

Speaking One Another's Love Language

Introduction:

Over the past few weeks we have looked at 1 John and the messages John brought to the church of his day. John spoke to the themes of life, light and love with the purpose of instructing believers in the ways of God. He was confronting several heresies of his day, Gnosticism (a teaching that promoted salvation by learning obscure spiritual truths in order to free humanity from the evil and material world) and Docetism (an early heresy that claimed that Jesus Christ was not a real person). One of the main messages of First John is simply this; God is love and we are to be like God and love one another. This morning we will look at learning to love one another and letting them know it...

Love must be defined:

The Apostle John goes out of his way to describe the love of God for us. He tells us **“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10)**. For the most part we know instinctively what real love is and isn't. When we experience true selfless love our hearts are thoroughly satisfied. However, on the other hand when love is cheap it is easy to recognize.

- A girl gave a photo to a boy she was dating with this inscription on the back. “Dear Johnny, the last two weeks have been the best of my whole life. I will love you as long as the stars shine and until the oceans run dry. Love Susan.
P.S. If we break up I want this picture back.”

Love is so multifaceted in our culture that we need a solid foundation to define it. Love is more than romance. It is more than a feeling or more than a positive choice. Love is more than mushy gushy or wishy washy friendship. This is such a popular sentiment today. Love we are told is accepting of one and all and never takes a hard stand. But love devoid of truth is not love at all. One of the most unloving things I can do is to allow error to be passed off as truth without lifting a finger to stop it.

That is where the Bible comes into play.

1 Cor 13:4-8a - Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails.

Love must be practical:

In the early 1990's a new moment of kindness was sweeping across North America. For many people random acts of kindness was becoming an exciting way of letting someone know that they were special and that someone really loved them. The movie Pay It Forward is about young Trevor McKinney, troubled by his mother's alcoholism and fears of his abusive but absent father, is caught up by an intriguing assignment from his new social studies teacher, Mr. Simonet. The assignment: think of something to change the world and put it into action. Trevor comes up with the notion of paying a favor not back, but forward--repaying good deeds not with payback, but with new good deeds done to three new people. Trevor's efforts to make good on his idea bring a revolution not only in the lives of himself, his mother and his physically and emotionally scarred teacher, but in those of an ever-widening circle of people completely unknown to him.

Evan Almighty was another classis movie with a similar message; we can change the world with one act of random kindness at a time – A.R.K. In order for love to become real it must be accompanied by an act of selfless kindness. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...”

(Videos)

Love must be understood:

Love is so much more than saying “I love you”, it must grow to be something special for those who receive it. Love must be understood by the recipient in order to be true love. I remember when I was in the Philippines in 1984 with YWAM sharing the Gospel of Jesus through art, drama and music. It was a great cross-cultural experience. However, at some point of sharing the Gospel I needed a translator to communicate this message of hope and peace... Language was a barrier that needed to be overcome. The message of love needs to be comprehended to have its full effect.

In order to understand love we must be speaking the language of the love to one another. This is easier said than done. As people we are all so varied in personality, likes and dislikes and our up-bringing at home. So we must take some time to help define the languages of love that we use to inter-relate with each other. The Holy Spirit becomes the translator as related to the love of God.

Love must be experienced:

Gary Chapman, author of The Love Languages of God, describes our deep longing to be loved. Whether male or female, there is a spiritual and emotional need to be loved. When love is clearly defined by our God and practically given away we begin to understand and experience love first hand.

Gary Chapman describes five different love languages in human relationships which are a reflection of God's love for us. Discovering these languages of love and learning to speak them with one another allows love to be fully and deeply experienced.

1. Words of Affirmation...

The Scriptures speak words of affirmation over and over to God's people. Using words to affirm another person is a great way of expressing love. Even the Son of God was spoken to this way. Our words have the power of life and death. Affirmation supports another person by speaking positive truth which in turn edifies the person.

- You look nice... You did a great job... I really appreciate that... Thank you for...

2. Quality Time...

There is nothing more satisfying than having the undivided attention of a person. We must understand that God – the Creator of the Universe – is waiting and desiring to spend quality time with you with no distractions. When we spend quality time with someone we love them by valuing them and them alone.

- A quiet walk along the river, just the two of us... An engaging conversation with eye contact... Sitting on the couch with your child...

3. Gifts...

In any culture the giving of gifts is a great way to say "I love you." A gift opens the door to our hearts and invites others in. For some this is their primary love language. No matter the age or gender we all appreciate a good gift which makes us feel loved and appreciated. It is not necessarily the expense of the gift that counts. It is the thoughtfulness and sincerity in which the gift is given.

- A diamond ring... A teddy bear... A bouquet of flowers...

4. Acts of Service...

When we do something for another person which we know they would like this becomes an act of serving releasing God's love. For many of us, love is given and received through acts of service. Love is best expressed for these people when we help them. "Actions speak louder than words" is true for people whose love language is serving.

- Doing dishes... Driving the kids to soccer... Changing the oil on the car...

5. Physical Touch...

The importance of touch has been documented in studies at orphanages. Healthy and appropriate touching is essential for the well being of children and adults alike. A hug or a kiss or a friendly slap on the back can all be expressions of love towards another. The Apostle John himself lay on Jesus' chest enjoying the physical closeness.

In conclusion:

We all have the need to be loved and appreciated by one another. Love is more than a definition or theology; it must be practical and understood. Once this takes place then love can be truly experienced. The questions we must ask ourselves this morning is simply:

- Do I love Biblically?
- Do I express love practically?
- Do I understand the languages of love?
- Do I allow myself to experience love?