



Sermon Title: Unwrapped week 2

Sermon Title: The Season of Love

Date: 12/4/2022

Today we'll be talking about Christmas being "The Season of Love." In Mark 12, Jesus describes the greatest commandment (**Mark 12:28-31**). He tells us not only to love God with everything that we have but also to love our neighbors as we would ourselves.

Big Idea: Let the love of God overflow to those around you.

We will look at three "hows" that clarify this idea

HOW BIBLICAL LOVE IS DEFINED

To let the love of God overflow to those around us, we need to know what qualities are found in sacrificial love that is not found in worldly love.

Eros: A romantic love

Storge: A kind of love shared between a mother and a child.

Philia: Speaks of brotherly friendship and affection.

Agape: A love that loves without changing. This type of love is a choice!

Agape love doesn't love in order to receive. We see that displayed in the greatest example of love that there is, Jesus' sacrifice (**1 John 3:16**). Real love isn't merely felt as an emotion; it's also shown by demonstration. The actual *demonstration* of agape love isn't displayed solely in the fact that Jesus died: it is the death of Jesus **PAIRED** with what it does for us that it is the epitome of agape love. Paul writes with the same idea in mind when he writes his letter. **Romans 5:8**.

Agape love is God loving us, even when we didn't love Him first. The kind of love that makes this a season of love, and we see it through Jesus being born as a baby boy, to grow and live a sinless, human life.

HOW TO LOVE GOD IN RETURN

There are a few different ways that we can love God in return:

1. **Know Him** - **1 John 4:7-8** John affirms that love comes from God. The Greek word used here for "know" speaks to a personal relationship.

Love is more than a feeling – it is also something that can be shown through demonstration. Here, we are not only receiving the ability to love in a Godly way; we love God the best way that we can by accepting Him into our hearts and following His will for our lives.

2. **Obey Him.** Back to 1 John 5:3, John states it very simple for us - If we love God, we are to obey Him and keep His commandments! However, the second part of this verse also rings true: His commandments are not burdensome. Jesus makes a contrast between the requirements of the religious leaders of His day and then the simplicity of loving God and obeying His commands. Jesus said that the Pharisees were imposing burdens on others that they were not willing to carry themselves (**Matthew 23:4**). However, Jesus says to us, "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself."

3. **Trust Him** in **Proverbs 3:5-6** Solomon is writing to his son about putting his trust in God. His trust is an unwavering confidence.

HOW TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Mark 12:31

Love for our fellow man or woman follows from our love for God. We receive the love God has shown for us, and we're also using that to minister to people. **Philippians 2:3-4** tells us that loving others requires humility. If we let ourselves be transformed by the love of God and our hearts yearn to please Him.

When we live with conceit, we are out of God's will. We are to take our eyes off ourselves and care for others. In Luke 10, we see Jesus tell the parable of a man that robbers attacked on his way to Jericho. He was stripped of his clothes and left half dead on the road, and a priest and a Levite passed him on the road. Neither stopped to help him. A Samaritan stopped to help. He bandaged his wounds, brought him to an inn, paid for his room, and offered to pay for any extra expenses they may have while the man was there.

Letting the love of God overflow to those around you can be encapsulated in the loving of our neighbors as ourselves. When Jesus truly transforms us, our hearts should not only want to please God but also yearn to serve our neighbors in the way described in the good Samaritan parable. It all comes to a head here. Learning what biblical love looks like, learning how we can first love God in return, and THEN we can let it overflow to those around us.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Explain how it is possible to love your neighbor as yourself. What does that look like?
- The Beatles sang *All You Need is Love*. Is the world's definition of love different than the Bible's definition? Explain
- How is God's love displayed in a sinful world? Does the world recognize God's love?
- Jesus said, "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength." Why didn't He simply say "love God"?
- Describe a time when you showed agape love to another person
- Describe a time when you were shown agape love