

Loving God, Loving Each Other, Serving the World

September 21, 2025

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week's message is titled, "Loving God, Loving Each Other, Serving the World." The scripture reading is Matthew 22, 37 to 40. Thank you to Don, Dave, and everybody else involved in the service. Happy birthday this week to Ernie and to Lynn.

Scripture Reading

Good morning. The reading this morning is Matthew 22 verses 37 to 40. Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.

Sermon

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for being with us today. I had a lovely compliment this past week. Person said, Don, I really appreciate your sermons. And then I said, I was just going to say something because you only talk for 15 or 20 minutes. So there you go.

Many years ago, Rainier Marie Rilke wrote these words. This is the miracle that happens every time to those who really love. The more they give, the more they possess of that precious, nourishing love from which flowers and children have their strength and which could help all human beings if they take it, without doubting. And I believe that's extremely true.

When you walk into our church building, we have what's called a welcome center. And it has a motto on it. It says, loving God, loving each other, and serving the world. The major theme of Old and New Testament is love. In fact, I think that's what the world's motto should be, love.

So why is it so important to love God? It's because he loves us more than we could think or even imagine. When our children were born, there was this overwhelming love even before the child was born. And when we were born, God's love was overflowing. We can't grasp what it all means. When a loving couple know they're going to have that baby, the love is there. So scripture gives us and reminds us over and over again that all we need is true love, authentic love, love of joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and all those other things because they're sustaining for all of us. If you're having a bad day, you can just reach out to others. And one of the good reminders is God is pouring out his love into our hearts. Maybe we don't feel it sometimes. But God never, never backs away from a promise. In Psalm 100, it says, "For the Lord is good and his love endures forever." Psalm 109, "Out of the goodness of your love, you deliver me." Psalm 118, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Give thanks to him always. Those who revere the Lord endures forever."

My grandmother had very poor eyesight. And whenever we would visit her, she would read the scripture, read many of the scriptures, but didn't have good eyesight. Bringing the Bible up close didn't work. Putting it this way didn't work. So she put scripture on tape. And she could remember those words. I've never known a lady, a person in my life, who could quote scripture, because that was her love. "For the Lord is good and he loves forever. Out of the goodness of your love, you deliver me." All of these from Psalm. Sometimes in the Old Testament, the scripture seems hard and harsh. And yet, many of the Old Testament writers always say, even going through very, very difficult times, my love is always upon you. It endures forever. Those who revere the Lord, his love endures forever.

And probably one of the most quoted scriptures in all the Bible, talking about love, is 1 Corinthians 13. If I speak in the tongues or languages of men and angels but have not love, I'm only a resounding gong. You're just making noise. Or a clanging symbol, which is worse noise. If I have the gift of prophecy, which I don't know anyone who does, some say they do. Or if I can move mountains but have not love, I am nothing. Because here's what love is.

And this is difficult, maybe even for today. Love is patient. But if you're waiting for something for a long, long time, patience isn't always easy. Love is kind. Love doesn't envy. It doesn't boast. It's not proud. It's not rude. It's not all about me. It's not all self-seeking. It should never be easily angered. It should never keep a record of wrongs. Remember when you said that, Don? No. I don't keep a record of any of those things. God doesn't keep a record of those things because love protects. Love always, always rejoices with the truth. It always perseveres. And then the writer has to say it because he can't wrap it up any better. Love never fails.

Again, like what the Beatles say. Love, love, love. But it's not-- it's not just throw it away kind of thing. No, no, no. It's who we are. We're more than body. We're more than mind. We're more than blood. We're more than any of that. We are love from God. And then this, in Matthew 3, "And a voice from heaven said," speaking about Jesus, "This is my son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased." And so when the New Testament started and Jew and Gentile kind of were wrangling between one another, how are we going to come together? Here's what is said. The only thing that counts is having faith and expressing that faith in love.

Ephesians 3, "I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." That's us. "I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in the inner being--" so listen to this-- "so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith." And I pray, being rooted and established in love, that you may have power together with all the Christians to grasp how wide, how long, and how deep is the love of Christ and to know his love that surpasses all knowledge so that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God's love in your heart.

When a baby is born, love is already in that child. Even though the child might not know it, even though the parents might not know it, that's how God is created. Every child is given love inside from the very, very beginning. Some of us remember when we were going to have a birth in the family. What's it going to be? Back then, never knew if it was a boy or a girl. Didn't have that technology back then. What's it going to be like? It didn't matter. It didn't matter. We knew even before the child was born, we loved this child. We loved this child. You know, Don, this baby's going to keep you up a lot. This baby's going to cry a lot. This baby's going to be on-- that's just going to drive you crazy some way. I wouldn't have it any other way. See, this is love.

Show me the ways, oh Lord. Teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth. Teach me, for you are God, my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember me, oh Lord, your great mercy and your love. So all the way through the scriptures, this word, love, you have a good word sometimes, just look it up. How often the word is there. But it's not just the word. It's how it changes us. How even if we've been Christians for many, many, many, many, many years, and we've known a lot about love, love keeps on expressing itself in multiple ways that we never thought before.

John dominates the New Testament in teaching the book of love-- looks love, helping us to do the same. Again, he says, how great the Father has lavished on us. Remember, quite a few years ago when our children were very, very young, they loved putting in soap inside the bathtub where the kids are in the bathtub going around, and there's all the soap coming up, and all of a sudden trying to get through and putting all those thuds on their head, and just having a good old time in the bathtub, and just having a good old time. Yeah, seems silly, doesn't it? But it's not. It's all part of love. Being cared for, being taken care of, reaching out to one another, and to believe it, and to share that love with others. The Bible says that He has commanded us to know the love of God, that He lives in us, and to love one another.

And then there's this interesting gentleman in the New Testament named James, and he says this. "Blessed is the person who perseveres under trial. When he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God promised to those who love him." Let's face it, every one of us have gone through trials. Some are right now going through trials. Don't really know what the outcome is going to be. But we have a promise that every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give each one of us birth through the word of truth that we might be called this. First fruits of the created one. That's who we are, not because I said it, but because God has repeatedly said this, all the New Testament like.

He serves us. He encourages us so that we can help others in encouraging them. And some of the Old Testament scriptures, it can be rather rigid and pretty strict. And now, oh, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to revere the Lord your God and to walk in his ways? He better do it.

So how do we do that? By serving him, by helping, by encouraging others, encourage people who are lonely, friends, new people who come in so that they can be friends and share with others? Let's maybe this year, the best as we can, help others to be a person of love, joy, of peace and patience and kindness. Because you never really know what a person is going through. Sometimes we don't listen to what others say, but we want to pay attention. You can trust Jesus. Laugh with people. Weep with people. Come alongside. And now, this might sound-- yeah, OK, OK. But no, it's real. Flesh and blood and mind and spirit, it's true. It's so important to love God, to love each other, and to serve the world. May God bless us.

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