



SUNDAY SERMON

What is God's Love Language?

Many of us are familiar with the 5 Love Languages, by Gary Chapman, which examines 5 general ways that we can express and experience love: through words of affirmation, quality of time, receiving gifts, acts of service and in physical touch. Perhaps some of us have taken the quiz and can identify what our love languages are and believe that we have identified what the languages are of those whom we love around us. This is just one of the many different ways that we have attempted to define what love is. It illustrates our ever-longing mission to identify what exactly love is. How can one get it? How can we give it? Is it an... "it"? Is there a way to bottle it up? What would the cost be? Would one be more worthy of it than another?... What is God's Love Language?

DATE
Pentecost 14
Sunday, Sept. 6, 2020

PREACHER
Cami Caudill

In today's reading, Paul instructed the Romans to Love. Just- love. Yes, there are rules and traditions, and even laws about those traditions. More importantly, Paul calls out that it is not enough to simply not kill, steal, or cheat- but challenges us to love our neighbors as ourselves because in that, the law will be fulfilled. We cannot love and kill. Love and Steal. Love and cheat. Calling us to lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, Paul gives us the directive to love our neighbor. Who is that? Our literal neighbor? Our friends? Family? Don't you worry, Jesus has an answer to that in Luke, which you may be familiar with as the story of the good Samaritan. In this story, a man- presumably Jewish, has been attacked, robbed and left for dead is laying on the side of the road. Two like-minded, like-cultured, "from the same neighborhood" men walked by and did nothing. The third person, someone who would be a person belonging to a culture that the Jewish people of the time would have despised... DESPISED!, takes pity on the man and acts in compassion. This is the neighbor. So again, I ask, who is your neighbor? What is God's love language?

We are living through a time of unspeakable injustices, fear, pain and sorrow. We are living in a time when over 186 thousand people have died from this pandemic, many of them alone, in a cold hospital room with only the warmth of a kind nurse or doctor at their side- and still, wearing a mask to protect each other from it somehow divides us as being a partisan issue. I don't need to tell you the anxiety and fear that parents, students and teachers have as they send their kids to college, or embark on a school year that looks and feels different than ever experienced before- where the jumpstart of our economy is placed upon the very lives of our children, parents and grandparents. We live in a time when the quest for racial equality is choked out by a systemic racism that seeks to pull our black and brown brothers and sisters down- where a black man can be shot in the back 7 times and a white man can shoot and be hailed a hero. What love language is this?

continued

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Many of us feel, or have felt sad, overwhelmed, scared, depressed, afraid, and alone. And that's ok. But now- Now is the moment for you to wake from sleep. The day is near.

At 8 years old, Nolan Davis decided that kids in his community needed a chance to express their feelings around the injustices that are being experienced by African American's in our communities. When asked why he wanted to do the march, Nolan answered, ""Even though I'm a kid, it's important to speak my voice so people can hear me and know they can share their voice too, just like me." Armored in light and with a poster that read, "Kids can make change", Nolan lead a group of over 700 people, with hundreds of young voices all singing in unison, ""We are the children, the mighty children. Here to tell you, Black lives matter!". Along the way, pieces of chalk were available on the side walk for kids to write or draw about their feelings so that their voices, too, could be heard. At the end of the march, with a powerful voice, Nolan took the bill horn and said, "I am worried about black people like me getting hurt. Some skin is like chocolate, some is like vanilla, some is mixed together like mine. But we're all people." At 8-years old, Nolan's love language to God's children was affirmation.

Diane's mother passed away when she was in hospice. Today, she volunteers at the same hospice center in an effort to share with them the same reassurance, compassion and respect that "gentled" her mother's journey. Diane notes that some days they watch TV together or talk; at other times, they sit in companionable silence. She enjoys the time that she spends at the hospice center and wants people to know that it takes so little to put a smile on a nursing home patient's face- all it takes is some quality time. Diane's love language to God's children is quality time.

The Heffron family began a mission to collect iPads for hospitals, after a member of their family died alone in the hospital at 81. "Imagine living a long life, dying in the hospital and not being able to tell your family goodbye,". They didn't get to say goodbye in person. They started this effort so others didn't have to go through the same pain. The Heffron's love language to God's children is gifts.

Zoomers to Boomers- a school in California decided to help the elderly and immunocompromised in their communities by saving them the risk of exposure while going to the grocery store by delivering groceries to their homes. The program has now spread to over 21 cities across the country, with the statement that, "We are Generation Z and we are here to help!" The Zommer's love language to God's children is acts of service.

Dr. Calderon, a general practitioner decided that she wanted to help families that were stuck at the border while trying to obtain asylum in the United States. That is where she met a boy who complained about a toothache. When she asked him when the pain started, one of the most basic healthcare questions, she was not prepared for the answer that would follow. "When La Mara (a Central American Gang) broke all my teeth and killed all my family", the 14-year old replied. "I was the only one who survived". Calderon is part of a movement of health officials and medical students from both sides of the US-Mexican border who are battling to keep asylum seekers healthy and safe during their journey through the US court system. Sleeping on floors and in tents made out of trash bags, bathing in the Rio Grande, and living in crowded quarters, Dr. Calderon and other medical professionals worry that they won't be able to provide all of the medical care that is needed. In one year, the Refugee Health Alliance and Dr. Calderon's healing touch has served more than 9,000 people. Dr. Calderon's love language to God's children is touch.

Brothers and sisters, now is the moment for you to wake from sleep. Many of us find ourselves asking what we can do to help. How can we make a difference? Where do we start? Some of us perhaps feel a sort of paralysis as the waves of anxiety continue to roll in, and the high tides of injustices around us seem to drown out the low tide of calm and tranquility. In Michelle Obama's, *Becoming Michelle*, she recounts her time learning to play piano with her aunt. She remembers the importance of "middle C" on the key board. As long as you can find "middle C", your left hand and right hand will know what to do. They will find their way. Middle C is your anchor. I have never played the piano, and most likely couldn't find "middle C".

Could it be that our "Middle C" IS love?.. Our "Middle C", our anchor, IS. GOD's. love?

My friends, God's language IS love. It is recognizing that all of God's children are precious and beautiful to be hold. It's knowing that love is more than a feeling- it's action armored in light. Let's be woke! The night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Allow God's love to be your anchor, and trust that when you act in love, you are speaking God's love language.