

August 25, 2019
LOVE UNLEASHED - Part 1
"Love Acts"

Jesus loved verbs - verbs like follow, come, learn, serve, give, die, go, and love.

Jon Weece: "A hypocrite is nothing more than a noun without a verb."

Love is a verb, an action, something we do.

Jesus: "'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.'" (John 3:16 ESV)

Jesus: "³⁷... 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'" (Matthew 22:37-40 NIV)

GATEWAY'S MISSION: leading everyone to become more like Jesus.

GATEWAY'S VISION: growing people toward spiritual maturity in order to unleash God's life-changing, unconditional, and sacrificial love in our church, homes, community and world.

God's love is choosing to accept someone for who they are and sacrificially working for their good.

Discipleship is the process of imitating Jesus.

Discipleship has to show itself in our actions, in love, or it's not real discipleship.

We're focusing on three things - worship, serving and groups - because these are environments we as a church provide to help all of us grow more like Jesus.

The world around us, and probably each of us to some degree, has a distorted understanding of what loving as Jesus loved is really like.

1 Corinthians 12:31 (ESV): "...And I will show you a still more excellent way."

1 Corinthians 13:1 (ESV): "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Any spiritual gift can be impressive, but God's not impressed with our gifts - He's concerned with how we use them, the reason behind our actions.

1 Corinthians 13:2 (ESV): “And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

1 Corinthians 13:3 (ESV): “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

In these first three verses Paul lists some amazing practices, but if we’ve done them for my own advantage, for my own name, in God’s eyes they’re a waste of time.

The picture and model for us is Jesus Christ, who did many of these very things, but his motive was always love for his Heavenly Father and love for us.

Romans 5:8 (ESV): “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

John 15:13 (ESV): “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

Those of us who’ve recognized Christ’s love, who’ve surrendered our lives to him out of gratitude, experience the life-changing power of his love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (ESV): “⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never ends....”

We can’t live these verses on our own, but with Christ’s Spirit living in me, He begins to transform me so I can begin to act loving in all these ways.

Most of the time love is not doing big amazing things but daily, little things that add up over time to create a lifestyle that influences and impacts others.

1 Corinthians 13:13-14:1a (ESV): “¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. ¹⁴Pursue love....”

Next Week: Love Cares

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