

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, April 28, 2024

"What's Love Got To Do With It?... Everything!" Based on 1 John 4:7-21

The Beatles sang "All you need is love!"

Bob Marley sang "One Love! One Heart!

Let's get together and feel alright"

Tina Turner sang, "What's love got to do with it?"

How about Everything for us Christians.

1st John 4: 8 says, "God is love"

It can't get any simpler than that. When we love others, it is rooted in God's love. God is the author of love. And since God loves us so much, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us.

The Greek root for love here is Agape. This is God's unconditional love for us humans and the world. God loves us because God created us. And even when we feel we don't deserve God's unconditional love, or take it for granted, or don't share this same love with others. God still loves despite our sinful nature.

English has one word Love. In the original Greek of the New Testament, there are 3 or for words for love. The first is Agape. When Jesus says, Love one another as I have loved you. The word is agape. God's love is most clearly seen on the cross. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent God's Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins." To have agape for another is to accept them as is... flaws and warts and all. And to see them through the lens of God's love.

1st Corinthians 13, the love chapter often used in weddings, also uses the word "Agape" for love.

Love is patient, love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

How many of you were thinking I'm not always patient, I not always kind or I am irritable or resentful, or selfish? The you are human.

These words should convict us. As sinners, our love falls short of God's glory daily.

Another word for love in Greek is Philo. This is a friendship type love. It is where we get the word, Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. A bibliophile is a lover of books.

A third word for Love in Greek is Eros. Think of cupid shooting an arrow through your heart. It is love at first sight. It is an attractive love. But as we know love is more than physical attraction.

A good marriage, for example, has all three types of love. Agape, philo, and eros. However, the foundation that we want to build our marriages on and all relationships for that matter is Agape. Accepting others as God accepts us... and seeing the value in everyone.

For fun, this talk of love made me think of Golde and Tevye in the Fiddler on the Roof.

In Fiddler on the Roof, the Father, Tevya, asks his wife, Golde of 25 years in a song. "Do you love me?" In an arranged marriage this is a legitimate question. Golde dismisses the question at first. And then responds after he keeps asking.

"Do I love you? For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes
Cooked your meals, cleaned your house
Given you children, milked the cow
After twenty-five years, why talk about love right now?"

He keeps asking, "Do you love me?"

Golde sings, "Do I love him?
For twenty-five years I've lived with him
Fought him, starved with him
Twenty-five years my bed is his
If that's not love, what is?"

(Tevye)

Then you love me?

(Golde)

I suppose I do

(Tevye)

And I suppose I love you too

(Both)

It doesn't change a thing

But even so

After twenty-five years
It's nice to know

Thankfully, we don't have to wonder if God loves us. God loves us no matter what. Roman's 8 says, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Like I taught last week in the children's sermon, may God's unconditional love for us, made known in Jesus Christ, spill over to others. May our cups runneth over. May people see Christ's love in you and wonder about where it comes from.

Finally, let us repent when we don't show God's agape to others, and let us be filled up with God's love through the word and sacrament so we can go out and love our neighbors as ourselves.

Amen