

Sermon – Love Love Love

1 John 4:7-21

June 13, 2021 - Woodcrest

Did you hear this passage clearly and accurately? Love is mentioned quite a few times. Anyone count the occurrences? There are 29 variations of the word LOVE in these 15 verses. So, it sounds like John is saying, Love, Love, Love. Listen.

<play Beatles' - Love Love Love audio clip>

It sounds like John is saying, Love is all you need. Listen.

<play Beatles' - Love is All You Need>

According to John, the Beatles have it right!
Love, love, love, Love IS all you need! And
here's why! **God is love.** God is love. **Say
that with me. God is love.** God is what? **God
is love.** Now, God is not just LOVE, God is
agape love and that means that God is
unconditional love. Unconditional love.
Unconditional love is totally committed, full-out
love.

Let me give you some examples of God's
unconditional love from this passage: (and as
I do, try to detect a theme as I give you this list
and the list not from this passage.)

God sent his only Son into the world so that we
might live through him. God blazed a trail for us

to eternal life through belief in Jesus Christ.

God gave his Son, so that whoever believes in him has eternal life.

God gave us His Spirit. **God proactively gives!** God proactively **gives** His Son, and proactively **gives** His Spirit. And when we have His Spirit, we readily testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

Now some examples **not from this passage**:

God gave you life. God gave you breath. God gave you a mother. God gave you food. God gave you drink. Jesus says, “I go and prepare a place for you.” Jesus proactively got up from the Passover table, took off his cloak, wrapped a towel around his waist, stooped before his disciples and washed their feet.

Have you detected a theme in these examples?
Giving? Proactive Giving? Yes!

God gives first. God loves us first and God always loves us. God shows us unconditional love by proactively giving himself and his Son. When we ‘get that,’ when we realize that God is full-out, 100% committed, proactively giving unconditional love, everything changes. When we understand that God is love, God first loved us, and that God loves us, loves us, loves us, our life totally changes.

A boy once asked his father how God loves us. His father said, “God loves us with an unconditional love.” The boy thought for a moment and then asked, “What is unconditional

love?” So, his father said, “Do you remember the boys down the street who got a cute little puppy for Christmas? It had long shaggy hair and those large, loving puppy dog eyes.” “Yes, I remember them.” “Well, the two boys used to tease the puppy and throw sticks and rocks at the puppy, but the puppy would always greet them with a wagging tail and try to lick them in the face. That’s unconditional love.”

To help us GET this, I want you to relax and listen to an audio clip for a minute and a half.

<play God Loves You msg2.mp3>

God loved us first. He didn’t wait for us to approach him with our love or respond to his love. No, he loved us first. He loved us with no

conditions. He loves us unconditionally. He doesn't say, if you clean yourself up, I'll love you. He doesn't say, if you take responsibility for your behavior, I'll love you. He doesn't say, if only you'd get out of debt, I'll love you. He doesn't say, if you clean up your language, I'll love you. He doesn't say if you clean up your thoughts, I'll love you. No, he just loves you. And, friends, even if you have no plans to love him in return, he still loves you. He loves you with his full self. He loves you with his presence. He loves you with his peace. He loves you with his touch. He loves you with his prayers. He loves you with his healing power. He loves you with his blessings. He loves you with his very life. You see, he loves us now and he loved us with his sweat, he loved us with his

blood, he loved us with his grace, and he even loves us with his forgiveness. That's how God loved and that's how God loves. Do you see how one sided this love is? This is radical, outrageous, unconditional love. This is an unbalanced love. It's a total love for you and it's a total love for me that flows from the Father through Jesus Christ. This is the love that spoke through Jesus from the cross, when he hung there betrayed, battered, beaten, bloody, and bruised, about to take his last breath, but said, "Father forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." This is the love that shapes us, forms us and sends us to revolutionize the world.

So, now, I love the first line of this scripture.
What does it say? **<pull out the head of lettuce.>** Beloved, **LETTUCE** love one another, because love is from God. **LETTUCE** love one another, because love is from God.

So, friends, since God loves us unconditionally, then..... We must actively, sacrificially, deliberately and intentionally love one another. **LETTUCE** choose to love one another. **LETTUCE** choose to love one another. You see, agape love, unconditional love is a choice and a commitment to love, no matter what. A choice and a commitment to love, no matter what. It's the love God has for you and for me, so **LETTUCE** show that love to others. Think of

this as the LETTUCE sermon. LETTUCE LOVE! LETTUCE love unconditionally.

So, now, what does active, sacrificial, deliberate, intentional unconditional love look like for God and for us? Two examples. First, our God and Father gave us, proactively gave us (and when I say, us, I mean, nasty, selfish, greedy, rebellious people) his most treasured possession, His only Son, his spotless lamb, his little child. He gave us His Son, he gave up his loved one, He sacrificed his Son for you and for me. It's a little like you giving away your heirloom diamond, your priceless antique watch, your whole valuable coin collection, your inherited wealth, your house, your property, your 401K, your 503B,

your CDs or stocks, or even your health for the benefit of someone else. You give up whatever is your most valuable and most meaningful possessions for another. Giving your all.

That's unconditional love. **Second**, God's only Son, Jesus Christ gave up his time, his talents, his treasures, his health, his wealth, his very life for you and for me. He came to walk the muddy, dusty, rocky road beside us, not to sit in a palace, eating caviar, sipping \$100 bottles of wine, getting fanned by gorgeous women, saying, "Isn't life just grand?" No, he came to be with us. He came to give himself away..... proactively. That's what unconditional love looks like. It's a little like you and me putting aside our own lives, our own interests, our own egos, our own passions or our own pursuits,

our own time, our own talents, and our own treasures to benefit someone else, with no thought of what we get in return.

Friends, when we proactively love unconditionally, we tear up the balance sheet. We rip out the column of what's in it for me. We scratch out the column on how to satisfy myself. We live out our identity no longer concerned about ourselves. As Paul says in Romans 13:14, "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh." So, with no thought of ourselves, we simply try to love others, bless others, and serve others. You see, when we look at our calendars and checkbook registers, we notice that they have

two columns – our time (the white space) and other’s time (the filled in spaces), our income and our expenses. Humanly speaking we’re told to keep a healthy balance in life. But look at this. Jesus did not focus on himself, his time, or his income. He simply focused on others, giving himself away, spending himself on others, wanting the best for you and me, pleasing the Father and doing God’s will. He was so plugged into the Father, that he simply ushered forth the holy, healing, grace, and love of the Father on us. That’s how Jesus loved. So, when we are plugged into Jesus Christ, when we love unconditionally, when we rip out the me column, our challenge is this: We are shaped by these words, “LETTUCE love one another, because love is from God,” And, when

we are shaped by LETTUCE love one another, we don't spend time bickering about our glory, our ego, who's the greatest, who's doing all the work, who's needy, who said what to whom, who's grouchy, who's grumpy, who's egotistical, who's just plain down hard to work with or live with. No, we simply proactively love first. We proactively love first. We love with no thoughts of the consequences. We love even if people hate us, speak ill of us, ignore us, or do everything in their power to crush us. We just love them with the love God has for us, we love with them with the love Christ has for us. And, friends, when we love in this way, it will turn heads, it will turn hearts, it will change lives and it will turn the world upside down. The

revolution starts today as we commit to loving one another! Amen. Let us pray.