

IRVING NORTH CHRISTIAN CHURCH
REV. JOHN BURTON
FEBRUARY 12, 2012

TEXT: I JOHN 4:7-12
SERMON: LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Where did love come from?

- ? Out of a test tube?
- ? From Don Juan?
- ? From a psychology text book?
- ? From a romance novel writer?
- ? From a pre-marriage counseling session with your minister?

Just where did love come from?

I like to think that it came from God!“God so love the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him might not perish but have eternal life.”

God's entire act of creation and all God's subsequent actions have been generated out of love.

Theologians say God is:

- ✓ a spurned lover looking down as the people worship a golden calf
- ✓ a proud lover who blessed the Temple which his children dedicated to him
- ✓ a hopeful lover who his son for our salvation in the hope we might accept such love
- ✓ a fearful lover who watches as children and nations wander away from the true path

- ✓ a giving lover who provided manna in the wilderness, wine at Cana,
- ✓ an angry lover, who bids no rejection

I'd say those theologians are a bit obsessed with love! Nevertheless, love is God's gift to us. And God intends us to know and share love. In fact, one can ask the question, "Can one be fully human without knowing love?" You can live without marriage, but....without love?

What would it be to grow up never knowing you are loved? Never knowing that there were people who cared about more than your conduct, and who were willing to forgive not because it made good business sense but because they loved you and wanted you to have the best? Never experiencing the thrill of knowing that you are loved or that you love someone? Never knowing that God loves you?

Sure, love can be a pain in the neck, especially when your love is not reciprocated, but would you really be happier if you built up walls to keep love out of your life? Immediately after a hurtful experience you might feel the need to shut that side of life off long enough for you to heal.....but wouldn't staying in that place be like a person with a gallstone deciding to never leave the hospital again?

Being loved and giving love is what makes us human.

Tuesday being Valentine's Day, I want to focus on the kind of love that inspires us to send Valentine's Cards: romantic love.

There are some of us who have been on a date for so long that our memories of it are dim, and some of us have not had much, if any, experience with dating, so I thought I would share with you some refreshing responses to questions about love by elementary school children:

WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE DO ON A DATE?

(Mike, 10) "On the first date they just tell each other lies, and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a "second date"

WHEN IS IT OKAY TO KISS SOMEONE?

(Kelly-9) Never kiss in front of other people. It's a big embarrassing thing, if anybody sees you.. I might be willing to try it with a handsome boy, but just for a few hours."

(Jean- 10) "It's never okay to kiss a boy. They always slobber all over you.. That's why I quit doing it."

THE GREAT DEBATE: IS IT BETTER TO BE SINGLE OR MARRIED?

(Lynette - 10) It's better for girls to be single, but not boys. Boys need somebody to clean up after them. "

CONCERNING WHY LOVE HAPPENS BETWEEN TWO PARTICULAR PEOPLE.

(Harlen - 8) "I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest isn't supposed to be so painful"

ON THE ROLE OF GOOD LOOKS IN LOVE

(Gary - 8) "It isn't always just how you look. Look at me. I'm handsome like anything and I haven't go anybody to marry me yet."

CONCERNING WHY LOVERS OFTEN HOLD HANDS

(Dave - 8) "They want to make sure their rings don't fall off because they paid good money for them"

CONFIDENTIAL OPINIONS ABOUT LOVE

(Bobby - 8) "Love will find you even if you're trying to hide from it. I've been trying to hide from it since I was five, but the girls keep finding me."

THE PERSONAL QUALITIES NECESSARY TO BE A GOOD LOVER.

(Ava - 8) "One of you should know how to write a check. Because, even if you have tons of love, there is still going to be a lot of bills."

SOME SUREFIRE WAYS TO MAKE A PERSON FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU.

(Del - 6) "Tell them that you own a whole bunch of candy stores."

(Alonzo - 9) Don't do things like have green smelly sneakers. You might get attention, but attention ain't the same thing as love"

WHAT MOST PEOPLE ARE THINKING WHEN THEY SAY "I LOVE YOU"

(Michelle -9) The person is thinking: Yeah, I really do love him. But I hope he showers at least once a day."

HOW A PERSON LEARNS TO KISS

(Doug - 7) "You learn it on the spot when the gooshy feelings get the best of you."

HOW TO MAKE LOVE ENDURE

(Randy - 8) "Be a good kisser. It might make your wife forget you never take out the trash"

Considering all that, isn't it amazing that people still fall in love and get married?

Getting married is a holy thing, a sacrament of God's love. It is not an accident that Jesus' first miracle was turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana.

As one who has done hundreds of weddings, I have long wondered about that wedding. Scripture does not actually say that Jesus performed the wedding. It does not give an order of service. And it definitely does not record the boo-boos.

Every wedding has boo-boos and I have heard and seen some really doosies!

1. The bride says "I do" and from the audience a man's voice ... "Ha!" (inviting ex-husbands is dangerous!
2. The groom says his vows.... "A, E, I, O, U".
3. And the rings...the rings are still supposed to go on fingers...no matter where they want to wear them. (Big sigh!)

I think that weddings are there to teach us that since we cannot pull one a wedding after countless hours of planning and preparation and reading all the wedding books and magazines then we should not be surprised that we cannot make our spouse into a perfect mate. It prepares us to live with mistakes, ours and theirs.

Making love last is a full time job that is not for sissies. It can be hard. The payoffs can be irregular. The things that you think will work many times won't, at least in part because men and women are so different! Speaking of such differences...do you know the...

The top 5 things you'll never hear a MAN say:

5. While I'm up, can I get you anything?
4. Why don't you go to the mall with me and help me pick out a pair of shoes?
3. Aww, forget Monday night football, let's watch The Bachelor and snuggle.

2. Hey, let me hold your purse while you try that on.

..and the number 1 thing a man will never say:

1. We never talk anymore.

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The top 5 things you'll never hear a WOMAN say:

5. This diamond is way too big!

4. And for our honeymoon we're going fishing in Alaska!

3. Is that phone for me? Tell 'em I'm not here.

2. I don't care if it is on sale, 300 dollars is too much for a designer dress.

..and the number 1 thing you'll never hear a woman say:

1. What do you mean today's our anniversary?

Love is funny business, especially when dealing with such different personality types, as most marriages do. But love is the putting of another's needs, welfare and happiness before our own needs, welfare and happiness. And in this, love is truly reflective of God's great love. When we love we mirror, however dimly God's love for all humanity and for us in particular. In fact, the more we come to know God's love for us - the more we are able to love others, called to love them, and happy to do so.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

May God's love live and thrive in your heart now and ever more! Amen.