

The Right Kind of Love

by Josh Reimer

I. Talk is cheap

- a. Suppose I told you that I could open all the windows in here using only my mind. I've never done it - I mean, we have air conditioning anyway, so why would I? But if I wanted to I could just think it and they would all open up. If I told you that, would you believe me?
 1. Okay, so you wouldn't believe me. But what if I said it a whole bunch of times? "I can open them with mind; I can open them with my mind; I can open them with my mind."
 2. I get the feeling that wouldn't convince you either. Probably the only way I could convince you is if I did it. And if I only did it once you would probably just think it a fluke. I would have to do it a few times before you would believe it.
 3. Why is that? It's because talk is cheap. It takes zero time or effort to make a claim - whether that claim is outrageous or whether it sounds reasonable.
- b. The Bible tells us that talk is cheap.
 1. **James 2:15-21**
 - A. If someone was hungry and had no food or money, how much would it mean if you just told them, "hey, you should go get something to eat" ?
 - B. How much would it have meant for Abraham to say, "I am God's servant; I trust Him no matter what," but refused to go offer up Isaac when God told him to?
 - C. Talk is cheap. Just saying it means nothing unless it's backed up with action.
 2. Remember when King Saul was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites and he didn't do it? What did he say when he first saw God's prophet, Samuel, after the battle with the Amalekites?
 - A. It's in 1 Samuel 15:13 and he said, "*Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.*"
 - B. He said it, but that sure doesn't mean he had done it.
 3. **Titus 1:15-16** describes people like this.
 - A. Verse 15 starts talking about these people who are defiled. It also calls them **unbelieving**.
 - B. Verse 16 says, "they profess to know God." In other words, these **unbelieving** people claim to be believers.
 - C. ...but "in works they deny Him." Talk is cheap. Their works define them as unbelievers; their words do nothing.
 4. And, of course, God cannot be fooled by cheap talk.
 - A. In Isaiah 29:13, the Lord said: *Forasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,*
 - B. In Luke 6:46, Jesus said: "*But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?*"
 - I. It's like He was saying, "why are you calling me Lord? If I was your Lord, you would do what I say."
 - II. Talk is cheap. Just calling Him Lord means nothing unless that statement is backed up with action.
 - III. We just can't fool God with our cheap talk.
- c. Now, remember when I asked if you would believe that I could open the windows using

only my mind?

1. You probably wouldn't believe me, not even if I said it a whole bunch of times. "I can open them with my mind; I can open them with my mind; I can open them with my mind." Go ahead and raise your hand if you believe me.
2. I can't fool you and I certainly can't fool God with my cheap talk.
3. How about this? "I love you; I love you; I love you," or "I love God; I love God; I love God." There are plenty of people who make that claim, and they make it over and over. But how much does it mean? That depends on if their actions back it up or not, doesn't it?

II. We are going to be looking this morning at the right kind of love.

- a. We already know that cheap talk can't be the right kind of love. I'm not suggesting that if you love someone you never say it, only that the words need something to back them up. That was point one of this sermon.
- b. Point two is that real love involves some kind of sacrifice. It means giving up our time and resources and maybe even leaving our comfort zone.
- c. Point number three will be that loving you is more than just saying, "I love you." It is doing what is best for you.
- d. And point number four will be that loving God is more than just saying we love God. It is obeying Him.

III. Let's move to point number two. Real love means sacrifice.

- a. There are two excellent ways of illustrating this and we can read them both in one place (**Ephesians 5:22-25**).
 1. Christ loved the Church. How do we know He loved the Church?
 - A. It wasn't because He said, "I love you guys and I hope you can find some way of paying for those ugly sins."
 - B. No, He loved the Church - us - so He left a better place to come down to us and pay for our sins. He made a sacrifice. As we just read, He "gave himself for [the Church]."
 2. We also just read that husbands are supposed to love our wives in that same way - a sacrificial way. It's not much different for wives - they have to make the sacrifice of submitting to their husbands.
 3. Ruby and I have a great arrangement - I earn the income and she does everything else.
 - A. Now suppose I went ahead and let Ruby clean the house, do my laundry, make me meals, and do everything else she does but I just spent all the money I make on myself. How much do you think it would mean when I tell her that I love her?
 - B. Or suppose that Ruby went ahead and shared the money I make but refused to take care of our home. How much would it mean when she told me that she loved me?
- b. This sacrificial type of love is not just for husbands and wives (**Ephesians 5:2**).
 1. Christ showed His love for us by making a sacrifice.
 2. We are all supposed to follow that example.
- c. Jesus even specifically told His Apostles to follow this example of self-sacrifice (**John 13:3-17**).

1. Jesus washed the disciple's feet - probably not a fun job.
 - A. And, lest we think that things were different back then and washing someone else's feet was not an unpleasant and lowly job, look at Peter's reaction in verse 8. "You shall never wash my feet!"
 - B. Peter was not about to have the Son of God stoop down - literally and figuratively - to wash his feet. It just didn't seem right.
2. In verses 14 and 15, Jesus told them to follow this example.
3. He kind of explains it in verse 16.
 - A. Jesus - our Master - was able to make the sacrifice of stooping down to wash their feet.
 - B. His servants - His disciples at that time and us today - are not greater than Him. If He wasn't too great to stoop down and do an unpleasant job, then neither are we.
- d. Jesus set the example of the right kind of love. And the right kind of love involves sacrifice.

IV. Point number three: loving each other means doing what is best for each other.

- a. Let's begin this point with another divine example. God loves us and so He disciplines us.
 1. Proverbs 3:12: *For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.*
 2. **Hebrews 12:5-11**
 - A. The Lord chastens - or disciplines - us because He loves us. He wants to make us better.
 - B. Does that mean chastening is fun? Of course not. Look at verse 11 - it's not joyful; it's painful.
 - C. It may not be fun but it's profitable (10) and it helps make us righteous (11).
- b. When it comes to discipline, as it is for our Heavenly Father, so it is for earthly fathers.
 1. Both of the scriptures we already read on this subject compared the discipline from earthly fathers to that of God.
 2. Proverbs 13:24: *He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*
 3. Parents who love their children with the right kind of love are willing to discipline them.
- c. Recall from Hebrews 12 that being disciplined is not joyful; it's painful. Well I don't think it's just painful for the one being disciplined.
 1. How many parents do you suppose enjoy punishing their children? Probably not too many.
 2. I would think it's pretty usual for a parent to not want to discipline a child.
 - A. Some might even say, "I love my son, how could I ever hit him or cause him pain?"
 - B. That's why there is a need for verses like Proverbs 23:13: *Do not withhold correction from a child. For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.*
 3. Remember point number two of this sermon? The right kind of love means sacrifice.

- A. A father might hate having to hurt his son whether that means spanking him or punishing him in some other way. If it's a real punishment, then it has to hurt in some way.
 - B. But that's what is best for the son. Remember Proverbs 13:24: *He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*
 - C. Refusing to punish a child doesn't mean that you love him too much to hurt him. It means you don't love him enough. It means you love yourself - your own comfort and convenience - more than you love that child.
 - D. There's no sacrifice in that. It's not the right kind of love.
- d. I think love often gets replaced with tolerance.
- 1. Tolerance is often a good thing - it certainly has its place. But in many many cases, tolerance is simply what's comfortable and convenient.
 - 2. When you hear defenders of homosexuality try to justify it with regards to the bible, what do they say? Isn't it usually something about how the Bible says to love your neighbor? Let's follow that through to its conclusion.
 - A. 1 Corinthians 6:9 says that homosexuals "will not inherit the kingdom of God." But I am just too loving to say that homosexuality is wrong.
 - B. So, in other words, I love someone so much that I don't care whether he inherits the kingdom of God or whether he gets left out. I love someone so much that I don't care whether he goes to heaven or not.
 - C. That's the wrong kind of love!
 - 3. I'm sure there are cases where tolerance involves sacrifice, but more often I think it involves a refusal to sacrifice.
 - A. Like disciplining a child, telling a friend that his life is not right with God is not fun.
 - B. Maybe that friend will respond favorably, or maybe he will be furious. Maybe it will damage or even destroy your friendship. Maybe he will think you are some religious nut and want nothing more to do with you.
 - C. So it's easier; it's safer; it's more comfortable to just tolerate. Don't say anything. Just go with the flow. And don't risk spoiling the friendship or hurting his feelings.
 - D. But that's not the right kind of love. There is no sacrifice and - even more crucially - you are not doing what's best for that friend.
- e. Loving each other the right way means being willing to make the sacrifice of hurting a friend for his or her own good.
- 1. Proverbs 27:5-6: *Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*
 - 2. If I really love you, then I will be willing to go through the pain involved in trying to help you serve God. Paul loved the Corinthians enough for that (2 Corinthians 7:8-11).
 - A. Paul wrote them a letter and it hurt them. It made them feel sorrow.
 - B. Was Paul happy they had to go through that? Of course not. Verse 9 says that he did not rejoice that they were made sorry.
 - C. But he did rejoice that that sorrow lead to repentance - and that repentance leads to salvation (10).
 - D. Paul loved them enough to hurt them.
 - I. He made the sacrifice of being the one to hurt them...
 - II. ...because he loved them so much that he didn't want them to be hurt by

their sins.

- f. Point number three: loving each other the right way means doing what is best for each other.
 - 1. Telling someone they are sinning is awkward, uncomfortable, can damage friendships, and can hurt feelings.
 - 2. But if we really love someone we won't spare their feelings at the expense of their soul. James 5:19-20: *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

V. Point number three was about loving each other the right way. Point number four, our final point, is about loving God the right way.

- a. Of course, loving God is very important. It's the most important. It's the greatest commandment (**Mark 12:29-31**).
 - 1. Since it is so important that we love God, we better make sure we do it the right way.
 - 2. So we'll spend the remainder of our time looking at how to love God the right way.
- b. Just like it does with loving each other, the talk is cheap rule applies here. Just because I say I love God doesn't make it true. In fact, if my actions aren't right, then I don't even know Him (**1 John 2:3-5**).
 - 1. It's very easy to claim that we know God or even that we love God. But, again, talk is cheap.
 - 2. The truth of it is that we only know God and we can only love God with our actions. And what actions are those? Obedient actions. We have to keep His commandments.
 - 3. We often think of love as a feeling - and I guess there is that side of it. But if that's where it ends, then it is not the love of God (**1 John 5:2-3**).
- c. Jesus was very clear on this point during His time here on earth (**John 14:15, 21-23**).
 - 1. You can say you love Jesus Christ, but that doesn't mean it's true.
 - 2. Here's what determines if you truly love Him with the right kind of love. If you keep His words you do. If you don't keep His words, you don't.
 - 3. Pretty simple, right? Simple to say, not always simple to do. It involves sacrifice.
 - A. It involves not being able to fit in as well with other people in the world. John 15:19: *If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*
 - B. It involves giving up some things in this world. Matthew 6:24: *No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*
 - C. It involves moving family and other things down on the priority list. Matthew 10:37: *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*
 - D. These are sacrifices, but isn't sacrifice a part of the right kind of love? These things are from Jesus' word - the word that we will keep if we love Him.

VI. Conclusion

- a. As Christians, we focus on love quite a lot. There are a lot of sermons about it, it comes up in class and discussions pretty frequently, and we hopefully all strive to make love a

- big part of our lives.
- b.** Let's make sure the love that we make a big part of our lives is the right kind of love.
 - c.** That means doing more than saying, "I love you, brother" or "I love you, God," because talk is cheap.
 - d.** It means making sacrifices for the ones we love.
 - e.** If we love each other the right way, then we will make the sacrifices involved in helping each other get to heaven.
 - 1.** Just tolerating whatever anyone does wrong is comfortable and convenient. It avoids those awkward and uncomfortable conversations.
 - 2.** But if we love each other, we will do it anyway. We will make the sacrifice and tell each other when our lives are not in line with God's expectations of us. James 5:19-20: *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*
 - f.** Finally, if we love God the right way, then we will obey Him.
 - 1.** If we don't keep His words, then we don't love Him. Jesus said that very thing in John 14.
 - 2.** Do you love God?
 - A.** Part of Jesus' words - recorded in Mark 16:16 - say: *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*
 - B.** Jesus' words say to be baptized. If you have so far chosen not to do that - and that is a choice - then you don't love Him. You may claim to, but talk is cheap.
 - g.** If you haven't obeyed the command to be baptized or if you have obeyed that command but are neglecting others, then why not right that wrong today? Start loving God. Do it today.