

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 5

Sermon Title: Week 4: The Power of Sincere Love

Date: 03-31-19

- **Romans 12:9-16! So far in Romans 12, emphasis on BECAUSE of what is true (1-11), HOW WE LIVE NOW**
- **Obvious, but incredibly Important reality that Jesus...**

† **Jesus, the God of RIGHT NOW.**

- **Ridiculously simple question... what is the point of being a christian? What does this all even matter?**
- **When I grew up... “HEAVEN when you die”. That was the point of being a christian, so not go to hell.**
- **Subset... no, how you live now is important, because it is preparing us for heaven when we die.**
- **Idea that LIFE RIGHT NOW MATTERS so that we can be a witness. WHOLE PURPOSE of being alive is to bring others into kingdom. Sinking ship, only reason we are here is to keep others from drowning.**
- **HEAR!! There IS eternal consequence to faith in Christ. We DO have hope of eternity with God, the hope of Resurrection!**
- **God DOES CALL US TO BE HIS WITNESS! We are Christ’s ambassadors as God is making his appeal through US.**
- **But there is another great reason for being ALIVE IN CHRIST, RIGHT NOW, a reason we see through NT, and that is Paul’s focus now in Romans... TO GLORIFY GOD, simply, by experiencing, expressing, his presence and goodness AS WE LIVE OUT OUR LIVES. It’s not just the goal of heaven. It’s not just the purpose of evangelism.**
- **WE SEE IN SCRIPTURE a SACREDNESS of the NOW. Whatever we are doing, however God has created us, to know him and be ALIVE IN HIM, to be people of hope, joy, and LOVE... as we live our daily lives.**
- **Example: For A healthy parent, greatest desire for their child? Do things for them? No... they are overjoyed by seeing their children flourish. Be healthy. Live full, joyful, meaningful lives. Same is true of our father in heaven.**
- **Given all the different ways we have been created, all the different places we find ourselves in life, what is the one great constant of living out- experiencing- God’s presence in daily life? IT IS TO LOVE. TODAY**

If we love God by loving people, then what does it LOOK LIKE to LOVE?

- **Another way of putting it... what does a healthy, free, meaningful, FULL... Scripture tells us!**
- **IN CHRIST, the question HOW DO WE LIVE is the same as the question HOW DO WE LOVE.**

† **Let love be without hypocrisy**

- **Sincere. DON’T FAKE IT. If we claim to love, but what follows are absent or unimportant to us, our love isn’t sincere**

† **Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.**

- **Be repulsed by evil- no part in our lives. NOT a picture of segregating ourselves from world, ‘holy huddle’... also not picture of passing judgment on world around us, hating**

people. **NO.** In our own lives, we don't give evil, things that hurt us and hurt others, a pass.

- **AGAPE LOVE-** love with a fervor- holy hatred of evil things and what it does to people.
- **CLING TO GOOD.** Equal passion. Seek out! Literal Greek... **BE GLUED TO...** honesty, kindness, patience... all these attributes... we can't imagine life apart from them... **THEY ARE WHO WE ARE.**

† **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;**

- **Pattern of Paul here... STRONG WORDS, strong phrases.** He is being emphatic, these are **RESULTS** of relationship with Christ, **ONLY POSSIBLE** through the spirit working in us, but also **COMMANDS** we must consider, choose to obey. **DON'T HAPPEN ON ACCIDENT.**
- **WITHIN THE BODY,** we view each other, we have love, affection, dedication to one another just as a natural family. We are **FAMILY** not just in sense of shared cause, but of **SHARED LIFE.** Last week- we are members **ONE OF ANOTHER.**
- **KJV... Be 'kindly affectioned'... "KIN"...**
- **'give preference'...Eager to show respect for one another. LOVE** which eagerly seeks out and rejoices in and honors the good qualities of other believers (Morris)

† **Not lagging behind in diligence (NIV, never be lacking in zeal)**

- **Sense of both haste and diligence.** Literally, don't be lazy! Love, Christ in us, is not performance oriented, but we will be active! Love **SEEKS** to do good...

† **Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;**

- **Passion! Literal sense is that of our spirits boiling! We deeply care about what God is doing, we deeply care about people, we deeply care, passionate about what we are doing..**
- **"Serving the Lord"... what is this? Church? Mission field? EVERYTHING WE DO. Audience of one.**

Colossians 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

† **Rejoicing in hope,**

- **No matter what is happening in this life, we may rejoice- live with presence of JOY RIGHT NOW, because of the even deeper hope we have of Christ.**

† **Persevering in tribulation,**

- **Not just a passive 'putting up', but an active steadfast endurance. To persevere is to not lose hope, not fall to frustration, bitterness... TRIBUTATION is great difficult... ONLY possible with JOY OF HOPE, and...**

† **Devoted to prayer, (NIV 'faithful')**

- **Strong word. Not just a picture of faithful recurrence, but ongoing desire... ongoing awareness, mindset of God's presence... depth of relationship**

† **Contributing to the needs of the saints,**

- **Generosity, specifically in regards to each other as believers. TO LIVE FULLY, to love fully, is to have a heart to share freely. With wisdom, discernment, YES... but with a heart of generosity.**

- **Significant, sense is not just giving to those in need, but walking with them. Being one with them. ONLY POSSIBLE by Spirit, love of Christ!**
- † *Practicing hospitality.*
 - **Practicing... like an athlete training. Vigorous effort!**
 - **Early church, people traveled, Inn's really didn't exist... opening your home to other believers was important part of the church, family of believers. Easy to withdraw, protect your space... Paul says no.. in Christ, we will DESIRE, act ACT, to be hospitable.**
 - **NOT JUST pleasant social event. It is opening of our LIVES in a way that may cost.**
 - **NOW PAUL just gets a bit out there... (smile)**
- † *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*
 - **With a sincere heart, ask God to bless... Not just refraining from retaliation, but to sincerely desire what is best for those who persecute us- actively seek their good.**
 - **“Do not curse”... ‘stop cursing’... if we find ourselves being tempted to hate, to desire harm for people who are against us, let the spirit will check this!**
- † *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.*
 - **Be present to each other in all times of life!**
 - **Weep.. to mourn with compassion is more natural..**
 - **REJOICE with people in their success, when goodness happens to them that may not be happening to you... THAT IS SUPERNATURAL.**
- † *Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind,*
 - **Live in harmony... have ‘same concern’ for everyone. Don’t think more highly of some than others.**
 - **Don’t be ‘haughty’, elevating yourself, or the group you want to be with, over the needs or honor of others. IN CHRIST, WE ARE IN UNITY. Without him, WE ARE ALL LOST!**
- † *But associate with the lowly.*
 - **Be willing to associate with people of low position.. also can be translated “be willing to do menial work’. Not just be acquainted, but to LIVE ALONGSIDE.**
 - **IN CHRIST, certain people, and certain jobs, are NOT BELOW US. Doesn’t mean we don’t seek to improve our situation in life, but that we don’t look down on others, and we don’t look down on ourselves, if we find ourselves in very humble circumstances. INDEED, we may willingly enjoy this because of how God is working in our lives. OUR CONTENTMENT, SELF ESTEEM, is in CHRIST.**
- † *Do not be wise in your own estimation.*
 - **Don’t be conceited. Don’t believe your own marketing department. LAST WEEK- have a ‘sane view’ of who you are, for your LIFE, your HOPE, your LOVE.... Is in CHRIST.**
 - **WOW! Word for this... IMPOSSIBLE. This is a description of nothing less than the character of GOD, of CHRIST, lived out in relationship to other people.**
 - **NOT all or nothing. It is a journey, as we no longer conform to the pattern of this world, but are transformed by the renewing of our minds.**

Philippians 3:12 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.* ¹³ *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to*

have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- ***Here's challenge***
- ***FIRST... to yourself, describe your relationship with Jesus. Read Romans 12:1&2... messages.. how is this happening in my life.***
- ***NEXT... just one at a time... examine these attributes in your life. Really give time, thought, prayer. NOT legalism, but letting spirit convict us, bring transformation...***
- ***NOT SO God will love us more, but BECAUSE of his love within us, and His desire that experience HIS LOVE, HIS LIFE, RIGHT NOW... that we increasingly make the choice to put that love into action, in our relationships with other people. When we do that, THAT is the foundation of sharing our faith***