**Morning sermon series: Heaven Meets Earth**

 **"Loyal Love" (**Matthew 9v1-17)

*How close a relationship do we believe God wants to have with us? Can it really be like that with God?*

**1) Confident because Completely Forgiven** (v1-8)

Jesus has the full, divine authority needed to restore a human being's relationship with God (v4-7). He has done everything needed to remove all of our sin. We are not only forgiven, but cherished. That gives hope and confidence in his presence (v2).

**2) Called into Covenant Relationship** (v9-13)

Jesus is pleased to draw near to us as works-in-progress (v10). In compassionate love, he heals and restores us (v12). The Pharisees were, tragically, missing the whole point. God desires and delights in loyal, loving, faithful relationship with us (v13). It's two-way!

*Are we, at Abbey, an accessible 'hospital', or place of healing, for hearts and souls?*

**3) Rejoicing with the King** (v14-17)

The Pharisees had sucked the life out of true faith in the God who is Love. *What do non-Christians see when they look at our joy and praise?*

To know Jesus is to be brought into the joy of God's own life. It's being invited in, as a sinner, as a work-in-progress, to share and eat with him now—to feast and rejoice with him in the Kingdom of Heaven (8v11).

To know Christ as Bridegroom, to experience his loyal and passionate love and to love him in return, is both radically different and incompatible with the old way of the Pharisees (v16&17). We need church life (our evangelism, growth, prayer, sung worship, meetings, etc.) to sit within and be fed by the astonishingly beautiful vessel of this new covenant relationship. Only then will the first truly reflect the second.

**Heaven meets Earth, as we rejoice and feast with Christ the King**!

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