



Q1: How did God show up to you in this message?

I hope you are enjoying this series, One Team. And last week you heard two of my teammates, Pastor Glenn and Theresa share about importance of personal training, sacrificing the Me for the We as we look to Jesus and define what the true win looks like.

Today I get to speak about winning in the Locker Room. In major sports, the locker room is where the coach brings the team together, issues between players are worked out, plans for winning in the game are set, and that's where the team comes together to become unified before getting out to play. If there is unity in the locker room, then the chance for victory is great. If there is discord, disharmony, disunity in the locker room, victory will be doubtful.

This picture of the culture in the locker room is similar to what God calls us to do in our interpersonal relationships with Jesus setting that culture for our team dynamics. It's about having a winning relational culture that we bring to the playing field for the world to see.

We have the best team, talent wise, as everyone on our team has been given great gifts, talents, abilities, experiences to be on the winning team, BUT if we are not able to play well together, gelling in unity in the way we relate with one another, we'll not experience the victory of Oneness that Jesus wants for the world to see.

For us to be winning on the field, how successful we are at relating to one another, matters greatly. With all our different personalities, backgrounds, passions, we can rub each other the wrong way intentionally or many times unintentionally. That's why Paul give us some guidance from his letter in Chap. 4 in how to win in the locker room by Being One!

Q2: How would you describe the culture in the lock rooms that you are in, home, workplace and in your community circles?



Again, it's in the locker room where personal issues are worked out, differences can be openly discussed, opportunities to be pono with each other through forgiveness can happen. That's the space we get to be together with the coaches to work out the issues. In the spiritual world, we have coach Jesus and the Holy Spirit, there to help us work things out so that we can become united, one team for the world to see.

Paul sets the culture of how things are to be in the Locker Room. And he starts with this, *"¹ Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace."*

Q3: Paul begs those in the Ephesian church to lead a life worthy of their calling as Christians. How would you describe your life in comparison to how Paul is contending Christians to live?

In God's locker room, there is a sign that marks that culture and it says HUMILITY. Coach Glenn and Theresa spoke about that value last weekend, Exchange the Me for the We. The other signs are Gentleness, Patience, allowing for each other's faults. Remember we are ONE TEAM. And that's the culture in the locker room that Jesus wants to set.

For us to learn about this, I urge you to be a student of Jesus in how he related to those on his team, in the locker room of his ohana group. I'll share with you one story of an encounter that Jesus had with his closest disciples:

It's Jesus' last week of life on earth before he was crucified, where he has his most difficult conversation with his heavenly father. The scene is at garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus wants three of his closest companions to stand with Him in his most difficult time! Sadly, Jesus comes back and finds the disciples "sleeping." The very ones he was fighting for were sleeping while he labors in agonizing torment.



They failed to “watch” with their master. Yet in this major moment for Jesus, he responds, with a question instead of ripping into them and condemning their commitment. You gotta catch how Jesus responds. He responds with some questions. “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

We can learn so much from Jesus. Jesus is so self-controlled! Wouldn't all of us have shown great disappointment and anger, having been let down big time? But, Jesus is so patient. He does not emotionally tear down the disciples! He doesn't reject them. But, there is instruction. There is correction. There is warning. “Pray so that you will not be tempted!” And He challenges them. “Are you sleeping? Could you not keep watch one hour?” Then Jesus instructs them, “The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” Your inner man is willing. But your body is tired. We gotta love our master. And that's an example of how we can relate to those on our team who fail us, disappoint us.

Humility, Gentleness, Patience, and the value of working out all differences are all the hallmarks of that winning locker room culture. And it starts with us asking our Coach Jesus to help us with his power working in our lives for us to live out those values. How else can we win in the locker room?

Paul continues in his letter in v. 21 and it goes like this:

“Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”



As we leave the locker room, we must never forget about putting on our new nature, our new uniform and DRESS TO WIN. We are completely different inside as we are now carriers of his very presence. So put on that uniform, and leave behind those old one. Yeah, but I feel comfortable in the ones. No, throw those away! Wear your new one. So when people ask, Wea Jesus, you gotta Wear Jesus, by putting on your new uniform for the world to see.

Paul says in his letter, *"Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church (v. 15)*

The first action is to be truth tellers. No bulie each odda. We tell one thing, but we mean anodda. We shy away from telling each other the truth cuz we think the other person can't handle the truth. It's like Jack Nickolson's line in a Few Good Men. You can't handle the truth.

But we need people who'd have the courage to speak truth into our lives, especially if we are blinded to our own selfish ways. I know the Holy Spirit can reveal truth to us, but I also know God uses others to reveal truth. We all have blind spots that we need to be given feedback.

Well, sometimes the truth hurts, but if the truth can be conveyed in love, that would be such a gift. I've told parts of this story before, but it shows the importance of truth telling. I was so convinced that I should return back to Japan with my wife and young kids as an English teacher and missionary. I was proceeding with laser focus, and I figured Gayle was wholeheartedly on board.

As I look back, it was one of my friends in my locker room at that time, that spoke to me in a gentle, but firm way and asked me some good, but tough questions. Do you sense that Gayle is on board totally with you? "Nah, not totally, but she'll eventually open her eyes." And, still today, I so remember his hand gestures to me. He said, Earl, it seems like you are holding too tightly this plan, maybe you should instead open your fists up to God with this one. Don't you think God would lead Gayle with you in unity!



Wow, it's as if God slapped my head and got my attention, all because my friend was willing to speak the truth in love to me. Better yet, he was willing to have me reflect upon the way I was making that life changing decision.

We need more truth-telling friends like that. And because of that, look what I get to do today. A wise proverb says this, *"Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time (Proverbs 25:23 NLT).*

That was such a right thing said at the right time. We need more people willing to speak the truth in love.

Q4: How are you in the area of speaking the truth in love?

Another part of our uniform is putting on this value of dealing with our anger.

Paul clearly instructs us how to deal with anger in v. 26 – 27.

"don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil."

In our locker rooms, especially when so much of life is on the line, it's a guarantee, it's inevitable, that when we commit ourselves on the same team, we'll butt heads, we'll rub each other the wrong way at times. And we offend someone on our team. And that can cause anger!

Why you did that or why you neva do that? And anger is a real emotion. Jesus got angry. But he did not sin in his anger. So how do we deal with our anger towards one another. Many of us have been controlled by our anger and we've caused relational carnage. The world's ways is to say, laytas with you! And write someone off in your anger. Or you lash out and give that person a piece of your mind. That's the way of the world.



So Paul gives us this kingdom value, “don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry” The principle is deal with your anger and don’t give the devil the chance to hold you down. Too many allow their anger to fester and because they don’t deal with it, there is a rift on the team and Paul says, gotta learn how to deal with that.

Wisdom would say, cool down first, But then deal with it.

Remember we all can live from the heights of that spiritual place on the mountaintop, allowing us to have a bigger perspective on the situation. Remember, we are carriers of his very presence and therefore we have the power to forgive and let go the anger.

You may say, “Pearl” you don’t know what the person did? So unforgivable! Yeah, but hasn’t Jesus forgiven us of our unforgivable sins? Yeah, and cuz we have experienced that forgiveness, we have the power to extend that to others. Don’t take that offense as Satan’s bait for you to continue in your anger. Release that offense to God. Exchange that anger for the power of forgiveness. And if you need help in this area, join Hope on Th’s at the Hope Center.

Lastly, a big part of how we dress to win in our locker room is in the way we speak with and to one another. Paul says this in v. 29,

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen,” (4:29 NIV)

In NLT it says, Don’t use foul or abusive language. And much what comes out the mouth of in people who don’t have the spirit of God controlling them is foul, pilau as Da Jesus Book tell. Not language that builds up, but tears down!

I used to be the F-er guy, F dis, F dat. You can fill in the blanks.

But when the spirit of God came into my life, something happened in my heart and I quickly stopped using all those expletives. And more than that, I hated how I was in speaking in that way.



So now, I get new F word vocabulary, F . . . riend, F . . . ellowship, F . . . aithful. With the old uniform on, I'd joke with others. We'd cut each other down and laugh at each other's expense. Now I ask God to help me in whatever I say to build others up with words of encouragement, give-courage, fitting uplifting words, words that build others up not tear them down. The world does enough of that! Let's be different as players on Team Jesus!

I know some of you are saying, But Pearl, you don't know the people I'm around. They always talking stink about others, they cut people down, they talk smack, Or they make nice nice on the surface, but they really not sincere, they two-faced. Even more so, that's when you ask God to help rise above the rubble and live from the place where the spirit empowers you to respond in love.

***Q5: How would you describe yourself as dressing to win in your speech?
How are you different today as a Christian in this area?***

Remember we carry the very presence of God. That's the uniform we wear! So, Wea Jesus?, Wear, Jesus! Dressing to WIN.

Speak and listen from the spirit, as we have a new vantage point from above the rubble.

So Team Jesus, remember well that we must win in the locker room in the way we relate to one another. And when we can be ONE in the locker room, you watch, you'll see how we can WIN on the field, and for the world to see, and invite them to belong to Team Jesus as well.

I wanna invite you to come back next week as we'll learn about the type of leadership Jesus looks for on his winning team. You might just be surprised what he says! So Until next week, let's win in our locker rooms.
All for Jesus on three! One – Two – Three, Jesus!