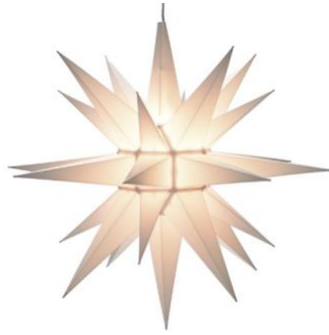
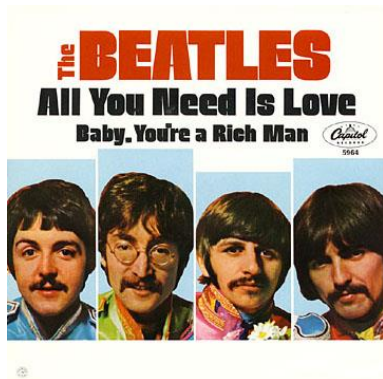


Advent 2 - "Love" - Lessons for Living © 2017
by Pastor Faber McMullen



This is our second week in Advent. Last week we looked at Hope, and now we take a look at "Love". Love seems to mean all kinds of things to all kinds of people, but what is the kind of love we are to have as Christians? This morning we'll see what the Bible has to say about "Love".

When I was around 12 years old I had certain ideas about love. In that year of my life, the Beatles released their record album called "The Magical Mystery Tour". My best friend, David Wachsman, got the record that day and we listened to it over and over. I remember sitting in his room, watching the fish in his gigantic aquarium, and listening to Paul McCartney singing



Love, love, love
Love, love, love
Love, love, love
There's nothing you can do that can't be done
Nothing you can sing that can't be sung
Nothing you can say but you can learn how to play the game
It's easy
All you need is love
All you need is love

We sat there and sang along with Paul "Love, Love, Love", but we didn't have a clue what love really meant. I guess I figured since the Beatles were all that was cool they must have really been singing some deep truths.

A couple of years later, I found myself pretty much wanting to be in the presence of a young lady I met in high school. I wanted to be with her all the time. I craved her presence. I loved being with her. I loved that she "loved" me. But what I really loved was hugging her and getting the occasional kiss. You see, the love I had for her was really because of the way she made ME feel. It was the kind of love that may not have been all about me, but it certainly wasn't all about her, or all about love.

The world has a selfish definition of love. For the world, "Love" has much to do about how it makes us feel. We hear, "I LOVE chicken fried steak". That means, "I love the taste of chicken fried steak and how it makes me feel."

In the earliest days of the church, the congregation in Corinth was trying to figure out this whole thing called "Love". They were a culture of sensuality and Temple prostitutes. Theirs was a society based on carnality and self-pleasure. I have stood on the top of the City of Ancient Corinth and searched the museum at its base to see relics and artifacts of this city. Their religion was a selfish religion. In many ways it revolved around the worship of sex itself and the search for intense pleasure. The Greeks had a term for this kind of love and it was called "Eros"; from which we get the word "erotic". Things that are erotic are things that arouse our sexuality and satisfy that physical hunger. The Apostle Paul was trying to convey to the group what REAL love really means. Stand with me as we read his very words to that group.

The Greatest Gift

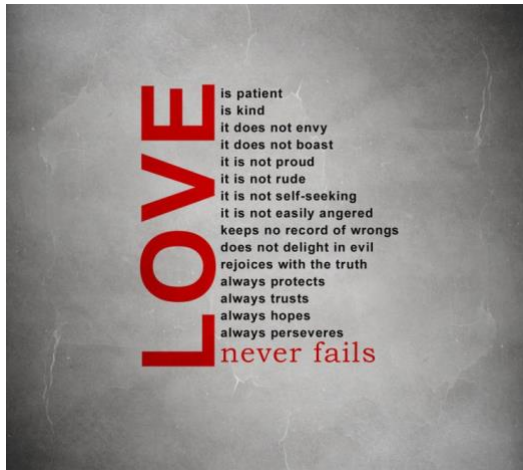
13 If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end.

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled. When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good. We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

My job as pastor is to divide God's Word to you. I am to interpret it to you in an inspirational way so that you will be motivated to yield yourself to the Holy Spirit of God to become more like Jesus. This passage today needs little interpretation. I have written it out from a paraphrase of the Bible called "The Message". It is written in such simple language that you really don't need me to interpret it, but let me give a few brief comments about what Paul was really after here. I'm going to talk about what these things mean to me, and then maybe you can apply them to your own life. I repeat Paul's words to the little church in Philippi when he said, "9 Those things, which ye have both

¹ Peterson, E. H. (2005). [*The Message: the Bible in contemporary language*](#) (1 Co 13:1-14:1). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Union Grove, those things that you have learned, received, and heard, and seen in me, do those things and the Shalom of God will be with you.



In the first few verses Paul is telling me that if I am a great speaker and can marvel crowds with my words it is all meaningless if it is done with a selfish heart. The measure of my words is whether they are selfless or selfish. Then Paul tells me that if I have great enough faith to see a new sanctuary built that seats 400 to be built up on the front of our land, or if I see the parking lot that I've already envisioned built and I am doing it selfishly it's not worth a hill of beans. Not only that, if I give away all that I have and all that Union Grove has to the poor and I do it for how it

makes me feel, it has no value in the Kingdom of God. Then there is that bullet point of statements that should prick every heart hearing or reading this sermon.

Love never gives up - when I get worn out loving others selflessly I should be careful to remember what it's all to be done regardless of how it makes me feel.

Love cares more for others than for self. - Real love never should focus on me.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. - Real love never has envy or jealousy mixed into it. That is sick. Love wants what is best for others.

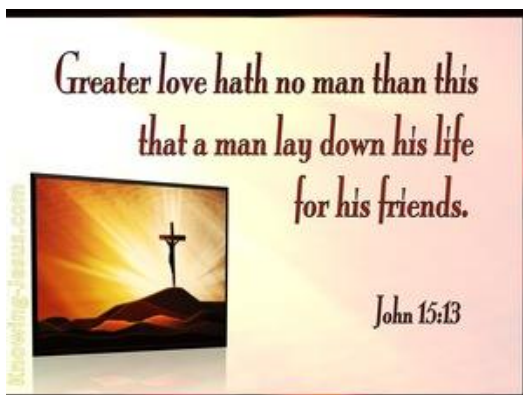
Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," - Love NEVER lets pride get a foothold in the matter.

Doesn't fly off the handle, - A loving person doesn't fly off the handle in anger even when they're driving your tractor and are about destroy the front end forks.

Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, - A loving person never keeps score or how others have wronged him or her. It doesn't carry a mental gunny sack of how others have done you wrong.

Doesn't revel when others grovel, - Real love doesn't pleasure in seeing others "get what they deserve".

Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end.



Guys, this is a vivid picture of what love really is. The world's concept of love is "what's in it for me" and total "selfishness". God's picture of love is "what's in it for you" and total "selflessness".

Jesus said it in a different way. ¹² **This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.** ¹³ **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**²

Laying down our lives for one another seldom involves getting killed for someone else or taking the bullet for someone else. The laying down our lives for each other is when we take time out of our days to patiently hear the concerns and needs of one another, and if we are able to do so, and if the Holy Spirit tells us to do so we try to do our part to help the other.

Please understand I am not suggesting that you allow yourself to be abused by another. If you give and give and give, only to be taken advantage of and destroyed by another that person is no friend. Jesus is telling us to lay down our lives for one's friends. IF we can become a Community of Faith where each of us is looking out for each other and ministering to each other as best we can, then we'll experience a little bit of heaven on earth right here.

The Bible tells us that "even knowing we were sinners Jesus died for us". He knew we had a sin problem and in a divine transaction we cannot really understand, perfect Justice met Perfect Love and brought about Perfect Righteousness. As our beloved old Hymn tells us,

I hear the savior say, thy strength indeed is small
Child of weakness, watch and pray, find in me thine all in all

'Cause Jesus paid it all
All to him I owe
Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow

And when before the throne I stand in him complete
"Jesus died my soul to save" my lips shall still repeat

Jesus paid it all All to him I owe
(Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow)

May you love others this Christmas Season as Jesus loves you. Let us pray!

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868
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² [*The New King James Version*](#). (1982). (Jn 15:12-13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.