

## SERVING LOVE DOESN'T EQUAL NOTHING

### Introduction

Love is a romantic word.

More songs have been written about love than any other subject.

And would there even be a movie industry without love?

There is an entire genre called romance novels because people so desperately long for love.

And yet as much as we write about it,  
talk about it,  
and claim to build our lives around it,  
love is actually a rare commodity.

Most of what we call love falls in other categories:  
from like to lust, passion to possession.

We have been so inundated with love imitations,  
that we've become blind to what love is really all about.

#### I. IN THE END LOVE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN SACRIFICE

##### A. Jesus told us that the way the world would know that we are his disciples is if we love one another (John 13:34).

<sup>34</sup> *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34)*

1. He laid a foundation for an entire movement.
2. Love is so central to the heart of God and the culture of the NT church that without it  
  
we have no claim to be the disciples of Jesus Christ.

##### B. In John 15:13, Jesus gives us the practical expression of love.

1. He says,

*“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

2. Of course, Jesus was speaking of his own death, explaining that his sacrifice would be the ultimate expression for the love of all humanity.

C. And the church erupted out of an act of love.

1. It shouldn't surprise us  
that the church  
only moves toward God  
when it is fueled by love.

2. In a world of imitations,  
real love draws a cord.

It stands out.  
It is undeniable.  
It is defining.

D. I have to admit for the last ten years of my Christian life,  
I have been far more attracted to faith.

1. If my life were a Bible, it would say,

*“You will be known by your faith—and love is important too.”*

2. I wanted to be known for my faith.

E. In some ways that drove me into some pretty extreme situations.

1. It put me in the middle of a world I knew nothing about.

2. My life of faith carried me down the middle of the street in Quito, Ecuador at 3:00 AM hitch-hiking to the airport.

3. It's put me foreign countries in some dangerous situations.

Like in the path of hurricane Wilma in Havana, Cuba.

- F. Yet in the middle of that journey,  
Jesus has changed my core motivation.
  1. While He wanted me to live by faith,  
the only way I could really know Him  
was to also be known by love.

## II. SERVING LOVE DOESN'T EQUAL NOTHING

- A. It is impossible to come close to God  
and not have love overwhelm you.
  1. When you realize that the practical expression of love is servanthood,  
love begins to change everything about your relationships.
  2. In fact, this is one of the amazing things about God;  
He loves to serve.
  3. When Jesus tied a towel around his waist  
and began washing his disciples feet,  
  
this was not an extraordinary act for God,  
but right in line with who He is.
  4. Jesus Christ was a servant.  
He was doing nothing more  
than expressing the servant heart of God.
- B. It sounds sacrilegious to say that God is a servant,  
but that's only because our core values  
are so corrupt and distorted.
  1. We feel comfortable attributing to God  
those things we aspire to be.

2. To describe Him as all-powerful makes Him only what we want more of.
3. To describe God as all-knowing once again reinforces something we value.
4. To describe God as all-present is not only comforting, but it even affirms our personal value for control.
5. We want God to be all-powerful, all-knowing and all-controlling.
6. But to say that God is a servant seems out of touch with our view of how God works.

C. If we were all-powerful, all-knowing and all-present,

how many of us would choose to let servanthood

be the ultimate expression of all that potential?

1. Isn't the whole point of being God to be served?
2. It would be for us, but not for Jesus.

### III. JESUS SHOWED THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS LOVE

A. Whenever we are known by love, God's reputation is intact.

1. Psalm 17:2 says,

*<sup>2</sup> May my vindication come from you;  
may your eyes see what is right. (Psa 17:2)*

B. God's love is so consuming that He comes to us where we are.

1. Often times we don't think of love manifesting itself precisely like that.
2. But this is exactly what Jesus does. He comes to us.
3. I want each one of us to obey Jesus' commandment of John 13:34:
  - <sup>34</sup> ... *As I have loved you, so you must love one another.* (John 13:34)
  - a. These aren't just words.
  - b. They are red words in our Bibles.
4. Jesus says, "*as I have loved you.*"
  - a. Wow! Jesus is calling us to love like we have never loved before!
  - b. Jesus came to meet our needs.
  - c. He served us even though He is God.
  - d. Jesus' disciples knew Jesus loved them because He served them.
5. Service is always about meeting others needs or helping others succeed.
  - a. Service puts the needs of others at least on par with our own.
  - b. Selfless, self-forgetting service is what opens the hearts of people.
  - c. We cannot separate love from service.
  - d. They go hand in hand.
6. When Jesus asked the blind beggar,

*“What do you want me to do for you”* (Luke 18:41),

He was demonstrating a heart of a servant.

7. He was asking the question all true servants ask.
  - a. When Jesus washed his disciples' feet, or made a fire and prepared a breakfast of fish and bread (John 21:9),
  - b. he was showing his disciples that no act of service is too menial to be without meaning.
  - c. He was showing the full extent of his love!
8. Service is the action that causes us to move toward others in love.

C. We have to have the same attitude about service as Jesus had and still has:

<sup>5</sup> *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus*  
<sup>7</sup> *...taking the very nature of a servant.* (Phil 2:5, 7)

D. The Scriptures record that people came to Jesus

*“to hear him and be healed of their diseases”* (Luke 5:15; 6:18).

1. But Jesus had more than that on his agenda.
2. Matthew 20:28 records that Jesus “came to serve and to give.”
3. Jesus gave of himself and sacrificed himself.

CONCLUSION

A. This is what Jesus is commanding us to do for the lost world.

1. Let's move beyond mere words  
and try to embody the message we are proclaiming.
2. You know you may be the only gospel people ever see;  
  
You may be the only Bible people ever read.
  - a. You need to become Jesus to these people.
  - b. God and you can do it.
  - c. In the name of Jesus, I release you.
  - d. Now go and be what God has called you to be.