

May 5, 2013 - Spiced

We are starting a new series this morning. We finished Ephesians two weeks ago and so we're starting a new series this week that will carry us into the summer over the next several weeks. I hope you look forward to that, as well.

Several weeks ago, we were making supper at home and I was making supper that night and we were making chili. I did all the stuff I was supposed to do, I browned the meat and it was all good then I started adding all the other ingredients that you put into chili. I got it all ready and it was all looking really good and I was all anxious to have this chili. I went to get the last thing to put in which was the chili powder and I opened the cabinet and I looked and I looked and I looked and I couldn't find any chili powder. So I did what most husbands would do, I called my wife and said "I can't find the chili powder" because, if you're like me, guys, you look at the thing and you look at it and you can't find it and then you ask your wife and she goes "Oh! It's right there." And I thought that's what would happen and from the other room I heard this "Oh!!! We used it all up the last time we had chili and I meant to get some and I didn't." And so, here we had this whole pot of chili that was missing one ingredient, the chili powder. And so we did what we had to do, we ate it without the chili powder. Chili without chili powder is just kind of stew, sort of. It was okay, I mean it wasn't bad, it just wasn't as flavourful, it wasn't as good and it wasn't as tasty as it would have been if we had had that chili powder to put in it.

I remember one of the first dishes I cooked for my wife, actually it was probably the first. It was before we were even married, we were in college and so, for a date what I did, being the suave guy I was, is I talked to some friends of ours who lived off campus and I asked if we could use their basement suite apartment and I went over and cooked a meal for her and invited her over and she ate the meal. And the meal we had was stroganoff and so I had to call my mom and say "How do I make this?" and she sent me the recipe. So not knowing what I was doing, I meticulously followed the recipes step by step, very accurately and precise. Now, over the years we've made that dish many, many times and we've got to the point where we can pretty much make it from memory and so that's usually what we do. We hardly ever pull out the recipe to see how to make the stuff. The problem is, when you start to do that, every now and then when you make it from memory, and we both do this, so we're sitting there and we're eating this and we're going....something's just not, it's not bad, but there's something missing. Then we start going through the list. Did you put in the paprika? Yeah! I put in the paprika. Did you put in the garlic salt? "Yeah". And we go through the list till we remember which one of the ingredients we put in. That's the way the ingredients work right? When you put all the ingredients in and you get all the right ingredients in and all the right proportions then things taste great and they taste wonderful, but when you happen to forget one or two of the ingredients or you don't put in the right amounts, it's not that it's inedible, it's not that it's bad, it's not that you can't have it, it's just not right, it's not quite as good as it would be otherwise.

Well, you've heard the expression that "it takes a village to raise a child", I want to suggest to

you that it takes a village to raise a person, not just a child, a person. It takes a village to live a life. In the movie Ocean's Eleven, at the beginning of the movie these two guys Danny and Rusty are talking and Danny lays out his plan of how they are going to rob three Los Vegas casinos all at the same time. As he's laying out this plan here is the conversation that they have. See if you can follow what they are saying here. Rusty says "You'd need at least a dozen guys doing a combination of cons." Danny says "Like what do you think?" Rusty "Off the top of my head I'd say you're looking at a Boski, a Jim Brown, a Miss Daisy, two Jethros, a Leon Spinks, not to mention the biggest Ella Fitzgerald, ever. Now, that whole conversation leads them to this crew of eleven guys. I've tried as hard as I can to try to match up those names to the guys they end up with in their group and I have no clue. I have no clue as to what most of those terms mean. But what they had figured out is that if we're going to pull this thing off, it's going to take more than just Danny and Rusty. It's going to take more than the two of us. We're going to need this group of people for us to pull the whole thing off because we each have different skills and different talents and different abilities that we bring to the table. You see this in movies all the time it's kind of a common thing to do in movies. You remember the Lord of the Rings movie and they made this great fellowship of the ring and this group of people were going to accomplish the big task of the movie. So in this case you ended up with four Hobbits which were those little guys, two men, a dwarf, an elf and a wizard. Each one of those people had their very important and very specific role to play throughout the rest of the movie. Not one of those people could have accomplished it on their own. Not one of them you could send out and say "Here we want you to accomplish this quest on your own" and if you sent any one of them out by themselves, they would have surely failed.

Now, that's kind of how life goes. We all need our 'Fellowship of the Ring. We all need our 'Ocean's Eleven' surrounded around us. We all need a certain individuals in our lives to play specific roles and to fill the gaps that we have. The guy named Robert Fulghum wrote the book "All I really Needed to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten". Here's one of his kindergarten rules that he laid out for us. He said: "When you go out into the world, watch out, hold hands, and stick together." That's kind of a good rule for life, isn't it? When we go out into the world, we've got to watch out; and we need to hold hands with some other people; and we need to stick together, because we can't make it through this world on our own and maybe you could survive without this group of people around you. Maybe if you were missing a few of them, if you were missing all of these people around you, I'm not sure how well you would make it through. However, really what we're saying is, that if you're interested in doing more than just surviving. If your desire is for a life that is more brilliant than bland; that is more habanero than ho hum, that is more delicious than dull, then it's time for us to spice things up a little.

The Bible is full of examples of people who play these kind of critical roles in the lives of others and they often tend to be a secondary character in the story. They often tend to be these people who kind of stand out of the lime light a little bit but not necessarily the stars of the story as we read. Without these different people we read in these stories, the story

clearly, would not have turned out the same. And so for the next several weeks as we look into this new series, we're going to look at about ten of these 'essential life spices' as we will them. These ten essential relationships that you need to have in your life. As we do so, I want to encourage you every week, as we go through a different spice, I want you to ask yourself these two questions:

1. Do I need someone to be that in my life?
2. Does someone else need me to be that in their life?

All right. So that's where we're headed.

Every week, I don't know if you realize this, but every week this is kind of what my sermon notes start looking like when I print them off, usually on Saturday night sometime. They're very nice and neat and colourful and pretty and that's usually what I have up here; except, what's interesting is that, no matter how much I review these things before I print them off, after I print them, they inevitably turn out looking something more like this. I don't know if you can see this page from where you're sitting, but it's got scribbled stuff out and it's got stuff added in and it's got stuff corrected and it's got marks all over the page. That's usually how my notes end up looking by the time I stand up here on Sunday morning because no matter how many times I review them and look over them, I always find a few typos; I always find a few mistakes; I always come up with some new idea that I think would be great to add in; or I read through something again and think "Yeah, I'm going to cut that part out" or, I just find a better way of saying something than what I had written down originally. So my notes always end up scribbled out and scratched out and a little bit messed up. I'm an aspiring writer...and so I like to do lots of fictional writing at home and I meant to bring a manuscript for you this morning. It's probably about this thick (2") and it's one of my most recent endeavours. I have been through that thing and rewritten it and reworked it, dozens of times. Literally dozens and dozens of times and I finally thought "Okay, this is a good first draft for me" and so I printed it off, probably half the book that I had finished writing. So I printed it off and I gave it to my wife and said "Why don't you read a little bit of this and see what you think. Go ahead, and if you find typos or whatever, go ahead and mark it." I wanted to bring it to you so I could open it up and show you the first page. It's COVERED with marks and circles and lines and notations. No matter how many times I had been through that thing, as soon as I passed it to her, she looked at it and she saw a bunch of stuff that I obviously had missed when I was writing it. You know even the best of writers need Editors to look at their work. There's a man named Henry James and some have called him one of the greatest writers of our time. I don't know if that's true. He wrote in the early 20th Century. He's a famous writer and people hold him up to some kind of level anyways. What I wanted you to read this morning, and I have it on the screen so you know that I'm not mis-speaking it, but here is something he actually wrote and published without having an Editor look at it first. If you can decipher this, please let me know. Here's what he wrote:

“Mrs. Warrington not only owes to her cultivated art of putting it’s the distinction enjoyed when some ideal of expression has the whole of the case. The case once made, it’s concern in charge but my further act for us, were we to follow up her exhibition as lighting, not a little fact, not belittle that question of tone. The author’s own intrinsic as to which we have just seen Mr. Conrad’s link production rather tend to darken counsel.”

Anyone follow that whatsoever? No! further proving the point that even good writers sometimes need an Editor to kind of sit down and look at what they’ve written and maybe make a few tweeks and maybe make a few suggestions and revisions. We all need a little editing from time-to-time and sometimes, we need a lot of editing, don’t we? The Editor’s job is essentially to help us see the things we overlook when we read our own work. I think that holds true in life as much as it does in literature.

How many of you remember the story of the Emperor’s new clothes? Children’s story. Story of an Emperor who liked to have all these fine and fancy clothes so he hired these two guys to make him a new suit. They were kind of swindlers and so, what they did is they told him “Well, we’ll make you this suit and it will be of this special material that’s invisible to anyone who is not worthy of their station.” And so they put him off and put him off and finally they came and then they pretended to dress him in this invisible suit. There he was wearing this suit that was invisible, he thought, but was really nothing at all. No one dared comment about it because if you commented about it, that meant that you weren’t worthy of your station so no one wanted to speak up. So he walked around and walked around and one day he was in a parade and a little kid saw them walking by and he shouted out “The Emperor has no clothes!” Everyone, including the Emperor, kind of went along and pretended that they didn’t hear the kid because no one wanted to admit that they couldn’t see the invisible clothes. Well, the Emperor needed an Editor. He needed an Editor to say “Hey buddy! Your new suit is your ‘birthday suit’ and it don’t look good. You need to change.” The Emperor needed an Editor. An Editor is someone who tells you “You’ve got a little something in your teeth there.” An Editor is someone who tells you “Hey! You’ve got a little bit of dandruff on your shoulder, just brush that off. That’s what an Editor does for you.

I don’t know how many of you watch American Idol. I don’t watch it very much, any more but when I did watch it, my favourite part of watching American Idol was the one episode Eat they put on that showed all of the horrible auditions that came in, right? The whole hour would be just all of these people who would come in and audition and they couldn’t sing. They were horrible. They were terrible. So you’d have this whole hour of these guys just being silly up there singing and those people needed an Editor in their life. They needed someone to sit down with them and say “Hey, I love you and I believe in you and I want you to succeed but don’t go to this audition because it’s going to be on T.V. and this is just not really your strong suit. You need to do some more practicing before you go to do that. An Editor it someone who asks you those questions about yourself that you don’t want to answer because you know when you answer, you know what their follow-up question is going to be. Have you ever been asked one of those questions? I have a friend who does this to me all

the time. We'll be talking about something and his favourite question is "How's that working for you?" I don't want to answer that question because I know when I answer that question and say "It's working miserably for me", he's going to say "Well maybe you should try doing something else." That's what an Editor does. He asks you those questions that you don't want to answer because in answering, you know what's going to come after. That's why world famous athletes have coaches and trainers who help them perfect their craft. The coaches and trainer can't do half the stuff the athletes do. Some of them probably never could have done half the stuff the athlete's do but the one thing the coach and the trainer can do is, they can help the athlete's see what they are blind to themselves, and then help them work on that and improve on that. Even the best of us need an Editor in our lives sometimes because an Editor shows us what we can't see on our own.

Even the great King David, known as a man after God's own heart' needed an Editor and his Editor's name was Nathan. Now, what you need to know about Nathan and David is, long before the story we read about just a few minutes ago, Nathan had provided David with expert council on a vast range of issues. He talked to him about architecture; he talked to him about music; he talked to him about royal succession and all of those things. So Nathan had already given David lots of good advice on a variety of subjects. Nathan had become a trusted advisor to David already before our story even begins. That's so important because, the editing process, if you've ever been edited, you know the editing process can be painful. The editing process can leave you feeling rather vulnerable and when you feel vulnerable, it makes you feel a little defensive and when you feel defensive, you tend to want to lash out. And so, your editor should be someone who has become a trusted advisor or a trusted friend to you.

Leonard Sweet describes it this way, he says:

"Nathan's care as much as you do about finding the right word or putting the right foot in the right place. A Nathan is welcome because this is not an editorial critic with icicles in his or her heart, this is a person who believes in you and wants the best for you, even when he or she shows up at the door with a sword.

So, to put our story in context, we have to first do a really quick review of the story of David and Bathsheba. Some of you probably know that story, others may not, so here it is in a nutshell. David and Bathsheba...she was married and he was the king. They spent the night together and she became pregnant. David tried to cover it up by bringing her husband home from the battlefield for a night but he refused to stay with his wife and so that cover-up failed and so David sent him back out to the front of the battle and told his senior general to make sure that Uriah died in that battle. He figured that would be the way to cover the whole thing up. So that's kind of the background story of what we are talking about. I think for a moment, David felt like he was in the clear, he thought "Uriah is gone out of the picture. Nobody knows what happened, everything will be okay." But then, Nathan showed up at his door. Nathan tells David the story that Roy read for us earlier out of 2Samuel 12. At the

end of the story David is furious at what happened in the story. In the story, he can clearly see what wrong had been done...and then...Nathan edit's the story and says: "You are the man. This is what the Lord God of Israel says: 'I anointed you King over Israel and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah and if all of this had been too little I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the Word of the Lord by doing what is evil in His eyes. You struck down the Hittite Uriah with a sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.'" And suddenly, David sees what he had been blind to for so long.

How often does that happen? How often can we see so clearly the problem in somebody else's life, in somebody else's story, but we're completely blind to the problem in our own story. Sometimes it's the exact same problem and we can see it so clearly when it's someone else but in our own life, we just fail to see it. Jesus describes it this way. He says in Matt.7:3-5:

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother "Let me take the speck out of your eye" when all the time there's a plank in your own eye. You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

You know as I think of the story of David and Bathsheba, I think that there were almost certainly others who knew what had gone on. There would at least would have had to have been others around the palace who had suspected. But no one had the guts to come and tell David that what he was doing was wrong. And no one had the credibility to confront the King. David probably wouldn't have listened to anyone had they come and told him and confronted him about what was going on but he did listen to Nathan. Paul describes this process like this in Ephesians 4:15, he says:

"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is Christ."

And that's what an editor does. An Editor speaks the truth and he does it in love. He doesn't just do it OUT of love, he doesn't just do it motivated by love, but he speaks it in love. He communicates the message with love. I have seen, too many times, where people have confronted others and they are doing it out of love, they're doing it motivated by love but the way that they confront the person, the way that they communicate with the person, the way they talk to the person, is not a loving way. Paul says: "We speak to one another in love. We do it in a loving way."

There's a man named Joe Myers and he illustrates the work of a Life Editor this way as he tells the story about his wife Sarah. He says: "One day he handed his wife a paper that he

had written, an essay, and one day she handed it back to him and all he could see on the paper was red.” He said “The whole page was dripping with blood when he got it back and as he tried, he searched through the whole thing to try and find one page without any red markings on it, his wife said “Joe, this is fantastic! This is one of the best things I have ever read. This is going to change people’s lives.” Joe said “No. Your kidding. You hate it.” “No, I love it.” “But look at all the red you scribbled on my page. You hate it!” “Joe, I love it. I just wanted you to get your ideas out as powerfully as you can. Every time you see red on the page, you should hear me saying to you “Joe, I love this. I love you and I want the whole world to read this book.” That’s what an Editor does for us in our lives.

Through Nathan’s example, God reminds us that we all need an editor in our lives. You need someone in your life who can do this. I need someone in my life who can do this. As I reflect back over my own life I can see many times where I look back and I see a situation and I say “Praise God that there was someone there to step in and talk to me and encourage me in the right way or discourage me from the wrong way. Praise God that there was someone there in that situation when I was blind as to what was going on in my life. I also see times as I look back and replay the tapes in my mind where I say “Oh God! I wish someone had stepped in and helped me see the road that I was on.” In some of those times, I think there were people who tried and I just didn’t listen to them. In some of those times, I think I just failed to cultivate those relationships in my life so when I got to that point, there was no one in my life who was in a position to do the job.

Now, I really hope you can’t relate to any of that. I’m afraid most of us can relate, probably relate more personally and more often than we wish was the case. You see, if you do not have Nathan in your life you need to find one. You need to get one and you need to get one before you need one.

Last week I was in L.A. and I rented a car and I got to drive on the 405 which at one point I counted 7 lanes across and 65 miles per hour. When I first arrived it was night time, so it was dark and I went about three blocks before I realized my lights weren’t on. It’s crazy out there. It’s like Mario cart out on the freeway. I’m serious. People swerving all over the place and stopping and all sorts of things. So when I rented this car they asked “Would you like to get insurance?” Now, it would have been wonderful. What I wanted to say is “No thank you. I don’t need insurance, I don’t want to pay the extra for that” and just drive the week and if by chance something happened during the week, if I had a fender/bender with someone, I would just say “Please wait a minute” call up the rental car company and say “hey, I would like that insurance now” and then go on my way. But it doesn’t work that way, does it? No. And the same way with an Editor in your life, a Nathan in your life. By the time you know you need one, it’s too late to find one. You need to be building that relationship and cultivating that relationship in your life now.

Here’s the other important thing to remember. You won’t know when you need a Nathan. That’s the whole point. If you did know, you wouldn’t need one. Because the job of a

Nathan is to be the guy or the girl who is there to help you to see what you don't see on your own. If you don't see it, you're not going to see the need. And so, you need to find a Nathan now, before you feel like you need it. Find someone who can be your Nathan. Start building your relationship with them. Start building your relationship so they can know you well enough to see past your facades when you say "Yeah, I'm doing fine" when you say "No, nothing's wrong"; "Yeah, things are going good." You need someone who knows you well enough to say "No really. What's happening?" And you need someone that you know well enough that when they come to you and say "You know what? I think you're missing something here." That you will allow them to speak into your life with their message.

Now, as I was working on this, this week, every day after a long day of surfing??(LOL) I would come back to my hotel...Oh good! You are with me. Every day, after a long and wonderful day of lectures and workshops, I would come back to my room and I would look through my notes and be working on them and through this whole thing I thought "I like the message here. I like what it's saying...but...what I would really like, is to try and put some more God into this message somewhere. I thought about that for awhile and finally, on Thursday night, it hit me that there is God all over this message because there is God is the one who put Nathan's story into the Bible and He included it, I believe, at least in part, so that we could understand, that we need someone like that in our life. He included it so that we could see that if even the great King David, a man after God's own heart, if he needed an Editor, then probably so do I.. You know that whole story could have been written without Nathan in it. We could have been reading the story about David and Bathsheba and then the text could have gone on and it could have said something like "and just before the baby was about to be born, David came to his senses and repented to God for all the evil he had done and he asked God for forgiveness and so on and so on..." It could have been written that way but it's not because we needed to hear the story of Nathan. We needed to know that God wants to put someone like Nathan in our life. Because you, are how God edits my life. Now probably not all of you and probably not all of the time. Remember not just anyone could have edited David, but Nathan could, because of the relationship they had already built. But remember, that God wants to edit us and if He doesn't come down and speak to you directly, then He's going to speak to you through someone else, and so you need a Nathan, in your life.

If you happen to be one of the one's who is editing someone else, what you need to remember is that, you're not editing them, God is trying to edit them through you. And remember that God is the One doing the editing. Even Nathan got this wrong sometimes. In 2Samuel, Chapter 7, David comes to him and says: "Nathan, I want to build this great temple. It's not right, I'm living in this beautiful palace and the Arc of God is sitting down there in a tent. That's not right! I want to build a temple for God." And Nathan says "Go ahead. Whatever you put your hand to, God will bless it." And then Nathan goes home and God comes to Nathan and says 'You gave him the wrong answer, Nathan.'" And God goes into this long speech about why that was the wrong answer. And so the next day Nathan goes back to David and says "You know that stuff I told you about go ahead, whatever you do,

God will be behind you? I was wrong there, so here's what God really wants you to do." So if you happen to be editing the life of someone around you, remember that God is the one editing, through you and that means we have to do our editing in love and in humility.

One of the sessions I was in at Pepperdine was by Randy Harris. He was talking about knowing God through experience. He told, he lamented really, that in his freshmen Bible class he hears some of his 19 year old students talking to each other. They will come to each other and say "God has told me that he really wants you to do this." Or "God has laid it on my heart that you should do this" or "I really believe that God wants you to do that.." And he says "I wonder how many hundreds of hours they spent in prayer and contemplation, coming up to that opinion about what God wants." He says "Before you step out and tell someone what you think God's agenda is, you had better make sure that you have spent a lot of time letting God speak to you about what He wants." That's what we have to do as Editors as well. You see, we all have our blind spots. David had his blind spot and his blind spot almost, completely derailed his life. Imagine for a moment how the story of David might have been different. How it might have played out if it weren't for Nathan. If Nathan hadn't come and told him that story. If Nathan wouldn't have confronted him and said "David, you're the guy!" Imagine how the story would have played out differently. Would David have eventually repented? Would the loss of their child have turned David back to God or would it have turned him further away from God? Would Bathsheba have been sent away in shame and bitterness? Would the secret have eventually gotten out and destroyed the King? Would his legacy be forever tainted? Would his house have fallen and his throne been lost? Would the Nation have crumbled? What would have happened if Nathan hadn't been there to speak into David's life? But instead, because Nathan was there, the "man after God's own heart" once again had his heart seeking after God. David's house endured. Later a child of David and Bathsheba, named Solomon, would become King and he would rule over the Nation and he would build the temple that David had once dreamt of. Solomon is part of the lineage of Jesus coming to earth. What is interesting enough is that, the third son of David and Bathsheba, guess what his name is? Nathan. Because David realized, if this guy hadn't been in my life at that moment, if he hadn't been there to show me what I couldn't see on my own, my whole life would be in a total different place than it is now. Thank God for Nathan.

If that's what Nathan could do for David, then imagine the difference the words of an Editor might make in your life.

God's blessing be on you this week as you strive to follow Him and serve Him and be an example to others around you.