

2-4-17

**WHAT IS GOD'S STANDARD OF LOVE?  
NO GREATER LOVE THAN HIS LOVE**

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.  
John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.  
John 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.  
John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.  
John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.  
John 15:17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.  
John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.  
John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.  
John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.  
John 15:21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

Friday my wife was walking between the dollar store and our music store and she tripped and twisted her ankle. We were not sure if it was broken so Saturday morning we went to the hospital to get it checked out. We left late morning and did not get home till about 7:30 in the evening. So it was difficult to decide what to share with you this morning. So I decided that the best subject to preach when you don't know what to preach is to PREACH CHRIST. Is there any greater theme? Can we exhaust what can be shared about Christ?

John said in his gospel as he was concluding the book he wrote:

***John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.***

Imagine this: John said that the subject of Jesus and all that He did and said is a subject that no preacher could ever exhaust.

Then I realized what we need to know more of is CHRIST.  
There is never enough preaching on Jesus Christ.

***Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!***

Since next week is Valentines Day, and this is the time of the year that we try to express our love one for another, I thought what better subject to preach on than Christ's love for us. His love is past finding out. (Romans 11:33) The truth is the world talks a lot about love but they actually have no idea what love is all about. This morning I want to share **WHAT GOD'S STANDARD FOR LOVE** really is.

Our text says:

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

## **I. NO ONE HAS A GREATER LOVE THAN CHRIST. THIS IS THE STANDARD FOR ALL LOVE.**

Greater love hath no man than this.

It is sad to see how many people have rejected God's love and the gift of God provided by His son. Yet they claim to be loving compassionate people. NONSENSE!

So many actually think that the world's idea of love and compassion is far better. As we preach Christ, we preach the love of God.

I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

If you look to any other source for the meaning of compassion and love, you will get a perverted understanding of what love is.

The truth is that many times the world likens Biblical love as being cold while they promote their love and tolerance for those who reject standards of godliness and truth, and they are the kind, loving compassionate ones..

The Christians are heralded as:

HOMOPHOBES.

THOSE WHO REJECT A WOMANS RIGHT TO CHOOSE ABORTION.

THOSE WHO ARE INTOLERANT OF ALTERNATE LIFESTYLES.

THOSE WHO ARE INTOLERANT OF SEXUAL FREEDOM AND EXPRESSION.

THOSE WHO PREACH HELL FIRE AND BRIMSTONE.

THOSE WHO ARE MEAN SPIRITED.

But if we are going to define love we need to look at Christ.

For the Bible says, GOD IS LOVE. The love that this world talks about is a counterfeit love.

***I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.***

## **II. TO UNDERSTAND LOVE WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND CHRIST.**

### ***1. Christ is the standard of love, the world has a counterfeit love.***

The standard of what love is, is God, and Christ was the love of God incarnate.

#### ***A. Some make their emotions that standard of love:***

Those who rely on emotion are up one day and down the next.  
Why are so many marriages short lived and destroyed?  
We have great expression of emotional love and passion today.

Many have come to my office all emotional and emphatic about their love only to wind up divorced a few years later.

When the world thinks about love they think about an emotion called love. Love is what happens when two people get emotionally involved with each other. This is what is promoted for Valentines Day as LOVE. So as long as there is this feeling called love (or this emotion) it has got to be good. So two people who have this emotional attachment to each other it is love, and it is good in the world's eyes. According to the world, how could you condemn this? So if anyone tells these people who are acting in love that their actions are harmful or wrong, they are labeled hateful.

Thus, preachers who preach biblical standards in regards to sexual relations are hateful. Preachers who teach a biblical standard of marriage must be full of hate. This emotional love is the standard. People often, in expressing right and wrong in their life, say well, "THIS IS HOW I FEEL ABOUT IT.. "

***B. Some make tolerance and diversity an expression of love.  
Love to them is to live and let live, and be tolerant and kind.***

According to the world's definition of love, the loving person is flexible and diversified, never putting anyone down for what they believe. Live and let live. This is the person who really loves. The tolerant one is the loving one.

***C. Some make family and friends the standard of love.  
They love their friend, they love their family, and that is all that matters, that they love and are loved. This is enough.***

This is the ultimate for them:

Every person who believes this finds that in time this love will let them down, family will disappoint you, friends will disappoint you.

I saw a documentary of the Holocaust. In it three young boys made a pact that they would not forsake each other or separate from each other even if it meant death.

As they were herded like a bunch of animals to Auschwitz, one of the three suffered from a sprained leg. They helped him but when they got off the train they were told that the boy with the bad leg could not go on, they were going to shoot him on the spot. The other boys protested and the gun was raised to their heads. They realized now that they would either die with their friend or desert him. The old man with a tear in his eye told how he went back on his vow and watched his best friend shot to death and thrown in a ditch.

You say preacher the love I have for my wife is the standard. No it is not.

THE LOVE FOR CHILDREN.  
THE LOVE FOR PARENTS.

THE LOVE FOR FRIENDS.

NO THESE ARE NOT THE STANDARD. YOU THINK THIS IS THE STANDARD OF LOVE.

THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE THAN THE LOVE CHRIST HAD. THAT IS THE STANDARD.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this,

## **2. Consider Christ is the ultimate example of what it is to love.**

### **A. He died for us.**

Jesus sacrificed His life so that we could have the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of eternal life.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

He did not turn back but gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins.

He was God's substitutionary Lamb for the sins of the world.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

It was necessary that one man, a perfect man, die for the sins of the world.

In Adam all sin in Christ all can be made a alive.

### A TRUE STORY....

AFTER A FEW OF THE USUAL SUNDAY EVENING HYMNS, THE CHURCH'S PASTOR SLOWLY STOOD UP, WALKED OVER TO THE PULPIT AND, BEFORE HE GAVE HIS SERMON FOR THE EVENING, BRIEFLY INTRODUCED A GUEST MINISTER WHO WAS IN THE SERVICE THAT EVENING. IN THE INTRODUCTION, THE PASTOR TOLD THE CONGREGATION THAT THE GUEST MINISTER WAS ONE OF HIS DEAREST CHILDHOOD FRIENDS AND THAT HE WANTED HIM TO HAVE A FEW MOMENTS TO GREET THE CHURCH AND SHARE WHATEVER HE FELT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SERVICE.

WITH THAT, AN ELDERLY MAN STEPPED UP TO THE PULPIT AND BEGAN TO SPEAK. He said,

"A FATHER, HIS SON, AND A FRIEND OF HIS SON WERE SAILING OFF THE PACIFIC COAST," HE BEGAN, "WHEN A FAST APPROACHING STORM BLOCKED ANY ATTEMPT TO GET BACK TO THE SHORE. THE WAVES WERE SO HIGH, THAT EVEN THOUGH THE FATHER WAS AN EXPERIENCED SAILOR, HE COULD NOT KEEP THE BOAT UPRIGHT AND THE THREE WERE SWEEPED INTO THE OCEAN AS THE BOAT CAPSIZED." THE OLD MAN HESITATED FOR A MOMENT, MAKING EYE CONTACT WITH TWO TEENAGERS WHO WERE, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE SERVICE BEGAN, LOOKING SOMEWHAT INTERESTED IN HIS STORY. THE AGED MINISTER CONTINUED WITH HIS STORY, "GRABBING A RESCUE LINE, THE FATHER HAD TO MAKE THE MOST EXCRUCIATING

DECISION OF HIS LIFE: TO WHICH BOY HE WOULD THROW THE OTHER END OF THE LIFE LINE. HE ONLY HAD SECONDS TO MAKE THE DECISION. THE FATHER KNEW THAT HIS SON WAS A CHRISTIAN AND HE ALSO KNEW THAT HIS SON'S FRIEND WAS NOT. THE AGONY OF HIS DECISION COULD NOT BE MATCHED BY THE TORRENT OF WAVES. "AS THE FATHER YELLED OUT, 'I LOVE YOU, SON!' HE THREW OUT THE LIFE LINE TO HIS SON'S FRIEND. BY THE TIME THE FATHER HAD PULLED THE FRIEND BACK TO THE CAPSIZED BOAT, HIS SON HAD DISAPPEARED BENEATH THE RAGING SWELLS INTO THE BLACK OF NIGHT. HIS BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED." BY THIS TIME, THE TWO TEENAGERS WERE SITTING UP STRAIGHT IN THE PEW, ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR THE NEXT WORDS TO COME OUT OF THE OLD MINISTER'S MOUTH. "THE FATHER," HE CONTINUED, "KNEW HIS SON WOULD STEP INTO ETERNITY WITH JESUS AND HE COULD NOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF HIS SON'S FRIEND STEPPING INTO AN ETERNITY WITHOUT JESUS. THEREFORE, HE SACRIFICED HIS SON TO SAVE THE SON'S FRIEND. HOW GREAT IS THE LOVE OF GOD THAT HE SHOULD DO THE SAME FOR US.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER SACRIFICED HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WE COULD BE SAVED. I URGE YOU TO ACCEPT HIS OFFER TO RESCUE YOU AND TAKE A HOLD OF THE LIFE LINE HE IS THROWING OUT TO YOU IN THIS SERVICE." WITH THAT, THE OLD MAN TURNED AND SAT BACK DOWN IN HIS CHAIR AS SILENCE FILLED THE ROOM. THE PASTOR AGAIN WALKED SLOWLY TO THE PULPIT AND DELIVERED A BRIEF SERMON WITH AN INVITATION AT THE END. HOWEVER, NO ONE RESPONDED TO THE APPEAL. WITHIN MINUTES AFTER THE SERVICE ENDED, THE TWO TEENAGERS WERE AT THE OLD MAN'S SIDE. "THAT WAS A NICE STORY," POLITELY STATED ONE OF THE BOYS, "BUT I DON'T THINK IT WAS VERY REALISTIC FOR A FATHER TO GIVE UP HIS ONLY SON'S LIFE IN HOPES THAT THE OTHER BOY WOULD BECOME A CHRISTIAN." "WELL, YOU'VE GOT A POINT THERE," THE OLD MAN REPLIED, GLANCING DOWN AT HIS WORN BIBLE. A BIG SMILE BROADENED HIS NARROW FACE, HE ONCE AGAIN LOOKED UP AT THE BOYS AND SAID, "IT SURE ISN'T VERY REALISTIC, IS IT? BUT I'M STANDING HERE TODAY TO TELL YOU THAT STORY GIVES ME A GLIMPSE OF WHAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE FOR GOD TO GIVE UP HIS SON FOR ME. YOU SEE --- I WAS THAT FATHER AND YOUR PASTOR IS MY SON'S FRIEND."

You see, the standard was Jesus and this old preacher decided to follow that standard. God the Father resolved that He would give his son for us and he did. This preacher followed that kind of love. Emotion was not the standard, family was not the standard, feeling was not the standard. Christ was the standard.

Many years ago when I was a young preacher, I preached on the text:

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

In that message I said that you need to love God more than your family, your wife, your children. This is the commandment.. After the service a man came up to me and said, he didn't love God more than his wife and son, and he did not think God expected him to. In time that man got offended about some other things I preached and left the church. Years went by and his wife died and then his son died at an early age. Last of all he is left without his family, his son and his wife. And now he is old about to die. So now he is bitter against God because he made up

his own standard of what love is. The truth is that in the end it will be just you and God, and if you don't love Him you have nothing!

In the end, if you do not put God first, you will lose everything you love. Because your love was misplaced. Because everything else you will lose, but when you put God first you can never lose that no matter what.

### ***B. There is No greater standard of love than Christ's love, because He who was rich became poor for us.***

***II Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.***

You know that I am not only your Pastor but I also have some experience in the business world. The business world is cold and those who are most successful in it make decisions based on getting rich not getting poor.

I have had many friends who when it came to losing money have said to me I'm your friend but this is business. Meaning I am not willing to lose money for our friendship.

In other words there are very few people who are willing to be made poor because they love you.

Imagine, Jesus who was richer than any of us could imagine, became poor.

How many people do you know that are willing to sacrifice for you financially? Jesus did! I think every Christian following Christ is going to have to make some sacrifices financially to follow Him.

For some people, love and money go hand in hand. Yet the Bible says you cannot love God and money.

I Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

### ***3. Christ is the teacher of what it is to love.***

Jesus wrapped up the essence of love in forgiveness:

He forgives our sin and He says now we should be willing to forgive others..

Matthew 9:5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?  
Matthew 9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

The Lord said it is a greater work to forgive than to heal sick people.

Imagine, when a person forgives others, it is a greater work, a greater miracle, than healing a person of palsy. Don't you wish you had the power to heal cancer or other diseases? You

actually have a greater power, within you is the power to forgive people who have sinned against you!

Oh how people get bitter and won't forgive others for petty little violations that they feel have been done against them. Yet these people think they are godly. They think they are filled with love. Are they?

One bitterness leads to more bitterness, until that root begins to strangle you and destroy you.

What have people done against you in comparison to what has been done against Christ? Yet He forgave sinners of their sin.

OUR SIN NAILED HIM TO A CROSS AND WE AT TIMES HAVE NOT EVEN APPRECIATED HIS PAYMENT, AND FOR YEARS PRIOR TO KNOWING HIM WE MAY HAVE EVEN BLASPHEMED THAT NAME. BUT YET HE OFFERS US FORGIVENESS.

Is there any greater love than this? In the parable of Matthew 18 the unforgiving servant refused to forgive his fellow servant and the Lord in turn indited him as being unworthy of his love and forgiveness because of it. Listen to what the Lord says about those who fail to follow Christ in showing this attribute of love in their life.

Matthew 18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

Matthew 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

#### ***4. Christ enables us to love and teaches us to love through His Spirit.***

Not only does He teach us how to love. He enables us. He gives us a new spirit to be able to love..

I Thessalonians 4:8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

I Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

It is the Holy Ghost that gives us the grace of God to forgive and to love like He loved.

The greatest evidence that we have the Holy Spirit is that we are able to love as He loved.

I John 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

A fellow called me up and said, according to what is being taught in the your church there is something wrong with me because I just don't love Christians. I am glad he recognized that but what is sad is he didn't do anything about it and decided he should just leave the church. Is this

the solution? No, the solution is to get right with the Lord and ask Him to teach you how to love like you should.

I John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

I John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

I John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Our love for each other is not based on mutual interests, sports, music, hobbies, etc. Our love for each other is based on the fact that we each love Christ. Our mutual interest should be the Lord. If someone loves the Lord we should love them.

Before I was saved I was a musician, I studied music. Recently George Belcher passed away. I used to have him come and sing for us. He was half deaf, and could not sing on tune, and was blind. But he loved the Lord and I loved him because he loved the Lord. George sang at a funeral and a preacher was there that came up to him after the funeral and said to him, you will never sing at my church. You see, that preacher was looking to be impressed by a man's music and not by the spirit that the man had. I didn't have George sing because he sang good, I had him sing because he had a great testimony and loved the Lord, and I loved him.

Do you love Christ. if you do, you will love to be around others who love him.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

I John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD OF LOVE? THAT STANDARD IS CHRIST.

DO YOU LOVE HIM?

DO YOU LOOK TO HIM AS YOUR STANDARD AND SOURCE OF LOVE?

OR

DO YOU LOOK TO OTHERS, AND YOUR OWN IDEAS?

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE STANDARD OF ALL LOVE!**