

Good morning.

How was your Thanksgiving?

We had a great day .. my family loves this week-
I am blessed to have a husband who is an amazing cook...

A favorite part of Thanksgiving for Fred is the food...saddest ever was power went out a few years ago. The only thing that saved his favorite day was his last minute idea to smoke the turkey in his outdoor smoker....he walked through snow – he made the dinner and we used our generator to power the microwave to make rest of the food.

Favorite part of the week for my girls and me

– Black Friday shopping

We love everything about it...the crowds of people, stopping for coffee at 9 after hours of shopping...

But for me, the very best part- is each year we have breakfast and the girls play bingo while they watch the parade at a dear friends home –

We have done this for years, and now many of our older kids are home from college and when they are together all seems right in the world. So I hope you had a restful day...it is a gift to stop and spend day giving thanks.

But I also know that as we came into the worship area today, some of us are so tired, some are sad and feeling like life is just too had. And it is true, life isn't easy. All around us we have sickness and pain and death. That is why I have appreciated all Mike, John and Emma have shared in this series.

This weekend we finish our series The Mystery Unraveled and look at Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

What makes the book so powerful is that Paul was chained in a prison cell when he wrote it.

When we read Ephesians, we do so knowing that Paul is in prison for telling people about Jesus.

And he lives out this truth

No matter our circumstance, we can make a choice to bring our cares to Jesus-

Cast your burden on Jesus, He cares for you-

So before I begin, I want to pray for God to open our hearts and help us set aside the burdens we are carrying.

Pray...Amen

I so am glad that I get the chance to talk to you today about one of my favorite books in Scripture.

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

If you have not had the chance to take one of our Garden City Journals, I encourage you to take one home today.

They are the welcome table- they cost 5.00, but if that is too high a price, take one home as a gift from us to you.

Emma Liddle, our pastor of community life wrote them. In the chapter that looks at Ephesians 5 and 6, she describes this word submission- The word "submission" is not one that is well liked in our society. It is often seen as somehow negative, perhaps even un-American. After all, we were founded by a group of scrappy colonists who refused to continue to submit to Britain's authority. To submit is to lose a piece of oneself, to compromise, to admit defeat.

Scrappy Americans. That phrase reminds me a line from Hamilton the musical, which I'm very obsessed with right now...anyone else obsessed? I play it when I am cleaning, I watched the PBS special – I think Lin Manuel Miranda is a genius.

If you are not familiar with it, is a Broadway show based on the life of Alexander Hamilton and how his thought shaped our country....founded by people who did not want to live under the unfair rule of England.

How do you feel about the word submit? If you grew up in the church, you may have heard many messages about this word. In all honesty... I heard many messages on how to be a submissive woman- but I can't think of any that included this sentence.

5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Or as it says in "The Message" **21** Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.

Jesus was so clear –

As dearly loved children, (Col 3:12) and that is what we are- we are called to submit- one to another.

...the problem (might not be about) submission itself -- but forced submission, submission that's not by choice. Really, a better word for submission in these instances might be coercion... true submission is a beautiful thing.

When I thought about a picture of submission, I thought of when my girls were little and my husband would give them a bath. He is quite tall and would have to bend over the tub to keep our squirming girls from falling under the water.

If you have ever given a little one a bath- you know what is involved here- when Emily, my youngest, was born, all of my girls were under the age of 4 . So, we would often bathe two at a time- just to get bath time done... Fred and I would call dibbs as soon as dinner was done- (clean the kitchen or bath time)

They were so adorable...but the event would be so messy, we would end up wet and the floor would have bubbles and water everywhere and I would be sore from the kneeling over the tub.

It is not a job that was easy. But we loved them. And so we did things that were not fun or easy. Bath time was not easy, but since they had a bath almost every day- cleaning their little feet was not very hard.

That is why John chapter 13 continues to amaze me, here we see Jesus- King of Kings and Lord of Lords... Wash His Disciples' Feet

They did not have socks, their shoes were sandals, and their feet would be caked with dirt.

Washing feet was a job for a servant, not the rabbi...but in

John 13:1 Jesus shows us what submit to one another looks like

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. **2** It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. **3** Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. **4** So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, **5** and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

12 After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? **13** You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. **14** And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. **15** I have given you an example to follow.

Jesus showed us over and over what it looks like to be humble and submit to one another

John 13:17 Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them. Our time in Ephesians has shown us that in Christ's family- we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ...

Ephesians transformed my life.

It allowed me to see God's plan for relationships. and when I did not just hear the word, but began to do it...I started to have healthier relationships.

When I was a new mom I loved to read parenting books- in fact we have home videos we have started watching, and one of my girls favorite thing to do is watch them. When I see myself 20 years ago, and my husband and I are bickering on camera about how to do something...I would say to my husband- "who read the books?" I love to be right...and so does he.

I do not think I would be the wife and mom I am today, if God had not opened my eyes to Eph 6.

Children and Parents

Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. **2** "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: **3** if you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."

I have been a Children's Pastor for over a decade, and that verse may be the #1 reason parents bring their children to Sunday school. But if your parents are alive today, like my mom is, I realized this is for me this verse is for all of us who have a mom or dad to honor.

How do we honor our parents when we are adults?

Have you ever thought about this? I know it was eye opening for me...I am called to honor my mom. Use words that honor her. It is hard, I was not raised to do that- I was often sarcastic and a know it all toward her...so after more than 30 years of not honoring her, I had to learn a new way of interacting with her.

How do we raise children who honor us, in a world where parents look like idiots on every TV show ?

I think it involves quiet conversations when no one is angry, where we explain what honor looks like to us...how their voice and rolling eyes dishonor us. But what does scripture say to us, as parents?

Eph 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Now, I wish this verse truly was only for dads...but I believe this speaks to us as parents. Other versions replace the phrase provoke to anger with exasperate.

What does it look like to exasperate our child? We have seen it- a Toddler screaming in a grocery store after a busy day...crying, because they are done...they are not able to be good...they are hungry, tired, overwhelmed....

My oldest daughter is an incredible leader, but her toddler years were not easy...

As my girls got older and I began to follow this verse, I had to give them permission to tell me when I was exasperating them.

Do your kids have permission to tell you?

I think that is the key reason my girls and I have a good relationship- they have permission to tell me that I am asking too much of them.

But as a family, what do you do when they feel exasperated and you feel dishonored. How do you have calm, respectful conversations about what honor looks like to you and allow them to tell you that your expectations may be too high?

If I ever have time to write a book, this is the passage I would write about. Because I believe a family that looks like Jesus is one that can speak clearly, respectfully and directly to each other. Where we take the time to be kind and loving. Where we allow our children to have the freedom to tell us when the expectations about school, sports, anything are just too high.

I think we all need a goal, and for my family it was EPH 4 – Be kind and loving to one another-

forgiving each other, as God, in Christ forgave me. I have been forgiven and I am loved...when I believe that- I can forgive and love others.

Paul finishes the chapter with words to Husbands and Wives

Eph 5:22 For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. **23** For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. **24** As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

This is a important word, when we start at the beginning- submit to one another. It is not only one way, and it does not mean be a doormat...coerced by someone who has power and authority. The clarity comes as we look at vs. 25

25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her **26** to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.

WOW- Love as Christ loves us.

28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself.

Isn't this true of all of us? We can truly love when we feel loved.

I can only give to my family, what I authentically have to give...otherwise I am an actor, a hypocrite....pretending...and that leads exhaustion and anger. As John reminded us last week-I can only reflect what I have received

My husband and I just celebrated 21 years of being married. The last few years have been so much easier. Life was really hard with three little girls, but as they have gotten older – we have a peace in our home that comes from honoring and not exasperating.

My husband and I are both first born. Our first years of marriage were hard. We both really like to be right.

But I have r seen this verse help my marriage. If I am respectful and he is loving, it makes it easier to submit to him, to care more for our relationship than I care about being right...and the more loving he is the easier it is to respect him. It is like a snowball going down a hill...when we are going in the right direction it is easier to submit to one another....but someone has to start. Someone has to go first.

Our relationship really changed about 10 years into our marriage when I started to look to God to fill my soul and found my identity in God and who He said I am. No human is able to take the place of God in another person's soul.. I began to believe what God says, and stopped being a needy black hole as John said last week. I began to reflect what I had received...God's love...

So Harbor- how do we do this- .How can we be kind and loving?
How can we submit with reverence?

1.Believe that you are loved by the God who made you.
Find your identity in Him
This is why Jesus came –

He Lived a perfect life, and on that cross shed His blood for every thought, word and deed that separated me from God.

When I believe this- I am able to submit to those around me out of reverence for who He is and what He has done.

If I wait for my husband or child or job to make me feel enough- I will always be lacking...and I know loved people love people, hurt people hurt people.

If I give in to the needs of others, and live life feeling like a doormat, then I am **not submitting** out of reverence to Christ...I am giving in to be liked, or to avoid and argument.

I know-this is hard...But Love, Joy and peace are seen in us ONLY when our identity is found in Christ .

When we believe that the gospel is true- we know that there is nothing I can do to earn the love of God- my redemption was bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ...

I need to sit at His feet and listen for the still small voice who says- you are loved. There is nothing that can separate me from His love

Jesus tells us "there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13),

I love others because Jesus first loved me.
Scripture says, while I was a sinner, Christ died for me.

He obeyed God's plan and submitted himself to God

This was not easy- Jesus was in such anguish as he prayed that his sweat was like drops of blood. But his ultimate desire was whatever God desired, and he willingly laid down his life.

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42).

Harbor, what does that mean for us today? In the Message we see

Eph 5 1-2 Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

Mostly what God does is love you...Love like that...
Love like that...what would happen if we love like Jesus?
I think that the people around us would find their way back to God.

This last year and half has been full of changes....and it may seem like everything is different
But our church is led today , as it always has been led- by an elder board that makes decisions
by consensus- submitting to one another.

Since I stepped in as XP in August, I find myself in awe that God keeps sending people to lead
and serve that I do things that I not even know to ask for

We have new Leaders in C Care, leading the Recovery groups,KH, the café, IT, HR, Admin,

And that is what we need to continue to do to be the church God has called us to be

I first heard Good, Good Father in August of 2015..

I sat that first day and cried...afraid for our community as our loved Pastor told us he was
leaving. I had come here to work with him and really could not see how church would go on
without him.

As we soon enter 2017, I am reminded that this is God's church...because we are the
church...and as long as we know God is who He says He is and I am who God says I am we
will continue to be His hands and feet- submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ,

When we believe this and live it out...people will wonder...they will ask – what is different about
you? And we can share the truth

We are loved children of the most high God- who submit out of reverence for Christ

If you are looking for a loophole...why the person you struggle with is not worthy of submission-
you won't have to look hard to find one,

We are all broken, but we are respectful and kind...not because people deserve it...but because
we know God has called us to reflect His light as pastors and teachers who believe they were
once dead, but are now alive...saved by grace ...His masterpiece

The good news is.. no matter who you are, what you have done or what has been done to you-
You are forgiven, you are loved...you are known by the creator who made you and you are
enough. We can't do anything to earn His love- He just loves you.

As a mom when I gave my baby girls a bath-
I did not love them more when they were good...My girls couldn't make me love them more by
staying clean, or keeping the bath floor dry...they're mine-and I love them.

How much greater is God's love for us-

In a moment we will sing these words that we have sang many times in this series. Do you
believe it-

that God is pleased

And that we are never alone

He really is a good, good father

I'm loved and you are loved....It's who we are

We can trust Him and believe him- and believe His word.

5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Submit, means we are humble and kind to one another
Out of reverence, for Jesus, The anointed messiah-Christ the king

My encouragement is in the quiet moments ahead
Ask God... what is one step I can do...

To honor the person you have put on my heart?

Or maybe you are asking how can I stop exasperating my toddler or my teen?

How can I treat others with the love God has shown me?

If there is a relationship that is just too hard -ask for God's love, His joy, His peace, to fill you...and know that God is not calling us to lose ourselves...we must walk a fine line, not forgetting the value in us or in others.

Submission occurs when we see and value each other...
When we believe the image of God is in each of us.

We are made in the image of God... I John 4:7,8 says

Beloved. that is how we should view each other...

Beloved let us love one another. Love comes from God...anyone that loves..is born of God and knows God...

I am loved, that is who I am when I believe it – I can do what God has called me to do...

Will you pray with me?

We thank you God, for your word, for your love
We pray that we can believe what you have said

You love us. Help us believe in the love God has for us and know it won't change. Let our roots grow down deep, and by the power of the Hs help us submit – one to another- out of reverence for you- our Lord and Savior.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to Fill us and help us believe the truth
That we can submit to one another, out of reverence for you.