***Mature Love: Embracing God’s Narrative When Mistreated***

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Series:

1. Introduction
   1. As we cultivate agreement with God's perspective of the people who mistreat we can enjoy mature love and family unity with joy.

I want to give a very brief context for what I am sharing over the last couple weeks. If you have not been here you are going to miss some of the context so just forgive me on the front end of that because I am going to be brief. I talked about Isaiah 19 I am not going to go into that again. How important that is in what is going to happen in this generation I believe across the globe. The conflict and the unity that will be happening in the Middle East is depicted in Isaiah 19, an end-time chapter and the idea is John 17 the greatest miracle of human history is the unification, the unity of the people of God. But it is not just unity. Jesus said a unity at the level that I and the Father are walking in unity. That’s in-comprehendible to me. It has never been done. 1% of that has probably been filled in church history.

But at the very time of that supernatural miracle of the unity of the people of God globally, we are talking about profound unity. A unity that is supernatural. Again, the greatest miracle of human history will be that, overt miracle. At the very same time that is happening, Matthew 24, we covered it the other day Jesus said there will be a betrayal culture. I do not want to call it a betrayal movement but betrayal among the body of Christ will come to a level never seen before in history at the very same time that the deepest unity of history is taking place. So as people say there is going to be a great harvest and a great falling away. Which is it? Both. There is going to be a unity, profound unity, that is going to be stronger than a unity movement. A supernatural work but there will be a betrayal culture, not just in the secular culture within the body of Christ. So the whole body of Christ is going to be in a trajectory one way or the other. Some will be stuck in the middle for a while but everybody will be moving in one direction or the other in the next 5-10-15-20 years plus.

Well we talked about Zachariah 3 and in Zachariah 3 the prophet Zachariah has this vision of one of God’s leaders, Joshua. He is a leader many ways over the prayer and worship movement of his generation. He was over the temple and all the singers and everything, all of these things. Satan comes before God and says that man is disqualified and he accuses him. The man had some deficiencies and some real failures but accusation always exaggerates them. And a bigger problem was not just he was going to accuse Joshua the leader to others it was going to get inside of Joshua. The biggest problem of accusation is not just that others accuse you is that you accuse you. And then when you accuse you, you become a prime suspect or whatever, not suspect, a prime vehicle to accuse others. Accusers are the people that feel accused. Go on, I won’t go on about that for a long time but you already understand that.

The Lord speaks up and says the Lord rebuke you, the angel of the Lord. I have got a different narrative of this man. You have the accusation narrative, I have a divine narrative. Here is what God says about him. And I am canceling out his disqualification and I am recommissioning him I am putting new robes on him and I am giving him even greater privilege and stature in the spirit. I mentioned how Zachariah 3 in our near 40 years that I have been in this city with different prophetic guys. Zachariah 3 and 4 is by far the passage that has been given to us in supernatural ways, dreams and visions, far beyond any other passage. You know we have Song of Solomon 8:6 we have Hephzibah. We have Psalm 27:4 this one thing. We got this one twice. We have received it about 7 or 8 times. That is a staggering implication. I am not talking about somebody got touched in their spirit I am talking about God supernaturally confirmed it and He said in essence this family must walk in that to walk in the fullness and I mean the 99% we are going yes. We are on. The consensus is yes. Yes, we want that.

Well it is not just that we have the divine narrative for our self that is where it starts. We have the divine narrative for one another. But the problem is the one and another are the people often mistreated you, friends and family members. You know the verse to love your enemies. Well most of us do not have enemies at the level Jesus was talking about we have friends and family members and people in the marketplace that we know well that mistreated us. And it hurts us and he goes I want you to do good and see what I see about them. And that is the challenge of history to get into God’s narrative of believers, familiar believers that have actually mistreated us. As long as they are enemies they are far away and they do not have a face. But it is friends and family members up close and personal and the Lord says do you see my narrative for yourself and do you see my narrative for them. This is the key to the John 17 unity miracle, the family healing miracle.

I am going to give a couple more points here. Isaac jump in anytime. Ok, he is so fun. You know, parentheses. I know stop. I have known you since peeweesville. How old were you? Six. I love you, anyway, go back to this. This is so fun with him up here. Ok, peeweesville you can write that down and look it up on Wikipedia.

If we are not, if we are going to, I am positive we are going to mature in love. Hundreds of millions are going to mature in love but the pathway to maturing in love, it is not the only thing, is cultivating, it takes time to get it. God’s perspective of the other person in the body of Christ that we are close to that mistreated us. We have got to get into seeing what God sees about them. It is hard enough to see what God sees about me but to see it about a guy I labored with. A guy, a person in my family, a person that I have been close to that has betrayed me. That is tough. The Lord says it has to be but when you see how I have forgiven you. How I have overlooked and forgiven your weaknesses, deficiencies etc.

* 1. David was tending sheep without any accomplishments yet

7For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at [focuses on] the outward appearance,   
but the Lord looks at the heart. (1 Sam. 16:7)

I am going to take you to this verse. Profound verse, this is the verse of the day for me in terms of focus. 1 Samuel 16:7 if you will put that on a PowerPoint. 1 Samuel 16:7 A prophet Samuel comes up before David’s, King David’s father and says I want to tell you something you do not know. The Lord does not see like man sees. We all know this verse. This is profound. This is the pathway to John 17 supernatural unity. It starts here. He goes man looks at, he focuses on, the outward appearance. The secular narrative, I do not mean the secular narrative in a horrible way. Just what you can see unaided by the Holy Spirit is what I mean. Man naturally focuses on outward things. What he can see unaided by the Holy Spirit. But he goes I want you to tell, I want to tell you something, God does not see that way. Beloved, this is radical though the verse if famous this is profound. This is the pathway to John 17. He goes, God looks at the heart, He sees those thousands and millions of 10 second conversations of that believer who is stumbling and tripping who is trying to sincerely walk with God. He says I see the 10,000 times 10,000 short prayers and conversations of their heart. You do not see it, I do.

5Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes…[to] reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)

Look in 1 Corinthians 4:5 Paul talks about this. He taps right into this. He says I want you to judge nothing before the time. Don’t judge, meaning don’t come to final conclusions is the point. This is talking about conclusions about people. It is more than just an opinion, judgment can be an opinion. Don’t judge anything before the time, the time that Jesus returns. Why, He is going to reveal the counsels of the heart, the motives of the heart, the million, short little movements of the heart over 50 years. He is going to reveal it, nobody can see them. A heart that says Lord I want to obey, I am yours. I am crying out, lying on your bed, driving, walking. Those million 10 second little conversations and thought processes that express sincere intention to obey. And the Lord says when that happens I am going to actually shock the guy. I am going to praise him because he does not even count those movements of his heart as important. He goes I am going to act to give him praise. God is not going to praise him in worship, God is going to affirm him. Some of you are going to get the shock of your life on that day when the million 10 second conversations and thought processes you had before God actually matter to Him. But the problem is the person that is annoyed at you, he doesn’t even care about them. He doesn’t know about them. He does not care about them. They do not count in his evaluation of you. Like Paul said, do not draw conclusions. Those things count in God’s evaluation of a person.

* 1. ***Outward appearance***: This includes “the facts” about 5-10 of their ***main accomplishments***,   
     5-10 of their ***failures*** and 5-10 of their ***deficiencies*** (in their personality or leadership skills)

Well let’s look at the outward appearance. I want to give you 3 real, so rapid fire of the secular narrative, what the outward appearance is. It’s the facts. It is based on facts. It is the facts, I am just making up this number, it is the 5 or 10 main good things you have accomplished over the 10, 20, 30, 40 years. Those are facts about your life. I mean you graduated with degrees. You have built this business. You had this family. You did, cool, accomplished so cool. Those 5 or 10 main things. That is a made up number. The facts about your outward life is the 5 or 10 main failures you have had in the 10, 20, 30, 40. 50 years. Some go oh I wish it was 5 or 10.

The other point of the secular narrative is the way people evaluate people 5 or 10 deficiencies. Those are not failures, they are deficiencies in their personalities, leadership skills, things they do not have abilities in.

* 1. These **facts** do matter, but are not the ***primary determining factors*** in God's narrative for people.

The Lord said you look at those few things that they accomplish. Those few failures and the facts about their deficiencies and you have summed them up. The problem is that is not how I read a person’s life. Those facts are important but here is the key, they are not, here is the key, they are not the primary, determining factor of God’s narrative for their life or your life. See we want to talk facts. What they accomplished. The Lord says some of the most important people I do not call to certain things. We want to talk facts, here is how they failed. The Lord says some of the biggest failures I called to a destiny beyond anything you could have imagine. Some of the people or the biggest deficiencies you cannot imagine they are going to lead this and that and you think what? Not possible. The Lord says I really do not interpret people’s lives like you do. This is what God is telling the prophet Daniel.

* 1. The divine narrative is based on the profound reality that the Lord sees not as man sees.

Now the divine narrative of a person’s life, it is your life but it is the guy that has mistreated you. I am talking about friends and family. I am talking about in the church, in the marketplace. That guy and you are going ugh. The divine narrative of his or her life is based on the profound reality that God sees that woman or man different than you do. That is a profound, he says I do not see it like you. What is the divine narrative based on? I gave three things of the secular narrative. A few facts of our good accomplishments, a few facts of our failures, a few facts of our deficiencies and those are the facts and the Lord says those are only a few of the facts. They are not the primary, determining factor of my narrative. Yes I calculate them but that is not the main conversation I am having about that person.

* 1. ***Divine narrative***: He looks at His ***sovereign call*** on them, their ***sincere motives*** (seen in their countless 10 second thoughts or conversation with God that reveal their intention to obey) and His interpretation of their ***main accomplishments***, ***failures*** and ***deficiencies***

What is the divine narrative? He looks at the sovereign calling over the man, over the woman, over the boy and the girl. Now we cannot always know that but God knows He has a sovereign calling He is working toward and often not even aware of it but it really matters to God.

Number two He looks at the sincere motives of that person. And number three He looks at His interpretation of their accomplishments, failures and deficiencies. Because His interpretation of them is different than ours. And the Lord says between my sovereign call the million 10 second conversations they had with me over 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years sincerely signing up to love me in ways that nobody else knows. And the way that I am interpreting their gifting. I do not interpret it like you, they are incredible gifted but that is not what moves me.

David’s brothers, this is about King David. He was boy number eight. His brothers were so much more accomplished than He was. David was tending the sheep which in modern day he was mowing the grass all day long. His brothers were accomplished. The Lord says that is good. But that is not how I call people just because they are accomplished. They have degrees, they have accomplishment. Those are good, I like those, but those do not necessarily become the primary determining factor of God’s narrative of your life. David, He said, he has a heart. I can see his heart. His heart is pounding for me. He is trying to obey me even though it does not look like it. I remember once in 1985 I gave a sermon on a Sunday morning. I remember literally I picked out identified the 10 sins in David’s life in 1st and 2nd Samuel. David probably won’t like this when I first meet him like hey, hey, do you think I forgot that sermon. Or maybe he will say uh ok. I do not think anyone has picked all 10 and laid them out in time. It was so bad they almost took David’s Psalms out of children’s church curriculum. I mean they just wanted to boycott David. If you take those at face value, you go no, the facts are he failed. The facts are there are deficiencies in his fathering. There are deficiencies in his leadership. There are deficiencies in a number of things that created some problems. The Lord says I called it and I see his heart.

14The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people. (1 Sam. 13:14)

He says here in 1 Samuel 13 I sought for a man after my own heart, talking about David he is about 17 years old. And I have commanded him to be commander. The Lord sovereignly chose him. His brothers are more gifted. They might have less failures. They may have different deficiencies and less or more but I have calculated it all and my narrative is that about David. I am going to end with this, in the next 60 seconds.

* 1. Our goal is to engage in “the right conversation” – the one that promotes God’s narrative in people’s lives and thus advances mature love with family unity and joy.

God’s narrative is shocking. We have got to get into the right conversation. The one that promotes God’s narrative of the person that is bugging us. It is so easy to get into a conversation about the person but it is not the right one. What’s the conversation, it’s the facts. I know what they accomplished so let’s do something really exciting. I know how they failed so let’s really beat up on them. I know their deficiencies so let’s look the other way. The Lord says those facts are important but they are not the primary thing. My narrative, my call and we have got to get into it.

20He [Abraham] did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief…. (Rom. 4:20)

Abraham, now I am starting the 60 seconds over. Here is the 60 seconds. Romans 4, I just love this verse. Romans 4, the first person I heard that preached was John Wimber some 30 years ago. It says Romans 4:20 it says Abraham did not waiver. I remember John Wimber goes in my house that is called wavering. Abraham had a couple of big mess-ups. 2,000 years the divine storyline is that he did not waiver. I’m like what? Lord says no to the editing process of my personality and my grace that how I cancel out failures and deficiencies that others don’t because of who I am. He did not waiver through my editing process of grace. That is my narrative. Who got into that narrative while Abraham was alive? I don’t know.

22He raised up David…concerning whom He testified and said, 'I have found David…a man after My heart, who will do all My will’…36For David, after he had served the purpose of God   
in his own generation, fell asleep [died]… (Acts 13:22, 36; NAS)

David let’s look at chapter 13, here is the other verse. Acts 13:22 and 36. I mean this is 1,000 years after David. Paul is preaching. He did not hear my 10 sins of David’s life sermon. Paul never heard that but here is what he said about David 1,000 years later. Acts 13 you have it right in front of you. Verse 22 first then we will look at 36. God raised up David. Here is what God testified about David. I found David, he will do all of my will. Now I have taught the life of David I guess at least 7 or 8 times in 40 years. I go, all of your will? Most? The Lord says through my editing process, my narrative is he did all of my will. Leave it there. Well the facts are. The Lord says yes but I interpret his successes, his failures and deficiencies different than you do. I say he did all. Wow, that guy, that woman, that person, that brother, that sister loves the Lord, not doing great, not treating you well. The Lord that does not mean that everything is fine but that does not mean, you have got to get into my narrative about them or you will never get on the trajectory of the John 17 miracle of the family unity.

Then he goes on to verse 36. He served the purpose of God in his generation. He did it. I go if that is how you read people, I want to read people this way. I do not just want to read me this way. I do first, I want to read you this way and I believe this is a critical part on the way to John 17, the fact that God, it goes back to the 1 Samuel 6:7 when we started with God does not see like man sees. Man looks at the outward things. The facts of their outward accomplishments, their failures, their deficiencies and summarized them. And God says no, I look at myself in calling the million movements of their heart and I interpret those accomplishments, failures and deficiencies actually different than you do. To you they are this big or that little. To me they are different. They do not have the same weight to me than they have to you. Get into my narrative for that person. So as a community we want to be intentional about getting into conversations that promote the divine narrative so we can grow in family love and unity. Amen.

Issac…

Mike: I shared it a couple weeks ago there was this guy who profoundly betrayed me and then I find out about some real negative stuff about his life that is really real. Then the Lord speaks through Paul Cain the 1 Peter 4:8 it says above all, above all, above all, that is how the verse starts but he pronounces it. Love covers a multitude of a man’s sins. Cover him. That is the Lord’s word. Cover him. That’s the Lord’s word. Cover him. The point I am say is, we were talking earlier this morning is that a lot of folks, they uncover to punish, to get back. I will get you straight. It is just the truth. The truth about this man’s life, I am thinking about this man right now. The truth of his life, there were 90% of the truth is not about that. The truth of his life is, he loved Jesus. He talked thousands of people out of sin. The truth is he cried out to the Lord. The truth is he did many, many good things. That is the truth of his life.

A lot of people think that the truth is the deficiency or the failure. Beloved, that is 5% of the truth of your life. The truth of your life is the million times that you said things to God and what you have done with your hands. That is the truth. One lady came to me and says I just want to tell the truth. I said well tell the whole truth. Take 6 hours tell me about the guy, the good things then give me your 5 minute negative. If you want to tell the whole truth I will listen and while you are at it since you are so into the truth. Yes you are so into the truth. Tell me the truth about you and start with the 5% negative and then give me the 6 hours next. She says well (stammering). You are not really into the truth, this is payback. That is what you are doing. And you are applauding yourself as loving the truth. Give me the 6 hours. This is years ago I remember the conversation vividly. Give me the 6 hours of the good things he has done in 30 years. I don’t want to do that, that is the truth, you said you were into truth aren’t you?

And then again if you are into truth tell me your truth but start with the 5% negative because your 95 is amazing too. That is the truth but we were talking this morning about loving enemies and the problem with the phrase “love your enemies” is that is so generic and it has been on so many posters it does not move most people. Most people in this room do not think of enemies. The think and Jesus, Jesus might say oh you think my terms are not right? My terms are right little guy. Do not add to my terms. He spoke about that day when people are going to be murdering one another and that loving your enemies is going to be a whole other level.

But at this hour in our nation it is about the people that mistreat us. It is about doing good to them. Covering their sin, blessing them before God and I do not mean lying about them blessing them before people but finding the good virtue. I do not mean going on, and on, and on about it but mention the good virtue. Jesus said bless the person to people and pray to the person before God. And do good, give them some money every now and then. I am not talking about the enemies because we do not have enemies. I am talking about the friends or family members that mistreat you. Find the one thing that you totally by into and say that behind their back and do not say the other thing behind their back. Jesus said if you do that and you talk to me and you do that. I prayed for my enemies and the first couple of times, couple like a thousand is what I mean. I said don’t bless him bless his kids. How is that? We will start with his kids and work back. I could not get it out.

After a while what I found out is by blessing him to people, I spoke the virtue to him, I have lots of folks that betrayed me, many of us do at my age in their 60’s. Been in the kingdom 40, 50 years we have a long time. Everyone has betrayed relationships so we have had to do this a lot. But when I find the virtue and speak that instead of the failure to people then when I talk to God and I ask God’s blessing and favor. I do a couple of nice acts. Give them a little money or do some things to help them a little bit. Do good to them. It probably did not help them at all really but it liberated my heart. I was the guy getting set free.

And some time down the road when I felt tender feelings for these various ones and every one is a different story, it was like I got you. I was after your heart. But until you operated in the opposite spirit in your words to other people about them, your words to me about them and some of your resources, you could not get your own heart free. I am after your heart my beloved young man or boy of God. I am in my 20’s and 30’s but I am still not there yet. I am still working on that but I know this thing is real and it works and it is the Zachariah 3 divine narrative not the accusatory narrative it is what is going to lead us to the family miracle. It involves covering their sins, their failure. It is so easy to point out the 4 failures of that guy, that girl, that person. Lord says no, find the 3 virtues, 2 of them if that is all you can find and say those and I know the other stuff. Leave it with me. Leave it with me.

Isaac: How do we walk in the tension of covering a multitude of sins but not covering up to abusers and where there really is true evil that is being perpetuated? How do we walk in that tension?

Mike: The key issue is the predator. If you are uncovering to keep them from a pattern of doing this to other people and they are a predator that is one thing. If you are doing it to pay them back and to punish them there is not a redemptive reason. There are people who are not growing in love by the uncovering you are trying to get a personal advantage over the person by the uncovering and you are venting, you are punishing, you are not stopping a predator. If you were stopping a predator that is different. But the thing today in the culture, again it is a betrayal culture. Nobody calls it a betrayal. It is all call speaking the truth, being real. So as long as a guy starts a conversation with “just being real.” then that is his permission to give the 5% of the deficiencies and failures of that person. He is just being real. What a virtue if you are real. Brother you are real. You are a betrayer too. You mean well, sort of.

If you are getting an advantage by showing their deficiencies, deficiencies are the lack of your abilities or personality it is not a failure. Or a failure. If you are getting a personal advantage or you are punishing them or you are venting because you have anger. That is not a kingdom response. If you are saving that guy over there, that business from getting ripped off by that ponzie scheme that is a different issue. But then you tell it to the right people in the right spirit and the right way. You go to the person in private and you say it with the spirit of redemption. You are trying to win love. You are not venting or gaining an advantage that is the huge difference.

Mike: have this written down, I ended this a few minutes ago, is to engage in the right conversation with one another that promotes God’s narrative in that person’s life. So when you and me and him and her are talking about him, we want to get into the right conversation that promotes the right narrative in that guys life. The narrative is not their failures, their deficiencies and even their great accomplishments. Those can be sometimes irrelevant in the conversation but the Lord is saying the main conversation in my narrative is just do the facts. Well do the 95% facts, not just the 5% negative. I just want the truth. Well do you want your negative truth? Let’s do this thing together and so all over the room. Let’s stand up for a moment and I want us to think. Everyone has 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 people that are in your space causing you some turmoil. That is a soft way to say it. They are mistreating you a little bit. They are just bugging you at least in a way that really is not good. That is the group we are talking about. It is so easy to tell the folks next to you, they are…and God says no, no, no catch that, I have to get you ready for the bigger drama coming. Do some pushups right now. Learn how to bless. Find the virtue and say it. Tell me things about them. Talk to me about them. Give them a little bit of your resources, your time, energy whatever.

Father we bring that person. Those two people, those three people and Lord, I have preached this for years but I am confessing my neglect and failure in this even recently. I am confessing I need to continually do more of the spiritual pushups by speaking to people, speaking to you and doing things for those people. Lord I say before you, forgive me having known this message for many years I am still not in the place of maturity in it I should be by now. All over this room let’s acknowledge that in our hearts. Lord I want to go there. I want to be a part of that John 17 miracle in Kansas City where the body of Christ loves the different ministries and different races in the church. Lord I want to be a part of that. I want to see for real. I do not mean hype stuff. I do not mean just saying it because it sounds good.

I want to feel what you feel about them. I want to start by feeling about those 4, 5, or 6 people in my life that are in my face causing me trouble. Lord I say in the name of Jesus have mercy on me. Help me and I commit myself, all over the room, just say in your own heart, I am committing to do this. This thing evaporates in 12 hours. You guys have to recommit like a million times. It is like peeling an onion, it is one layer at a time and you have tears every step of the way. But there is a million little layers that come off on this. You have to do it day after day. Lord we thank you for that in the name of Jesus I ask for grace and I take authority over the spirit of condemnation and accusation attacking our own hearts in Jesus name. Amen and Amen.

Gen. 12 Abraham lied about Sarah to Pharaoh and he weary of waiting so he had a son with Hagar

Gen. 16 Hagar was Abraham's concubine and the mother of his son Ishmael.