

Nitty Gritty Love: “As I Have Loved You”

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Texts: 1 John 2:3-8; 3:11-18

The quality of our fellowship is determined by what our love will lead us to do for one another.

“God intends for the way we interact with one another as believers to help redefine love and beauty for fallen humanity. The basis of our interaction with one another is love.”

(The following message is based on John 13:31-35 and is adapted from Jonathan Leeman’s The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love. Preached Sunday Morning, February 7 by Pastor Paul Edwards at Calvary Baptist Church of Waterford, Michigan.)

“People today are generally more reluctant to enter into binding commitments and associations that will limit the options available to them in the future.” (Ibid)

The quality of love and the duration of a relationship are in direct proportion to the depth of the commitment by both people to making the relationship successful. Commit yourself wholeheartedly and unconditionally to the most important people in your life. — Brian Tracy

Takeaways from these quotes:

- Fallen Humanity needs to see love examples in order to understand divine love
- Yet churches are infected with the culture of “keeping my options open”
- Relationally you get out of church what you put into church

Read the texts.

The Message

- Life 1:1, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”
- Light 1:5, “This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.”
- Love 2:5, “But if anyone obeys His word, love for God is truly made complete in them.”

= KNOW, 2:3, “We know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commands.”

=the message of life, light, and love requires tenacious devotion to be understood by a Fallen World.

The Response

- Obey, 2:5 “But if anyone obeys His word, love for God is truly made complete in them.”
- Live 2:6, “Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.”
- Walk, 1:6-7, “If we claim to have fellowship with Him, and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But, if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.”

= OBEDIENCE, Matt.28:20, “...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

The Application Questions

- What do you do with your material possessions when you see your brother or sister in need? 3:17
- How are you laying down your life for your brother or sister? 3:16
- Does your love for your brothers and sisters go beyond the brief encounters you have on Sundays to a deeper love of action and truth? 3:18

The Gold Standard: “As I have loved you.”

- This is a new command, 2:8, “Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.” What is new about the new command?
- Jesus’ example:
 - John 13:34, “A new command I give you: Love one another. **As I have loved you**, so you must love one another.”
 - John 15:12-13, “My command is this: Love each other **as I have loved you**. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”
 - Eph.5:25, “Husbands love your wives, **just as Christ loved** the church and gave Himself up for her.”

I am only a messenger. I relay what God has given me to you. My job is to make sure that we know God and His word. It is my job to encourage you and teach you to be obedient to the Lord is all your life. The quality of our church which will be tested one day finds no higher calling than to love one another AS JESUS LOVES US. That is a tall order. That is a new command. That is what we must obey if we want to know God. This is essential to the fulfilling of the message we have received, a message of life, light, and love. Our love for one another cannot be theoretical or superficial. We cannot get away with just saying we love each other. It must be demonstrated. It must be tangible. It comes with a price. Recently I told two of my grandchildren to ask the question: What can I do to help? May this be our question too!

The Experiment

The One Another Commands (Handout)

- These commands must be made practical to work. So I want to ask you to do two things. These two things should be done with your brothers and sisters at Central in mind. For now-not your family, friends, or co-workers. Just your fellow Central members.
 - First, I want you to take this One Another list and beside each one of these commands (which must be obeyed as John said, 2:5 “But if anyone obeys His word, love for God is truly made complete in them.”) write out at least one way you can practically fulfill this command, and then do it.
 - Second, I am sending around a basket with some practical ways to fulfill some of these One Another commands. I would like you to draw out just one, and then during the next couple of weeks put it into practice.
- The purpose of this experiment is to see if we can increase the quality of our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.