

Active and Growing...Love!

John 15:9-17

February 24, 2019

Happy 10 days after Valentine's Day...the day of love!

It has been 10 days since the day of "love"...Valentine's Day.

The cards have been filed or trashed by now, except maybe the handwritten note of thanks and drawings of your grandchildren.

The candy has been devoured or at least most of it has disappeared...(hold up candy box)

The flowers have wilted or are on their last petal! (show wilted flowers)

The helium balloons have deflated!

The nice dinner has been digested with only the memories and the credit card bill still around.

The over-stuffed animal just sits there with the awe factor fading away...(show big stuffed red Valentine's bear animal) In fact, this big guy arrived on the food truck unwanted...because of a tear in his right leg.

If you did receive some jewelry, it will last a little longer...but it too will soon tarnish and lose it's sparkling affect.

Happy 10 days after Valentine's Day...the day of Love!

Being loved is the most powerful motivation in the world.

Our *ability* to love is often shaped by our *experience* of love.

We usually love others as we have been loved.

There is the challenge for us today!

Love is to be the most powerful motivation in our lives...even above the money!

Our experience of love is to be what shapes our heart of love.

We are to go and love others the way we have been loved.

I realize that some of us may have been jilted in our lives by someone we thought loved us. We have not had the best track record of love and so our hearts have experienced some hurt and damage. And so it becomes difficult for us to love others because of the way we have "been loved."

No matter what your love story may look like or sound like, we all have a love story we are to connect with and then live out.

I want to share a love letter from someone who understood what love is all about. It's a "Dear John" letter from the disciple John.

"My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love---so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about---not that we once upon a time loved God, but that He loves us..." (I John 4:7-10a)

Two questions from the letter: Who loves ya? God! Who are you to love? God and others! Here is the challenge of each of our love stories.

Pretty much everyone believes that love is important. However, many think of love as a feeling. In reality, we discover that love is an *action*. Love is a *choice* we make each and every day. *God is the source* of our love. He is our example of what love is all about and how it is to be about in our daily lives. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to love. God's love always gives us a choice and an action in who and what we experience in life each new day.

John, the disciple of Jesus, the one who experienced live and in person God's love through Jesus, wrote in his letter of love, "**God is love.**" Pretty straight up and easy to understand. But yet, our culture switches it around and says, "Love is God." Our world with its shallow and self-seeking view of love has turned these words around. This view of love contaminates the true love that is to be rooted in our hearts.

Society thinks that love is what makes a person feel good no matter what compromise of morals or actions one takes to get that feeling of love. The perversity of love is not the purity of love that God has in mind. Real love is not a selfish love. Real love is the love God has revealed to us in Jesus.

While working at the NASCAR Foundation tent last weekend we were instructed to check all \$20, \$50 and \$100 dollar bills to make sure they were real and not counterfeit. The way to check them was to mark them with a special marker. If the mark appeared black and didn't disappear then the bill was a fake. If the mark appeared brown and soon faded it was the real deal.

I then had a vendor come to the tent and he shared how he had received some counterfeit bills. I told him about the marker test. He said it wasn't enough. The bills had been bleached to make the marker test make them look like the real deal. The only way to verify the bill's authenticity was to hold it up in the light and check the watermark.

What about the love we have and share? Fake or the real deal? Mark your heart and see if it shows the love? Or have we bleached our lives of love to the point we can still fake it? When our hearts are held up to the light of Jesus what love mark is revealed?

John later wrote that the authentic mark of love in our hearts is the love of Jesus. How is this made real? By showing this love to others. (I John 4:12)

No one today has seen Jesus in the flesh. So how is it that we are to make his love known and real to others? Jesus was the complete expression of God's love in the flesh when he walked this earth. He lived out and taught the love of God. God revealed His love for the world through Jesus. When they experienced Jesus they experienced the love of God.

When we love one another the invisible God reveals himself to others through us. The love of Jesus is revealed through us. We make the invisible visible. We are lifted up in the light of Christ and that love is genuine. People are to see Jesus in us as we live out His love towards them.

While Jesus walked this earth He taught about this love we are to have in our lives.

It was not a love that was to wilt, be devoured and the sparkle fade. It was a love that is to remain in us. We are to be at home in His love for us. His love is the real deal...daily...not just one day a year. He challenges us to love as He loves.

How do we keep this love in us? We remain in his love as we obey his commands.

Jesus summed up his teaching on love with this one thing to remember:

"But remember the root command: Love one another." (John 15:17 Message)

The root command!

Anyone ever had a root canal dental procedure? Yeee haw!!!

About a month ago I experienced a root canal. Two weeks before that I had a tooth that was sensitive to pressure. I went to my dentist to see what was going on. The dental assistant needed to identify which tooth was hurting. She gently tapped the teeth in the area with a metal instrument. When she tapped THE tooth I about jumped out of the chair! Tooth #20!

After a 3D X-ray I was told those two lovely words, "Root canal."
Been there done that a few times.

Some how bacteria penetrated the root and was causing the pressure sensitivity. The dentist told me it could have gotten in there years ago when the cap was put on and just now caused the infection and need for a root canal.

Did you know that there is a 95% success rate in saving the tooth when a root canal is performed? If the infection is ignored then decay takes over and the tooth is beyond repair. I needed to save the tooth since it was an anchor point for a bridge.

I chose a young root canal specialist that my dentist went to school with who was the same age as my daughter. She was taking over her dad's practice. She was easy going and down to earth! I had no issues of pain or agony with all the drilling (make the sound :)) and all the rooting around! She saved my tooth. Hopefully, it will last the rest of my life!

What kind of shape is your root command to love others as God has loved you? Is there some sensitivity? When pressure is applied to this love you are to live out do you nearly jump out of your skin? "You want me to love that kind of person?"

What bacteria of society's idea of love has infected your root source of love?

If you ignore it you will loose the heart to love.

Allow God to come and do the root canal of His love in you! He has a 100% saving rate on those who trust Him and obey His will.

His love, rooted in your heart, will remain, will last forever. Remain in His love that He has so freely given to you in Jesus. That love is the love that we are to share with others. We are all specialists. We are to be ourselves...down to earth and easy going. Show the love by your actions and speak the truth in love. You may be the anchor point for the love of Jesus; to be the bridge to someone's life of Jesus' love!

Be the specialist of God's love that He has created you to be.
Remain in His love. Be rooted in His love!

This kind of love goes against our natural inclinations!
We cannot love like this without the love of Jesus in us.
He will not call us to love like this unless he puts in us His love.
He has!

This love is not to be about us!

We are not to take the credit.

The Apostle Paul warned about this in his "letter of love."

He shared how if we could talk a great talk with such eloquence
but didn't love...we were nothing but a creaky gate.

If we speak God's word with power and can move a mountain
with faith, give to the poor, give our life for someone and do not
have Christ's love we are NOTHING!

There is no such thing as a Super Saint!

There are to be only humble lovers.

What does the love of a humble lover look like?

Here is how the Apostle Paul described it:

The way of love, Christ's love, ***"never gives up...cares more for others than for self...doesn't want what it doesn't have...doesn't strut...doesn't have a swelled head...doesn't force itself on others...isn't always 'me first'...doesn't fly off the handle...doesn't keep score of the sins of others...doesn't revel when others grovel...takes pleasure in the flowering of truth... puts up with anything... trusts God always...always looks for the best...never looks back... keeps going to the end."***

(I Corinthians 13:4-7 Message)

During this message series of "Active and Growing," we have looked at various aspects of the Christian life that we are to keep alive and growing in our daily. Our **basic faith...character... wisdom...discipline...passionate patience...reverent awe... friends**. These are all crucial...but if they are not encompassed with the generous love of Jesus they are nothing!

Are they active and growing in your daily or have you put them with your Valentine Day of love gifts?

The love of Jesus is to be active and growing in our daily lives. Without His love we are fake.

Be generous and genuine in your love for others.

Without His love our lives will wilt, deflate, tarnish and be forgotten.

Hold on to the love of Jesus!
Stay rooted in His love!
His love will last beyond this lifetime...forever.

Be humble and love others as Jesus loves you!

Make Jesus visible to those around you.

Let them see Jesus' love in you! And look for Jesus' love in them!

Stay active and growing in your love!

