

Love at Work

Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins - June 24, 2018

This morning I checked my computer for messages and one of the first things that caught my eye was a paragraph describing the plight that men get themselves into when they marry. I don't know who the original article was written by, but the article listed all the reasons men should choose to live with a woman rather than marrying her. The article listed all the ways in which a man loses when the breakup happens and it listed all that was at stake by taking vows. It ended by encouraging men to take the precautions ahead of time and steer clear of marriage.

Obviously, this person has never read or at least understood God's purpose for his creation. Today I want to discuss the subject of love and the benefits of building relationships that last a lifetime and provides role models for future generations.

In order to get the true meaning of love, we must begin with our heavenly Father. Look at 1 John 4. The first few verses states how we can test people to know if they are God's children or if they are false prophets following satan's schemes.

Anyone who denies that Jesus is God dwelling in a human body is a liar and the truth is not in him. The Spirit of God does not dwell in this person. God's spirit dwells in believers and is more powerful than the one that is in the world.

There are enemies of God that speak lies and those who are not in God's family will believe and listen to these deceivers.

Those who belong to God will listen to the truth of God's word and follow it. Here are some guidelines concerning love.

We are to love one another for love comes from God. When we love each other, it shows that we are God's children and we know Him. God is love and anyone who doesn't love others has never known Him. Real love is not our love for God, but his love for us. God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven. Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we must love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is truly in our hearts. God has given us his Spirit. That is how we know that we are one with him, just as He is one with us. God sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

God is love. If we keep on loving others, we will stay one in our hearts with God and He will stay one with us. If we truly love others and live as Christ did in this world, we need not be worried about the Day of Judgment. A real love for others will chase those worries away. We do not have to be afraid of punishment when we love as Christ loves. We love because God loved us first. If we say that we love God and yet we don't love others we are liars. We cannot see God. How can you love God whom you haven't seen if you don't love people that you can see? The Commandment that God left with us is to love God and love each other.

1 Corinthians 13 explains love. Paul wrote this to show us what genuine love is and what it is not. What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels? If I don't love others it has no more meaning than listening to a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains? I would be nothing unless I loved others. What if I gave away all that I owned and let myself be burned alive? I would gain nothing unless I love others. These are powerful statements! The love of God brings springs forth from the Holy Spirit that dwells in the heart of God's children.

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails.

Paul continues by telling us that we only have partial knowledge in this life so our perspective is not complete. But that which is perfect will someday appear and that which is not perfect will disappear. When God removes the veil from our eyes we will know everything and understand just as God completely understands us. For now there are faith, hope and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.

Marriage illustrates God's relationship with his church. He created us as male and female and when we are united in marriage, we have a contract that we will love and honor that commitment until death takes one away from the other. Male and female completes us as God designed us in his image. As we commit ourselves to God and to each other, God's Spirit guides our lives in the direction that He desires us to go. The man is commanded by God to love his wife as God loved the church and gave his life for it. See Ephesians 5:2.

The chapter starts out with telling us to follow Christ's example for we are his children. As God's people don't let it be said that any of us are immoral or indecent or greedy. Don't use dirty or foolish or filthy words. Instead, say how thankful you are. Being greedy, indecent or immoral is just another way of worshiping idols. You can be sure that people who behave in this way will never be part of the kingdom that belongs to Christ and to God.

Verse 8 reads like this this: At one time you were like people living in the dark, but now you are people of the light because you belong to the Lord. So act like people of the light and make your light shine. Be good, honest and truthful as you try to please the Lord. Don't take part in things that are done in the dark in secret; instead show how wrong they are. It is disgusting even to talk about what is done in the dark. But the light will show what these things are really like. Light reveals everything.

Act like people with good sense and not as fools. These are evil times so make every minute count. Don't be stupid. Instead, find out what the Lord wants you to do. Don't destroy yourself by getting drunk, but let the Spirit of God direct your life.

Always use the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to thank God the Father for everything. Honor God and put others first. A wife should put her husband first as she does the Lord. A husband is head of the wife as Christ is the head and Savior of the church which is his own body. A husband is called by God to love his wife just as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. Christ's purposes to have a glorious and holy church without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws. In the same way a husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself. A husband who loves his wife shows that he loves himself. None of us hate our own bodies. We provide for them and take good care of them, just as Christ does for the church because we are each part of his body. The Scripture says that a man leaves his father and mother and becomes one with his wife. This is a great mystery but Paul took it as a symbol of Christ and his church. Each husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband.

In Proverbs 31, we find pearls of wisdom for us to consider:

Verse 10 speaks about the value of a good wife. It reads like this: "A truly good wife is the most precious treasure a man can find! Her husband depends on her and she never lets him down. She is good to him every day of her life, and with her own hands she gladly makes clothes. If you read this chapter, you find a godly woman enjoys being a helpmate to her husband. She is industrious, cheerfully fulfills a wife's duties, and is intelligent and skillful at providing and protecting the assets of her livelihood. She stays busy and is never prone to idleness or laziness. She helps the poor and the needy and her own family has warm clothing so she need not worry about the snow when it comes. She prepares ahead of time for her family so they are not in need. She takes pride in herself and everything she wears is beautiful. Her husband is a well-known and respected leader in the city. She makes clothes to sell to the shop owners. She is strong and graceful as well as cheerful about the future. Her words are sensible and her advice is thoughtful. She takes pride in her family and takes good care of them. Her children praise her and with great pride her husband says, "There are many good women, but you are the best!"

Charm can be deceiving and beauty fades away, but a woman who honors the LORD, deserves to be praised. Show her respect-praise her in public for what she has done.

If every young person would read the Scriptures, choose a mate accordingly, marriages would be strong, healthy, happy and last for a lifetime. The family unit would be built on a rock solid foundation and nothing would be able to penetrate and destroy it.

When men and women realize that God created them as a married couple to complement each other, not to control or rule over one or the other, but to bear one another's burdens, share responsibilities and to enjoy life together, worshiping God together then life has meaning and purpose. God has designed a man and his wife to enjoy life, bear children and raise them in the ways of the Lord. When a husband takes his place before God, is head of his household, and keeps a humble spirit the family is blessed.

Jesus showed us by his example the proper way to treat each other.

Even though his time had not come to begin performing miracles, He responded to his mother's request to intervene at the marriage of Cana when the host ran out of wine. Jesus turned the water into wine to save embarrassing the host. John 2:1-11. After he provided the wine for the guests, he went with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples to the town of Capernaum where he stayed for a few days.

Jesus had compassion on sinners. In John 8, religious leaders brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus and questioned him as to what should be the punishment for her sin.

They said that Moses commanded such a person to be stoned. They wanted to test him and bring charges against him, yet Jesus used it as a teachable moment. He simply bent over and started writing on the ground with his finger. They kept on asking Jesus about the woman. Finally he stood up and said, "If any of you have never sinned, they go ahead and throw the first stone at her." He then bent over again and began writing on the ground. The people left one by one, beginning with the oldest. Finally Jesus was alone with the woman. He stood up and asked her, "Where is everyone? Isn't there anyone left to accuse you?" She answered, "No, sir." Then Jesus told her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Jesus was sinless and he was the only one that could rightfully judge and condemn the woman, yet He chose the route of kindness, compassion and forgiveness. We should follow his example with people around us.

In John 11, Lazarus, Jesus friend was sick. Jesus loved this family and Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus to come quickly as his friend was very sick. Jesus waited two more days before going to Judea where the sisters lived. When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been buried for four days. Martha, hearing that Jesus had arrived, went to meet him, but Mary stayed in her house. Martha greeted Jesus with these words, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask." Jesus showed his love, compassion and power to this family even though he knew that they were disappointed in him for delaying his trip. Jesus told Martha that he wanted to see Mary also. Martha went home and told her sister, "The Teacher is here and he wants to see you." As soon as Mary heard that, she arose and went to see Jesus. As soon as she saw Jesus, she knelt at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus wept. Even though sorrow was there, disappointment was there, and death seemed to be final, Jesus brought forth a miracle. He raised Lazarus from the dead and commanded the people to loose him and let him go. In marriage there are disappointments, heartaches, sorrow, as well as happy times. God is always there to bring us through if we place our trust in him. His word declares that "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28. He uses trials of this life to mold us into his likeness.