



**July 30, 2017 ~ Pastor Dustin Bennett**  
**Love Does Part 4**

I first of all want to thank Amy for reading to us this morning.

If you have been with us the last couple weeks, you will know that we have started a new series we have called Love Does. This series has been awesome so far, as we have been learning how to put love into action, and not just say that we love. If you are interested in reading Love Does by Bob Goff we are selling copies of it at the reception counter.

Before we start I guess I should tell some of my famous jokes. If you're new here, you may not know how funny I am yet. But within a couple minutes you will learn.

What do you call a pony with a soar throat? A little Hoarse.

What did the buffalo say to his son when he left for college? Bison.

A couple weeks ago myself, and my wife Beth headed to Vancouver with a group of 12 of us to do a missions trip.

I had of course, been on a couple missions trips previously, but this was my first time leading a team.

Several of you supported us financially, and we appreciate it.

While there we really were able to put Love into action. We spent a lot of time in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, which is the poorest postal code in Canada. There you will find many homeless, addicts and mentally ill people. It is not uncommon to see drugs, alcohol and many other things in the open.

I know for some of us this was our first exposure to this kind of thing, and most of us were nervous as to what to expect. It was an eye opener to see how many people within Canada are struggling, and we don't have to go overseas to do missions, we can do it in our backyards.

One activity we were able to do was to pack a lunch and have lunch with someone living in this area. One thing we were told is that most people living in the area are not starving since there are so many programs in the area offering food and other services. The reason we packed the lunch was to give us an opportunity to eat and chat, and hear the stories of the people living in the area.

We learned that most people living down there don't just want food, but they just want someone to notice them, and have a conversation with them.

I can't imagine living on the streets and seeing thousands of people walk past you every day, with people judging you and almost dehumanizing you.

We had an opportunity to get out of our comfort zones and love people for who they were. Their addictions and mental illnesses didn't define them, but their creator is the one who defines them.

I think that it is the same in our lives. We need to love people for being people. Not for who they are, not for their accomplishments, and not for what we can get from them. But just love people for being people. But love them for who they are and act on it.

I think Jesus really pointed this out to us in the book of Matthew chapter 25:34-45. If you would turn in your bible with me to the book of Matthew chapter 25.

If you are new to the bible you will find Matthew about 3 quarters the way through in the start of something we call the New Testament. If you don't have a bible and would like one you can grab a free bible at the back of the auditorium.

**34** Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' **37** Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? **38** And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? **39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' **40** And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,[a] you did it to me.' **41** "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, **43** I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did

not visit me.’ **44** Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ **45** Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’

This verse really shows me what it means to hangout with Jesus and to love him. Loving Jesus means loving every person that we come into contact with during our lives. It means meeting the needs of those around us and showing them that we care about them and value them.

But as Amy read this morning some of us are stalkers of Jesus and not friends with him.

Action is so important in love.

Today I want to talk about doing things with Jesus.

When I look at doing things with Jesus I see two things that I find super important that we need to understand.

If we want to do things with Jesus I think the first thing we need to understand is:

### **Doing things with Jesus is Loving People**

In the chapter that Amy read to us he talks about being a stalker of Jesus, but never actually diving into relationship with him, not actually taking steps towards him. Not actually loving him. We just follow him around and try and get to know him as best as we can.

I find so many Christians, myself included, are so focused on the fact that we need to love people, yet our actions point us in a different direction. We say that we love certain groups of people, but without acting on love how would anyone know that we love them?

I think the bible really describes what love is very well of course, but there is one verse that I think really describes what love really is, and how we can apply it to our lives.

1 John 3:16 English Standard Version (ESV)

**16** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

I love this verse because I think it really depicts what love is. It shows us really what grace is. That Jesus came down and laid down his life so we could be free. That is how we know what love is.

And because we know what love is, we need to go out and do the same. We need to go out and lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. We need to be willing to go into the uncomfortable to make sure people know what love is, and make sure they know they are loved.

This can be really difficult to do.

I think all of us have someone in our lives that can be difficult to love at times. Everyone just look straight ahead. I don't want any nudging of your spouse or sibling. There is always someone who gets on our nerves, and even the thought of loving them in one of those nerve racking times can seem impossible.

One thing I always try to think about is that Jesus came and died for me just like he came and died for them. I need to learn that I also can be annoying at times, and difficult to love, yet Jesus came down to die for me. He came down to lay down his life for me and for others. Why is it so difficult for me to love?

I think some of us have heard the story of the Good Samaritan before. I want to read it this morning, and while we are, be thinking about how you really would react if you came across this sight.

Luke 10:30-37 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

**30** Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. **31** Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. **32** So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. **33** But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. **34** He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. **35** And the next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' **36** Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" **37** He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

When thinking about this story in the context of today, it could be in the morning when we are on our way to work, or on our way home, and we see a car on the side of the road with a flat tire. Or maybe we are walking downtown Calgary and we see someone who is having a rough day. Maybe they haven't eaten in a while, and look like they could be injured or hurt.

So many of us would walk past them. I have done this so many times. I have walked past people who just need some love without a care in the world.

Yet I read this story and don't understand how those men could walk past this hopeless man. I believe their excuses could be the same as some of the ones we have today.

Maybe we are busy, maybe we don't want to get dirty, and maybe we feel as if our love tanks have run out. Maybe we feel that we don't have the resources to help, maybe we just feel as if we aren't talented enough,

We all have things that hold us back from loving people, maybe they are different than us.

But what we do to the least of these we do to him.

For me this is a hard statement to hear.

How many times have I walked past Jesus on the streets or in the mall, and missed out on an opportunity to love him and hangout with him.

### **Without Action Love Dies.**

What actions are we taking to love people? Because loving people is loving Jesus. How many people do we ignore every day? We are literally doing this to Jesus.

I do this all the time.

If we want to do things for Jesus we need to first love Jesus, and I believe one real way to do this is to treat the people around us as if they are Jesus.

One thing I often tell the youth is that 'if you knew Jesus was coming over for dinner, how willing would you be to do all the cleaning to prepare for him to come?'

But when regular people come over we sometimes aren't willing to do those things.

We need to treat every situation that we face with this kind of heart. A heart of love.

While in Vancouver we heard a story of a man who's kids started an organization called Whole Way House in the Vancouver Eastside. This man called Ron Konkin was diagnosed with Melanoma at the age of 48 and was given only 4-12 months to live. It was at this moment that he looked at his life and really thought about what he wanted.

He decided to change his vocabulary from I have to, to I get to.

He did this in every aspect of his life. He decided he would take each day as a blessing, and not as a hindrance. Change it from; I have to pick my kids up from school to I get to pick my kids up from school. Change it from; I have to sit in traffic to I get to sit in traffic. He decided to change his outlook on life. To change his obligations to opportunities.

I found this so cool, and I think it really fits this series well.

We have to change our mindset from, I have to love my neighbour to I get to love my neighbour. It changes our mindset going into certain situations, and bringing a more positive outlook on life.

If we really want to hangout with Jesus and do things with him, we must understand that each day we are presented with hundreds of opportunities to do so, yet we often ignore them.

Lets go out and love people and invite Jesus along with us. I believe we are called to be the light of the world, but if we go out without Jesus are we really bringing light to people in the world? Jesus wants to do things with us, but we have to invite him along with us.

The first thing we need to understand when it comes to doing this with Jesus, is that doing things with Jesus is Loving People

You know the next thing I think we need to understand is:

## **Doing things with Jesus is being with him**

I know this point may seem pretty simple and not really eye opening at all, but it is so easy for us to fall into not spending time with Jesus on a daily basis.

We get so caught up in all the things going on around us that we forget to actually spend time with him. I know for me that spending time in devotions each day is really difficult. I spend all day at work and then go home and think did I even spend time with him?

We need to figure out a way to make hanging out with Jesus a daily thing.

The bible is full of different scriptures that talk about spending time with Jesus, but one that I love comes from the book of Romans.

It says:

Romans 10:17 English Standard Version (ESV)

**17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

For us when we hear the word 'Hear' we think of hearing sounds.

You know birds chirping in the morning or to some of you it could be your kids screaming in the morning.

For parents when you ask your child to clean their room, and you know they heard you, yet ignore you. That could be what hearing means to you. In one ear and out the other.

I researched this week to see what the word hearing actually means. It comes from the Hebrew word Shema, which means to take heed, or to be obedient or doing what is asked.

It takes action to grow faith and faith is grown by spending time in the word.

I know we all have things in our lives that cause us to have a lack of faith.

Maybe we look at our bank accounts and we don't understand where all of our money went, and if we can even afford to buy food for our families this month.

For some of us it could be struggling with a secret addiction, something that is holding us back, and we feel as if we are hopeless and will never get out.

For some of us it could be children that we have seen leave the church, and we lose hope.

When we read the bible and spend time studying it we learn how to deal with hardships, and we learn that Jesus is always with us even in the hardest of times. We learn about the Father Heart of God, and how much he loves and cares for us.

For me, I can go to Jesus with anything I am struggling with and receive peace for it. He cares so deeply for us and died so that we could be free from it.

We need to learn how to spend time with him.

For me I like to put on some worship music and spend time in the word. I then try and dissect what it is saying for my current situation and apply it. I try to have one take away for the day that I can apply right away.

Some people do things called SOAP. SOAP is an acronym. Making it easier to remember for people like me.

The S stands for Scripture. You pick a core verse or a chapter and read it out or write it out.

The O stands for observation. This is what you see in the verse, what you learned, and what you find cool about it.

The A stands for application. This is what you are going to apply. For my I try and make it a daily application. Some people make it a yearly goal or other things.

Lastly, the P stands for Prayer. I encourage you to write out this prayer. This gives you an opportunity to go back to it and remember what God showed you during that time.

This is something that can be very impactful and bring us closer to Jesus, and rather than being mere stalkers we become friends. We can lay out our deepest struggles, and deepest hurts, and he will in return just pour out love.

But figure out for yourself what works and stick to it.



Sometimes this love comes through people, or through the word, but He is always there and the more we get to know Him, the more we will fall in love with Him.

I think if we understand these two things and act on them, we will start to grow into deep relationship with Jesus, and no longer just be stalkers. We will stop just knowing about Him to doing things with Him.

This week I want to put out a challenge to you.

Last week Kelly gave us an awesome challenge to go out and make an effort to repair a relationship

This week's challenge is to change your Obligations to Opportunities. To change our words from, I have to, to I get to.

We have opportunities every day to do things with Jesus, yet we often miss out.

We get to love people we don't have to.

Lets get to heaven and have Jesus say, "What you did to the least of these you did to me." Lets look at each day in a new light and take each day as an opportunity, not an obligation.

The last thing that I want to do this morning, is give any of you in here, who have never accepted this gift we have talked about this morning.

This is often the most important decision anyone can make. To actually come to a place where we want to come into relationship with him. Some of us in this room have never made a decision to invite Jesus into our brokenness and to make us whole.

2 Corinthians 5:17 English Standard Version (ESV)

**17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Once we make the decision to receive Jesus sacrifice on the cross we are a new creation, our past is washed away and we are made clean.

It doesn't matter the mistakes you've made because Jesus loves you, and he wants to do things with you. We just need to choose to do this.

I want to give you an opportunity this morning, to make this decision to accept

the gift of grace.

It doesn't have to be complicated.

In the bible it says

Romans 10:9-10 English Standard Version (ESV)

**9** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

[Pray]