

How to Love 5 – Share and Practice Love

How to Love Bumper Video

Here we are in the 5th and final week of our How to Love sermon series. Welcome to Redemption Church in Plano Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt and I thank you for joining us.

The World knows TO LOVE.

Every movie, book, song, everything popular in our culture carries the message that life is better with love.

I took some time looking at the Billboard hot 100 this week to see what songs our culture is enjoying. The #2 song in the world really jumped out at me...

The #2 song in America is about a perfect family that loves each other. Every member of the family seems magically gifted and all the doors within the family home seemed to be opened with love and care... except it is not true. Does anybody know the song I am talking about?

“We don’t talk about Bruno”

“We don’t talk about Bruno-no-no...” This song is the 2022 version of “let it go.” It is everywhere.

In the movie Encanto you see a family that seems to be very loving on the cover, yet if you can get past the veneer you will learn that there is a member of the family they do not have love for... And this story line hit home because our culture likes to put on the display of love, while past the

outward wrappings we have discarded others and have chosen who and when we choose to love.

I love everyone... “what about Bruno?” ...”
We don’t talk about Bruno.”

The world knows TO LOVE, but the world lacks the understanding of HOW TO LOVE.

How to Love

Last week we talked about a love that rejoices in hope, is patient in affliction, and is faithful in prayer. That message can be reviewed on our Redemption Church podcast or through our website – Redemptionplano.com.

In this series we have been focusing on a passage of scripture, Romans 12. Let’s read this together.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

10 Be devoted to one another in love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Our prayer for this series is this, “Lord, teach us how to love.”

We have need to be taught, but we also have need to be un-taught. The world has led us to believe false things about love.

The world: Share? What's in it for me?

The world teaches the need to love, but it places limits on that love.

Love, up to the point it costs you. If it costs you time, energy, or money, then a love-limiter kicks in. If it costs you pride and causes you to live humbly, many people refuse to love at that level.

There is a word that we learned in pre-k that many children struggled with... and still many adults struggle with. That word is “share.”

Sharing is difficult because sharing causes you to have less of the substance you share. If you share some of your pie, you have less of that pie for yourself. If you share a portion of the dollars in your wallet, you will have less money. If you share some of your time and energy, you

will give that to someone and have less for yourself.

Now the world recognizes that sharing is a good and loving thing. In fact, the world celebrates when someone shares. For this very reason there are countless YouTube accounts where people film themselves sharing with those in need. They go out of their way to set up cameras and microphones to record themselves acting virtuously so that they can receive the adulation of viewers.

It really makes you question the motives behind their sharing. It is suspected that many times the videos are all acted out and no one is actually helped.

Our society would rather be adored for sharing, than to actually share. Is that how we should love? Comprehend that?

The highly theological and prophetic show, Seinfeld has a clip where George Costanza shares a tip with the Calzone guy.

Seinfeld Clip – Tip Jar

George shares a tip in the tip jar, so far so good. It is good to share, but George notices that his sharing goes unnoticed, and this is where the problem starts... when it goes unnoticed George Costanza reaches back into the tip jar to retrieve his tip, perhaps to reshare it when it would be noticed.

I think the world is largely just like this. This is self-seeking, and scripture teaches us that love is not self-seeking.

This is not how sharing is supposed to work. This is not how love is supposed to work. Loving and sharing are both giving of oneself without looking to gain in return.

God: Share with the Lord's people who are in need

Being a Christian SHOULD MEAN never being alone.

Being a Christian SHOULD MEAN you have help with all your burdens.

Being a Christian SHOULD MEAN you have your needs met.

Being a Christian SHOULD MEAN no one goes hungry around you.

Being a Christian SHOULD MEAN that you are willing to help.

Being a Christian SHOULD MEAN you keep an eye open for needs, a heart open for needs, and a door open for needs...

Being a Christian SHOULD be wonderful. Knowing a Christian SHOULD be wonderful.

If you know a Christian you should know that Jesus loves you and that the Christian loves you.

God teaches us how to love by sharing with the Lord's people who are in need.

*Romans 12:13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need.

We love by sharing.

I am proud to be pastor of a Church that

has always shared.

We have shared with Christians who know Jesus and we have shared with non-Christians in an effort to introduce them to Jesus.

We have rescued people from homelessness.

We have helped people across geographic, national, and racial boundaries.

We have helped people across denominational boundaries.

We have largely shared in secret, not because we have something to hide, but because we don't want to be like George Costanza. We don't give so that people will stand and cheer... we give because we love.

We share with people out of love, not for gain. Trust me when I say this – sharing is not a church growth strategy that they teach you at any church conference. We have shared with people you have never met... at times it is very frustrating, but the frustration cannot and will not be that they never joined our church group, but maybe they did not receive our message concerning Christ.

The message is this. YOU ARE LOVED. You are worth sharing with. God loves you and shared Jesus with you, dying on a cross. We love you and you don't have to be bound by drug addiction and live in need. You can have friends. You can have help. You can have brothers and sisters who will weep with you and rejoice with you.

When did this notion of sharing start in the Church? It started on day 1.

Acts 2:45 (NIV) They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Are you sharing? Do you allow yourself to feel the confrontation of a need?

There is another teaching of the world to un-learn.

World: Receive the invite

Stop me if you have heard this before...

Kid opens the candy bar he bought with his last dollar to find one of only 5 golden tickets... He then begins to sing, "I've got a golden ticket..."

Thousands of owls deliver an invitation to a young boy living under the stairs... His family denies the invite until a giant man shows up and says “You’re a wizard, Harry...”

The hard-working maiden was not allowed to attend the prince’s ball, but a fairy godmother came, and the maiden did attend complete with a magical dress and glass slippers.

He was just a moisture farmer on the planet Tatooine until crazy old Ben told Luke that he could train him in the ways of a Jedi.

The world teaches us ever so slyly that we hold no value without an invitation. It teaches us that love is found in earning an invite. For some reason the special quality

of the protagonist warranted an invite, or they were not even special until the invite.

To the world, love is receiving the invitation. I will love you if you take my invitation. If the glass slippers fit... if you have the magic... if you open the golden ticket... if the force is strong with you... you can receive the invitation of love.

This leaves us in a state of waiting for our prince charming.

There are even people who are loved, in a loving marriage and surrounded by wonderful friends, yet they are looking for a dramatic Hollywood invite.

There are people who feel no worth unless they have a girlfriend or boyfriend...

People who feel no acceptance until they have 1000 YouTube subscribers...

It was actress Sally Field who upon winning her 2nd academy award in 1980, walked up on the stage and cried “you like me, you really like me.” Are we to believe that everyone else who did not win best actress was unappreciated? Only those that win are liked. That is the teaching of the world.

Are you loved today, or are you waiting for an invitation? Are you trying to win love and affection?

God teaches a much different lesson.

God: Send the invite

God’s love is not about receiving the invite, but in His sending the invite.

The way to show love is not by earning the invite, but in sending the invite. This is

how to love, and scripture teaches us this in 2 simple words.

*Romans 12:13 Practice hospitality.

It says “practice” but that word is a little stronger in the Greek. It means to pursue with all you have. To give all of yourself to hospitality. To press... It is the same word Paul used for I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. To reach and strive towards... hospitality.

And what does hospitality mean? In the Greek it is a compound word. Paul used the word for “kind affection” (*philos*) and the word “stranger” (*xenos*) and created a word that means “love of the stranger.”

Press toward loving the stranger...

Don't just love the people you know... love the people you don't know.

Don't just love your friends and family... love those outside your circle.

Don't just love the people in the Church... love those outside the Church.

Don't just love the people you agree with and look like you... love those you disagree with and look nothing like you.

Did Jesus teach us this?

Luke 6:32-36 (NIV) 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what

credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 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. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Redemption Church, we should love the stranger.

Hospitality

Redemption Church we should practice hospitality. Do you see an important root word in the word hospitality?

HOSPITALity

Church should be a hospital. It should be a place where the stranger who is weak is welcome.

The sick are welcome.

The homeless are welcome.

The confused are welcome.

The depressed are welcome.

The lost are welcome.

Don't limit your love. Expand your love.

This is how to love. No one ever did it better than Jesus.

Romans 5:8 (NIV) But God

demonstrates his own love for us in

this: While we were still sinners,

Christ died for us.

More than a lesson, God gives us a demonstration. Jesus Christ shows us so clearly “how to love” when He dies upon the cross.

So, let’s close this sermon out by comparing our lessons to Jesus on the cross.

The world: Share? What’s in it for me?

Was this Jesus’ attitude on the cross? Did Jesus pull a George Costanza and only share when it would be seen and celebrated? Or did Jesus give even though it would not be celebrated.

God: Share with the Lord’s people who are in need

Did Jesus share with those in need?

The stripes he took with that whip, the cat-of-9 tails, he gave to share his healing with anyone in need.

The water and blood that poured from his side, he gave to share forgiveness and justification with all in need.

The life he gave, he gave so that all who needed life could have an overflowing everlasting life.

In love Jesus shared, not to receive something in return, but to answer every need.

Followers of Jesus should do the same.

World: Receive the invite

Did Jesus live by this worldly principle? Did Jesus try to receive the praise of King Herod or Pontius Pilate? Did Jesus seek entry into the upper-class power structure of the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin?

God: Send the invite

Jesus does not seek the invite. Jesus gives the invite. He sends it not to just his family and friends. He sends the invite not to just the select few.

There were only 5 golden tickets in Charlie and the Chocolate factory, aren't you glad God has more than 5 invitations? Jesus invites everyone.

Not just the Jew, but also the Gentile. Not just the free, but also those who are

bound. Not to just men or to just women.
Jesus gives the invite to all.

Jesus gave hospitality – the love of
strangers. Love for those who were far.

Ephesians 2:13 (NIV) But now in Christ
Jesus you who once were far away
have been brought near by the blood
of Christ.

Matthew 11:28 (NIV) “Come to me, all
you who are weary and burdened, and
I will give you rest.

If you feel far away from Jesus, He invites
you to come.

If you are weary and heavily burdened, He
invites you to come.

He invites all to come.

How to Love

Lord, teach us how to love.

Help us to open our love and not limit it.

Help us to share with those in need.

Help us to not only love those near us, but to love those far away.

I invite you to come receive His love today.

I invite you to come pray for His love to be lived out in your life.