

LOVE THAT TRANSFORMS

FROM ENCOUNTER TO OVERFLOW

Good Morning friends. It's always an honour and privilege to have the opportunity to share God's Word with you. I'm excited and can't wait to share what God has put on my heart for you this morning. Before I jump into my message I do want to say thank you to you all for celebrating myself and Jess so well... We love you guys!! I just have to say: Isn't she beautiful!!!

This morning I want to share something that God has been wrecking me with over these past 2 weeks. I have found myself at times weeping like a baby so undone!!

So this morning I want to inspire you with what He has been wrecking my heart with!!

So 2 weeks ago on April 10th myself and Jess went to watch the Great Awakening.... It's a movie I highly recommend you all watch. There were 2 moments in the film that gripped my heart as I watched George Whitfield so full of love and compassion embraced a prisoner who happened to be a leper to wash his feet and lead him to salvation.

So I found myself pondering this scene over the past few weeks. The Father has been breaking my heart for what breaks His and has brought me back this place of alignment that I didn't even realize I had got unaligned in. He brought me back to a place of loving deeply and sacrificially the place of deep love where I once used to be when I first got saved.

- Share how you used to love so deeply and how you started loving less without realizing it.

So when Shaun asked me to preach... I knew exactly which message I was to share.... This morning I want to share on **Love That Transforms: From Encounter to Overflow**

Turn with me to 1 John 4:7-11

1. Love Begins With Encounter

In verse 7 we can see that Love comes from God and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

The word I want you to notice is the word **knows**. This specific word comes from the Greek word ginoskei which is referring to a relational, experiential knowledge, and not so much an intellectual understanding.

- You see we will never fully know or understand the love of God until we encounter love Himself. Love is not something you can attain with effort or knowledge, it comes from beholding Him and ultimately encountering Him.

1 John 4:19: We love because He first loved us.

Friends you don't initiate this journey He does!!!

Now I need you to understand this knowing God that John is talking about here speaks of deep relational intimacy with God that is the fruit of encountering Him!

- Analogy of the vine
- **We've been taught to strive for love but heavens invitation is to abide in love.**
- The world's culture is I only love you if.... Christ says I love you before you do a thing.

Prophetic Moment:

I feel like this morning there are some here that have built a theology of love, but your heart has stayed guarded and this morning the Father is gonna give you a love encounter.... Pray over everyone! Let Him in!

- You know it in the mind but haven't experienced in the heart!!

2. Love Revealed In Jesus Becomes Love Expressed Through Us

Now lets go back to 1 John for a moment. In verse 9-11 we can see that Jesus is the love of God made manifest... He is our example and model for life.

It goes on to say in verse 10 that we love because God first loved us. It starts with a love encounter and it results in a life that looks like Jesus. That love like Jesus, that's so intertwined with the divine that people encounter Jesus wherever you go.

- This is God's love, not earthly love

*Now there are 2 words I want to highlight that really open up this verse. The first is the word **loves**... In the Greek there are many forms of love but in this specific verse it's the Greek word Agapeo that is used. Which is where we get the word Agape. This word refers to a high sacrificial and intentional form of love.

I want to mention 3 things from the life of Jesus to inspire us to live like Him.

- **Love moves first**

Jesus didn't wait for you to get it right or get saved.... He met you where you were at.

Romans 5:8 says, while we were still sinners Christ died for us!

He is the one that chased you down and initiated a love encounter with you.

Ways we can live this out

- * In Relationships (Reaching out first, saying sorry first, forgiving first)

- * In every day moments (Paying for someones meal or coffee, sitting with someone who is sitting alone, checking in with someone)

- * Testimony of looking for the lonely to love and making them feel seen, known valued and loved. Started with a small group of people who were basically the ones on the outskirts the ones people paid the least

attention to. We started hanging out and doing life and suddenly everyone wanted to hang out with us because everyone had a place at the table.

● **Love pays the price**

Real love doesn't calculate the cost- It absorbs it.... Wow! Jesus didn't just love you at a distance. He stepped into your mess and paid the price for it. This is a hard truth but if it didn't cost you anything. It probably wasn't love like His.

This is why in Luke 9:23 Jesus says that whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and pick up their cross and follow me.

1 John 16:3 says, This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

We have to realise that biblical love isnt convenient... It's costly.

Ways we can live this out

*Time

*Comfort (Showing up for people, stepping into awkward messy situations instead of avoiding them. Loving people who are difficult)

*Resources (Financially when it stretches you, giving when you wont receive anything back, Opening your home, table and space.

*Reputation.

● **Love embraces before it corrects**

Jesus never used truth to keep people at a distance. He used love to bring them closer to himself. Before He changed people, He welcomed them.

It's important for us to realize that people are transformed best in the presence of love, not the pressure of correction.

It breaks my heart that church globally is known as the most judgemental place on earth.... The truth is If we are to impact the world

like Christ we have to allow His love to so transform us that like him we welcome before we correct.

Rom 2:4 says, God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance. In John 8 we see how Jesus responds to the woman caught in the act of adultery.

- * He protects her
- * Removes Condemnation
- * Restores dignity
- * Then says Go and sin no more.

Ways we can live this out

- * Friendship (friend confesses a struggle- Listen and affirm them first, don't jump straight to advice.
- * LGBTQ (Do they encounter love first, or correction?)
- * Politics (Do you realize that if you are a republican that you will most probably be sitting next to a democrat at the Kings feast in Heaven. Jesus blood alone determines who gets into heaven alone regardless of the political opinions. Its ok to love those who have different opinions than you.

Call Linda up.

So in closing..... If you remember anything from this message it's that you are deeply loved and your greatest calling is to express that love to the world around you.

Won't you stand with with me. I believe God wants to mark people this morning and release a baptism of love over you.... So right where you are put your hand on your heart.