



On the Same Page

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7 NAS95)

Forever-Family Fellowship

We will teach and practice truth-and-love relationships with brothers-sisters in Christ that must survive/thrive in the present because we believe that these relationships will last forever

All-Week-Long Worship

As the local body of believers gathers each Sunday for worship, we will inspire a worship experience for all age groups that will travel with you all week long. What we do on Sunday will assist you in your singing, in your praying, in your devotion, and in your witness.

Conversely, it is as you worship all-week-long that you will be prepared to enter into gathered worship on Sunday.

Day-to-Day Discipleship

As followers of Christ, we are disciples every single day. Respect for and commitment to Scripture is essential. We will show you how to interact with and respond to God's Word, both as individuals, and in groups.

Moment-by-Moment Mission

God, the Architect of the world and of our lives arranges appointments and interruptions. Each of us is called to represent His Son for the glory of His Name. We will cultivate a mind-set for moment-by-moment mission, whether close to home, or far away.

Jesus was Not a Victim

Jesus left heaven's glory to enter into the created world and live among those who were in rebellion against God. He was misunderstood, falsely accused, and wrongly sentenced to capital punishment on the cross. **But, Jesus never played the victim.**

On the other hand, **Jesus made Himself to be vulnerable.** Vulnerability and Victimhood are not the same thing. He made Himself vulnerable - He, the eternal Son of God - by being born in human nature to a human mother. A mere creature, Mary, changed the diapers of the Son of God! That's vulnerability. He was surrounded by sinful siblings, yet He Himself was sinless, though most likely blamed when the younger ones cried. He was painted as having evil motives, even when the real reason He came to earth was to provide salvation for people like us who actually do have evil motives. He was *“like one from whom men hide their face; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him”* (Isaiah 53:3). **Yes, Jesus made Himself to be vulnerable. But He never claimed victimhood.**

There may be such a thing as victimhood, but the idea has become an art form these days. It is a pathway to power, as if you have a voice if you are victim over against those who are not or don't claim it. These days, those in the throes of victimhood are skilled at making other people feel guilty for their plight. It's not their own fault for whatever; it's yours. If their behavior is bad today, it's because of something that happened - that was done to them - yesterday. That is, every episode of sorrow and introspection and failure to do what needs to be done - it was set up by yesterday's crime - a crime against - me. The focus is not on what I can do to improve my situation in the present, but rather on what happened in my past that crippled my ability to live life today.

Jesus never did this. You will not find it in the Biblical record. Yes, **He made Himself vulnerable, but He did not play the victim.** He didn't blame God, or His disciples, or the religious leaders, or even the devil. There was and is sin in the world, but He didn't whine and complain about it. He confronted it, but He treated it as a part of the present reality that needed to be dealt with, and He was prepared to deal with, as only He could.

This can mean many things, but one of them is this: **Jesus does not blame you for His death.** He holds us accountable, but He does not leverage our guilt in order to make Him look or “feel” better. **That is so far below Him. And, it is also far below His followers.** We also are to be vulnerable, but we are not to play the victim.

So what does it mean for the Christian to embrace his/her vulnerability? It means that we are but creatures, and the world does not revolve around us, but rather the Creator. It means that we realize our present reality, that we are sinners saved by grace living in a sinful world. If we experience disease or disability, it is part of the present reality that will be wonderfully transformed when Jesus comes again. If it is mistreatment by others, we take it as a badge of honor as those who follow Christ, who was even more mistreated than we are. To be vulnerable in this world as a Christian means that it is not all about me, but about the honor of His name. If I find myself offended because I am not properly appreciated or celebrated, then I know that the Holy Spirit will soon convict me, and I will be on my knees confessing my sin and, once again, sanctifying Christ as Lord in my heart - Christ as Lord, not me.

Let me end by looking back at Jesus once again. If anyone would be justified in being cruelly affronted, it would be Him. We may not deserve all of how we are treated, but surely we deserve some of it. We are sinners after all. But Jesus is not: never was; never will be. Always pure. Always glorious. And yet, He made Himself vulnerable so that we can live our lives today looking up, and live life forever, in perfect fellowship with Him, with all that He has created, and even with our own formerly twisted selves.

The Compelling Community by Mark Dever, Jamie Dunlop

Remember, our love isn't proportional to our forgiveness; it's proportional to our understanding of forgiveness. If someone has been forgiven by Christ's supernatural sacrifice at the cross—and yet that person never explores the depths of his sin and the miracle of the atonement—his love will remain tepid.

Notes:

Sunday school meets weekly with classes for adults and children.

This Sunday, September 1, American House, 3 p.m.

Ladies Bible Study is set to begin September 10, 10 a.m., studying Colossians.

Fish Fry and potluck at the Lund home, Sat, Sept 21, starting at 4, dinner at 5:30.

Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.



Last Sunday, August 25, we thought through a difficult story of sin and revenge. We see the sons of Jacob who seem to continue their father's old **ways of deceit**, and we watch as they **enact revenge**. But what is amazing is that God, who hates sin, can use these kinds of willful and broken situations to accomplish His purpose - in this case to move Jacob and his family from the low road to the high road. Our message, "**Shechem**," is found in Genesis 34. [Listen to the message here.](#)

This Sunday, September 1, we prepare for Lord's Table with a return to our series "Gospel Conversations," and think about "Two Rich Young Rulers" (Luke 18 and 5).