

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MAY 20 - 24, 2019

UNCOMMON

love

SERMON SERIES

April 28 - May 26

MONDAY

1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 John 3

Our passage this week says that we are never finished with love. We were created because of love and for love. We all need and will always need love. But all too often we don't feel loved. This last week alone I have had three separate situations where this need was evidenced. One occasion was a phone call from a friend who was seemingly purposefully "left out"—oh, the pain of rejection. Another individual expressed appreciation for the unexpected outpouring of love. And personally, I am still carrying around the note someone left on a stack of my papers that said simply, "God Loves You Soooooo (perfect 7 o's) Much!" The note was so uplifting, especially as I was immediately reminded of someone who had recently prayed those very words over me.

We all long for everlasting love. But human love does not last. Even at its best, it always ends with separation or death. Unless we find the love of God, we will always be searching, be longing, be living with at least a tinge of fear. But God's love does last; it's forever. God's love is without fear for it is a love of total acceptance, even in the midst of being at our worst. God will never love us more or less than He does right now. And since He is all-powerful, ever-present, all-knowing, we can be assured that even at the worst of times, He is working for us out of love.

Zephaniah 3:16-17 says: *“Do not fear, do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”* Can you hear God singing over you? He finds His delight in you! Scriptures go on to say: *“Love one another as I have loved you”* (John 13:34). Just about everyone can quote John 3:16. But what about 1 John 3:16: *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*

Today take some time to simply breath in God’s love. Sit in silence and say to yourself: “Jesus loves me” or “Jesus is singing over me” or “Jesus delights in me.” As you exhale simply say: “Thank you, Jesus.” Then find someone whom you can show love to, a love gift from Father God.

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN CLARK AND YWAM

Pray for Stephen Clark with YWAM (Youth With A Mission) in Denver. YWAM is part of a larger family of 1,400 locations working in every nation. Stephen leads missionary training schools, teaches on evangelism and the Holy Spirit, and helps set up the training that sends YWAM’s young people to different nations.

TUESDAY

Hebrews 11

Faith is not a tangible receiving; it is living with certainty that God's words and ways are true. Often when we speak of faith, we use examples of where God has shown up: Daniel in the lion's den, his three friends in the furnace, Abraham offering up Isaac, Moses' parents hiding him, or the parting of the Red Sea. We talk of Jericho, Gideon, David and Goliath. But the very last verse in Hebrews 11 says: "*These [all the people who saw miracles, who were tortured, who faced jeers and floggings, who were put to death by stoning or sawed in two] were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*"

Faith is taking God at His word with an eye on what is to come, not on this life. It is living as citizens of heaven, aliens now in a foreign world, longing to return home. This means not living by the philosophies, ways, means, and priorities of our culture, but living by the foundational truths, ways, and means of God. It takes faith to respond in love when someone rejects you or hurts you. But this is what Jesus did for us.

A good illustration of faith comes from the old Indiana Jones movie, *The Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Look at it on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-JlfjNnnMA>. Where is God calling you to take Him at His word today? Is there a decision He is asking you to make, a conversation to be had? Maybe it is a call to be obedient or to change something in your lifestyle?

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, people recognized Him and declared Him their king. Five days later they crucified Him; even His friends fled from His presence in fear. Jesus chose to go to Jerusalem. He chose the cross because He had faith that God was sovereign, that God was in control. Jesus chose God's agenda in faith.

Faith is living on the certainty that God is sovereign and is working out His purposes, which include me if I am willing to be part of the faithful rather than fickle crowd. Faith remains because it is not a one-time agreement with doctrine concerning the existence of Jesus or the life to come; it is a daily choice to live believing that God knows best.

Where do I need to have faith that God is in control and choose God's agenda rather than my own short-sighted agenda?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN CLARK AND YWAM

Please pray for YWAM's training campus in Denver, CO. Pray that their 60 full-time staff and 100-150 annual students would be unified in spirit and have the bond of peace through love.

WEDNESDAY

Psalm 25

“Faith, hope, and love. Together these words embrace the whole of Christian existence as believers live out the life of the Spirit in the present age, awaiting the consummation. They have ‘faith’ in God ... Even though now they do not see Him, they trust in His goodness and mercy. Christians also have ‘hope’ for the future, which has been guaranteed for them through Christ. Through His resurrection and the gift of the Spirit, they have become a thoroughly future-oriented people. The present age is on its way out; therefore, they live in the present ‘as if not’—not conditioned by the present and its hardships or suffering. They are on their way ‘home,’ destined for an existence in the presence of God that is ‘face to face.’ And they have ‘love’ for one another as they live this life of faith and hope.” (Gordon Fee)

What does it mean to live as future-oriented people, to live in the present “as if not” (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:29-31)? If we really believed that this life is short, that this life was passing away, what difference would it make in our decisions, priorities, goals, plans and our responses to life situations?

The early Christians had hope; they were “fear-less”! Their sights were not set on the here and now but upon the certainty of what

was to come. We are called to “fear” God, to be in awe of God, to worship God, to increasingly realize just how wonderful, powerful, ever-present and all-knowing He is. But that is the only fear we are to have. When Adam and Eve sinned, they began to live in fear—fear of getting caught, fear of the consequences of death, fear of being seen by God, fear of others. In Jesus we are called to no longer live in fear, but in hope. Such hope allows us to face whatever life or Satan might throw at us and stand tall. Hope allows us to love rather than hide, to give of ourselves rather than protect ourselves.

The nightly news strives to cause us to be fearful, which translates into good ratings. But fear keeps us from seeing God. When you live in fear, you are no longer able to love.

What do you find yourself being afraid of? How does Jesus offer hope in the midst of that situation? How does knowing of God’s powerful, ever-present sovereignty and His ability to bring resurrection to all of the little and big deaths we face help replace fear with hope?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN CLARK AND YWAM

Pray that YWAM’s base would increase in their ministry to the nations. Pray for more teams to be sent to Greece, Nepal, Vietnam, Latvia, and Tanzania and that the impact would be strong.

THURSDAY

Romans 12

Paul begins 1 Corinthians 14: *“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts.”* It is not that the gifts are not important. It is not that doing the “right” thing, believing the “right” things, living the “right” way is not important; but without love they all too often end up pointing away from God rather than to God. The Pharisees were incredible law-keeping, law-teaching, worshipping individuals. They fasted, they prayed, they gave; but they completely missed Jesus. Jesus was very righteous; in fact, His righteousness exceeded that of the Pharisees, though they would never admit it, nor did they see it.

The “call to love” is a foundation upon which the rest of our activity is built. We are called to learn and grow. We are called to do our part in the Body of Jesus, the Church. We are called to live sacrificially. We cannot so focus on love that we use it as an excuse to not grow, to not exercise our responsibilities. But neither can we let our responsibilities and what we know is right shine above our love.

How do we hold this tension between work and love together? By remembering that above everything we have a Heavenly Father who is at work. He is at work bringing resurrections out of death. As I give up the right to be right and the right to fight back, as I learn

to fight the battles of this world using the weapons of heaven rather than the weapons of this world, I begin to let evil be overcome by good. Our adversary will always try to get us to focus on the wrong thing. By looking at everything through the lens of love (the sacrificial life-giving love that Jesus showed as He died for the very people who put Him on a cross, the very people who themselves did not love, who themselves practiced all manner of evil), I battle with the weapons of heaven. Being right and “getting the job done” is not what is finally important; love is.

Love is not an emotion. Love is giving of oneself sacrificially for another that I might become all that Jesus created me to be—not through my actions or power, but through God’s spiritually empowered work in my life.

Where am I tempted to not hold love and righteous activity in balance? Where am I tempted to be so right that I forget about leaving room for God to bring life out of death?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN CLARK AND YWAM

Pray for Stephen as he seeks to love, serve, and obey the Lord. Pray for the strength of character, the humility in leadership, and the boldness of love that the Great Commission requires.



FRIDAY

1 Corinthians 13

This week is our final sermon in the series on “Uncommon Love.” This passage is sandwiched in-between two chapters on spiritual gifts. The Corinthians were a proud church. They strived to be above average. They marked off their maturity by outward manifestations—whether it be speaking in tongues, performing miracles, or having the best seat at dinner. While Jesus came denying Himself, humbly riding on a donkey, and going to a cross (as those He was dying for spit on Him), the Corinthians were focused on their rights and privileges. And so, Paul begins this section on love with the last verse of chapter 12: “*Let me show you a more excellent way...the way of love.*” He ends the chapter letting the Corinthians know that what they are using to define success will pass away. The only things that will remain, that really matter are faith, hope, and love; and the greatest is love (13:13).

Why is love greater than hope and faith? Simply, one day we will see Jesus face to face. When that happens, we will no longer have a need for faith. One day we will receive our inheritance in the life to come. When that happens, our hope will be fulfilled. In the life to come, we will give and receive love day after day for eternity. We will

receive and live in *agape love* that never fails, that is patient and kind, that thinks first of the other, that is not dependent on receiving but only in giving to the other. Like children, in this life we are learning to love; in the next life, it will be second nature.

Once I heard a story about a man whom St. Peter was showing around heaven. They walked down streets paved with gold, lined with mansions. After a time, they turned a corner onto a new street; there awaited a wooden shack. St. Peter opened the door and showed the man his new home. Not understanding, the man turned to St. Peter asking why he was allotted a simple wooden shack while others lived in mansions. To which St. Peter replied, “We did the best we could with what you sent ahead.”

This is not meant to be a “works” oriented story. I am reminded of it because so much of what we presently do now will pass away. As John Ortberg says, “All the toys of this life end up going back in the box.” What lasts? The things done in love.

What can you do out of love and in love today?

PRAYERS FOR STEPHEN CLARK AND YWAM

Pray for the youth of our world today. Pray that they would escape the corruption of this age, find hope and purpose in Jesus, and learn how it is that they were made to bring restoration to every tribe and tongue.

Sources

- Fee, Gordon D. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987, 650.
- Ortberg, John. *When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

