

THE GIFT OF LOVE
jkroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org
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John 13:1

1. This is the time of the year when people spend a lot of time thinking about giving and getting.
 2. In its highest form this giving and getting is a manifestation of what the Bible refers to as brotherly love; it is a reciprocal form of love that involves doing towards others that which they are going to do towards you.
 3. What I want to focus on this morning is the highest form of love; a form of love that cannot be defined based on what it is, rather it is defined by what it does and does not do.
 4. It is a form of love that is not of this world, but it is manifested in this world by people who have experienced and responded to it, and who have been enabled by God to manifest it towards Him and others.
 5. Very few people know what it is to be loved unconditionally from a human standpoint, and relatively few people are equipped to love others unconditionally.
 6. Yet every true follower of Jesus Christ knows what it is to be loved unconditionally by God, and, if things are as God wants them to be, they will be enabled by God to manifest His unconditional love toward others.
- NOTE: The fruit of the Spirit is, first and foremost, love. See Galatians 5:22
7. A person does not have to have the spiritual gift of discernment to conclude that the missing ingredient in the lives of many professed Christians is unconditional love; a form of love that is divine in its origin and not dependent on how others respond to it.
 8. It is my belief that the absence of “Agape Love,” the ability to love others as Christ has loved us, is the single greatest, missing ingredient in the lives of many Christians and churches, and that missing ingredient is the reason why we are not seeing revival in our day.
 9. Every serious follower of Jesus Christ should take the time to examine their lives in the light of what Jesus said about love in John 13, 14, 15, and 16.
 10. We will learn some important truths about Christ’s love for us and our responsibility to be an instrument of His love towards others.

I. Jesus’ earthly life was characterized by love. 1

- A. If we would understand unconditional love we must do so in and through Christ.
 - B. As Jesus approached the end of His earthly life we are told that He had loved His own who were in the world, and that He loved them to the end (to the uttermost, eternally).
- NOTE: Paul shared a similar thought when he wrote, “Love never fails.” 1 Corinthians 13:8
- C. A careful and complete study of Christ’s life and ministry will help us understand what God expects from us as followers of Jesus Christ.

II. Jesus demonstrated love in a practical way. 2-11

- A. Jesus and the Apostles were gathered in the Upper Room to observe the Passover.
- B. No servant was present to perform what was a normality in Jewish life at the time.
- C. So Jesus, without diminishing Himself in any way, got up from supper, poured water in a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet.
- D. It is evident that Peter viewed Jesus’ actions as somehow demeaning, and so he resisted the Lord’s intentions.

E. By taking upon Himself the form of a servant and washing His disciples feet Jesus elevated the mundane, everyday responsibilities of life to the level of ministry and a form of worship. NOTE: He also elevated simple acts of caring and kindness towards others that often go unnoticed, unappreciated, and sometimes misinterpreted or misunderstood.

III. Jesus declared that His followers were to follow His example. 12-17.

- A. We are most like our Lord when we do for others what He has done for us. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own (unique) love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- B. Note what John wrote in 1 John 3:13-24.
Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14 **We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.** 15 Everyone who hates (fails to actively love) his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 **We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 **Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.** 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. 23 **This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.** 24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.
- C. The commandment John was referring to is found in John 13:34-35.
"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

APPLICATION

1. My prayer is that Pacolet Hills Baptist Church will exemplify the sacrificial love that Jesus commanded us to manifest.
2. Christ is not only our example, but He is also the One who will enable us to love others even as He has loved us.
3. The place to begin is to honestly examine our lives in the light of what the Bible teaches related to loving God and loving others.
4. Jesus clearly declared that loving God involved more than singing, "O How I Love Jesus." John 14:21-24
"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24 **"He who does not love Me does not keep My words;** and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.
5. It costs nothing to express love verbally, but to love as Christ loved requires that we lay down our lives for others and demonstrate that we have "in deed and in truth."