

## 12-4-22 Sermon #46 Love

Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection frees us from the bondage of sin, and choosing to become an adopted child into God's family is our act of love that brings the ultimate joy to God. Knowing and living by the Spirit allows us to walk in the newness of life and guarantees salvation.

Before we begin service today, Last week Pauline wasn't able to be here, and I want to publicly celebrate Pauline's baptism by presenting her with this certificate of baptism. When our heart is stirring inside and God is talking to us about the need to be baptized, we need to listen. Pauline's heart led her to act on her faith. Pauline made me think about how my grandkids say, 'This is the "bestest" day ever!' That's what God feels!!!

(hand certificate)

Let's pray.

Introduce Steve & Sandy.

Today is the second week of Advent. This is the week for "LOVE". John 3:16-17 says,

**<sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

When you think about John 3:16 & 17, what goes through your mind?

One thing that it made me think about is how it feels giving somebody something that requires a sacrifice.

(treasure chest)

These memories are for forever memories.

When I read verse 17, it shows me that it's not that God is wanting to condemn – God's love is so we can be with Him forever in heaven. It's all about giving us the gift of heaven. This takes great Love.

I've really been enjoying Advent because of how much it makes me think about how real the life of Christ is. When I think about our church family, I've been able to see why the words hope, love, joy, and peace are used. I wish all of you could come up and light a candle. Sharing the words hope, love, joy, and peace are meaningful to all of us because they are the fruit of the Spirit.

When we light the candles, it makes us think about God's character. As we draw closer to Christmas, I must admit that I am one of those people who has always loved the morning of Christmas and all the gifts. Especially how kids can't wait to open presents. Watching my grandkids is even better. (I don't have to pay for all the gifts!)

It starts on Christmas Eve. A tradition in our family is that on Christmas Eve we always open one gift. It's always pajamas. This started when I was a kid and continued with my children, and now it happens in my children's homes.

Another tradition is we usually don't put gifts under the tree until everyone goes to bed. Then in the morning, we refuse to get out of bed. We act like we can't wake up, and I laugh at all the

ways they try to wake us up. Once we finally get out of bed, we need to get our coffee and during this time, we watch them as they try go through presents to see which ones are theirs.

When we accept Jesus and are filled with this kind of excitement, God has to just relishe in it.

As parents, we spend a lot of time teaching our children it's not just about presents. It's all about Christ. But even as our children get older, I still enjoy watching them open gifts.

Decorating the house and putting up stockings, represents having love for the birth of Christ.

It brings joy to our hearts because it represents God's "LOVE" in our hearts. I'm so thankful that my family enjoys talking about God, and it's great to see them want pass this onto their children.

The most important aspect of Love is that it takes tremendous love to put aside all the differences we have. God's love is the only way for us to be able to forgive others even when we're not asked. This is exactly what God did through Christ.

When we come to believe and are baptized, we're accepting God's gift. When we bring Christ into our hearts, it allows God to see us open His gift of forgiveness. Then He gives us more gifts. He just keeps giving and giving.

Christ's coming has always been God's plan. God wants us to *want* His love. He wants to remove sin from us so we can have life in Him for eternity.

Fortunately, we live on this side of the cross. Instead of hoping for Christ to come, we know it happened, and we get hold onto the hope of heaven. Accepting Christ's DBR (death, burial, and resurrection) makes our hope real. We get to feel how much love God has for us, and we get to celebrate how Christ came to the Earth.

Let's turn to Philippians 4:8-9:

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

The greatest way for us to model this is when we FORGIVE!!! Christ's birth is how our Forgiveness makes God's love so real.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 can't be said enough, and we all need to work at getting better at it:

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails.

John 3:16 may be one of the most memorized verses, but do we truly understand the power of it?

<sup>16</sup> 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.

Verse 17 is the opened gift part:

<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

All we have to do is open the gift. This kind of love is packaged by God for everyone to open. The bible is very clear about how to receive this gift. If you need to find a deeper love for Christ

or if you need to become born of the water and the spirit, Jesus' birth and walk on Earth is God's way of showing His love.

God's gift is for us to know how deep and how wide His love is for us.

Let's pray.