

CALVARY MISSIONARY CHURCH, OWEN SOUND 2021 12 05

SERMON: Christmas is a Time for Love

Pastor Don Boyd

Scripture Portion: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-10

WEEK 1 – HOW TO BECOME A PART OF GOD’S FAMILY

WEEK 2 – LEARNING HOW TO CONFESS

WEEK 3 – LEARNING HOW TO FORGIVE

WEEK 4 – LEARNING HOW TO CONFRONT

This week, we are transitioning from Learning to Be a Family to preparing our hearts for the Christmas season. As it happens, the refocus is a perfect blend between the two. We’re moving from WHAT we need to DO, to HOW we can do that.... Love is not just this week’s focus, it gives us the power to obey..

HOW DO WE GET TO A PLACE WHERE WE WILL ACTUALLY FOLLOW-THROUGH WITH THESE PRINCIPLES?

We are not transformed by HEARING the Word but by DOING it! God does not give us His Word so that we can know more data: it is so we can do it and be transformed by the doing of it. (JAMES 1:22- 25)

HOW DO WE BECOME DOERS AND NOT JUST HEARERS?

We move from hearing to doing when we CHOOSE to walk in LOVE. It is a choice we make. I choose to walk in LOVE. DOING God’s word can only be accomplished by the power and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We cannot do it in the power of the flesh or by human determination. When it comes to confession, forgiveness and confrontation, Love is the ultimate motivator.

But not just any love; it takes God’s love. There are 3 different kinds of love in the Greek New Testament: Eros – sexual love and attraction. Phileo – brotherly love – more like kindness and emotional attachment to another person. Agape – which is God’s love. Best defined as “a predetermined decision to do what is best for the other person, regardless of the cost to the person who chooses to love.”

God’s love is produced by the work of Holy Spirit in our lives. Galatians 5:22 lists LOVE as the FIRST of the fruit of the Spirit.

1 John talks a LOT about love. Apparently, God takes LOVE very seriously! Listen to some of what it says...

2: 9,10. “The one who loves his brother abides in the Light....”

2:15b “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

3:11 “For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

3:14 “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren....”

3:16 “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.:

3:17 Love shares with a brother in need.

3:23 "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another..."

4:7,8 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God;"

4:11,12 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

4:16 "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment..."

4:20 "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar..."

LOVE IS PRETTY IMPORTANT, ISN'T IT?

Love confesses; love forgives; love confronts. Without love, we don't confess, we don't forgive; we don't confront.

Let's listen to the ideas in 1 Corinthians 13 as LOVE directly relates to confession, forgiveness, and confrontation:

RE CONFESSION:

13:5 "Love... does not act unbecomingly..." Love does not behave in a way that is not suitable for a believer. Refusing to confess is unbecoming.

RE FORGIVENESS

13:4. "Love is patient; love is kind." - makes it easier to forgive.

13:5b. "It does not seek its own. Is not (easily) provoked." Doesn't just think about itself but is concerned for

others. Isn't touchy, but overlooks the little wrongs.

13:5c "It does not take into account a wrong suffered," Forgiveness means that you don't drag up past offences; you don't make a list...

RE CONFRONTATION

13:6. "love does not rejoice in unrighteousness". It CONFRONTS IT!

LOVE is what empowers us to confess; to forgive; to confront.

GOD'S LOVE FOR US:

God has never had to make a confession but HE DOES CHOOSE to FORGIVE and to CONFRONT.

Because of HIS LOVE, God chooses to forgive us our sins – he bore the penalty for our sin.

Because of HIS LOVE, God also CONFRONTS us with our sin. It's called conviction. WHY? Because His Love doesn't want us to suffer either the penalty or the consequences of our sin.

His RULES – His commandments - PROTECT us from the consequences of sin; they are for our own good. When we break the rules; God provides forgiveness and He confronts us. Why? Because He loves us.

Finally... God's love compelled Him to pay the penalty for sin by sending HIS BELOVED SON to die.

I hope that your familiarity with John 3:16,17 has not robbed you of its impact.

“For God so love the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world (Condemn the world) but that the world might be saved through HIM.”

CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR LOVE; and love confesses, love forgives, and love confronts. As we approach this Christmas season, let me ask you, “Are you ready for Christmas?” I’m not talking about presents and turkey and decorations and lights; I’m talking about salvation, confession, forgiveness, and confrontation?

Are you in need of salvation? Its available if you believe.

Do you need to confess something? To make it right with God and with someone else? Have you behaved in an unworthy manner?

Is there someone and something you need to forgive? Something you’ve been holding onto, and you need to let it go?

Is there someone and something that you need to confront - the way Jesus did? “Neither do I condemn you, but go and sin no more?”

Let’s get ready for Christmas! Joining God’s family and practising confession, forgiveness and confrontation will set you free to enjoy the real meaning for the season and help you get ready for a fresh start in the new year.

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