**Pastor Timothy D. Proctor Sr. D.Min.**

“You Gotta Love Me”

It’s The God In Me!

*John 13:34-35*

*“A new command I give you:* ***Love one another****.* ***As I have loved you, so you must love one another****.* ***35*** *By this everyone will know that you are* ***my disciples****, if you love one another.”*

**Introduction:**

If you could sum God up in one word, what would that word be?

* Would it be Almighty?
* Would it be Omnipotent?
* Would it possibly be, Creator?

Any one of these would be a legitimate answer. You see, He is Almighty! He is Omnipotent! He is the Creator! But the one word that I am looking for is “Love”! I’m sure that everyone of you here today would agree with me, that God is indeed Love! Think about everything that he has done for you out of love. Think about all the things that he has done for all of us out of love! He has done so much for me that I could not even begin to list everything! My life, my family, my ministry, this church, but most of all, the Love of His Son, Jesus Christ!  
  
One of the biggest responses from people that we share the plan of salvation with is, that they cannot believe or understand:

* How God can forgive the despicable things that they have done in their lives and to others.
* How God can forgive a murderer? An adulteress? A thief? A liar? A Drug Addict. A Homosexual?

The things that people could never and will never forgive you or I for? And it is truly amazing at Jesus could forgive like this! But none the less- He does forgive us all!

He does it, because of His Unconditional Love for us! He unconditionally loves you, you, you and me! Each and everyone of us in here this morning! Not some, but everyone of us. Look at your neighbor and tell them, YOU GOTTA LOVE ME!  
  
Just what should be our response be to this Love? Just how should we react to this powerful gift of Grace that God has given us? What does he want our response to his eternal love?  
  
The first thing I want to do is to clearly define just what love is.

* What this love does for us.
* What it does for others.
* What it does for the Church.

A survey of 8,600 people from congregations in 39 different denominations measured their `love quotient’. The conclusion - growing churches are more loving to each other and to visitors than declining churches. When the fact of the matter is, Loving churches attract more people regardless of their theology, denomination or location. Love is defined as a strong affection, desire or devotion. So why is it exactly that we say things like, “ I love my wife’s cooking?” or “I love watching football!”

Should we really use a word of this magnitude for such ‘things’? Like the Washington Redskins, the Dallas Cowboys? Food?   
  
I think that somewhere we have diluted the true meaning of this beautiful word called LOVE. So, this morning, I would like to go to the authority of Love, God, and His Holy Word, to clearly define the true meaning of Love. Is that alright?  
  
Let’s open our bibles to the book of Corinthians, chapter 13 is known as the love chapter. Beginning in verse 4 and to the beginning of verse 8. We read, “***Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast. It is not proud, it is not rude. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails...***”  
  
So what are you saying preacher? Just this, Love is patient. Patient means to have hopeful forbearance, endurance, staying power. Love is not self-seeking. Love is something for you. It’s sacrificial. That mean, you give without expecting anything back. Luke 6-35c

***35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.***

If you truly love someone, you will trust them no matter what. (That mean when you get married, you don’t make your spouse sign a prenompe). Your love never fall, it never dies, It lives forever. In fact in verse 13, we are told that it is the greatest of all!

***13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.***  
  
Why is it so hard for us to show love as human being as God has loved us. He showed us what is called “Agape Love”. Perfect Love, a love without flaws, Pure and never ending.   
  
I am guilty, as are most people of not sharing this unconditional love with others. Oh sure, we can love those that we know and have become close to. We show love to those that are of like thinking and status as ourselves, but what about the others?

* What about the guy that stands on the corner panhandling for alcohol money?
* What about the mother that leaves her 4 year old child in the car while she prostitutes for drug money?
* What about the man who strikes his wife out of anger when she wants out?
* What about those Muslims that took the lives of over 5000 people on September 11th?

Would Jesus love these people just as much as us, his people? I think that we all know the answer. I say emphatically yes!!! He came to save the wretched, the poor and the sinners. You see, sin is sin in God’s eye. He loves you no more or less than anyone else.   
  
Do you remember the Jason Doty trail, he was accused of killing a Security Guard so that he would receive special powers from Satan. Doty was both a Satanist and a white Supremacist. He was a cold blooded killer that was responsible for the death of at least 3 humans. This man was as evil as the acts that he has completed, but he was just a man.

He was definitely responsible for his acts of treachery, and he should be punished for them. But I wonder about his salvation, I think about God’s love, and how the changes that his love could have brought this man. If he would have only allow Jesus Christ into his life. If Jesus could die for this man, why can’t I show this kind of love to others?   
  
God’s love is directed outwards, towards others, not inwards. It is utterly unselfish. This kind of love goes against our every natural inclination. It is impossible for us to practice this kind of love. The only way that we can show this kind of love is with the help of God himself. He helps us to set aside our own desires and wants. Then, and only then can we give love without expecting anything in return! That’s when we become more like Christ, when we show unconditional love!  
  
**II.** In 1 John 4:7-12 we read, “***Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.***”  
  
A newspaper columnist named George Crane told once of a woman who was full of hatred toward her husband. Someone counseled the woman to act as if she really loved her husband, to tell him how much he meant to her, to praise him for every decent trait, to be kind, considerate, and generous whenever possible. Then, when she’d fully convinced him of her undying love, she’d make her move and file for divorce. With revenge in her eyes she said, "That’s perfect, I’ll do it." And so she did...but guess what happened...the more she demonstrated sacrificial love toward her husband, the more she began to actually love him, and at the end of a few months divorce was the furthest thing from her mind. Why did I tell you that story, because Love is usually thought of as a feeling.

In reality, it is a choice and an action! In fact, in the New Testament, Love is used as a noun 110 times, and a verb 137 times. 247 times the word love is referenced! I wonder if by chance that should tell us something? God is our source of Love. Love in it’s truest and purest form. You see, God is love! Look at your neighbor and tell them, You Gotta Love Me!  
  
Jesus is our perfect example of unconditional love! Everything that he did in both life and death, demonstrated Agape love.

* When he took the spear in the side, that was Love.
* When they placed the crown of thorns on his head, that was Love.
* When they beat him and spat upon him, that was Love.

You see, he didn’t have to take it, but He did. He could have simply called out army of angels, and they would have came to his defense! But he didn’t! Why? Because He love us so much. We as “Christians” need to be more Christ like, and show this kind of love! But some of you are still saying, it is so very hard to do this. How do we do this? Well, I’m glad you asked me.  
  
**III.** The first thing we to do is to empty ourselves of sin, we do this by asking for forgiveness! Then we have to invite the Holy Spirit into our lives to begin this transformation from weak human being into powerful vessels of God’s love! Our love should always involve choices and actions! Then it will be like God’s love! Ask yourself, how well do you display your love for God in the choices you make and the actions you take?  
  
Some time ago, a teenager, lifted a 3,000-pound tractor with his bare hands. He wasn’t a weight lifter, but his friend was pinned under a tractor. Hearing his friend scream, he somehow lifted the tractor enough for him to wriggle his way out from under it. Love motivated him to do it. Our Father in heaven heard the screams of lost humanity, crying out for deliverance. He sent His one and only precious Son to the cross so that our sins could be lifted off of us and on to Himself. Love motivated Him to do it. Tell your neighbor, You Gotta Love Me!   
  
John 13:34-35 is a basic instruction for us to follow. Mother Teresa, when asked how she had accomplished such great things in her life said this, "None of us can do anything great on our own, but we can all do a small thing with great love." Jesus says we are to love one another, as he loved us! Who did he love? Everyone! Who should we love? Everyone! We are to give that cold drink of water to all who thirst! We are to still love those that do not love you! The Scripture commands us to love Christ. John 14:21, “***Whoever has my command and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.***”  
  
Here we see that love truly is more than words, he said that those that have his commands and obeys them loves him! This shows us that love is commitment and conduct. Choice and action! If you love Christ, then you will do as he says, you will follow his commands! You will do as the word says! The Bible is the word of God, so we must follow it! In Matthew 10:37-38, “***Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.***”

Jesus is calling us to a higher mission in this scripture! We know that love of a family is a law of God. But even this love can be used as an excuse to not serve God. “My family needs me, I can’t do that Lord.” I know that there are many excuses as to not serve the Lord as he has called you. I have used many of them myself. But that is exactly what they were, excuses. You have to have faith that when God calls you to his service, he will take care of all the details! You should not fear, you have to be willing to do things that may seem uncomfortable. When you truly love God, you will step up to the plate and take a swing at whatever He told you to do. This is what he is talking about when he says you are to obey my words!

Mark 12:30-31, “***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.***”  
Jesus tells us that by loving both God and our neighbors, we are actually fulfilling the intent of the 10 commandments! So when you are confused about what to do, ask yourself, “Which course of Action best demonstrates God’s love and love for Others?”  
  
**In Closing:** I want you to think about some things, ask yourself;

* Is there somewhere in my life that his love does not show?
* Is there someone that I ought to share his love with?
* Is there someone out there that needs to feel his love?
* Can I deliver this love?

When you leave out of this old brick building, are others able to tell that you are Christians by your Talk, by your Walk, by your Works or by your Love!

AMEN! Let us pray: