRIENDSHIP!

Jesus uses plenty of plant metaphors because they illuminate FRIENDSHIP with Jesus so well. Immediately before Jesus calls us friends in John 15, He describes Himself as the Vine and we

are the branches. For fruit plants to flourish, you must prune, cut-back things that hinder our ability to flourish. I'm sure this woman that Jesus forgave and saved had much more in her life to cut-back, cut-out, change, in order to flourish with Jesus.

Friends desire the best for the other. For what do you give thanks that Jesus changed about you?

For what sins have you been forgiven that you owe your life to Christ and thank Jesus each day? How does Christ's forgiveness of your sins encourage you to invest in Christ's community?

Jesus says, "If you want to love a lot, reflect upon your life, seek forgiveness." Do you remember when the one celebrity recently went up to space and she said, "She saw love!" And then was immediately laughed out of being taken seriously. It's because we all know love takes work. Love takes self-reflection and correction. **Love desires the best for us and desires to change us because love wants the best for us.**

The ointment in the alabaster jar the forgiven woman uses to bath Jesus' feet would have been her life savings and possibly her family's life savings, worth between \$40K-\$50K in today's money. She gives her all to Jesus Christ!

Friends if you want to be complete, give your life to Jesus Christ. Make Him the Lord of your life. Friends if you want to love, deeply love, search your life in front of Jesus and ask for forgiveness. For the one to whom little is forgiven loves little! If you desire to experience joy, give generously as this forgiven woman. You can't have joy without generosity, and you can't have generosity without joy! If you desire FRIENDSHIP pray to Jesus this very moment, for Jesus lives and desires to live in you!

Love,
Pastor Curtis

1. For what friendships at NPC do you give God thanks? "No longer do I call you servants, but call you friends." -Jesus (John 15:15)
2. Friends desire the best for the other. For what do you give thanks that Jesus changed about you?
3. For what sins have you been forgiven that you owe your life to Christ and thank Jesus each day? How does Christ's forgiveness of your sins encourage you to invest in Christ's community?