

Week 2: Feb. 14

What Is Love?

Let's talk about love. It's a theme that comes up repeatedly in books, movies, and songs. Can you think of a movie that contains a love story, either as the main plot or part of the plot?

- Frozen
- Beauty & The Beast
- Cinderella
- The Little Mermaid

The fact that love comes up in books, movies, and TV proves it's important, which is why I want to talk about it tonight.

What is love? Seriously, what is it? Describe it to the person next to you.

The problem is that love can be kind of "mushy term." We talk about it so much that it gets overused and it loses its meaning. Tonight I want you to walk away with a more biblical understanding of what love is.

Here are some passages in Scripture that describe love. Love is...

1. Defined by God. 1 John 4:16: God is love
2. Directed at us. 1 John 4:19: He loves us!
3. A command. John 15:12-13 We are commanded to love---it's a choice to put others first
4. Lots of things...1 Cor. 13
5. Permanent: Nothing can separate you from God's love: Romans 8:38-39 (Gospel moment)

Here are my takeaways from those passages:

1. God is the source of love
2. He can empower us to love
3. He shows us how to love
4. It is directed toward others
5. Love is a choice---more than a feeling (he doesn't command us to do things that are involuntary like hiccup or have brown hair)

Example of a choice: I get home from a day of work ready to relax. Marcy asks me to grill chicken for dinner, which involves me having to run an errand to Fareway to get more charcoal. Oh, and it's dark and cold outside. She says we can do something else, but her preference is to do chicken so we can have leftovers. I grill the chicken! By the way, I don't always make the loving choice; sometimes I'm selfish.

Example of a real-life situation involving a choice to love: Your friend is going through a hard time. They are in a bad mood and treat you poorly. You can say, "Screw you!" to your friend and let them be, or you can choose to love by being kind, gracious and asking what is going on in their life.

Another example: There's a weird kid at school that everyone is making fun of. Do you join in? Or do you stay away, even though it makes you look weird?

Another example: Your sibling wants to sit in the front seat of the car. Instead of racing them and fighting them, you allow them to take it.

Love is a choice. It should be the defining characteristic of a follower of Jesus. Greatest command: Love God. Love others. Love God by loving others.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." John 14:15

Follow Jesus, ask for God's help to be more loving. Rely on his love and strength. The best thing you can do to become more loving is to follow the way of Jesus, which you learn through things like prayer, Bible reading, and coming to Valley Church.

Closing thought:

How can you know you're growing in your faith and becoming a more loving person?

Answer: How much do you think about yourself and getting your needs met vs. how much do you think about other people and helping them get their needs met?