

Love Is.....

Scripture Text: 1 4:9-12

“God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is brought to full perfection in us!”

1 Corinthians 13:13

“Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”

INTRODUCTION

Today is Valentines Day! How many of you guys remembered this on your own? This is the day of LOVE! I did some research into who this St. Valentines was and where this day came from and found some pretty interesting things.

THE LEGEND OF ST. VALENTINE

The Roman Emperor Claudius II was fighting many wars. He wanted a strong army, but many men did not want to be soldiers. Claudius thought the men wanted to stay home to be with their wives and children instead of leaving to fight wars.

Claudius thought of an awful solution to his problem. He decided to cancel

all marriages! No one in all of Rome could get married. Claudius thought that if the men couldn't get married, the men would ignore the women and want to be soldiers.

Valentine, who was a priest, believed that people needed to get married. He thought that if they were not married, they would be tempted to sin by

living together without being married. So he secretly and illegally married couples anyway! He performed the weddings in secret places, so the Roman soldiers would not find out.

But they did find out. Valentine was arrested and brought before the Emperor. The Emperor thought Valentine was a well spoken and wise young man, and encouraged him to stop being a Christian and become a

loyal Roman. Valentine would not deny his beliefs and he refused. He was sent to prison until he could be executed. While he was in prison, he sent out letters to his friends and asked to be prayed for by writing *Remember your Valentine*.

Valentine was killed on the 14th or the 24th of February in the year 269 or 270. We celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14th in honor of St. Valentine.

When it comes to Love, it's probably one of the most talked about, written about, and sung about topics ever!

If we were to ask 50 people today the question, "What is Love" we would probably get about 50 different answers and most of them would probably describe at least a piece of what love is.

We who believe in the Bible, live with a firm belief that the core of love is GOD, who demonstrated the greatest act of love by sending his Son to the cross to die for our sins! Redemptions story is indeed a story of heaven's Valentines Day for us! It's a story we should never get tired of hearing about! And because God's love is creative, there are millions and millions of ways to express it! So let's talk about love today! I have a few ideas and insights I hope you will find helpful today. I have brought 5 powerful words which I think help us understand real love.

I. **WORKING** – Work Boots

- A. As far as I'm concerned love should be spelled **WORK!**
- B. Isn't it crazy that everything in life worth fighting for requires hard work and maintenance!
 - Car!
 - House!
 - Body!
 - Relationships are no different. Love starts with a decision to enter into someone else's chaos, dysfunction, and messiness! And from there one chooses to help create something beautiful!

- If your mate is not becoming someone more beautiful each year, its part your fault!

ILLUSTRATION - One woman was having some problems with her husband. Perhaps you ladies can relate. Well let's read about it. It's called **INSTALLING A HUSBAND. (Refer to reading #1)**

When it comes to the commitment of love you better enter it with work boots on and a resolve to get dirty and messy in the process. If you truly want LOVE you must put on your work boots and work for it but you must also let it work you!

II. **FIGHTING - Sword**

- A. True love is committed to fighting and fighting hard! But it's not what you think. You must be very wise as to whom you are fighting!
- B. Too often than not we pick up rocks and throw them at the ones we love the most. We sling mud at our souse as if he/she was the enemy!
- C. Believe it or not ultimately your spouse is not the enemy!

ILLUSTRATION : One man thought his wife was his enemy. He was sitting in church one day when from out of nowhere the devil appeared.... Everyone ran out of the church in fear except this man.....The devil said, "Aren't you afraid of me? The man said, "Nope". The devil said, "I have the power to _____ and you still aren't afraid? "Nope" said the man, I've been married to your sister for 40 years!

- D. Isn't it crazy how often we forget that we are in a real WAR!
 - An enemy that is a love killer that wants to rain on your love party!
 - An enemy that wants to devour your children and sabotage your deepest and most intimate relationships.
- E. It's even crazier how often we forget who the real enemy is!
- F. We think it's our spouse don't we? If she or he would just straiten up and fly right this whole thing would work out.
- G. All across the world today there is a war going on in homes and hearts. Good people fighting good people for God only knows what.

True love fights but it fights for the right things! True love throws punches, and slings mud but carefully focuses these things on the right target! True love keeps the little birds safe while unleashing an arsenal on an

approaching attacker! Here's something new. How about instead of fighting one another, you join your spouse and begin to fight your real enemy, the devil!

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 5:8 "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

SCRIPTURE: John 10:10 – "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the fullest.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:4 "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

But God doesn't leave you there without hope! Look at this:

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

So if you want true love, you must take up the sword and fight for it!

III. **DIGGING** - Spade

- A. True love is committed to digging up a lot of dirt, but it's not what you think!
- B. What you are really digging for is GOLD! Now do I have your attention!
- C. Isn't it crazy how good we have become at spotting the dirt in our spouse and so bad at discovering the gold?

You see, and good prospector knows that all he has to do is look in any direction and he will find dirt. That is a given, but the real skill is finding gold! And the prospector never points out the dirt but removes tons of it to find a speck of Gold – because the Gold is where the true value lies!

ILLUSTRATION: Some of you know that I love to Garage sale in the summer. I know, some of you think that people who garage sale must have a screw loose. "Why would anyone actually enjoy looking through someone else's junky stuff?"

Granted, every summer I look through thousands of items that are pure junk, but you see, I'm not looking for the junk....I'm looking for the treasure! And I've found some!!

- One man in an eastern state in this country bought an old picture just for the frame. When he removed the picture out of the frame he found an original copy of the **DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE!**
- A recently retired New York man wanted to use his retirement funds wisely, decided to buy a home and a few acres in Portugal. The modest farm house had been vacated for 15 years; the owner and his wife had both died and there were no heirs.
- The estate was being sold to pay the back taxes. There had been several lookers, but no takers. No one wanted to deal with the huge, ugly, medal building in the middle of the property and besides the doors of the building were literally welded shut!
- The New York gentleman bought it as is, paying just over half of the property's worth and moved in. He then bought a generator and a couple of grinders, and cut through the welds in order to be able to use the ugly shed. What was in the ugly shed? An entire shed full of vintage, sports cars! Worth more than 35 million Dollars!

When it comes to looking for true love...the gold is closer than you think, but you must dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, in order to get it!

IV. **DANCING – Picture of Wedding dance with Naomi**

- A. Isn't it crazy that most things in life have rhythm, a tune, and a set of steps!
- B. True love is learning to dance and moving together in step for a lifetime!
- C. Now as you know I came from a dance challenged church. Their motto was: **"If you move your feet you're in the heat"** They probably had a good reason for keeping me from creative movement. But the older I get the more I want to learn how to dance. Especially when I watch Dancing with the stars!
- D. Kris and I have been dancing for 28 years and I have every intention of dancing with her for a life time.

- E. Good dancing comes with a lot of work and its share of bumps and bruises. But in the end it should be bursting with poetry, fun, excitement, magic, and completeness.
- F. Each step should be worked out and perfected over a lifetime to create a wonderful end product! Something valuable, something magical, something
- G. You who have been married for many years should be more in love than ever! If you are not, what caused you to stop dancing? You need to get your buns back to school and get at it!

ILLUSTRATION: Video of a Car Commercial

If you want true love...you better learn to dance!

V. REMEMBERING

- A. God has given us the gift of memory – a chance to remember all the things that are true, lovely, and precious – glimpses back to when love first came alive!
- B. True Love never has an expiration date and always leaves a set of footprints.
- C. Remembering where we came from can help us focus on where we are going!

ILLUSTRATION: I have been fortunate enough to have my sweetheart for over 30 years! We have been married for 28.

In 28 years we have built a history together. We have shared so many experiences.

- As teenagers we went to the same church.
- Her family would come over to our house most Sunday nights.
- We shared a friendship long before the seed of love began to grow.
- When I slept soundly and she thought I was not living.
- When she wrecked the car.
- When I got hurt skiing.
- Water fights
- Crazy neighbors
- Our families getting together.

These are snapshots of a history of love. Snapshots that are unique to our couple ship. Sometimes good, sometimes bad, sometimes downright ugly but us...things we have shared that looking back on we can smile and know that it follows a specific path of deep, long lasting love!

In my opinion we should occasionally walk that road back from time to time. I think it would help us to realize the deep value of what we have right in front of us. Unfortunately, too often than not, we don't realize what we have in front of us until it is gone!

Kris and I have done our best not to make that mistake.

Comedian George Carlin lost his wife a few years ago it caused him to write something that was very profound, sentimental and dripping with love. It's about taking time to appreciate what you have right in front of you.

Conclusion:

So in conclusion if you expect to love and be loved you have a lot of hard work ahead of you. So you who want to know love's pure secrets must start working, fighting, digging, dancing, and remembering.....see love itself will never go away because of it's source...God who gave his only son, allowing Him to lay down his life as a sacrifice for the sins of you and me and the rest of the dysfunctional, chaotic, messy world we live in so that we in turn would have the ability to love deeply and sacrifice greatly and lay down our live for those we love the most. Those who dare follow Him and venture into the chaos will discover a very fertile place to plant a garden a place to create an unbelievable world where hopes and dreams come true... and in the process unlock an ocean of great joy.

These three abide; faith hope and love, but the greatest of these is LOVE!