

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

AUTHENTIC LOVE IS SACRIFICIAL

THEME VERSE

John 15: 12-13 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends"

PASSAGE: MARK 2: 1-12

Warm Up

What comes to mind with the phrase "sacrificial love"?

Sacrificial Love Makes A Choice (Mark 2: 1-3)

The group of 4 who are bringing their paralytic friend had to choose to take on this challenge. **How difficult is it to choose to sacrificially love others in our culture today?**

Sacrificial Love Makes a Way (Mark 2: 4)

The group of 4 were creative and persistent in finding a way to bring their paralytic friend to Jesus. **How does persistence show sacrificial love?**

Sacrificial Love Takes Risks (Mark 2:4)

The group of 4 were risking embarrassment, loss of time, potential rejection and maybe no healing, but go for it anyways. **What does risk taking love look like in today's culture?**

Sacrificial Love Is Seen By Jesus (Mark 2: 5-12)

Jesus sees their love for their friend and comforts the man's soul and body, taking away his sins and paralysis. **What are ways people can be reminded that Jesus sees sacrificial love?**

Reflection Question:

Sacrificial love, even for friends and family, can be hard to do and many times we feel it goes unnoticed. Jesus was the ultimate example of sacrificial love and gives His followers the ability to keep loving like Him. **Have you been struggling to sacrifice lately? Pray and ask God to remind you of His sacrifice for you so you can love others.**

Love That Is Sacrificial

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-6 Lar: Labor Day. Foundations. MOMS. R&R. Employment Op. Sun Prayer.
- B. Slide7 Dave Eubank/FBR: This Wed Night!
- C. Prayer: Pakistan Flooding (at least 33 million people have been affected by deadly flooding in Pakistan).

II. Slide8a Intro: Love That Is Sacrificial

- A. CM's MISSION - States our Aim, our fundamental purpose of why we exist; what we're supposed to be doing.
 1. To love **God** completely. *To love people authentically*. To make disciples globally.
- B. Slide8b CM's MOTTO - The Motto takes our Mission & breaks it down to something that could be placed on a Tee-shirt. A simplified rule to live by.
 1. To live the Great *Commandment*. To fulfill the Great *Commission*.
- C. Love God w/Everything [heart, soul, mind, strength, possessions, service, our whole life, family, hobbies, time, money, relationships, tax returns, etc.]
 1. **To love Him** isn't to have *good feelings* about Him, true love involves **the will**, as well as **the heart**.
 2. **Everything** devoted to loving God. Kent Hughes said, *It does not take much of a man to be a believer, but it takes ALL there is of him*.
- D. Jesus then added a *2nd one*, You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.
 1. Because love for God **can't** be *divorced* from love for one's neighbor. Jesus puts Lev.19:18 on the same level as the *Shema*.
 - a) *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar.* 1 Jn.4:20,21
 2. A **total love** for God & a **sensitive love** for others is the *essence* of a life that pleases God - Love God Completely; Love people authentically.

- E. **Slide9a** So our **focus** for this series is on **#2** of our Mission Statement, **Loving People Authentically**. *It's loving people as yourself. It's being real with people. It's being genuine.*
- F. Over our **4 Sundays of Sept**, we will be looking at **4 groups** of people to show God's love to ... in different ways: *Family/friends. Neighbors/community. Doubting/hurting. Persecutors/enemies.*
- G. **Slide9b** So this week we are starting with **defining Authentic Love** by looking at **Sacrificial Love**, asking ... **how do we sacrificially love family and friends?**
1. Let's 1st define **sacrificial love**:
 - a) **Sacrifice** = *an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy.* [giving up something valued, for something more important or worthy] (*i.e. Jesus gave up His life for yours*)
 2. **True love demands a sacrifice to truly love people.** (that's sacrifice in marriage, sacrifice in bringing children into this world. Any type of giving/ generosity is a sacrifice).
 - a) **Jesus** just wants us to **Major in loving others.**
- H. **Slide10** **Now** let's look at **the story** of **Four Faithful Friends who sacrificially loved their paralytic friend**. Mark 2:1-12 gives more facts about our **4 Faithful Friends**.
- 1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within*

themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?
 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” - he said to the paralytic - 11 “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!” [also found in Mt.9:1-8; Lk.5:17-26]

III. Slide11a SACRIFICIAL LOVE MAKES A CHOICE

A. What would've happened had the Friends given up?

1. What if they shrugged their shoulders and mumbled something about *the crowd being big and dinner getting cold and* just turned and left?
2. *After all*, they've done a good deed in *coming this far*. Who could fault them for turning back? You can only do so much for somebody. *Max Lucado*
3. They didn't use the excuse, “*It must not be the Lord*”.
 - a) *But these friends hadn't done enough!*

B. Many people only see *one door*. And when they *can't get in*, they either: stand staring at *the door of disappointment*, *or turn around and go home*, with plenty of excuses why that is *good and right idea*.

1. *While others*, find a door blocked, they simply *make another door*.
2. This *other door* is *not* always obvious. *But when faced with go home or go in*, they choose go in every time. [go big or go home!]

C. Slide11b Sacrificial Love *makes a choice*. Sacrificial love *goes big, not home*.

IV. Slide12 SACRIFICIAL LOVE MAKES A WAY

A. 1st, *they removed the roof* - no easy task.

1. Slide13 Explain homes: Flat roof. Formed by *stone beams* (8”x8”x4’). Then branches, & twigs, were covered by earth. Then packed hard.

B. Slide14a 2nd, *they made an opening* - Jesus alludes to this in Mt.6:19 ...

1. *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.* (Lit. *dig through to break in*)
 2. And so we have **light** starting to stream in. **8 hands** digging through the roof. **Dust** everywhere. People **coughing**. **Dirt** particles falling on the religious leaders *Armani suits!*
- C. 3rd, *they let down the bed* - **Jesus**, seeing 4 heads silhouetted above him, *saw their faith*.
- D. *Slide14b* Sacrificial Love *makes a way*. Sacrificial love *does the unexpected*.

V. *Slide15a* SACRIFICIAL LOVE TAKES RISKS

- A. *Maybe*, after realizing there was *no more room, not even at the door*, they set their friend down to regroup. *Maybe* 1 said, *hey there's no security cameras around back*.
- B. Some commentators believe since this was in Capernaum this was at **Peter's** house.
1. *Some mention*, where Matthew sites *the healing*, Mark, *who's writing what Peter tells him*, remembers *the roof* (only 1 of 3 gospels to mention it).
 2. I guess you could say, *their hope was through the roof!* (badum ching)
- C. *Risks?* The owner could say, *get off my roof*. They could fall. Worse, they could drop their patient. *It was unorthodox un-roofing someone's house*. It was intrusive. *Jesus was busy*. It's going to *upset everyone inside*.
1. **But** it was their only chance to see **Jesus**, **so** they climb the stairs to the roof.
- D. So they *risk* with their *sacrificial love* possible *embarrassment*, their *time*, potential *rejection*, and risks even *no healing* from The Healer.
- E. *Slide15b* Sacrificial Love *takes Risks*. Sacrificial love is often *crazy, risky, & difficult*.

VI. *Slide16a* SACRIFICIAL LOVE IS SEEN BY JESUS

- A. Jesus applauded these 4, **not** with his hands **but** w/his heart. Jesus healed *soul/body*.

1. Jesus loved what these guys did, He liked their style, because **He did the same. He came down from above, through your dirt, through your shame, and through your sin, to touch you!**
- B. Jesus **saw** their persistent, creative, & sacrificial love & faith. Jesus **saw** 4 sweaty men willing to *put a shoulder to their faith*. Jesus **saw** a faith that *laughs at barriers*.
1. Philip Yancey, **Faith is believing in advance what will only make sense in reverse.**
 - a) **But wait** ... *They tore up someone's roof, interrupted a home bible study, & inconvenienced everyone else that was listening.*
 - b) Well, Jesus did say regarding his kingdom, ***the violent take it by force.*** Mt.11:12
- C. What's more important a roof or a man, a bible study or a man? (They weren't asking, *does this guy have homeowners insurance?*)
1. Too many people are more interested in **the place or the program, instead of the people.**
- D. **Slide16b Sacrificial Love is seen by Jesus.** Sacrificial love **gets attention.**
- E. **Slide17a** I guess you could say, *Sacrificial Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end. Love never dies.* 1 Cor.13:4-8 MSG
1. "This word **agapao/love** has little to do with mere emotion; it indicates love which deliberately, by an act of **will**, **chooses** its object, & through thick or thin, regardless of the attractiveness of the object concerned, goes on **loving continually, eternally.**"¹
 2. Every description of love in this **Love chapter** is applicable to **Jesus**. **"Jesus suffers long & is kind ... Jesus never fails!"**

¹ Alan Redpath, pg. 156.

3. Thus when we become NT Christians, **agape** is born in us. We should be able to say, “*I suffer long & am kind, I do not envy ...*”

F. Slide17b *See, *Sacrificial love* does these things. *Sacrificial love* is unconventional. *Sacrificial love* does the unexpected. And *Sacrificial love* gets God’s attention. :)

G. Prayer: Lord, **No matter** how large the crowd, have our *sacrificial love* find a way through. **No matter** how steep the stairs, help our *sacrificial love* to be willing to climb. **No matter** how thick the roof make us willing to dig.

1. Help us to **love much, pray more, and shoulder much more.**

H. Communion: *Sacrificial love* got God the Father’s attention, at Calvary. *Has it got your attention this morning?*

1. Bread & Cup

I. Keywords: sacrifice, love.