

Just a Little More Love

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the critical need for more love within the church to strengthen relationships and foster unity amidst challenges.

Duration: 26:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of love in the lives of Christians. He acknowledges that humans tend to remember the one unloving act more than the many loving ones. The speaker shares personal anecdotes about miscommunication and misunderstandings that occurred due to language differences. He also highlights the need for love and understanding as the organization he is a part of expands globally. The sermon concludes with a reminder that love should be firm and just, not simply forgiving without addressing wrongdoing.

Transcript

I was really wrestling with what to speak on. It's a very live church, and God gave me some thoughts, again, on the subject of love, and I wanted to not share the same words, but just share some similar thoughts. This morning, I'd like you to turn to Philippians.

Here was a church known for their love, and yet what does Paul write to them, starting at verse 8. For God is my witness, how greatly I long after you all in the tender mercies of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment. That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

That you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ under the glory and praise of God. And I just had this burden this morning, that we may understand the great need so often in our own fellowship is just for more love. I believe to some degree, and I'm sure it varies from team to team and place to place, but I believe that there is a lot of love in OM.

I've searched my heart about that, because knowing things that happen, things that we are at times ashamed of as a movement, as the leaders of the movement, if we're not careful we can become too critical. But I think as we look at what God is doing through people's lives, there is a lot of love and I think

often we don't see people's loving actions. The way we are as human beings, if a person does ten things or seven things that are somewhat loving, that are motivated by the love of Christ and the desire to obey God's word, and then one thing that is unloving and a bit selfish, that is the thing that is more easily remembered.

That is part of human nature, both among Christians and non-Christians. One of the things I guess we have in common. And I know that sometimes when I'm ministering in a local church, that they are a church that really knows something about love, in cases I'm sure more than we do.

Sometimes that love is untested. And I found myself Sunday morning in a church where I knew there was a lot of love, it was a good church, it was a live church, and yet I felt this constraint to just give a plea for more love and talk about how that would affect their lives. And for the little feedback, because we had to run out of there to catch a plane, at least I did, the others headed by vehicle toward New Jersey, as they didn't go with me to Norfolk.

I was given assurance and then later I talked to the pastor's wife on the phone, you know, they felt this was absolutely the word they needed from the Lord. And more love within our own fellowship would affect every area of our life, would affect every area of our life. Now in speaking about love, I'm not saying we don't need more commitment to the truth.

I think that's always true and I recommend you, we won't turn there now, to 1st John, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, or to 2nd John, 3rd John, books that are not read very much. Strong emphasis on truth and we need that, we need that. But I just had this desire, and I wrote these few notes last night, that somehow we would seek the Lord's face today, to have more love.

What are some of the areas of our life where this would be affected? And I wrote down, it would affect especially our attitude. Again, I'm really out of it here, I'm just passing through, I have to leave Monday morning, I've not had any reports that are leading me to share this, I don't have any acts to grind this morning, as you can probably guess, I'm only half awake because of the time zones. It's somewhere around 2 or 3 in the morning right now.

But I just believe in my own life that there can always be more love. We have so much about this in the New Testament. I just urge you to meditate on 1 Corinthians 13.

If you don't have 1 Corinthians 13, whatever you may have, or you may be on the radical cutting edge of discipleship, you may be strong in the truth in different ways, but if you don't have 1 Corinthians 13, you just don't have it. It's what it's all about, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control against such, there's no law. That of course comes from the book of Galatians, very closely tied in with what we read in 1 Corinthians 13.

Again and again, these very good, loving fellowships go through major division, I mean heavy stuff. It's the most depressing thing I have found in my Christian life. And sometimes OM teams have gone through those things.

And generally, if there had just been a little more love, especially at the moment of impact, when the crisis came, when the strong words came, it's amazing. After being at this church, I felt led on the Monday to phone another church that I ministered to when I was back in the States in June. In fact, the whole church movement, a thousand strong.

Again, when I was there, I was so impressed. A young movement, fresh movement, very much delivered from legalism, the kind of church that I certainly easily could have related to. God gave us a close linking with those people, very strong on truth.

Also with a fairly good emphasis on relationship. But in the last six months, they have gone through deep, deep pain because of disunity, actually on the subject of the inerrancy of Scripture. Just coming out of this, a lot of their people came to mandate.

Quite a few are coming out of Europe. One of the first major missions thrust this fellowship, the whole new church movement has ever got into. It's interesting that this time of deep struggle and almost split their leadership in two pieces came after I had this meeting with all their elders about getting involved in world missions.

Because up to now, they have not been very involved. And then Dennis Banker went there to follow up on that visit. Fortunately, a lot of their difficulties going on mainly among the leadership and the young people were, you know, some of them unaware of it and getting involved and planning and praying to move out to the mission field.

More love. This is the message again and again we find in the epistles. And I would ask you to search your own heart.

I believe probably all of you are committed to the way of love. And you believe in love. You're not going to jump up in the meeting and say, I don't give me any more of this love business.

You know, I got enough of this in my life. And I'm not sharing this message to the exclusion of other messages. But personally, I feel that if we're going to make it through the next six months of heavy pressure, if we're going to make it through possible transition here in SDL to a different location, if we're going to make it through the fiery darts of Satan in the coming months, whatever way he decides to go at us.

And OM has been hit very hard. You know, sometimes the hard hits that we have because they're involved very deeply in people's personal lives and their marriages, they cannot be shared. They cannot be shared.

But we're being hit. And we, as we face this growth of OM, as it spreads right across the world, increasing numbers come from greater distances, seemingly at times with a greater cultural differences as well. We're going to need more love.

You know, it's so easy to have miscommunication. Let me tell you what happened in Messiah College. I sent two shipments of books to Messiah College, one out of the old motor home, John Wright sent it, had my name on it.

Everything was fine. The books were sitting outside the chaplain's office, the man who helped organize the meeting. The other shipment came later.

The chaplain phoned up the maintenance department and he said, I'd like you to come up here and fit a light bulb. My bulb's burnt out. While you're doing it, I want you to take these books and put them in a particular room.

And he named the room. The man who took the message was not the man who came up to fix the light bulb. That was the next man.

And in the English language, and we Americans are especially guilty, we often speak just short sentence. We're a nation of abbreviation and of slang. So when the man came up, he fixed the bulb and he said, oh, are these the books you want to get rid of? The chaplain said, yeah, take them away.

He'd already told the man on the phone where they were going. Let me just tell you, \$1,000 a book's history. They're gone.

I arrived, where are my books? These students, they were so embarrassed to tell the third chief. They didn't even want to say who was responsible. Took me a while to find out who this was.

But it was the chaplain. And we had a good laugh and a good talk about it. It wasn't a lack of love on the part of the chaplain.

I hope it wasn't a lack of love on the part of the maintenance department. Maybe they had a bad day. It was a miscommunication, a language problem.

Different phrases mean different things to different people at different times. And I'm sure all of us have had similar things, right? Working here in Bromley or Forest Hill. But I thank God that through that little crisis, and they have said they're going to send me money to cover these books.

I had inventory on them, amazing enough, because David Teraberry wanted an inventory. And I had it with me, the exact list of what books they were. Our raw cost of those books, what we actually paid, the number of them were Operation Worlds, was less than \$1,000.

It was still a heartbreak. And I'm praying, if it be the Lord's will, that they would send the money to cover the books. I think they'll feel a lot better about it.

I hope they don't get a copy of this tape. But, you know, God was about to do something really big there at Messiah College. This was a big event for them.

And when we gave that invitation and we read through the feedback papers from different folk, we realized God had done something big. Just right at the beginning, God wanted to bring an unloving situation. Satan wanted to bring an unloving situation.

And God, in His grace, overruled, at least as far as I know. I don't know things that may have gone on that I don't know about. And I just feel such a desire to ask you, when the pressure's on, go that extra mile in letting love cover, in believing the best, in trying to patiently find a solution in the midst of that crisis, rather than perhaps blowing off steam or saying something that's unkind or developing a wrong attitude.

God is concerned about our attitudes. Again and again, when I've been about to say something or do something extreme, and the leader of any movement, and the leaders have the greatest capacity to bring pain to that movement. If it's just a new recruit, we can often isolate that to some degree and deal with it.

But if the pain is coming from a major leader, it has the potential to bring so much hurt to the body. And I just want to confess, if it wasn't at 17, 18, 19, 20 years of age, this message was hammered into me. Again and again, I had to repent.

Again and again, I read another article, another book on love. In the very earliest days, everybody in OM had to read Theodore Epps' book, *Make Love Your Aim*, or *Love is the Answer*. *Make Love Your Aim* is another book by Eugenia Price.

And though I still fail, I still fail, I know if it wasn't for this emphasis, I would have blown OM in pieces, or they would have had to remove me before I did that. I would have blown my marriage in pieces. And I just thank God that this message is very clear in Scripture.

And with it comes the message of brokenness and repentance, because when we have these high goals in the area of love, we will fail. We will fail to live up to our own message. There's no question about it.

Therefore, plan B has to constantly go into effect. Love will cause us to repent. Love will cause us to go to that brother.

Pride says, don't go. Don't humble yourself. This trip in the United States, I had to humble myself very severely, at least twice on the telephone in repentance and brokenness for something that I had done in the past, didn't realize it had not been cleared up completely.

And pride, at the moment of criticism, misunderstanding, pride will try to move into control. And it's only if love is dominating our lives that it will, how can you say, it will conquer over the pride or the hurt or other difficulty that there may be. And I'm not expressing this so well, but I just say, you know, it works.

Love works. If we're committed to this, again and again, we'll be restrained. At the end of the day, we'll be so happy that we were restrained.

Jerry Davey here has seen the one or two number of unloving situations in committee meetings, board meetings, when Verwer's temperament overheats and the words come out that are not thought through. And sometimes at the end, it's only the apology or the repentance, sometimes even the tears that bring in the flood of blessing. What a joy to be able to call up someone that maybe you have hurt with your tongue or with your wrong attitude.

I heard again last week, public sin, public repentance. Private sin generally just means private repentance. No one's asking you to, you know, hang all your dirty laundry out in front of the SDL warehouse.

But if it's a public thing, if you have, you know, even publicly said something unloving and unkind, even to an unconverted person, even an unconverted person, then that person needs your apology. I remember once having to apologize to a man who pumped petrol into my vehicle. I was very strong against pumping petrol on the pavement.

The price went up, and this guy was sort of daydreaming, and a lot of petrol spilled over, went on the pavement, and I gave him a piece of my mind. Then I had to go back and apologize. I used some kind of excuse, you know, I was under pressure.

Forgive me, but at least there was half an apology. I really recommend you don't go around giving away pieces of your mind because you may run out shorter than you think. And then after that, you have a lot more problems of just functioning at all.

More love is the challenge of the New Testament. There's no situation where a little more love generally wouldn't help. There's no marriage where a little more love wouldn't help.

With it will come the patience, and if the patience isn't there, as in my case sometimes, then there has to be the apology, and brokenness, humility, practical apologizing. That's all tied in, that's what it's all about. It's not you living at some superior level, always oozing out with love in every situation.

My daughter came over to visit us last night and shared about a woman raped just around the corner from where she lives. We live in a real world, and it's not a matter of you sort of always just being, you know, all sort of loving in a way that sometimes we get a false interpretation of love. Love has to be firm.

Love also demands justice, and if that person is found, I don't think the woman involved should just sort of say, oh well, you know, just as long as you apologize, we of course, you know, forgive you. Of course, if she's a Christian, hopefully she will forgive, but there must be justice, and there are the laws of God, and God has ordained also that there are laws in the world, and there is a time when love must be firm, and it's a hard balance to find, and only perhaps when you're a parent will you discover how difficult it is to find that balance of love and firmness. I believe love, our commitment to love also will bring a greater call to purity.

We don't always connect the two as we see increased immorality and impurity in the Church of Jesus Christ. We may ask, where does love fit into this? And I was thinking through this, and I realized that if I really love a sister in Jesus Christ, then the last thing in the world I will ever do is in any way be involved in bringing her into any kind of impurity or getting involved in impurity. What may look like love is love.

What may feel like some great, wonderful experience that seems to be from God, I've actually had people, when I've counseled them, justify impurity because the feeling was so wonderful, and they haven't had it. Married men, married men justify immorality because they hadn't had that wonderful feeling for a couple of years. I was just reading another book on the plane, just part of the book, just again exposing, completely exposing the idea that you can build anything in your life on romantic love.

It's a con. No marriage was ever built on romantic love. It's got to be agape love.

It's got to be a love that's got much, much more than what comes out of these deceitful films that paint this brand of romantic love. No wonder the marriages in Asia, which are brought into being through the parents, where the person is, the marriage is arranged, are actually proving to hold just as well as marriages that are based on choice by partner in our Western world. I'm not saying one is better than the other.

Probably most of you would definitely feel the Western way was better, but our statistics aren't any better. And I just insert this that tied in with this whole area of morality and purity. If you think here at STL and ICT, you can get into any kind of lustful, immoral relationship and cover that up, you're going to be in for the shock of your life, because let me tell you, you're going to have to live with it.

And it may be months, but sooner or later, you will not be able to bear the pain, especially if revival comes and the Holy Spirit works in a special way. You will not be able to bear the pain of that hidden iniquity and sin and purity that was done in the dark. And I believe it's something we need to realize is tied in with this message of love.

Love will bring things into the light. Love will deal with things fully rather than trying to engage in cover up. And then lastly, in the moment that remains, love, of course, will affect our unity on every side in our homes, in our offices, where we live.

We may not think the problem we have right now in any situation is a problem of lack of love. But I believe if you search more carefully, you'll discover that more love in that situation will help you resolve that problem quickly. The problem may not be priority love.

No, it may be practical. It may be an area of justice. It may be an area of communication.

But a little more love, whatever the problem is, won't hurt. It won't hurt. And it may help to find the solution a lot quicker.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word, even to the Philippian believers that tells them that you wanted more love in the midst of an already loving church. And there was this plea for prayer that their love may abound more and more.

I thank you, oh God, that again and again, when I've been about to make big mistakes, it's your message on love that has restrained me. I thank you that the times I didn't do the right thing or I sinned or failed, that it was your love that helped me come to repentance. And your love that lifted me up when I was down, down on myself, down on the movement, down on others.

That your love lifted me up and brought me back to sanity, stability, and maturity. And we want to know this ongoing work of love. We know it is supernatural, but we know you will not force it on us.

That we will have to repent. We will have to deal with sin. We will have to call sin for what it really is.

And all of its ugliness and all of its power to deceive, to destroy, to bring confusion. We think of the degree of gossip that gets loose when love isn't in control. And innuendo and judgmentalism.

And we know this is one of Satan's primary methods to slow us down. Then we know when we do fail, if we don't know how to appropriate your love, we get in the grip of depression or discouragement and fail to fight back to that position of maturity and victory. Think of your word that says our sins will find us out.

Oh Lord, don't let us ever engage in cover up. Help us to keep an open life and an open book before you and before those leaders that, according to your word, have been assigned as guardians of our walk with yourself. Be it our pastor or be it our leaders in this spiritual movement that you have called us into.

Therefore, our God, we do recommit ourselves to this high and lofty calling of doing everything and of saying everything with love. Help us in the midst of miscommunications to be able to let that love cover it, to talk things out in a way that will honor you. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

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