

Empire Church of the Brethren

## *Sunday Service Sermons*

**12 February 2023**

What the World needs now is Love

Love, sweet Love! Nothing like it.

What images came up when you heard those words?

There are two kinds of love, basically that is.

I am referring to the Worldly concept of love and the Biblical concept of love.

You know the different kinds of love.

But what kind comes to mind first?

When you hear the word love do you think of self-sacrificing love or romantic love.

You know the difference?

Romantic love basically is all about getting what you need, want or desire.

Biblical, self-sacrificing love has two elements in it.

One is the will of God, the other is the other person's enhancement.

We grew up with a simple saying to help us move into Biblical Love.

Do for them as you hope they would do for you.

I use the word for instead of to, to convey the idea of service to the other person.

We easily say: To God's Glory and our neighbor's good.

But what or how much are we willing to invest in the other person's good or benefit?

How much do we really love?

It is easy and natural to judge the love of someone by what they invest in us.

In what are you investing?

Where your investment is, your love is.

Text: "What great love the Father has lavished on us." *1 John 3:1*

For whom would you sacrifice a child?

Of course God did get his son back.

But can you imagine what God felt as Jesus was scorned, beaten and crucified?

That is love for sure.

We have a basic need to be loved.

We remember the song many years back that proclaimed: "What the world needs now is love, sweet love."

Our need for being loved was met by God in His Son Jesus who was the Christ.

As we live in and through Jesus we can live a new kind of love.

This love can save, redeem and repurpose the lives of people.

The Father's Love.

When Martin Luther's translation of the Bible was being printed, a piece of type fell to the floor.

The printer's daughter later found the section, which said, "For God so loved the word that he gave."

Excitedly, she showed it to her mother.

Her mother said it didn't make any sense.

"Gave what?"

The girl responded, "Oh, Mama, it doesn't matter. If God loves me enough to give me anything, I don't have to be afraid of him."

God is not harsh, judgmental, or indifferent toward the world.

He loves us and he loves with a love we cannot comprehend or understand but we can accept it and live our lives blessed by it.

The gift of love.

How do we know God loves us?

"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." 1 John 4:9

The cross is God's bold demonstration of His love for us.

Because he loved us, he sent his only beloved Son to suffer the shame and agony of crucifixion.

Because he loved us, he made a bridge across the gulf of sin that separated us from him.

Bennett Cerf told of an eight-year-old girl in a Pennsylvania orphanage.

She was painfully shy, unattractive, and generally shunned by the other children.

The orphanage directors regarded her as a problem child.

A rule of the home required the director's approval of any written communication prior to mailing.

One afternoon the girl was seen hiding a letter in the branches of a tree that hung over the wall.

The letter was sized and opened.

It read: "To anybody who finds this: I love you."

Likewise, our Lord Jesus was driven by a love-less world outside the city wall.

He hung on a cross, a message from God to the world, I Love YOU!

The example of Christ.

Inclusive and active 1 John 3:16-18

We are to live out the pattern of Christ's love.

"This is how we know what love is."

How do we know?

By considering the example of Christ, the perfect pattern of love.

The way to respond to others is to walk in His steps.

His love included all people and was active in their lives.

Jesus faced many "untouchables" in his time on earth.

No one wanted to touch the lepers.

When they went out in public, they cried out "unclean" so that people could avoid them.

But Jesus went out of his way to touch the lepers; they needed his love.

The Samaritans also were considered social untouchables.

Jesus ministered to the Samaritan woman and honored every Samaritan in his parable of the good Samaritan.

Jesus had fellowship with the religious untouchables, people who did not scrupulously keep the law and were regarded as ceremonially unclean.

Jesus saw each person as valuable and full of potential.

That kind of love is the pattern for every Christian.

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Can His love be seen in us?

We ask, "Who is our brother?"

When in love we seek people in need, we discover our brother.

We naturally tend to love those who love us or share our values.

Too often we demand change before we show love.

But agape love includes everyone and actively seeks to share Christ's love with them.

Exclusive and eternal.

The love of Christ is not gullible nor naïve.

If we love God, who is holy, we cannot love the things that are against Christ.

We love sinners but do not love the sin.

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. . . . For everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, comes not from the Father but from the world."

Christ's love is exclusive.

Christ's love is also eternal: "Whoever does the will of God lives forever."

Those who receive Christ by repentance and faith begin to do God's will and become united with his love.

Paul affirmed that nothing could "separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's boundless love! As arching sky above us when we wake and sleep, above us when we smile and weep, above us when we live and die, God's endless love! What will it be when earthly

shadows flee away, for all eternity's bright day the unfolding of that love to see!

Maltbie D Babcock, "God's Boundless Love"

Probably no word in our vocabulary is as misunderstood as love.

We apply it to food and clothing tastes, to romantic relationships, and to religious experiences.

A four-year-old asked her father one day, "Daddy, how do you spell love?"

Her father told her the four letters, which she proudly printed on a special note to those she loved.

The spelling of love in our lives is infinitely more complex.

In Christ the true meaning is available, and the world desperately needs this love.

Can they see it is us as Christ lives in the through us.

As we love as he loved.