

Theme: We were created for real, physical, face to face relationships, but the iWorld encourages relationships mediated by various forms of technology.

I. Intro – Skype with kids/grandkids; Time with Lew and Deb

- A. This past week two events that illustrate the promise and limits of technology for relationships
- B. As we do most weeks, Skyped with kids/grandkids
- C. We love this - great way to talk with them/see them
- D. But it is not the same as being there!
- E. Saw Lewis and Debbie Powell - first time in years!
- F. Had a great time! - Much better than Facebook!
- G. What about technology and real relationships?

II. The Call To Real Relationships

- A. John is writing letters - and that is good!
 - 1. He is writing - and has more to write!

I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete. 2 John 12

I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. 3 John 13
 - 2. Letters like this comprise most of the NT
 - a. John wrote 3 letters, plus Gospel and Revelation
 - b. Paul's letters are a huge part of NT

- c. Almost everything originally written correspondence
 - d. We should be glad they had technology of writing - and used it!
 - B. But John sees the limits of written communication

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 - 1. John wrote letters - a lot!
 - 2. But he knows some things can't be done by letter
 - 3. Similar theme in other places as well

But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. 1 Thessalonians 2:17
 - C. Real relationships are face to face

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I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name. 3 John 13–14

 - 1. He wants personal, face to face communication
 - 2. Face to face - unmediated, not just visual

- a. Phrase used 16 times in the Bible - always refers to unmediated conversation

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Exodus 33:11

Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, Deuteronomy 34:10

After Amaziah king of Judah consulted his advisers, he sent this challenge to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel: "Come, meet me face to face." 2 Chronicles 25:17

- b. So face to face means unmediated relationships

- 3. We were created for face to face unmediated relationships

- a. Created in image of Trinity, Divine Community - who have unmediated relationships
- b. Adam and Eve had unmediated walk with God in the garden
- c. Since the Fall our walk with God must be mediated - without a Mediator we would be destroyed by the holiness of God
- d. But there is only One Mediator - Jesus - not other humans
- e. But our hope is to one day have an unmediated sight of God once again!
Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 Corinthians 13:12
- f. But since the fall we have desired mediated human relationships as well - we like to hide from one another

- g. But real community that gives joy exists in face to face relationships - not technology mediated ones

I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. **Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.** 2 John 12

III. Relationships In the Cyberspace iWorld

- A. The iWorld is a cyberspace world - technology is central
 - 1. Technology is important in shaping every culture
 - 2. But it is more central in the iWorld than ever before
- B. The technology of the cyberspace iWorld has opened up communication
 - 1. Technology has always allowed us to communicate with those not physically present - letters
 - 2. Today we can communicate by email, text, facebook, tweet, phone, and skype
 - 3. But all of these are not equal - and none are face to face, unmediated
 - a. Video chat is closer to face to face than phone, which is close than email, which is closer than text
 - b. But even video chat is not face to face unmediated
 - 4. These things are all wonderful - if we use them to **supplement** rather than as a primary form of communication
- C. The dangerous allure of cyberspace communication
 - 1. The iWorld offers the appearance of community rather than the real thing.

- a. Toyota commercial of girl thinking her parents have no friends - when she only has facebook friends
I read an article - well I read the majority of an article - online about how older people are becoming more and more antisocial. So I was really aggressive with my parents about joining facebook. My parents are up to 19 friends now (she lips - "so sad"). I have 687 friends. This is living. (Meanwhile, the parents are shown out with real friends, actually enjoying life together.)
- b. Facebook "friends", Twitter followers, are not real friends.

2. The iWorld offers a Gnostic form of community

- a. Body is not important - salvation found in getting out of the body
- b. Strong Gnostic thread in many leading technologists - they want to download themselves into computers - get rid of the 'meat'
- c. But real community is embodied - they are an essential part of real relationship
- d. And real community and communication is embodied - which is technologically mediated communication is misunderstood so often - and more the further it moves from face to face

3. The iWorld promises community without the cost

- a. Real relationship, real community costs - it is not convenient
- b. But mediated communication reduces this cost - especially things like text
- c. Communities are now those who are like me - and if it gets difficult I just leave the "group"
- d. But real life as made by God is not that way - there are costs, and we have to work through them - or miss the sweetest and best

- 4. Technological community is not real community
Technology is seductive when what it offers meets our human vulnerabilities. And as it turns out, we are very vulnerable indeed. We are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other. We'd rather text than talk. - Sherry Turkle, Alone Together

IV. Applying the Word In the iWorld

A. Am I building real relationships?

- 1. We were created for real, face to face relationships
- 2. But sin makes this difficult - and technology offers a substitute
- 3. Am I building face to face, real relationships with others?
 - a. How often do I visit someone else home - or have them in mine?
 - b. How often do I share a meal with others?
 - c. When I am with other physically, am I with them mentally - or checking facebook or texts?
 - d. Are my closest friends geographically close - or located somewhere else?
- 4. This is why we stress small groups, gathering with church

B. The Lord's Supper - Our Communal Meal

- 1. This meal reminds of of all of these things

- a. It is real food - not “virtual food”
- b. It reminds us of our need for a Mediator before God
- c. It reminds us that one day we will see God face to face and eat with Him
- d. It reminds us that we are one Body - the community of Christ

2. Today, we eat our communal meal - together

Real Relationships In A Cyber-World

2 John 12; 3 John 13-14
June 30, 2013
Communion
Psalm 134:3

May the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion. Psalms 134:3

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I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. ¹⁴ I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name. 3 John 1:13–14