

The Big Idea: Our **ACTIONS ACTIVATE** our **LOVE**

“Orbies” or “water beads” are fun for all ages, but they’re no fun unless you add water, so let’s add water and come back later to discuss what they can teach us about love...

While we wait, we’re going to read a bunch of Bible that I believe will:

- Call us to LOVE
- Tell us WHO we should love
- Teach us HOW to love

First, we need to define “love.” All the “LOVE” we’re talking about are “**Agape**” love.

- Not “**Eros**” which is more sensual or sexual (it’s where we get the word “Erotic”)
- Not “**Phileo**” which is more buddy-buddy
- BOTH of these focus at least in part on what we get
- Agape is a selfless, putting others first, sacrificial, “I will love you to the detriment of my self” kind of love. It’s the love we found on the cross.
- Also, we’ll be using “LOVE” almost synonymously with “SERVE” this morning.
- To SERVE is to LOVE and to LOVE is to SERVE!

1.) Read 1 John 3:16-18

- John was calling out **virtue signaling** before it was cool
- *Virtue Signal* - To make a statement that implies to onlookers you’re virtuous.
 - Saying/doing to look good, not particularly bc you care about what you’re saying or doing.
 - An easy example would be a politician and a minimum wage vote
- What if God loved us in *word* but not *action*??? (Word became flesh! John 1:14)

2.) Read James 2:14-18

- If what you **believe** is not what you **live** how much can you honestly believe it?
- **We have to ask the question: Are you just virtue signaling your faith?**

3.) Read Luke 10:25-29

- The lawyer quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18
- Then he asks “Who exactly is my neighbor so I can check this step off?” (transactional/self-serving)
- Parable of the Good Samaritan
 - Samaritan is the hero, rescuing a Jew
 - Jews and Samaritans were oil and water, i.e. enemies
 - Jesus says loving your neighbor is doing like the Samaritan in the story: loving your enemy by sacrificially serving him
- He answers even more clearly who we should love in the next passage...

4.) Read Matthew 5:43-48

- The Bible calls us to love our friends and our enemies and everyone in between
- Jesus says easy to love people who love you back, but John tells us Jesus died for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2)
- Matthew 22:40 - Jesus says ALL of Scripture could be summed up by this: Love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.
- Galatians 5:13-15 - Paul takes it a step further: “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.
- **The Biblical mandate to love extends beyond people WE LIKE and people WE’RE LIKE.**
- We must love those who don’t love back; give grace when grace isn’t offered; show mercy when mercy isn’t extended; act with kindness when we’re met with anything but.
- This is the example of Christ and it’s what He has called us to.
- It glorifies God. It points people to the heart of God.

*I wrote a song I’d like to share while you read the next passage on your own...

5.) Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 to better define HOW we love

- Paul balances out John and James, saying we can’t just WORK without love.
- **It can’t just be about our actions alone but our hearts!**
- In between two of the most important passages we have about spiritual gifts, Paul says you can have all the gifts in the world, BUT without love...
- He tells us what love is and does, and **they are NOT defaults of humanity.**
- **This is not the American way or even the Human way, but it is the Christian way; to extend love to the people hardest to love.**
- Just before the passage in Matthew 5 we read...
 - *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. If someone slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also; if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well; and if someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.” -Matthew 5:38-42*
- Do Paul’s description of love in action sound familiar?? (Fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5)

We could list a billion specific examples of how to do this, but instead let’s observe 4 manners in which Jesus fleshed out the mandate of Love:

1.) Love **Practically**

- Jesus healed the soldier's ear (Luke 22)
- Jesus healed when He went places (Various passages. Google it!)
- He had compassion for the hungry crowd and fed them (Mark 14)
- He refilled the drinks when the wine ran out (John 2)
- I know there is nothing practical about these things, and they all certainly had deeper significance and meaning than the surface level, but **they were all very practical, "in the moment" needs he met.**
- You can have BIG impact by serving in small ways.
- You're not responsible for the whole world.
- The world has a Savior already. His name is Jesus.
- You're just responsible TO your neighbor.
- You can meet practical needs via a prayer or a loaf of bread or a quarter at Aldi.
- Love has the amazing power to multiply and accomplish far more than you would have thought possible.

2. Love **IM**practically

- Give yourself away! Give your house away!
- "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." -Philippians 2:3-4
- Jesus said came not to BE served but TO serve. (Mark 10)
- Jesus literally gave His very life so we might live. (Phil 2:8)
- He offered himself up as the atoning, cleansing sacrifice that would allow for us to be forgiven of sins and reconciled to our God the Creator! (Romans 4:25)

3. Love **Un**conditionally

- Jesus didn't *love* us to get something *from* us. We were still his enemies. (Rom. 5:8)
- He also didn't do this in response to anything good we did. Ephesians says by GRACE you've been saved through faith, NOT by works. (Eph. 2:8-9)
- He didn't love you because He wanted to convert you. He acted on his love for you simply because He loves you and desires relationship with you.
- He brought everything to the table, the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18)
- You're exchanging the currency of love from something physical to spiritual. Love isn't a return on investment, it's a deposit into the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Love without any strings attached, just like Jesus.

4. Love **Quietly**

- Jesus spent most of his ministry doing miracles and following up with "don't tell anybody." (Mark 7, 8, Luke 5, Matthew 16)
- "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you

give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, **they have received their reward in full**. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matt. 6:1-4)

- The more often you love others the less often you'll feel the need to tell someone about it.
- His ultimate act of love didn't even make Him famous. Everyone mourned and OMG'd and went back to their normal lives.
- The Father made him famous when he raised him from the dead and broke the curse of sin and death (Roman 6:4, Gal 1:1, Acts 2:32-33)
- God raised him and caused him to be seen (Acts 10:40)
- Then the Church experienced that love and took His fame worldwide! (See Acts)
- In our social media world where everyone is performing in the hopes of becoming famous, serve one another quietly and humbly and your love make Him famous!

The Kingdom of Heaven is like Orbies. A NEW parable...

Orbies are LOVE in WORD. Left alone they're not worth much of anything.

The water is the DEED that activates them and makes them awesome! (**See Pictures**)

And that's what love does when you act on it: it creates something beautiful and life changing that grows exponentially to the glory of God!

***Love results in people giving thanks to God (2 Corinthians 9)**

***Love CHANGED the world and it is still CHANGING the world through you!**

“Let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.”

*I'm going to ask you to respond to this mandate, first by letting you off the hook:

Nobody is good at this! Some of you are just less bad at it than others.

*And you certainly can't do this without the Holy Spirit

*Going forward, how can you BE AGAPE? Pray, read 1 Cor. 13, then pray it, then read, then pray it, read it again and then pray it.....

1.) Respond by reflecting: O God, am I loving well? Help me love like 1 Corinthians 13.

Help me love (*specific people*)

2.) Respond by repenting: If you have reserved your love for people easy to love take time this morning to repent of that and ask for the Spirits power to LOVE

3. Respond to the Love of Jesus: Before you can BE love you need to RECEIVE love!

If you don't have a relationship with Jesus as your LORD and SAVIOR I'm calling you to respond to His love that we've looked at all morning and be FORGIVEN and CLEANED and MADE NEW!