

TheFirstRelationship

## **TheFirstRelationship**

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**00:01 Peyton Jones:** This is Peyton Jones with the Church Planner podcast, and you're listening to "Christ is All" with Frank Viola.

[music]

**01:33 Frank Viola:** I need a few minutes to clutter this lecture and with stuff. It reminds me of a story where a Lutheran pastor was in a study and a woman walked into his study and she observed his very messy desk and said, "Pastor, you do know that a cluttered desk means a cluttered mind?" to which he responded, "Then what does an empty desk mean?"

[laughter]

**02:11 FV:** You did get that, right? Good morning.

**02:16 S?:** Good morning.

**02:18 FV:** The older I get, the more I'm keenly aware that everyday we have on this Earth is a gift from God. I've had a close friend recently pass away; she lost a battle with cancer. She was only 55, 56; she just turned 56. And then I hear about Michael Jackson yesterday. "Everyday we live is a gift; life's short." And the older I get, the more I'm keenly aware to that. So I just wanted to say that because it's on my heart. I so appreciate the humour of these brothers. I wasn't sure what to expect. In some countries, I won't mention any names, but to be funny is like ungodly, you know what I mean?

[laughter]

**03:13 FV:** And you make a joke and you've just committed the unpardonable sin in the eyes of some people, but these guys were so funny. I wanna say something Lord. Lord, I'm humbled to be here. Thank you for this opportunity to just share with your people here in Canada and Fellowship with them. And I'm keenly aware that I'm not gifted enough; I'm not wise enough. I don't have the insight to handle this meeting the way that I would like to see it handled, and perhaps the way you would want me to handle it. So I'm asking to give me that which I don't have, and to make up for my lack and that you would reveal yourself and set many of your people free in this room, and those who would hear the message for your glory and honour alone. Amen.

**04:16 FV:** I wanna talk to you this morning about the closest, the dearest, the most central thing to God's heart. It is that which causes him to live, breathe and have His being. It is the most important thing to him; it is his dream beyond redemption and beyond salvation, but deep within the beating heart of God is his eternal purpose. God has many purposes in time, but he only has one eternal purpose that he has had beating in his breast from the very beginning, yeah even before creation. And it is the only reason, the only basis, the only ground upon which any church should exist. If I can put it this way, no church should exist; no church has any right to exist except to fulfill God's eternal purpose, and that's part of the statement that I stand by it. I'm gonna read a set of five passages. If you wanna turn with me, that's fine; if you just wanna listen, I'm gonna go through this very fast because of time, but I do want to show you some texts in the New Testament about what I'm going to say, John, chapter one, verse 18...

**05:56 FV:** Actually we'll go to John 1:1: "In the beginning was the word; the word was with God, and the word was God." He was in the beginning with God, and of course, this is before creation. Then look at verse 18 of John 1: "No one has seen God," meaning the Father, "At any time. The only begotten God or the only begotten son," some translation said, "Who is in the bosom of the Father, is in the bosom of the Father." He has explained him; he has declared him the Father. And then there's John 17, and if I had time, I would read the whole text to you. But look at verses 4 and 5, John 17, and the Lord Jesus says, "I glorify you, Father, on the earth having accomplished the work which you had given me to do. Now, Father, glorify me together with yourself," and here it is, "With the glory which I had with you before the world was. The glory that I had with you, Father, before the world was created." Alright, and now, look at verse 24 of the same passage, John 17, verse 24: "Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which you have given me, for you love me before the foundation of the world." What's that? "You love me before the foundation of the world. You gave me glory before the world."

**07:49 FV:** The world was with God before, in the beginning. And then turn over to John 15:1, "I am the vine; my Father is the vine-dresser; every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away." Look at verse 3: "You're already clean because of the word which I've spoken to you. You abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. Apart from me, you can do nothing." John 6:57: "As the living Father has sent me, I live because of the Father." Note his words: "I live because of the Father. I live because of the Father." Some translations say, "I live by the Father." Both are true. "So he who eats me, he who partakes of me, he who feeds on me, shall live because of me or by me." That's a passage worth highlighting and underlining if you do that in your New Testament.

**09:09 FV:** 2nd Peter 1, verse 4, "For by these, he has granted us his precious and magnificent promises, so by then you may become," notice the words, "Partakers of the divine nature." Partakers of the divine nature. Alright, I'm gonna try to put all that together and there's so many more passages of scripture we can look at that are along the same lines, but I trust these will be sufficient. "Before creation, in the dateless past, in a time before time, God the Father was everything to God the son, and God the Son drew everything from God the Father." I'm gonna repeat that, "Before creation, before time, God the Father was everything to God the Son, and God the Son drew everything from God the Father." This is before matter and anti-matter; this is before God created the physical world and populated it with physical creatures. It's before He created the invisible world and populated it with angels. It's before atoms or angels; it is before anything created. God the Son found God the Father to be His life source; God the Son found God the Father to be his energy; God the Son found God the Father to be his existence; God the Son found God the Father to be his very consciousness.

**10:54 FV:** Without the Father, the Son had no life; without the Father, the Son had no energy; without the Father, the Son had no existence; without the Father, the Son had no consciousness; he drew everything from his Father. To be more specific, before time, God the Father was pouring out his life into his Son, and his Son was living by that life. Before creation, God the Father was loving His Son with a pure passionate, divine, unconditional love, and God the Son was receiving that love and returning it back to His Father. And before creation, God the Father was pouring out His glory and His honour upon the Son, and the Son was returning it back to the Father. God the Son was in

the very bosom, the very center of God the Father, and was drawing everything from his Father and returning it back to his Father.

**11:59 FV:** And not only that, but the Father and the Son were perfectly unified. If the Son saw something, the Father saw it. If the Son thought something, the Father thought it. If the Father perceives something, the Son perceived it; there was a perfect unity. This, what I'm describing to you, was a pure, beautiful, loving mutual relationship between two beings, between God the Father and God the Son.

**12:30 FV:** It is the highest relationship that's ever existed; it is the first relationship that's ever existed. And the ancient Christians called it a "dance." This exchange of life, love and glory was a divine dance that went on in the eternals before time, between the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit was the choreographer of the dance. The Holy Spirit was the life; he was the love; he was the glory that flowed between the Father and the Son, in this beautiful, incredible, magnificent, matchless dance.

**13:18 FV:** A loving relationship; life and glory. I don't know about you, but I'm very impressed with that. That's before God ever did any; before He said, "Let". You understand "let?" "Let there be light"? This was happening. If you read the gospel of John real carefully, Jesus, he speaks and it seeks out, he'll talk about, "Before Abraham was, I am. The glory that the Father had given me, before the world was created." These things seep out.

**13:57 FV:** Now, this relationship between the Father and the Son was so incredible, so beautiful, so amazing, so pure, so holy, that when God created this Earth, He put within it a picture to represent this glorious relationship. It came out of the finger of God Himself. He created something to demonstrate this relationship, and here it is. It is the relationship between a branch and a tree. A branch, draws the whole of its life, all of its energy, all of its existence, all of its reality from the tree. And the branch and the tree are so unified that you cannot pinpoint where the branch begins and ends, and where the tree begins and ends. They are distinct, but not separate; they are one.

**15:04 FV:** So, think of a tree right now in your mind, and look at that as a picture, an image of the highest relationship that's ever existed; the eternal relationship; the first relationship. It is an image, speaking to all of us about this glorious relationship between the Father and the Son through the Spirit. Now, in eternity past, that God had decided that they would take this beautiful relationship between the Father and the Son, this glorious, incredible relationship, this dance that was going on before time, but God had decided in the eternal councils, that they would enlarge their relationship, that they would expand the fellowship, that they would increase the relationship between the Father and the Son, that they would open it up and invite another being into the dance, that there would be another creature that would be the third tier to this relationship between the Father and the Son through the Spirit.

**16:37 FV:** And so, in the councils of God before time, God purposed, God purposed, eternally purposed that He would expand the fellowship between the Father, Son and Spirit to a creature that did not yet exist. That would not mean that this participant would be divine, but it would mean that this creature, this being would participate in divinity, in this incredible relationship. And just as the Son drew everything from the Father, this creature would draw everything from the Son. And just as the Son received its life, its energy, its existence and its consciousness from the Father, this creature would receive its life, its energy, its consciousness from the Son. And just as the Father passionately

loved the Son, and the Son passionately loved the Father, so both the Father and the Son would passionately love this creature. And just as the Father and the Son share glory, the glory would be given to this creature. And so, the dance would get a little bit larger, for there would be a new partner to join it.

**18:15 FV:** Now, what creature would win the honour of participating in this eternal relationship? Let's go down the ladder of creation here and talk about it, because we'll get a better view of what this really means. You see, God is spirit, so this creature had to have a spiritual capacity. It had to have a spirit, because God is spirit. But you see, God the Father and God the Son, although invisible, initiated by God the Father who's the source of all things, wanted to create eyes to behold the beauty and the glory of this relationship that He have with his wonderful son, eyes to see his beauty, his matchless-ness, his radiance. And so he wanted to make this relationship that was going on in the invisible realm; he wanted to make it visible, so it could be seen by others. So this creation had to have a spirit. This creation had to be visible. This creation had to have a consciousness because God the Father and God the Son and the Spirit have a consciousness. And it had to be living, because it would be a living, breathing creature that would manifest the relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit, and participate in it.

**19:57 FV:** So, let's start out with creation. What's the first thing God creates? He creates minerals. All minerals are visible, but they have no spirit, no life, no consciousness. So the minerals did not win the honour of participating in this relationship. Then God creates plant life. Plants have life; they're visible, but they have no consciousness and they don't have a spirit. So plants, we can check them off the list. They are not invited into this glorious relationship. Then he creates animals and fish and birds, and they have life, they're visible, they're conscious, but they have no spirit. What about the angels? Angels are a really good candidate, because they have life, they have consciousness, they're spirit, but they're not visible.

**21:00 FV:** So that leaves human beings. If you're in this room and you're a human being, you are to say, "Praise the Lord," because you have life, you have consciousness, you are visible, and you have the Spirit. So, humanity won the honour; women and men. Wow! To participate in the first relationship, in the highest relationship, in the most glorious relationship that's ever existed; the relationship of the ages, and to make it visible to a creation that God wanted to behold it, all for the glory of His son.

**21:45 FV:** Now we get, at this point, to a really important question. How would God communicate this relationship to human beings? How would he bring humanity into this relationship? And I think... I mean we're all Christians here, right? We all know the answer to that. It's real simple. You have to study your bible every day to get into this relationship; that's how God communicates it. You have to pray at least one hour a day.

[background conversation]

**22:28 FV:** You have to witness to at least one person a day, in order to get in on this relationship. One soul a day, 'cause everybody's goin' to hell if you don't witness to Him, it's your fault. You gotta speak in tongues to get into this relationship. You have to tithe to get into this relationship, and you gotta go to church every Sunday and take notes on the sermon. You can't just watch the worship team play; you have to sing the songs. And you gotta live a good clean life and you can't watch R-rated movies in order to enter into this relationship. Right?

**23:23 FV:** Brothers and sisters, when God the father decided to communicate this relationship to creation, and invited the human species into it, He didn't change it at all. When it moved from the divine realm, the eternal realm to the earthly realm, it was unedited, unaltered, unchanged. The very way that God the Son partook of God the Father participated, drew everything from God the Father. The very way that had happened would be the same exact way that would happen for human beings. It would be unchanged; nothing would be added to it. So I ask again, how did God the Father communicate this relationship? How did God hath bringeth to this earth? How were human beings to enter into it? And the answer is really simple; just look at this man, Jesus of Nazareth.

**24:40 FV:** You see, when Jesus of Nazareth penetrated this planet, He took with him the relationship that He had with His Father before time, and He brought it the earth unchanged, unedited, unaltered. Think about all the things that he did and said, "The Father has sent me and I live by the Father. Without the Father, I can do nothing. Whatever I do, it's not me; it's the Father doing it. The Father loves me and I love the Father. The Father has given me his glory. I live by the Father." Brothers and sisters, when Jesus was a man walking on this earth, He drew everything from His Father just as He did in eternity past. He lived by the life of His Father just as He did as the eternal son of God before creation.

**25:47 FV:** He was loved by the Father and He loved the Father back just as He did with His eternal state. Nothing was changed; the only thing that changed was it was now made visible. It moved from the eternal divine key into the human key, the earthly key, but the song remained the same. And what was the secret? I'm gonna use a word here; He partook of His Father. He partook of his Father, and He made that relationship visible to mortals, to angels, to demons, to fallen humanity, and all of creation. Okay, that's great! Life's wonderful. That's the son of God; that's Jesus. Beautiful. What does that have to do with me? I'm a fallen human being.

**26:57 FV:** How does He communicate it to human beings? Well, go with me to a garden. Let's go back there again. This is not before creation; this is right after creation. It's a certain garden that God created. And He takes this first man Adam by the hand, brings him into the center of the garden. He puts him in front of a tree and He says, "Adam, you are the first creature I have created of a human kind. You have won the honour to participate in this relationship that I have had with my son from the beginning. You will be the the third tier of this divine dance, and you will make it visible on this planet. You will multiply it in the earth, and every creature will see and behold and give glory to Me as a result."

**27:59 FV:** "And so here is what you need to do to be in on this relationship. I am God, you are man; bow down and worship me." Is that what he said? He didn't. No, it's not what he said. He said, "You're human and I am divine. I'm now giving you 613 laws; here's the list of them. You've got to obey every single one of them, and if you don't, you're out of relationship. Obey them all and you'll get in." Is that what he said? No. We know what he said. He said, "I am God and you're just a worm. I am several life forms higher than you. There's angels then there's Me, then there's you."

**29:01 FV:** "So you're gonna serve me. I created you to be my servant, and your wife, when she comes out of you, she will be my maid. Yes, you will serve me all the days of your life. You'll work for me. That's how you'll get into this relationship." Read that there in Genesis chapter one. Anybody? It's not there? It's not in all the Bibles I've read. No, here's what He does: He has him in front of this tree. And I want you to look at this tree; it's pulsating. It's vibrating. Brothers and

sisters, this is no ordinary tree. The relationship between the Father and the Son through the Spirit is contained in this tree. This tree is the storehouse of God's life. The superlative life of the universe; the highest life; the only life; the real life; divine life is pulsating in this tree. The relationship of the ages is inside that tree, and hanging off that tree is a piece of fruit. I can just see it pulsating 'cause it's alive. Maybe it wasn't pulsating. I don't know what it looked like. Give me a little liberty here, folks.

[laughter]

**30:45 FV:** And there's only one word given to him. It's implicit in the whole passage: "Eat, eat, eat, eat from this tree. Partake." Why? "Because my life, my eternal timeless, undying, divine life is in this tree, and if you will take of this fruit, that life will go into you and be part of you, and you will enter into this relationship that I've had with my glorious Son, and you will make it visible in the Earth."

**31:30 FV:** And the fellowship between the Father, Son through the Spirit will be expanded and made see-able, and not just as an individual, but you are to multiply and spread it throughout the Earth, so that all of creation will see and behold this relationship. See and behold the glory of my son; see and behold the incarnation of love and and participate in it. Just eat of the tree; that's it; one simple work. This was profound simplicity, brothers and sisters. The most profound things in life are simple. Not shallow; simple. This is not shallow. This is incredible. Eat, that's it, eat. Eat and rest. And after eating, you will have energy. See? The Son drew his energy from the Father. Out of the eating, you will have energy to work the garden and then rest.

**32:37 FV:** Well, we know the story, don't we? They didn't partake. There's only one negative warning that God gave to His man. He said, "By the way, there's one thing that you can't do, you don't wanna do. I mean you can do it if you want to, but trust me, you don't wanna do this. There's one thing you have to do in all of this and that is watch your diet. There's one tree out here you do not wanna eat from, because if you eat from that, it's all over; closed curtains on the free world. It's over. And we know that Adam and his matchless wife, they ate from the wrong tree and then the garden was closed off; they were banished from the Tree of Life. And that's why we're in the mess we're in today.

**33:38 FV:** But that's not the end of the story. Brothers and sisters, and this is glorious, in the fullness of time, the Tree of Life appeared again. And he came into this Earth, and he said, "I am the vine tree, and you are the branches. As the Father has sent me, and I will by the Father, so he that eats me, the Tree of Life, the real Tree, I'm back again, will live by me." He that eats and drinks the Son has life; He that will not even drink of the Son will not have life. It's not all about this stuff. It is the same relationship, the same dance that's been going on from before time, offered to you and me again, the same way, "Partake of me." And as Peter says to the Christians in Asia Minor, "We are partakers of the divine nature."

**34:55 FV:** Brother and sisters, you can leave this room with only one thing on your heart and mind, only one task to eat of the real Tree of Life, and not just take a bite, but eat, and eat, and eat. And by the eating, you will grow in His life together, and it is not an individual thing. It was a corporate God who said, "Let us make man in our image and let them bear my image."

**35:33 FV:** What does this have to do with the church right? Everything. It's a group of people who

have been caught in the crossfires of the love that flows between the Father and the Son, and who are partaking of the Tree of Life together and making that relationship visible on this planet, wherever they live.

**36:00 FV:** It's a corporate thing, brothers and sisters. It's a collective thing you partake of him together. We can never echo and manifest and reveal this triune God, this relational God, as an individual. It's a corporate expression, "What is God's eternal purpose?" It's to expand the fellowship of the God.

**36:26 S?:** Amen.

**36:27 FV:** And to make it visible. What is your task as a Christian? What is your privilege? It's to eat from the Tree of Life. What do I do with my brothers and sisters? When we gather together, we do one thing. We eat off Him, we feed on Him, we give Him to one another, and we make Him visible. We learn how to live by His life. Some people want house church, but God wants to move the relationship of the ages. The fellowship of the God head right into the living room where it's been sorely missed. Some people want to end the clergy, hierarchical leadership structure, but God wants every believer to be of conduit of divine life, expressing that life together with one another, to one another and making it visible not only to each other, but to this world.

**37:24 FV:** Some people want relationships, but God wants every relationship to be the outflow of the eternal relationship that flows between the Father and the Son. Brothers and sisters, this is the most liberating, the highest thing I can tell you...

**37:42 S?:** Yeah, Amen.

**37:43 FV:** Is that your God has made it so that you will be unified perfectly with Him.

**37:49 S?:** Amen.

**37:50 FV:** Just as a tree is unified with its branches.

**37:54 FV:** But the relationship that the Son have with the Father would be yours, and you would enter into that divine dance and make it visible. That's what church is; it's nothing less than that.

[applause]

**38:09 FV:** And if you want something that's higher and deeper and richer than that, then I cannot help you.

[laughter]

**38:18 FV:** Somebody was asking yesterday, "What does Frank mean by shallow?" Well, what you heard this morning is not shallow.

**38:27 S?:** Amen.

**38:28 FV:** But it's simple. I wouldn't call it simple church; it doesn't quite say it. So what is our



task? It starts out with hard hunger. Do I want this? Do I want to participate in the first relationship and make it visible? That's the first question. And then there has to be an admission, "Maybe I really don't know how to eat and drink off Jesus Christ. Maybe, I was never taught how to do that." Hold that out as a possibility. Consider that as a possibility. Maybe you've been a Christian for 30 years. I have met Christians, Saturday night preachers, that came to a point where they admitted. I have never heard anybody talk about eating and drinking for us, of partaking of the Tree of Life. I don't know how to do that. Is it Bible study? No, it's not Bible study. There's nothing wrong with Bible study, by the way. I study my Bible. It's something beyond that. It takes a group of people who live fairly close to one another, who have no other pursuit but to know Christ, His Father and His way and to participate in that relationship. This is the simplest thing that I know to tell you and it is what the Bible tells us. The story begins with the Tree of Life in the garden and guess what? You will find that Tree of Life appearing again and again and again all throughout the Old Testament.

**40:06 FV:** You have to look for it to find it, but it's there. Look at the curtains in the temple Solomon built; you'll find the Tree of Life there. And then you'll find that it's spilling out everywhere in Jesus' ministry. The whole Bible is about one thing: How God's life has come to Earth, and it's been given to human beings to live by and to make visible. That's it.

**40:36 FV:** Read the Book of John one time with this eye. Look for the word, "life". Every time you see life, circle it; you'll be astounded. It's all about life, His life, a life of God coming, being part of your very existence and living by that life together. So, what is the eternal purpose of God? It's to increase, expand, extend the relationship. How do I do that? I told you last night there's no way that I can adequately answer that question in a few sessions in one day. But I'll give you a beginning and in the next message, I'm gonna talk about the very thing that many of us tend to go deaf on because partaking of Christ, living by Christ, participating in His fellowship, the fellowship of the ages doesn't work without it. And it'll probably be one of the most important things I say to you. We've just got the 50,000-foot view this morning. We're seeing things from the eternal realm, a part of God, eternal. Well, in the next session, we're gonna get right down in the weeds; we're gonna hit the Earth.

**42:01 FV:** So brothers and sisters, I don't think I can put it any clearer on the table than that. I just hope that you have this in mind, and not all the other things that are being pushed and promoted. It's all about the life of God that had come to Earth, right in the living room to be experienced. Not as a theory of theology, a doctrine, but a living breathing experience and making it visible.

**42:25 PJ:** And I don't know about you but I'm very interested in that. That's my only passion, that's my vision, to bring the first relationship back to the living room where it's been missed for a long time.

[music]

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