

What the World Needs Now Is Love

Lesson for Sunday, October 17, 2021

Text: John 13:34-35

Introduction:

- How would you describe the condition of our culture/world in one word? *Allow the class members just to say one word...*
- If you had to give another (one) word as a solution to our current state, what would that word be? *Again, allow the class to quickly pop off their one-word answers...*
- Final question: If you could describe the world the way we wish it would be in one word, what would that word be?
- If there's one root word that could be used in one form or the other to answer all three questions, it would be LOVE.
 - Current condition: unLOVing
 - The solution: LOVE
 - Our dream world: LOVing
- Our Pastor has challenged our church family with a new vision: to be the most loving place in eastern South Carolina. Why is this so appropriate? Because like the old song said, *what the world needs now is love, sweet love!*

Outline:

1. HOW THE WORLD THINKS OF LOVE
 - a. The dictionary definition: 1) a feeling of strong attraction; 2) sexual desire; 3) affection based on admiration, benevolence, common interest.
 - b. What do we see that each of those definitions have in common? Every definition is associated with feelings!
 - c. Then we must consider how often and varied we use the word love in our everyday communication: "I love my truck...dress...that song...that recipe..."
 - d. There are three words in the Greek language used to describe human love:
 - i. "Eros"— Sexual attraction where we get our English word "erotic" (actually does not appear in the Biblical text). This how our current culture most often thinks of love – just check out the top songs, movies, Netflix series, etc.
 - ii. "Phileo"— Brotherly love as seen in friendship (Hebrews 13:1). Often this type of love is conditional and can be self-serving. ("You scratch my back & I'll scratch yours.")
 - iii. "Storge"— Blood love, cherishing one's kindred or family (also not in Bible).
 - e. To summarize: The world often thinks of love as pleasant feelings, sexual pleasure & friendship.
2. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT LOVE

- a. As Christians, we must be most concerned with how the Bible defines love, not the dictionary!
 - b. Let's use our Bibles to develop a biblical understanding of love. First the OT:
 - i. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 — This is often how the OT describes God's love (often translated as 'lovingkindness').
 - 1. The Hebrew word for "love" means to delight in, desire, long for...
 - 2. When used in reference to God it is unsolicited, ("the Lord chose you"), unmerited (they had done nothing to deserve it), and unconditional (His love didn't depend on their response).
 - ii. Jeremiah 31:3 — "I have loved you with an everlasting love."
 - iii. Hosea 2:19-20 — Describes God's love as taking a bride ("betroth you to me forever").
 - iv. Isaiah 49:15 — Describes God's love as a mother for her baby.
 - c. The New Testament introduces another very special Word for God's Love.
 - i. "Agape" (John 3:16) — Unconditional love that acts on behalf of another.
 - ii. It is a verb, always involving action & intentional behaviors...never feelings.
 - iii. It is a love controlled by the will.
 - iv. Agape is willing to make sacrifices, it is unselfish and it always seeks the good of the other.
 - v. KJV often translates agape as "charity" (1 Corinthians 13).
 - d. A key text is 1 John 4:8, 16. It points out that love is God's very nature. God doesn't love – He IS love; it is Who He is.
3. WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS LOVE: GOD'S LOVE
- a. The entire motivation of Jesus' life was love. From the manger, throughout His earthly ministry, to His rejection, and ultimately to the Cross.
 - i. John 15:13; 3:16
 - ii. Under every picture of the cross there should be inscribed these words: "This is what I mean when I say, 'I love you.'"
 - b. What does this mean for you and me? Christ wins the hearts & minds of people through His love. If we're going to win them, we must win them the same way.

APPLY:

- ⇒ The "Mark of the Christian" is clearly defined in John 13:35.
- ⇒ Question: How are you known? How would your closest friends, family, co-workers describe you? Would they use the word "love" at all?
- ⇒ How can we go out this week and intentionally love others?
- ⇒ What makes this difficult to do? Love is the willing, sacrificial giving of self for the benefit of others without thought of return.
- ⇒ DISCUSS: How can we become a more loving Sunday School class?