**Comparison, Competition & Community.
10.2.2019**

**~ PRAY & CELEBRATE OTHERS ~**

Most of you know my story about getting **cut from the travel team**…

**What you don’t know** – I changed positions became captain of the next team.

I went to a different city – was the new guy…

The other guys on the team had been friends since childhood…

They we’re getting cut so that I could play – **rivalry** from that point forward.

It all came to head one game…

I found out that the Assistant Captain **convinced the coach that he was better**…

That if his line did better than mine –

Coach would make **HIM** the captain **instead of me**.

Funny thing happened at this point…

**OUR TEAM TANKED** – We went from being one of the best in the league…

To losing every single game from that point forward.

Not only did the team tank – **I tanked…**

I was mean to everyone on my line, self-conscious and back-stabbing –

I people I was supposed to play with – became the very ones I was against –

**The competition crippled me, divided our players & ruined our team**

**I lost the very thing that made me the CAPTAIN –** My heart for the **TEAM**

Maybe you’ve never played hockey…

Maybe you’ve never had a **coup of teammates** rise against you…

Every one of us has been **backstabbed** **& lost friends**…

Ever one of us has felt **insecure** **&** **out of place**.

In a world where God tells us the greatest thing to do is LOVE PEOPLE…

It can seem as though LOVING PEOPLE the hardest thing to do.

It’s hard to love the person who caused you pain…

It’s hard to move close to that person who seems to be better than you are…

**The Bible makes it even trickier…**

It’s easy to surround ourselves with people who we love and love us back…

That’s one of the criticisms of humanity – we easily form CLIQUES…

Last night we talked about the scripture in Luke 6 –

**If we love only those who love us – there is no reward.**

It’s as if God knew when He created us…

That while **TOGETHER IS TRULY BETTER…**

Together can be really, really TRICKY.

We see this in the **UPPER ROOM** with Jesus’ disciples…

**Acts 2**

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind,*

*and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.*

I don’t know if you know this –

They we’re up in that room for **50 days** before they got to the place of unity…

This tells be that there’s a difference in **BEING AROUND EACHOTHER –**

**And BEING TOGETHER**

THERE’S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **BEING WITH YOU –**

AND **BEING FOR YOU.**

So how do we get to a place of UNITY? How do we fight to be FOR EACHOTHER? –

We fight to UNITE? And then, how do we stay united?

What do we fight against? Each other? The devil? Social Media? Islam? –

Become the **UNITY POLICE** and judge the motives and actions of everyone? –

The answer, I submit is that we judge ourselves.

**I think there are 2 main TOXIC tendencies that destroy community**

**~ COMPETITION & COMPARISON ~**

**Competition – I’m more valuable than you.**

Birthed out of a WIN/LOSE, Limited-spot mentality…

Desire to stand out and win at any cost –

A need to PROVE that **we are better** than the people we are around.

Even though – **Our differences create the strength** of our culture…

Competition seeks to DE-VALUE others by displaying its own value.

**Can-opener isn’t better than the Spatula because it opens cans…**

**Can-opener trying to so a spatula’s job better only hurts the team…**

**Belittling the spatula to inflate your ability to open cans is short-sighted…**

The utensils value isn’t based on who can open or flip better–

**Its value is in being useful to the CHEF.**

Competition is an external method of proving our worth…

The desire to WIN comes as we aim to prove that VALID & VALUABLE –

If I can be BETTER than you, I establish my value in community.

**Remember that other people’s successes**

**don’t take away from my possibilities.**

**WHY?** WE are a team…**1 Corinthians 12** says we are **MANY PARTS** but **ONE BODY**

We can only accomplish the vision for life/our purpose when we’re TOGETHER.

**Team Analogy –**

If we are a team and I win and you lose .. did I win? NO

The only way for **ME TO WIN** is for **US TO WIN**

**The only way for US TO WIN – Is to unite around our differences.**

**Comparison – You are more valuable than me.**

The quickest way to FAIL – **try to be someone else**…

*~ Story of preaching like my parents ~*

Can I be honest…

**You’re terrible at being someone else…**

What makes them successful is in them – it might not be in you.

It’s like the Spatula **refusing** to **flip an egg** because it can’t **open a can** –

Or the Can-opener feeling **defeated** because it **can’t flip an egg** –

Neither of them can do the other’s job – Because they we’re never meant to

Just because you can’t do what someone else does –

**Doesn’t mean you’re not valuable…**

I’m only valuable at being WHO I AM.

See, **Everything you need to be the best you is already inside of you** –

Don’t expect what God does in you to look like anyone else…

So instead if comparing rejoice when God uses other people – your turn is coming.

You may not look like someone else…

But what is in YOU is as significant as what is in THEM –

Comparing yourself to others **distracts** you from the **work that you are here to do**.

**INSTEAD…CULTIVATE GRATITUDE**

Cultivate gratitude for what you have already accomplished –

Learn what it feels like to find validation in God’s validation.

Cultivate gratitude for who you are and who is around you…

Let your weakness drive you to celebrate the strengths of others.

Cultivate an environment that **values differences** – Our differences that make us strong.

Be quick to encourage, quick to praise and quick to forgive…

Don’t work to shine a light on yourself – Be the light that shines on others.

Lastly, **be vocal** –

When you see someone do something great PRAISE THEM

When your friend looks pretty TELL THEM

When someone is down REMIND THEM of how **GOOD OUR GOD IS!**