
Sermon Notes

September 8, 2019

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Love Like God

Galatians 5:2-23, Colossians 3:12-14

The Fruit of the Spirit

- ❖ The Fruit of the Spirit is supernatural in origin
 - you cannot manufacture or manipulate the production of this fruit
 - but, you have a part to play and a responsibility to fulfill in cultivating this fruit
- ❖ Having the Fruit of the Spirit on display in your life
 - pleases, honors, and glorifies God
 - puts God's power on display
 - is an ongoing, lifelong process

The Priority of Love

- ❖ Paul puts love first on the list of the Spirit's fruit
 - love is the cornerstone upon which each of the other aspects of the Spirit's fruit rests
 - 1 Corinthians 13 points out that love is the most supreme gift God has to offer
 - Jesus says love is a shorthand summary of the Law

- ❖ Your love for God finds its outward expression in loving other people
 - you cannot truly love God without loving others
 - sometimes loving others with God's love is a real spiritual struggle
- ❖ Love binds everything together in perfect harmony (Colossians 3:12-14)
 - love leads to action
 - "I am patient with you/kind to you because I love you"
 - "I do not envy your possessions or boast about my own achievements because I love you"
 - "I am not proud or rude to you because I love you"
 - I am not self-seeking or easily angered by you because I love you"
 - I do not keep a record of your wrongs because I love you, and love covers over a multitude of sins (1 P e 4:8)

God Is Love

- ❖ Love is an essential part of God's character
 - God's description of Himself (Exodus 34:6-7)
 - God sets the standard for love by showing us that love gives no matter what the cost
 - Jesus laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16)
 - God so loved the world that He GAVE His one and only Son (John 3:16)
- ❖ We are to love others with the same quality of self-sacrificing love that God has demonstrated toward us

- our lives should be marked by a love that gives and gives, even at great cost to ourselves
- 1 John 3:17-18

Love Gives AND Forgives

- ❖ Love not only sacrifices **TO GIVE**, love sacrifices **TO FORGIVE**
 - 1 John 4:9-11
 - forgiveness cost God His Son on the cross
 - what does it cost you to forgive someone else?
 - God is the only rightful administrator of justice in all creation
 - God's justice has been satisfied!
 - to harbor grudges, resentment, bitterness toward others, to let broken relationships litter the landscape of your life means that you are dissatisfied with God's justice
- ❖ When someone sins against you, you must work to see that person through the lens of Jesus and realize that God loves him/her just as much as He loves you

Love Passionately!

- ❖ Although love may be an act of the will, full-bodied, Biblical love also engages the heart
 - *love one another earnestly from a pure heart* (1 Peter 1:22)
 - *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.* (Romans 12:10)

- Paul's example (2 Corinthians 2:4, Galatians 4:19-20)
- ❖ Don't just **DECIDE** to do acts of love **DESIRE** to do them!
- ❖ Love is like a muscle, it must be stretched and exercised if you want it to be healthy and grow stronger
 - the example of the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4:9)
 - read, study, meditate on, memorize Scriptures that teach you about love
- ❖ Do the things that love demands!

Personal Reflection

1. Scriptures to read, study, meditate on and memorize: Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Romans 12:10, 13:8-10; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 John 3:16-18, 4:7-12, 16-21; 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9, 1 Peter 1: 22.
2. What opportunities do you have to show God's love by giving yourself to others, even at considerable cost?
3. What hinders you from loving? For example, perhaps preoccupation with personal concerns keeps you from caring about others. Or your desire to spend your money on your own needs keeps you from being generous toward the poor. Or maybe you've been hurt and are unwilling to take risks in relationships. Pray about the obstacles that limit your love.
4. Whom do you need to forgive? If you find this person hard to forgive, ask God to help you forgive as He has forgiven you. Ask God to help you trust that His justice toward this person has been satisfied, even if you don't have the justice you'd like to see.