

# Relationships: A Mess Worth Making

## Provision

### John 14:15 – 20

**Main Idea:** God’s provision is His presence which is “in” us to conform us to the image of Christ.

#### I. Introduction

- Case Study: *Brian and Kara*
- Life as Kara sees it
- Another perspective on Kara’s world
  - The critical importance of being “in relationship”
  - Being a friend to someone in Kara’s place

#### II. Explanation: Is It Enough?

- In the midst of trials, our tendency is to search for an explanation that does three things:
  - Helps us understand what is going on
  - Points us where we should be going
  - Tells us how to get there
- However, these explanations will only serve to convince us of three things
  - Our problems are deeper than we thought
  - Our goals are farther away than we thought
  - Our practical skills are inadequate for the difficulty
- Explanations reveal our inability to “solve” our problematic situations

#### III. Imagination: The Rest of the Story (Heb. 11:1)

- What we need in the midst of trial is not explanation, but *imagination*
- Imagination is not the ability to dream up things that aren’t real; it is the ability to see what is real, but often unseen
- **Hebrews 11:1** *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
- Imagination gives us a deeper sense of two unseen realities:
  - Our identity – the unseen realities of who God says we are
  - God’s resources – the unseen realities of his presence with us and His provision for us

#### IV. Identity: Who Am I?

- We are unable to experience the things that are true about us because we lack spiritual sight, hearing, and taste
- We don’t deny our present circumstances; instead we see them in the context of the whole picture – who we are in Christ!
- The two fundamental things that are true about us when we are in Christ:
  - There has been a radical change in the core of our being (Ez. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17)
  - We have a relationship with God as a Father

#### V. God’s Presence and Provision (John 14:15 – 20)

- God’s provision cannot be reduced to answers and strategies
- God’s provision is tied to his presence
- God’s presence is more than just being near us or with us, but in us!
- God’s presence is also described in terms of a family relationship
- The reality that our imagination embraces is the reality we will live by!

#### VI. Illustration: What is God doing in my Life?

- We are often tempted to view God as too busy, distant, or inactive to help us (i.e. prayer)
- This coupled with a focus on circumstances keep us from seeing our deeper heart issues
- God is always at work revealing heart issues that are in need of the gospel’s application
- We need to adjust our imaginations to embrace the God of Ps. 121 and Rom. 8:28 – 39
- His purposes are always the same: to conform us to the image of His Son
- When I see my identity in Christ and God’s presence and provision at work, and understand his purpose, I am willing and able to do things I wouldn’t do otherwise

#### VII. Conclusion (Application): Living in God’s Big Sky Country

- It is not enough to work on the circumstances of our crisis
- We must work on our imaginations
- He has provided simple means that stimulate and enlarge our imaginations to see what they need to see: prayer, truth, fellowship, worship, and the sacraments
- The question is not, “Has God made adequate provision?” It is, “Do I see Him?”

