

Unconditional Love

1 John 4:7-12 NIV - God's Love and Ours - ⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love.** ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:16 NIV - And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. **God is love.** Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

- **538** times "love" is found in the NIV
- **57** times in the Gospel of John **Jesus uses the word Love**

Yet, in the world that we live in, **Love is something that is reserved for only the closest of relatives or the greatest of friends.**

But even then that love has conditions.

- As long as you **don't tell me how to live.**
- As long as you **do what I want you to do.**
- As long as you **don't hurt me.**
- As long as you **behave in a manner that is pleasing to me,**
- **Then, I will love you.**

But we are talking about something called **Unconditional Love today.**

- For it was **without conditions** that **Jesus went to the cross of Calvary.**
- It was **without reserve** that **He so freely gave His life for our sin.**

1 John 3:16 NIV - 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.

Many people don't realize today that **THE LOVE OF GOD IS UNCONDITIONAL.**

Definition: Unconditional love, simply put, is **love** without strings attached.

- It's **love** you offer freely.
- You don't base it on what **someone does** for you in return.
- You simply **love** them and want nothing more than their happiness.

- The word **Unconditional** is simply what it sounds like.
- There is **no condition** that will either cause us **to earn it or deter it.**

John 3:16 NIV - For God **so loved the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The Greek word for world (kosmos) is **defined as** “the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ.”

- This is **the world that God loved.**
- It ***doesn't say*** that **God loved all the good people.**
- Or that **God loved all the Jews.**
- Or that **God loved all the saints.**
- It says, **“For God so loved the world.”**

God's love clearly isn't based on our spiritual condition or our moral predisposition.

- **It isn't based on our behavior or our attitude toward him.**
- Rather we see here that -
- **God's love for mankind is universal and unconditional.**
- **He loves everyone.**
- This is one of the things ***that sets Him apart from every other god held up by every other world religion.***

Christianity uniquely claims God's love comes free of charge; no strings attached but understand... *no other religion*** makes that claim.**

- **Buddhists**, for example, follow an eight-fold path to enlightenment. It's not a free ride.
- **Hindus** believe in karma, that your actions continually affect the way the

world will treat you; that there is nothing that comes to you not set in motion by your actions.

- **The Jewish code of the law** implies God has requirements for people to be acceptable to Him.
- And in **Islam God is a God of judgment**, not a God of love. You live to appease him.
- **Only Christianity** dares to proclaim ***God's love is unconditional***.
- **An unconditional love that we call grace**.
- ***Grace is God freely giving to us the gifts of forgiveness, mercy and love***.

God's love for us is unconditional

Rom 5:6-8 sums it up this way: *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, **Christ died for the ungodly**.⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.⁸ But **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

Ephesians 3:19 NIV - and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul said he wanted ***"to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge."***

- What a paradox!
- ***The love of God is so designed*** that ***we might be always learning and continually grasping after***, that which ***shall never be completely known!***

WE WILL NEVER KNOW THE DEPTH OF GOD'S LOVE COMPLETELY

- Though ***we learn some today***, there will be ***more yet to learn tomorrow***. ***Even in a world without end***, we will still be ***reveling in the depth***, ***length*** and ***breadth*** of ***the love of God***, ***FOR GOD IS LOVE!***

LOVING THE WAY JESUS loves has ***no beginning***.

- His love has ***no ending***.
- It is ***forever***. It will ***endure eternally***.

Loving the way Jesus loved is the only way we are going to make a difference in our communities, in our church, in our ministry, in our lives, and in our world!

The only way we will make a difference in this hurting, bruised, bleeding, broken, diseased, confused, prodigal world is to love the way Jesus loved.

Love so amazing and so divine that it demands my all.

That is why He was so very careful to define the kind of love he would give us:

John 13:34-35 - Jesus said, ³⁴ “A new command I give you: **Love one another.** As I have loved you, so **you must love one another.** ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, **if you love one another.**”

The apostle John told us:

1 John 3:17 - If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

Jesus told us: Luke 6:27-36 - Love for Enemies

²⁷ “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? **Even sinners love those who love them.**

³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

LOVING THE WAY JESUS LOVED IS THE ONLY WAY THIS CHURCH IS GOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR WORLD.

- You can help make a difference in this church, ***if you will love one another with the love of God*** that is in your heart by the Holy Spirit!
- **Love forgets a person’s past and even their present sins and failures and considers them to be under the blood of Jesus!**

WE may say: **don’t you know** what that person has been doing?

- **Don’t you know what sin they are involved in?**”

Real love...

- **Unconditional Love**, says, “I don’t care how bad your sin. *I still love you.*”
- **Unconditional Love** says, “No matter what you’ve done, I *still want to pray with you.*
- **Unconditional Love** says, “No matter how horrible or how gross your sin, I *still care about you and I still want to help you* in your walk with God any way that I can.

Do you know why I am teaching this this morning?

- I believe that “***My Church***” is going to grow.
- I believe that this church is going to be in a position to reach people like no other church has for a long time.
- If we are not careful, **we will judge them.**
- We will say, **Not Me!** I’ve never done that!
- **My Sin** is not as bad as their sin!”
- **I’m Better** than them!”
- **I’m Holier** than thou”

When we do this ***we will stop the grace of God from its ability to operate*** in the lives of people who desperately need His Grace to operate today.

- We will stop the move of God in this church.
- We will kill any chance of this church growing and ministering to the people who we say we love.
- We will be just like any other church.
- We will have nothing unique to offer this community
- We will lose our identity as Children of God.

Ephesians 3:19 - and to know ***this love that surpasses knowledge***—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- In the moment **you think you understand** the **Unconditional Love of Jesus Christ**, *you only condemn yourself as* His love is without measure.
- Paul to the church in Ephesus said **that His love passes all understanding and knowledge.**

Romans 8:35-39 - ³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But what about my sin?

- What about my failures.
- What about my mistakes?
- What about the trouble I'm in right now?
- What about the mess I've made of my life?

Hear me... Nothing shall separate you from the Love of God.

- ***His love is unconditional***
- His love ***does not depend on your circumstances*** aligning to His will.
- It ***does not depend on our being acceptable*** to Him.

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

I don't know why he loved me first.

- I just know that **He did**.
- **I didn't deserve it.**
- I didn't earn it.
- I didn't do anything to cause it to happen.
- He simply loved me long before I ever returned that love to Him.

John 15:12 - My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

CLOSE:

How did He love us? - Unconditionally.

- We **didn't** earn His love.
- And there is **nothing that we can do** dissuade it.

And that's the way we are commanded to love others.

- **We love others, just as they are**
- We love others regardless of the depth of their sin.
- We love others in spite of how they have treated us.
- We love others this way because our Heavenly Father loves them this way.
- ***He was despised and rejected of men, and yet He still loved them.***

So the example **He gives to you and I only condemns us if we fail to love in the same measure.**

John 15:13 - Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

A love that divides and criticizes is not real love.

- A love that seeks its own revenge is not authentic love.
- A love that refuses to initiate reconciliation is not genuine love.
- A love that says it won't forgive is not actually love!

Genuine Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.

- Love is patient, suffers long and refuses to retaliate.
- ***God-love is kind and rejects cruelty*** and seeks constructive ways to improve another person's life.

- Love is not jealous.
- Love does not boast.
- Love does not vaunt itself, does not seek to impress. ***Love does not parade itself*** and does not seek personal gain.
- **Love is courteous** and never acts out of character.
- It never perverts its way.
- **Love always acts in the best interests** of others.
- **Love is unselfish!**

- It does not pursue selfish advantages.
 - **Love shares** with others and does not seek its own.
 - It does not use others to get where it wants to go.
 - Love is not provoked.
 - **Love is not irritable or touchy** and never loses control of itself.
 - **It never responds in anger** and doesn't lash out while being reviled.
 - **Love utters no threats**.
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- **Love forgives!** Love, when wronged, has a **short memory**.
 - ***It forgets what it forgives.***
 - It doesn't keep a record of a wrong suffered.

PRAISE TEAM:

True Love - Agape Love... - Is unconditional love...

And unconditional love will change this world.

- **It will change your home.**
- It will change your workplace.
- It will change your school.
- It will change your family.
- And It will change this church and it's community.

So let me ask you... Do you love the way Jesus loves?