

Sermon Notes



**Expressions
Of
Love**

2-14-2010



Reflections

Valentine's Day! Men and boys rush to buy a fancy expression of their love and affection for that special "girl" who has captured their heart. Flower shops enjoy some of their greatest sales, stores sell more chocolates and cards than at any other time of year except, perhaps, Mother's Day or Christmas, and hearts are seen in most business displays.

When one examines the origins of this particular holiday, there seems to be some question as to which purported source of the theme of romantic love, evidenced in the traditions that we employ today, is the original source. Regardless of whatever people or events have resulted in our modern celebration, it has clearly become a time for celebrating with special expressions of love for that special person in our life.

Often lost in such celebrations, however, is the true source of love. God in His grace has demonstrated His love for us in the price paid by Jesus for our sin. His love was expressed unconditionally by His desire to remove the penalty of sin in our lives and to provide for life eternal. Jesus explained to the Pharisee Nicodemus... **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."** (John 3:16 NKJ) It is quite evident that this was not just a small expression of God's love for His people with a token of His affection for us, but rather the ultimate price for the sin of man.

The Apostle John tells us that... **God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.** (1John 4:16 NKJ) God is love, the very essence and expression of love. His love is eternal, unconditional, and available, but only through His Son, Jesus, will it become the source of our salvation. Human love at its best is but a mere imitation of the love that God offers His created ones. Only His love expressed in Jesus has the power to save and transcend the power of sin and death, and to give us His gift of reconciliation and a new life that is eternal.

Perhaps if more people understood the encompassing nature of love, its willingness to sacrifice for another, and its foundation of commitment, we might see fewer broken relationships and homes. The Bible tells us what love is all about so let's draw our attention to love's true defining qualities. ***4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails.*** (1Corinthians 13:4-8 NKJ)

Even what we call romantic love will become more powerful if it includes the self-sacrificing qualities given in this portion of the Scripture. If more of what we call love was defined in this way, we would see less of the "Hollywood" variety of falling in and out of love and more of the love that has defined the many relationships that have remained strong over 50, 60, or more years of marriage. It seems that what passes for love these days would more accurately be defined as lust. It is self-centered, shallow, and prone to be "lost" when the selfish "needs" of the ones involved are perceived to no longer being fulfilled. Too often we have seen people reject the commitment part of love in favor of "living" together without the sanctification of being one together in marriage and then quitting at the first blush of trial.

Well, it is Valentine's Day so let's celebrate the true love of our life with those items that have become traditional, and special, ways of saying that we love them. However, let's make certain that our lives validate those sentiments by living out the true nature of love. Let's also realize that the love we celebrate originated and is made all the richer because it is and always was God's idea. He created the very essence of love and then when man in his arrogance sinned and corrupted it, He, in due time, sent His own Son to die in our place to remove the penalty of sin, and then rose again to secure our eternal life in Him. Such love is impossible to comprehend! It is available to all those who will receive Him as their Savior and Lord. Let's also be reminded of our widows, the "sweethearts" of our church, by remembering them on this special day of celebrating love. **Pastor Doug**