

The Real Thing (Part 3)

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Where did the new believers go from the events of the resurrection? What do you want us to know?

Several pictures came to mind, mostly related to our relationship with Jesus and His desire for us to walk with Him on an ongoing basis, just like the disciples had left their nets and followed Him. The resurrection wasn't the end it was just the beginning of a life lived for Jesus.

The impression I kept getting was "It needs to be REAL" - "THE REAL THING" I felt like God was saying... *"I want them to know that it is real. I am real. What I did on the cross was real. Their salvation is real. My Word is real. And the relationship that I want with them needs to be real."*

There are too many voices out there claiming that none of it is real. There are too many believers who are falling for the lies of the enemy that it is not real. There are too many false representations of Christianity out there. There are too many Christians that are not living a real Christian life.

So, this series is going to focus on The Real Thing...

A Real God who wants...

Real Relationship with...

Real People and fill them with...

Real Power

Our two key passages for this series are...

1 Kings 14:21-31

25 In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. **26** He carried off the treasures of the temple of the Lord and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. **27** So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned these to the commanders of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace.

28 Whenever the king went to the Lord's temple, the guards bore the shields, and afterward they returned them to the guardroom.

2 Timothy 3:1-5; 13-14

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5 having a form of godliness** (*it's going to be a weak imitation but not the real thing*) but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

13 while evildoers and impostors **will go from bad to worse**, deceiving and being deceived. **14** But as for you, **continue in what you have learned** (*you've got to make sure you've got the real thing and that you continue to walk in the real thing*) and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,

Our journey to have the real thing begins with knowing that there is...

A REAL GOD...

Isaiah 45:5-7; 12; 18-22

I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.

The real God is **SEEN** in all that He **CREATED**

The real God is **KNOWN** through His **INTERACTION** with that creation

The real God is **HEARD** as He **SPEAKS** through His Word

The real God is **EXPERIENCED** through His **SON**, Jesus Christ

If I were to ask you to give me a word or short phrase to describe a **REAL RELATIONSHIP**, what would you say?

Our world today has many different ideas on what it means to have a relationship, most of which fall way short of what it truly means to have a REAL RELATIONSHIP. Unfortunately, these false definitions carry over to our relationship with God leaving us with a weak imitation, a form of relationship, without the power of a REAL RELATIONSHIP with God.

It reminds me of what Jesus said would happen in the last days

Matthew 24:12

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,

I think Jesus is saying that people won't truly understand what it means to have a love (and by the way the word he uses here is agape -unconditional love) relationship with me or with each other. Sin and lawlessness will redefine what REAL love is, and they will be left with a watered-down form (a cold or fake) type of love

So rather than be shaped by the roles definition of love or having a relationship, rather than, like Rehoboam, creating our own definition of what it means to have a relationship; let's look to the word to teach us what it means to have a REAL RELATIONSHIP with God

KEY TEXT: Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ **“Come, follow me,”** Jesus said, **“and I will send you out to fish for people.”** ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus modeled each of these traits for us

Leaving others behind (sacrifice)

Luke 5:11

¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Genesis 2:20-24

²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

A REAL RELATIONSHIP requires sacrifice.

Now some of you wives understand what it means to sacrifice for your marriage relationship. Some of you husbands know what it means to sacrifice for your relationship with your wife.

Most parents willingly make great sacrifices for your children. Jesus modeled this in that he left heaven to have a relationship with us

John 6:38

38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

Our series text in 2 Timothy tells us why many people will never experience REAL RELATIONSHIP in this world or with God...

2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God

They are selfish, more interested in themselves than others. They are not willing to make sacrifices.

What have you left behind to have a relationship with Jesus? If your answer is nothing, then perhaps you don't have a REAL RELATIONSHIP with Him.

Walking Closely Together

The next aspect of relationships that we learn from our text today is that it means WALKING CLOSELY TOGETHER

Jesus said come follow me, and they did. They wanted a REAL RELATIONSHIP with Him so, they stayed close to Him. They walked with Him. They slept where He slept. They ate with Him. They went where He went. They practiced ministry with him. They faced opposition with Him.

This is what it means to have REAL RELATIONSHIP with someone. It means spending time with them, being close to them.

In fact, the Word says that Jesus modeled this for us in that He says He will never leave us nor forsake us, he will always be close to us. We are told that Nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. NOTHING!

Are you spending time walking closely with The Lord? Are you walking closely with Him by reading His word every day? Are you walking closely with Him by talking to Him in Prayer? Are you walking closely with Him through worship and praise?

Or do you let things come in between you. Are there things that separate you from your time with Jesus?

Samantha is trying to stay up with her daily Bible reading for children's church. But sometimes she spends her free time doing other things like watching some YouTube, playing games, or hanging out in her room. When it's bedtime or past she suddenly wants to do her Bible reading. We have been teaching her that she needs to make that choice earlier in the day, which means making different choices and prioritizing her Bible reading above other activities

Are you walking closely with Him or do you only visit with him occasionally?

This is one aspect of relationship that we have allowed our world to redefine for us - Walking closely. We have accepted a pseudo form of relationship via social media that does not require closeness

Love Completely

A REAL RELATIONSHIP loves completely.

Luke 10:27

²⁷ He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The problem is in how we define love. In English we use the one word to refer to many different forms and means. I love my children. I love my job. I love art. I love my wife. I love fried chicken. I love my church family. All have different meanings

Isn't it interesting that in our culture today we have an incredibly sophisticated vocabulary for coffee, but only on word for love?

Today's coffee culture has an incredibly sophisticated vocabulary. Do you want a cappuccino, an espresso, a skinny latte, or maybe an iced caramel macchiato?

So, it is important how we define Love. Let's start by focusing on the word ALL. That means everything, holding nothing back

Combine that with the 4 different descriptions of what we are to love God with (heart, soul, strength, and mind) and we begin to see the completeness of the love we are to give to God

Remember that God is our example. In fact, 1 John says, "We love because he first loved us."

1 John 4:19

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

John 15:13

¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Thankfully in Greek there are different forms of the word love that each describe a different aspect of what it means to love. Our love for God should model all three types of love mentioned in the Bible: Eros or physical love, Phileo or friendship love and agape or sacrificial/unconditional love. Likewise, all three types of love are modeled by Jesus towards us.

EROS or Physical Love - Loving God is reflected in what we do physically. We cannot say we love God yet use our bodies for sin. We express our love for God by using our voice to worship, by lifting our hands in praise, by bowing before Him in surrender. We also love God physically when we care for other people. Jesus said that loving and taking care of other people is the same as loving Him.

Phileo love is Friendship love.

John 15:15

¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Agape love is sacrificial or unconditional love. Let me ask you a question, do you love God unconditionally?

In John 21, we read of Jesus questioning Peter following his resurrection. Three times He asks Peter do you love me. The first two times Jesus asks him if he Agapeo (Loves) Him. Peter responds that he Phileo's (Loves) Him. Finally, Jesus says, Peter do you Phileo (love) me and Peter responds that he indeed Phileo's Him.

There is a lot going on here in this conversation, but perhaps one of the things Jesus is calling for is a more COMPLETE LOVE, one that would love Him with ALL. One that would love Him with physical expression (Feed My lambs, Take care of My sheep, Feed My sheep and finally a renewal of the call to FOLLOW ME), of course a friendship love, but also a love that would be unconditional and sacrificial. That's why this conversation ends by Jesus telling Peter that eventually he would die a sacrificial death because he chose to follow (love) Him.

What about you, do you love Jesus COMPLETELY?

Commitment (loyalty)

A REAL RELATIONSHIP also requires COMMITMENT or LOYALTY.

The lack of commitment and loyalty is a true mark of many relationships today. People are in it for what they can get, and when the going gets tough, they bail out.

Jesus said...

Matthew 6:24

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

Make a choice and then stay committed to that choice for the rest of your life

Mutual Submission and Respect (obedience)

Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

The marriage relationship was supposed to be a model of our relationship with God

First of all, there needs to be a head, a leader. Jesus is that leader. Unfortunately, men, we have done a very poor job in living up to the standards of what God intended us to be (love her as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her) in this relationship and so have given people an example of what A REAL RELATIONSHIP should look like. Our failure has also provided an

excuse for the wife to say, I don't have to submit to that. Again, we then transfer over that experience and thought to our relationship with God.

Mutual submission and respect. Does God submit to and respect us. In the words of those great theologians, Phineas and Ferb, YES, Yes He does.

The answer is found in the words gave himself

Jesus shows us submission and respect by becoming one of us...

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus gave himself (submits to and respects us) by willingly dying for us even though we didn't deserve it. (While we were still sinners Christ died for us) If that isn't a picture of submission, I don't know what is.

Jesus submits to our free will. He respects the free choice that he created each of us to have

The question is, in your relationship with God do you respectfully submit to Him and OBEY?

What kind of relationship do you have with God? Is it REAL or is it a cheap imitation of the REAL THING?

Which one are you?

JESUS AND THE CROWDS

World - "Great crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and addressed them..." Luke 14:25

JESUS AND THE 500

1 Corinthians 15:6

⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

JESUS AND THE 120

Acts 1:15

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)

JESUS AND THE 72

Disciples - "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit." Luke 10:1

JESUS AND THE 12

Apostles - "Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them..." Mathew 10:5

JESUS AND THE 3

Peter, James, and John - "After 6 days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves..." Mark 9:2

As Kyle Idleman proposed in his book, are you a Fan or a Follower of Jesus?