

Love

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes that biblical love is a deliberate choice to prioritize others' well-being through selfless actions and giving.

Duration: 38:44

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:4

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of love in action. Love is not just a feeling, but it is seen in the practical things we do for others. It can be as simple as taking out the garbage or scrubbing a toilet. The speaker also highlights the impact of seeing love lived out in the lives of others, which can be more powerful than just reading about it in the Bible. Love is manifested through giving and does not count the cost. It is firm yet gentle, willing to confront and correct in a loving manner. The speaker encourages believers to learn from the communist practice of evaluating and improving their actions, rather than focusing on their successes.

Transcript

I bestow all my goods to feed the poor. Though I give my body to be burned and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long and is kind.

Love envieth not. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily proposed, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, dareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.

But whether there be prophecy, they shall fail. Whether there be tongue, they shall speak. Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I speak as a child.

I understood as a child. I thought as a child. When I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love.

These three, but the greatest of these is love. One of the things we owe to this generation is a new emphasis on love. You read it in the magazine.

You see it on the bumper sticker. Make love, not war. Live love.

Love in. And all the rest. Well, this is certainly a biblical emphasis if you look at it from the Bible standpoint.

So this morning, I'd like to think with you about love as it is presented in the word of God. First of all, I'd like to make seven basic statements about love and then give some practical illustrations as to how they apply in the Christian life. The first statement is this.

In the Bible sense, love is not so much a matter of the emotion as of the will. A lot of people think of love as something like an uncontrollable emotion that comes upon you, something like a case of the measles, and you just become that nothing you can do about it. And if it doesn't come, if it doesn't hit you, well, it's quite beyond you anyway.

But strangely enough, the Bible doesn't speak about love that way. Love in the Bible is primarily a matter of the will. We don't think of it that way.

I think we've been so brainwashed and conditioned. Well, that's why the Bible commands us to love. If it were some uncontrollable emotion sweeping over us, over which we had no control, well, of course, we couldn't do anything about it.

But the Bible says love, commands love. So, therefore, it's a matter of, it's something I can do something about. The second observation I'd like to make about it is this, that love basically thinks of others.

I think you caught that very strongly in the chapter that we read this morning. Basically, love thinks of others. That's why this chapter is in the Bible.

Sandwiched in between chapters 12 and 14, it's trying to correct an abuse that existed in the church in Corinth, where the people lost the conception of love as it really should be, and they became selfish. Selfishness is the opposite of love. Some of these dear people got taken up with the gift of tongues in Corinth.

Not the way God intended tongues to be used. They got taken up with the abuse of tongues. And they were using tongues to show off, to vaunt themselves, to exalt themselves at the expense of other people.

And Paul is saying here in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, look, love isn't like that. Love is always thinking of the other person and how it can help the other person. And so in the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit of God, love is thinking of how to edify and build up the rest of the people of God and never tries to show off, never tries to exalt itself at the expense of others.

Of course we see this most beautifully in the life of the Lord Jesus. No one was ever as unselfish as he. And I think in the human sense we see it very strongly in the love of a mother.

Really one of the great gifts that God has given to mankind is the love of a mother. And how she can go through life, a godly Christian mother at least, so unselfishly, always thinking of others, always thinking of what she can do to help others, whether it be her children or the gifts that come into her home. But that's the way love is.

It's self-effacing, wondering all the time, what can I do to help somebody else? The third observation is this, love manifests itself in giving. Love manifests itself in giving. Oftentimes in the New Testament when you have the word love, in the very same context you'll have the word give.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. God's love manifested itself to the world in giving his son for us. It says in Ephesians 5, Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

His manifestation of love was in self-immolation at the cross of Calvary. It must have been wonderful love. And we manifest our love to others by giving.

When the Lord Jesus sent the disciples out, he told them that their ministry was going to be a ministry of giving, not receiving. You know, it's so easy in Christian life and service to develop a giving attitude. And, you know, what's in it for me? And what am I going to get out of this? And sad to say, in church circles today, this is very, very strong.

But it's really not the Christian way. The Christian ministry is a ministry of giving. The work of elders and the local assembly is a ministry of giving.

Give, keep up that, and it shall be given unto you. Good measure, prepped down, shaken together, and running over. But with what measure you give, it shall be measured to you.

Again, love manifested itself in giving. That's why I can never say, I can't love that person. That means I can't give.

If you say, well, I love him, but I don't really like giving, we're playing games when we talk like that. The fact is, we can. That's the third thing.

Love manifested itself in giving. Fourth, love doesn't count the cost. Love doesn't count the cost.

Mind you, there was no real reason in us why the Lord Jesus should have ever come down from heaven and shed his blood for us. But it was genuine love, supernatural, divine love. A love that never counted the cost.

And he went all the way to Calvary because he loved us so. This is true in a certain extent in human relations. The average mother would go through fire to rescue her baby.

He doesn't count the cost. He doesn't say, I might get singed, I might get burned or anything. No, no.

The baby's there and in danger. And then another wonderful thing about love is, love doesn't place favorites to all. And if you are in the kingdom of God, then love goes out to the unlovable.

Brilliant. Goes out to the unlovable just as well as it goes out to the others. Then the sixth thing I'd like to mention is that love doesn't keep account of wrongs.

Love doesn't keep account of wrongs. The scripture says love covers a multitude of sins. When you read that verse, just remember that verse doesn't have to do with atonement for sin.

...away by the blood of Christ. This verse is saying love covers a multitude of sins. That is, love doesn't go publicizing the faults and failures of others.

...and failure. And then finally, love does not withhold. There's an awful misunderstanding in the world today about love that love is all permissiveness.

Love never criticizes, never corrects, is never firm. But certainly that doesn't agree with what we learned in the word of God, does it? Love can be firm. It says in the book of Proverbs that the parent who doesn't discipline his child hates his child.

My, that's strong language, isn't it? Hates his child. And of course, God is the example for us in this. It says, whom he loves, he chastens.

It is not a kindness to our fellow Christians to have that kind of unrealistic love that glosses over everything and would never think of correcting. Now, how does this work out in the Christian life? Well, it's very, very practical. A lot of people think of love as just being something ethereal, something in the clouds, something super romantic and all the rest that never has its feet on the ground.

But real love does have its feet on the ground, and real love begins right in the home. And if you and I can get the victory in our own homes, it won't be too hard to get the victory anywhere else in the Christian life. You say, what do you mean by that? Well, I mean this, that oftentimes it's in our own homes that it's most difficult to practice Christian love.

With our own parents and with our own loved ones, with those who are nearest and dearest to us by the ties of nature, it's just one of the crazy quirks of human, of fallen human nature that we treat those who are closest to us oftentimes the worst. Let me give you an example. I'm just having a terrible fight with my parents, running off at the mouth and saying all kinds of wrong things, and all of a sudden the telephone rings and I pick up the phone and it's one of my friends.

And immediately I just turn on the charm. I'm absolutely radiant. I'm a TV personality on the phone.

And it's such a sharp contrast. It's a good thing they didn't hear what was going on just a minute ago in the house, you know. I mean the walls were quivering, the windows were bulging, all kinds of acrimony flying around the room.

And yet here in a moment, the telephone, just with a ring of a telephone, I could just turn on the charm and exude personality. Isn't it wonderful? That's why I say it's so difficult. The difficult place to conquer this is in the home.

And if God can give us the victory in the home, it won't be too hard anywhere else. We treat people close to us so well and yet when we can really be this dichotomy in our lives, God, he gives us the power. But such is his calm and demand.

These are battles that are going to develop. This great... Many of you are living in teen situations now and many of you will be out serving the Lord, some in the foreign fields, hopefully, and working with other people. And you'll find that love is really the... People who are really broken before the Lord and who can practice... Love doesn't want somebody else to get that bad after.

Terrifically practical. I know none of you would have this problem. But, you know... I hope I don't say anything this morning that's indelicate.

But, you know, love... ...room and it cleans the sink. We'll clean that washbasin so that it's in better condition for the next person. Don't think this doesn't make for a happier life as you're going along.

Toilet paper is exhausted. Love sees that it's supplied. You know? The salvation is to leave and let somebody else to be done and does it.

So an awful lot of Christian people who are really lovely, if you suggest something to them to do, Johnny on the spot. They'll really go ahead and do it. Something as mundane as seeing that plastic bag of garbage out of the back door and taking it out to the air.

And the easiest thing to do is realizing others have work to do. They have a schedule too. And you don't want to... And a grip at this... Really, I really think that in the long run this is what... ...for evangelism, evangelism... Because they're not that.

You see, in many, many ways love takes the baby out of thinking of the people there in the meeting and how they want to listen to the message uninterrupted. And the baby's not getting too much out of the message. I didn't say nothing, but not too much.

And I mentioned at the beginning too that love can be firm. Love can be firm. And I really think we can take a page from the wonderful principles.

It's easy to pay attention to... It's easy to concentrate on young people. My classic example of that is Bill... Your brother Jack works in... I mentioned this to you before how at his camp at school a man who came to the camp who had all his influential well-to-do friends would wave from their table for mild voices. And I'm going to try to speak for the people.

When he gave the Law of Moses he said something to a deaf person. They say, what? Speak in a meeting and just speak in a soft, gentle voice so that... Chapter 14. Forgives... to maintain the grudge.

The opposite of it is pretty gruesome. If somebody has wronged you and you let the thing ferment in your bowels so pretty soon you're gastric... He was a young man because... One of the greatest texts of love is when everybody around you is acting selfishly. That's the hardest day for love.

When you're in a situation... Find in the selfishness of others an opportunity to identify yourself... Opportunity to identify yourself... We all tell the story of... Some of you have heard of dear brother Charleston... You know, it's one thing to go to the... ways in which you can... You can be thinking of... Even as we say these things... A little love... So easy, Laura, just think of...

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