

Summer Mix Tape Part 7

Love Doesn't Equal Acceptance

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Memory Verses: 1 Corinthians 13:6

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

In a mix-tape you can have a country song, followed by a rap song, followed by a rock song, and if you are a sociopath, perhaps you mix in some smooth jazz. I'm just saying, there has to be limits people. But mix-tapes are fun cause you get some variety.

This summer we are bringing the variety. We've had services with no preaching, and we've had 4 different preachers over the past two months. Some people are wondering if I'm ever going to preach again? Who knows?

Today I'm going to mix it up once again. This morning I'm going to preach about love. But not love like in ahhh, but love as in like... hmmm. To explain what I'm talking about let's look at the love chapter; **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**. Love is patient and kind.... blah blah. Love is all nice and polite and will do anything for you and accept you no matter what right? Well hit the brakes cupid. Look at **verse 6** again. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Did you get that? Love is kind, not arrogant, not rude, not irritable or resentful. Love will make you feel accepted but love doesn't accept all that you do because true love does not, cannot rejoice at wrong doing!

And it is this issue, this point, that may be the fulcrum of the current spiritual war which is raging in our culture. As believers we must place our faith in Christ above all, yes? And our faith in Christ is in accordance with a belief in the scriptures, yes? And our scriptures tell us that true faith is exhibited through righteous living, right? And our scriptures, the Bible, tells us how to live righteously, correct? So what happens when we are faced with a choice to either appear loving by accepting someone's sin or appear unloving by neglecting to accept one's sin?

For the longest time, the church answered this dilemma through the mantra, "hate the sin, love the sinner." But today we are confronted with so many changing cultural norms that in order to hate the sin, we must hate the very thing by which people find their identity. For example, I can easily tell an alcoholic that I hate their sin of drunkenness and dependency on alcohol, and they will most likely agree and not be offended by it. Why? Because being an alcoholic is not something anyone wants to be celebrated for. But in the last decade it has become mainstream for certain other sins and the people who indulge in them to

be celebrated for those sins, because those sins define them. And if you dare tell them that the sin which defines them is sin, and that you can't accept their sin or their lifestyle as right, according to scripture, then you are considered intolerant, a bigot, a phobe, and you are othered by society. We are told that if we don't accept someone's lifestyle then we are not being loving and we need to change our stance or be canceled. And we are left wondering? When did telling someone that we can't accept their sinful lifestyle become unloving. In fact, according to **1 Corinthians 13:6**, aren't we being loving when we do not rejoice at wrong doing, but rejoice in the truth?

And can we, as the Church of Christ, continue to take such stances if in the eyes of the world it makes us look intolerant and uncaring? How are we going to grow our congregations or stop the decline of church attendance if we continue to draw these lines in the sand? Shouldn't we just relax our stances and redefine the scriptures to align with our changing culture? In essence, we are confronted with a choice to abandon long held scriptural beliefs and compromise our commitment to Christ in order to placate a culture which holds acceptance as its chief virtue. I emphatically declare no! For I am immediately reminded of these verses; **Proverbs 29:25, Galatians 1:10, 1 John 2:15**, and **Matthew 10:28**. The point that I'm trying to make is this; Love does not equal acceptance, for love cannot accept the sins which Christ died to save us from. Rather, love selflessly sacrifices ones own standing for the sake of revealing the truth to those who have wandered from it. This morning it is important for you to realize that **perhaps the most loving thing you can do for someone is to respectfully and humbly refuse to accept their sin**.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see today is that... **A Love For Christ Requires A Rejection of Sin**. Sin by definition is an act of rebellion to God. In the garden of Eden, the ground rules for our relationship with God, as created and creator, were established. He lovingly created the world, all that is in the world, and us to rule over it. He lovingly gave us everything we would ever need or could ever want. He told us that all that we could desire was available to us except the fruit from one tree. Out of a million fruit bearing trees, only the fruit of one tree was off limits. The only rule was don't eat from the tree. So, if you are following the logic, this establishes a couple of things. First, God is loving and cares to give us the very best. Second, God makes rules and expects us to obey those rules. It doesn't matter if we don't understand the rules, the rules exists and we must obey them. For God to forbid something from us doesn't make him evil or mean. It simply establishes that though he is loving, he is also in charge. Third, the way that we worship God is by obeying his commands. And you know how this story ends don't you. Even though God gave everything to us and only forbade us from one thing, we could not help ourselves and took from the

tree.

This one act shows without a doubt that mankind is incapable of complete obedience to God. Don't blame Adam or Eve. If it had been you, you would've done the same thing. **Romans 5:12** says that sin through one man, spread to all men, for all sinned. We are all created with a desire to rebel against God. If we weren't, we wouldn't have a choice to obey or not. We would be robots. God's choice is what gives us freedom. Unfortunately, apart from God, we will always make the wrong choice. We will choose sin. We will choose to rebel. We will choose to not worship him the way he wants to be worshipped.

In order to show our love for God we must choose to reject sin. In **John 14:15** Jesus says that if you love me you'll keep my commandments. We don't reject sin because rejecting sin is smart, and healthy. **We reject sin because it shows that we are willing to obey God regardless of how unfair his rules may seem to us.** In my experience every sin can be justified and manipulated to be presented in a good light. Stealing is okay if you are starving. Murder is okay if the baby is only a fetus. Lying is okay if it benefits the majority. Fornication is okay because its love. God is not worried about whether you should do it or not... hes worried about whether or not you will remain faithful to him through obedience to his commands. The bottom line is clear; if God said it's not okay, it's not okay!

As Christians we should be very concerned with the growing number of people who claim to be Christians and yet indulge in open sinful lifestyles like Jesus is okay with it. There are entire churches dedicated to the affirmation of sin. Their unspoken motto is, "your sin is okay here." "You can sin and worship God at the same time here." This is just like Satan telling Eve, it's okay to eat of the fruit because it will make you like gods. **Luke 6:46** is Jesus in his own words telling you that if you do not do what he commands then you cannot call him Lord! Jesus is not your Lord if you are living in open rebellion to his commands. These churches are telling you that you can eat of the fruit of sin and still be a follower of the one true God... it's a lie and it will condemn you to an eternity without Him. The thing that really frustrates me about these so called "progressive Christians" is that they are flaunting the very sin that Jesus died on the cross to set them free from! How can you claim to follow Christ and love Him and worship Him and yet you are unwilling to surrender your sin to Him? The entire reason Jesus had to come to die on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for your sins is because without his atonement you would never be able to have a relationship with the Father and be saved from hell. The salvation of Christ saves us from our sin. Those who are truly saved cannot chose to live in it any longer. **Romans 6:1-16** tells us that in Christ we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to obedience. **If you live in open rebellion to Jesus by living in sin, you**

are disgracing his sacrifice and mocking his lordship. You simply cannot say you love Christ and spit in his face at the same time! If we love Christ we must refuse to sin, and **perhaps the most loving thing you can do for someone is to respectfully and humbly refuse to accept their sin.**

The second thing we need to see is that... **A Love For Others Demands A Desire For Their Wellbeing.** Going back to **1 Corinthians 13:4-6** we must notice that love is not the one doing the action. Love is an action. It takes a person to do the action. We are those people. Perhaps it would make more sense to say, we show others that we love them when we are patient with them, and when we are kind to them. We show others that we love them when we don't envy them or brag about our accomplishments over them. When we are arrogant or rude to others we are not showing them love. When we insist on doing things our own way, when we get irritated with them or resent them we are not being loving to them. Get it? When we love someone else we desire their wellbeing over our own and we show it through our actions. **John 15:13** boils this down to the most effective means of showing love. **When we are willing to lay down our own lives by serving others, caring for others, or even surrendering our own life for the sake of others we are expressing true love.** Interesting that Jesus actually did all of these for us when he died for us on the cross. Jesus laid down his life for us. He is the greatest example of love the world has ever known. We must follow his example too.

But if true love is the desire for another's wellbeing, then we can't just do what shows them love. We must also protect them from the things that would do them harm. **Psalm 82:3-4** tells us of the need to rescue the weak from the hand of the wicked. Sometimes the hand of the wicked seeks to rob them or physically harm them. Sometimes the hand of the wicked seeks to lead them astray from the commands of God. Which is worse? One is physical; one is spiritual. One has earthly consequences; one has eternal consequences. If a true believer would never fall into a blatantly sinful lifestyle and therefore rebel from God, those who do are in danger of hell. **In the words of Penn Jillette, of the magic duo Penn & Teller, "how much must you hate someone to not tell them the truth of the Gospel?"** How much must you hate those you say you love if you are willing to ignore their sinful lifestyle or worse, affirm it? If we care about the wellbeing of others then we must help protect them from sin. We must tell them the truth of the consequences of their sin. We must try to help them get back on the path of righteousness. And I know that telling someone that they are in sin is one of the hardest things in the world to do. Perhaps the only thing harder is to tell someone you love that you cannot affirm them in their sinful lifestyle. But we must. **James 5:19-20** tells us that we must try to bring those who wander from the truth back in order to save their soul. True love does not rejoice in wrong doing because sin breaks fellowship with Christ and mocks his

sacrifice. True love instead rejoices with the truth. The truth that sin is evil and it is the opposite of true love. **Perhaps the most loving thing you can do for someone is to respectfully and humbly refuse to accept their sin.**

The last thing we need to see here is that... **Truth Without Love Is As Detrimental As Love Without Truth**. So if we love Christ we will reject all sin in our lives and run from any sinful lifestyle that would rebel against his lordship in our lives. Also, if we love others then we must be honest with them about their sin and the consequences of their sin as to save them from hell. But let me assure you; in now way does that mean that we can arrogantly and rudely insist that they change their ways. Nor can we be resentful of them or irritable with them. Why? Cause love bears all things, believes all things, and endures all things. Just because sin is evil and sin in the life of a so called believer feels like betrayal, and it rightfully so might make you angry or mad, you still must learn to handle those feelings through the lens of love. Again, love doesn't look for revenge. Love doesn't demand retribution. Love seeks the wellbeing of the one who is in sin. **Galatians 6:1** says that we must restore them with gentleness. Let me assure you, refusing to affirm sinful lifestyles takes supernatural gentleness. **Proverbs 27:6** says, "faithful are the wounds of a friend." When we expose the sin in others it wounds. It hurts because no one wants to hear that what they are doing is wrong. But if you do it right they will recognize that you are still a faithful friend who loves them. **Ephesians 4:15** says that we should always speak the truth in love. I think we think we are justified when we treat sinners with disrespect or discrimination but we aren't. In doing so we become just like them. **When we refrain from loving sinners we become sinners too and our sin is no less great than theirs.** How much love does it take to gently lead a sinner from their sinful lifestyle? I'm not sure, but I think it is a great deal more love than we are showing them right now! It takes a supernatural amount of love to turn a sinner back to Christ! And it takes more than just trying... it is going to take a lot of prayer. We can't do this... only God can! **Perhaps the most loving thing you can do for someone is to respectfully and humbly refuse to accept their sin.**

Application

The application is simple. Personally, if you love Christ, flee from sin. And for those in this world who are living in blatant unrepentant sin, we must let them know the truth of the Gospel and the dangers of their sin, but we must do so in a way that shows them we care about their wellbeing more than we care about being right and having things our way. Most of all, we must learn the hard truth that love does not equal acceptance. Yes we accept them as people, but we cannot accept their

sin because sin is what separates us from Christ. We must do better at standing opposed to the sin of our culture while supernaturally showing our culture the love of Christ.

Conclusion

When is the last time you went out of your way to show someone who is living a sinful lifestyle that you love them and care for them? When is the last time you had an honest conversation with someone living a sinful lifestyle, but you did it in a way that showed them that you genuinely care for them?