

A Culture of Honor

This morning, I want you all to know that I consider it a privilege to bring God's word to you. I care deeply for each and every one of you. It is because of this that I pray that you will receive and understand God's message for you all this morning.

Each one of you is God's special treasure, you are his chosen, you are the sheep of his pasture and he cares and loves each one of you.

I have come to rejoice with you and celebrate the unique gifting's that each of you are starting to move into in the Body of Christ Jesus. I know that I am the newbie to Salmo as I have only been here a little over two years. It is because of that time we have spent together, that I believe I can talk in more detail about what a culture of honor entails.

Let's start with setting the foundation for a culture of honor...

1 Timothy 2:1-3 CEV

First of all, I ask you to pray for everyone. Ask God to help and bless them all, and tell God how thankful you are for each of them. Pray for kings and others in power, so that we may live quiet and peaceful lives as we worship and honor God. This kind of prayer is good, and it pleases God our Savior

- 1) We are asked to pray for everyone here
- 2) We are asked to tell God how thankful we are for each person here
- 3) We are asked to pray for our government and our church leaders

Why?

So that we may live quiet and peaceful lives as we worship and honor God.

At Crossroads we are building a culture of honor.

So what is a culture of honor?

Turn with me to Romans 12:1-18

Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him. I realize how kind God has been to me, and so I tell each of you not to think you are better than you really are. Use good sense and measure yourself by the amount of faith that God has given you. A body is made up

of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another. God has also given each of us different gifts to use. If we can prophesy, we should do it according to the amount of faith we have. If we can serve others, we should serve. If we can teach, we should teach. If we can encourage others, we should encourage them. If we can give, we should be generous. If we are leaders, we should do our best. If we are good to others, we should do it cheerfully. Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself. Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying. Take care of God's needy people and welcome strangers into your home. Ask God to bless everyone who mistreats you. Ask him to bless them and not to curse them. When others are happy, be happy with them, and when they are sad, be sad. Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people. Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone

Let's ask some specific questions.

- What is a living sacrifice?
 - Are you living for your self or God? (Rom 12:1)
- Are you willing to let God change the way you think?
 - *We live in this world, but we don't act like its people or fight our battles with the weapons of this world. Instead, we use God's power that can destroy fortresses. We destroy arguments and every bit of pride that keeps anyone from knowing God. We capture people's thoughts and make them obey Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5)*
- Are you full of pride in who or what you are; or are you humble?
 - *Pride comes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16:18)*
- Do you measure yourself by position or wealth or by your faith?
 - Measure yourself by the amount of your faith! (Rom 12:3)
- Is your heart this morning to serve others or to do what you want?
 - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves – Phil 2:3 ESV*
- Have you said anything encouraging to another person here inside and outside of your family unit this week?
 - *What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels? If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging*

cymbal. What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains? I would be nothing, unless I loved others. What if I gave away all that I owned and let myself be burned alive? I would gain nothing, unless I loved others. Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails! Everyone who prophesies will stop, and unknown languages will no longer be spoken. All that we know will be forgotten. We don't know everything, and our prophecies are not complete. But what is perfect will someday appear, and what isn't perfect will then disappear. When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do. But when we grew up, we quit our childish ways. Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us. For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love 1 Cor. 13:1-13 CEV

- When we help each other do we do it cheerfully?
 - *Show hospitality to one another without grumbling 1 Pet. 4:9 ESV*

- Are we generous?
- Do we show hospitality?
 - *Then the king will say to those on his left, "Get away from me! You are under God's curse. Go into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels! I was hungry, but you did not give me anything to eat, and I was thirsty, but you did not give me anything to drink. I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me, and I was naked, but you did not give me any clothes to wear. I was sick and in jail, but you did not take care of me." Then the people will ask, "Lord, when did we fail to help you when you were hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in jail?" The king will say to them, "Whenever you failed to help any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you failed to do it for me. Matt. 25:41-45*

- Are you kind to each other?
- Are you loving and caring?
- Do you honor each other as brothers and sisters?
- Are you asking God to bless those who you feel have mistreated you?
- Do you feel that in some way you are better than another person in this place?
- Are you living at peace with each other

This is all related to a culture of honor. We say we want it - but do we really?

Are we gossiping and backbiting each other? How about criticism? Are we criticizing each other? Do we feel that we can pick and choose what scriptures to obey and what ones to shove onto the back burner?

I certainly hope not, because these things are destructive to a culture of honor.

Friends, I have seen good things here in Salmo and this church will survive! This church will change Salmo and from here it will change the Land!

Do you know why?

It is because we are going to maintain focus on a culture of honor.

My friends, let's recapture what so many have lost. Each one of us should be able to share openly. When we are going through trials and tribulations, we need to be there for each other, not condemning but loving.

Crossroads Christian Fellowship in Salmo can lead the way!

I am going to give you some scriptures and I want you to look at honestly. Look deep inside your heart. If these words of God resound with you, praise God! If not, be open to letting the Holy Spirit work miraculous change into your life and thinking.

(ESV)

Romans 12:10

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Philippians 2:3

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing?

Romans 14:13

Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, IF you have love for one another.

Matthew 22:37

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

1 John 3:11

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant.

1 John 4:8

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love

John 15:12 NKJV

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you

Clearly God has a message and that message is that we are to love each other...

God has given us many warnings about not living in a culture of honor in his church...

Consider Galatians 5:15

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another

There are a myriad of other scriptures warning against this, but in the interest of brevity let Galatians 5:15 be the warning sign.

Also... I have a quote today from a very wise rabbit named Thumper: "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all"

Truth in Love?

Ever been on the receiving end of someone's perspective of the truth, not delivered in love?

Did you receive it? Probably not...

So many people fall for the "Speak truth in love" trap... They speak what they perceive is the truth with the hope of changing the other person, but they often totally fail in the love department. If you want to speak truth in love to each other, build relationship first so that your words come from a foundation of love and relationship. It is the only way they may be received.

People seem to think that there is a spiritual gift of criticism. I am here today to state unequivocally there isn't. I am going to let all of you in on a little secret....

Nothing, absolutely nothing I say can change anything in you; nothing you say can change anything in anyone else. ...Unless, in free will, a person chooses to listen and receive what is said.

For change to occur you must choose to receive what is said and apply it to yourself and if you are not strong enough ask the Holy Spirit to help. To bring about the likeness of Christ in you is his job after all.

Do you know why I use so much scripture instead of just my opinion? It's because his word will not return to him void. (CF. Isa 55:11) The Holy Spirit knows what you need in your life and he encourages you to open your hearts to receive. I can teach till the cows come home, but it is up to you to receive, learn and apply what is said. The choice to listen is yours. The choice to serve God is yours. You are totally free to choose, but you are not free from the consequences or blessings of your choices.

This is where so many well-meaning people get confused. You see when we understand this simple principle; we know that telling others what is wrong in their lives really doesn't make sense. For the most part people already know what is wrong. But there are times when teaching will help, but if you are going to sew seed, make sure that you have prepared the ground for it to be received.

Building relationships in a culture of honor is the key. When a real relationship is established and actual care provided, a loving connection is formed. When words

are then spoken, they are not just words, but they are words that are listened to, received and weighed.

What is my point?

As Christians we must learn to not just talk and put our knowledge on display, we must learn to love one another and those around us in our community, if we want to make a difference. Change only comes in a culture of honor and only when the person receives what is said because trust has been established.

I am on a journey and relying on the Holy Spirit to guide me. I am praying that the words he gives me will touch your heart and bring joy, understanding, richness and abundant life to you. I am extending this journey to you so that the words you bring will speak life into those around you in a culture of honor.

prayer