

12/6/2020

Love Came Down

Love Is a Verb (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

BIG IDEA: Love is a fountain, not a faucet. Always on. Love is the outcome of Advent invasion.

In our first week of Advent, we talked about the necessity of love – it's love or nothing. Spiritual giftedness is not as important as spiritual fruit. The Corinthians were a perfect example of this fact. Paul says of the Corinthians that they were "enriched in Him in all speech and knowledge" (1 Cor. 1:5) and were "not lacking in any gift" (1 Cor. 1:7). And yet, trouble abounded. One of the most gifted congregations was also the most troubled. Paul's letter seeks to address the myriad issues facing the Corinthians church. In the midst of his discussion, he highlights to them a more excellent way, the way of love.

This week we will answer the question: What is love? As Christ followers, how should our lives reflect love?

When Advent love invades your life, you become a fountain. John 4:14

Love never falls down, crumbles, falls apart. Rugged and resilient love.

- As Randy pointed out, Paul in the passage made love the subject of 15 verbs. The term for love used here is *agape*, and in this context it means "attracted to you for no other reason than your good." Out of this, the heart bubbles out activity. In other words, LOVE IS A VERB.
 - How does this picture of love differ from our worldly version of "love"?
 - Are there ways in which the church has co-opted a worldly version of love? If so, how?
- Consider the following things love does not do: **it does not envy or begrudge another's success; it does not brag about itself; it does not parade its own importance; it does not act rudely or disrupt relationships; it does not seek its own interests; it does not irritate; it does not score-keep; and it does not smile at wrongdoing.** All these descriptors call out the problems within the Corinthians church.
 - Compare/contrast this list with our own culture. What kind of behavior is celebrated in American culture? How are we the same/different from ancient Corinth?
 - What queues has the church taken from our culture in our message?
- C.S. Lewis describes two types of love: Need-love and Gift-love. Need-love is like a vacuum. It comes to the table empty and reaches out to any object that seems to hold the promise of filling

it. This is always hungry because it wants horizontal love to do what it can never do – satisfy its longing to be filled. This is the kind of love that we as humans engage in. Give-love is born of fullness, not emptiness. It transfers value from the subject to the object in order to fill up the object, not take from it.

- “God’s love is gift-love. God did not have to create this world. There was no necessity outside Himself, no one forced Him to act...He created because He wanted to...God’s I **LOVE YOU IS A COMPLETE SENTENCE**”. How would embracing this truth change the way you love others?
- How can we encourage each other to embrace this truth and put on love?

Randy’s concluding thoughts were a reminder and a challenge: You will never obtain AGAPE love by pursuing it directly; you can only get it by pursuing **Christ** directly. It is a gift from our King. These verses point to the only One whose love is perfect and complete. **“Faith is the path for the fountain of Christ’s love to flow in and through our hearts”**. Love is not something we turn on and off; it is more than emotion and sentiment. Ultimately love is a readiness to act, a disposition to act for the good of another in a wise and discerning way.

Last week, Randy challenged us to take these verses and try insert our own names in place of “love”. This week, **Randy’s challenge to us was to make the following our prayer for the next seven days:**

Oh, LORD, make me patient and kind. Protect me from envy, arrogance, or pride. Keep me from rudeness or self-interest. Irritability or scorekeeping. May I never take joy at injustice but follow the truth wherever it leads. Give me the strength to always protect, always trust, always hope, and always endure.

Spend some time praying this prayer together as a group as you close out your time together.