

**Relational Previval**  
**August 13, 2017**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” (Luke 10:25-28 NIV)

What Jesus was saying is this: life is all about relationships. Put simply, the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of right relationships. And so, when we experience previval and get a sample of what the future holds for us in God’s eternal kingdom, it is revealed through right relationships – with God, with others, and with self.

**Digging Deeper**

**We experience previval when we are in a...**

**Right relationship with GOD.**

- Who or what is the love of God to you? Is He the center of your universe or someone you think about once a week, then push to the side as you tend to everything else that is battling for your attention the other 6 days? The greatest commandment we have been given is to love. And we are to love the Lord with everything we’ve got. In order to build that kind of relationship, you must be willing to devote your time and attention to Him every single day. What are some habits you have developed that have helped deepen your relationship with God? What advice would you give to someone who might be struggling with recognizing God’s sovereignty in their lives?

**Right relationship with OTHERS.**

- Love your neighbor as yourself. Ouch. This one might sting a little. What if they’re loud and obnoxious? What if they have a different set of beliefs or preferences? What if they (gasp) root for a different team than we do? Love is a verb and we must make the choice to incorporate it into everything we say and do if we truly desire to live in the land of previval. We need people to “do life” with who understand our quirks, praise our strengths and encourage us (in love) when we falter. We know we have that unconditional love from our heavenly Father. But what about the people he created to dwell alongside us that don’t provide us with that same assurance? What are some things you do to purposefully build strong relationships? Is it something that requires great effort on your part, or does it come naturally? How can faith play a role in allowing yourself to become vulnerable to opening up to others?

### **Right relationship with SELF.**

- It must hurt God's heart to hear how we beat ourselves up over every little thing. After all, He loves us so much that He created us in His image and sent His Son to die for us. Since we were bought at such a high price, surely we owe it to Him to acknowledge the value we possess as His image bearers. Have you ever suffered from low self-esteem? Isaiah 43:4 tells us this about God's love for us, "Others were given in exchange for you. I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you." What are some other Bible verses we can call on to encourage us when negative thoughts begin to occupy our minds?

### **Conclusion**

The relationships we cultivate with God, each other and ourselves help us to achieve what we have been talking about in this sermon series: previval. When we get all of those trains rolling down the right track, we begin to catch a glimpse of what heaven might look like right here on earth. Now that's a preview worth watching! Make an effort to spend quality time with God, with your family and friends, and in self- reflection every day this week. You might discover a lightening of those heavy loads you've been strapping on your back for far too long.