

The Fray

February 10, 2008

* Today's message was part of a narration woven together with song and video...

NARRATIVE 1: This morning...how do I explain this morning? Now, from that video clip from Ya Ya Sisterhood, it may not be apparent, but we are going to explore relationships and what we can do to mend relationships.

How we got to this point is a story on its own. Let me start with an anatomy lesson...NO, not that kind! Anatomy of our service! The service today is called The Fray...you hipsters and cool cats out there may have guessed that The Fray is the band...The Fray, and you'd be right. That's kind of where we started...kind of. There were several of us kicking ideas around in my office...somehow the song "How to Save a Life" by The Fray came up. Do you know this song? There is this really moving video that goes with the song...we discussed that. Could we do a service just around that song?

Then I began thinking in my mind...The Fray...fray...fray, what exactly does that mean...fray? The first definition for fray is a fight...a battle or skirmish. Hmm, okay. The second has to do with like, the frayed edge of your clothing when it becomes worn. About the same time I came up with this definition, somebody said, hey, look what it says about this song...about "How to Save a Life" Apparently the song was influenced by The Fray's leader singer and song writer Isaac Slade's experience working as a mentor at a camp for troubled teens. Slade said, *"One of the kids I was paired up with was a musician. Here I was, a protected suburbanite, and he was just 17 and had all these problems. And no one could write a manual on how to save him."*

I think that point resonated with all of us. Somebody said something to the effect of, you know, in all of our relationships...love interest...friends...work...our relationships get messed up when we get paralyzed with fear and feel like we can't do anything...really, when you break it down, the best good we can do in our relationship to keep them from becoming frayed is to pay attention to the small stuff. When this discussion was happening, it reminded me of a friend who had cancer...

The last piece came when someone suggested..."Why don't we use songs from just The Fray...let's see if we can't find the continuity in the songs...let's see what story emerges

organically from one band's music...That's what we decided to try. All of the songs from today's service are from The Fray's record "How to Save a Life."

So that's it...this morning as you plug in to these songs and video clips...think about them in the context of all the different kinds of relationships you have...friends, sons, daughters, loved ones, co-workers...relationships are all about growth, change and when they become frayed sometimes it comes down to paying attention to the small stuff...MAKE THIS SERVICE YOUR OWN

NARRATIVE 2:

So, this is where you are and this is where I am...I don't know about you, but I sure can connect with that feeling. How many times have you had a disagreement with someone and you just feel like you are in different places...different places completely. It has been my personal experience that when you land in these places with people about whom you care deeply, the pain only is even greater...even deeper. Often times this is triggered when we project our own expectations on someone else.

The music today is infused with this sense of relational tension...Isaac Slade said that as a child he wasn't allowed to listen to secular music His parents would only allow him to listen to Christian music, and he wanted pop...

NARRATIVE 3:

You know, this may be the blindingly obvious thing to say about relationships, but they are a two-way street. On one end, we can be attentive to the small stuff, the I'm sorrys, the I was wrongs, but the person at the other end has to be attentive too. We talk so much here at The Garden about unconditional love...I believe that is it. True enough that God loves us unconditionally, but for us to *fully* experience God love, or the love of anyone with whom we are in relationship...we must be willing to receive it. When we refuse to receive it...when we are too stubborn, we may miss a wonderful opportunity for healing...

NARRATIVE 4:

You know, that last lyric...can we put it up?

Where did I go wrong, I lost a friend

*Somewhere along in the bitterness
And I would have stayed up with you all night
Had I known how to save a life*

At a first look or listen...there seems to be a sense of loss and hopelessness here. When it comes to relationships that have become frayed, many of us do feel helpless to change our stars. We do get caught up in bitterness, we would stay up all night if only we knew how...healing, growth...they sometimes seem impossible.

But I am confident, when we are willing to keep on trying, when we are willing to attend to the small stuff, it's never too late to mend or build our relationships...

VIDEO: Earl

CLOSE:

I'd like to close this morning with a prayer...it is printed in your Family Garden to Go...feel free to take it home and put it on your refrigerator...

God, we are so caught up in our every day lives that it can be so overwhelming, and often that stress is taken out on our friends, our partners, sons, daughters...these relationships that are so important to us become frayed. God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change and the courage to change the things I can...and the wisdom to pay attention to the small stuff...I'm sorry, I love you, I was wrong...God, give me the strength. AMEN.