

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday February 17, 2019. "More Love: Love gone bad".

A. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk.

Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

B. Recap.

We're in our third week of our "**More Love**" series, looking at what it means to actually practice love the way scriptures portray it. True love, (in The Princess Bride voice), cannot be a response to how we 'feel', or how someone treats us. Scriptural love is a willful and intentional commitment to actively work for the best for someone else no matter what. This kind of love is not soft or squishy. It's dirty, demanding, sacrificial, and requires us to move into places, and towards people, we would not naturally or normally embrace.

The first week we said, this kind of love HAS TO begin with us. There are things that build up within us that inhibit and actually block our ability to love well. And we have to do a regular inventory to root those things within us that would keep us from loving more.

Last week, we saw the beauty of love expressed fully in a richly diverse community, in "*The Harmony of Love*". In a unique time of singing at the end of the message, we saw the power of everyone joining in and creating something larger than just what we can do on our own.

C. Sunday.

And then this past Sunday Tami talked about the difficulties of love in "**Love Gone Bad**".

Tami began with this understanding of love. Love is complex. It's multidimensional, multifaceted. So it can be challenging to get our head around it. There are so many expressions of love; sexual love, family love, brotherly love, all-encompassing love of humanity/people. And then there's the gift of the emotional of love. This allows us to feel love and to be "in love."

Take a few moments and consider the different types of love. You don't have to have the official original language understanding of the different types, but wrestle with how love for a spouse is different than love for your siblings, friends, pets, people you know, and then people in general.

How can and does this make our ability to love so confusing and difficult?

Tami went on to say, in order for us to truly understand, (which means to be able to explain it to someone else, AND to actually put this more spiritual type of love into practice), we have to know God is the author of this type of love.

We cannot generate this level of sacrificial love out of our own efforts. We don't possess the selflessness, patience, or the sheer will, to love others in this way. This kind of love can only come from God- and we have to grow it within us.

Tami used several passages Sunday, but there were two that specifically spoke to this kind of love. **1 John 4:7-12, 15-17.** Read these passages from 1 John 4, and then answer the questions.

What jumped out at you, spoke to you, about how love was talked about?

What did it say to you about how love works?

What has to happen in our relationship with God in order for us to be able to “Love More”?

Two primary points we were challenged with Sunday are:

1. We have to BE love.

Let's just throw this out there.

What does that even mean? How can anyone actually BE love?

2. Love is other-focused.

“Love is giving of yourself 100% with no expectations, in order to make someone else be the best that they can be.”

Obviously this is much easier to talk about, and on paper, than it is to actually practice.

So, what would this look like practiced with your; family, co-workers, friends?

How would you make “*their best*” not your preferences?

How do you draw a line between ‘enabling’ and being other-focused?

What might it look like to make sure you have healthy boundaries in place, and not be used, but still put them first?

How can you know if there is any selfishness bundled up in your desire to put them first?

Tami closed challenging us with these thoughts.

- Is my frame of mind about love accurate?
- Is my mindset one of “being love”, or does my thinking about love lean toward how I feel (the emotion of love)?
- How am I “being” love?
- In what area(s) do I need to make some adjustments?
- What are some changes (think specifically) that will help me focus on others: how I can serve others, help others, extend care, kindness and affection to others?

God's love not only be must be our foundation, it needs to be the foundation of, and at the center of, every relationship with have in order for that relationship to be healthy and thrive. And this has to come from us putting practices and routines into our ordinary, everyday, walking around life, that grow our relationship with God, and grows this ability to love, within us.

What can you work into your daily life to help you do this?