

Week 2: Feb. 12

What Is Love?

Let's talk about love. It's a theme that comes up repeatedly in books, movies, and songs. (share story)

Why? Because people care about people's love lives! 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. It can mean so many different things that it can start to mean nothing specifically.

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: **Picture of Owen**...Owen wakes up at 4am...I can stay asleep and pretend I don't hear it, or I can get up.

Oh, by the way, I don't always choose the loving thing to do...yesterday I blamed one of my kids for moving something that they didn't move

What Is Love? slide

Example of a real-life situation involving a choice to love: Your friend is randomly 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. Something must be up. Maybe I should ask.

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.

Another example: You parent asks you to do a chore around the house. You've already done that chore or you think it's one of your sibling's turns to do that chore. You say yes anyway and do it with a good attitude.

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 and you will become more loving. Don't feel like a loving person? Ask for God's help to be more loving. He is the source of love.

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 challenge:

What is one thing you need to STOP or START doing to become a more loving person?