
SERMON NOTES December 20, 2020

Today's notes also available at CCPL.life/Connect

John 15:9-17
The Love of a Friend
Pastor Mike

- I. Our _____ and _____ love
- II. We have an _____ for relationship rooted in _____
 - a. We have an innate need for relationship _____
 - b. We have an innate need for relationship _____
- III. Relating to God as our _____
 - a. We can have this relationship only through _____
 - b. Jesus is a friend who gives _____
 - c. To love God, we must love him _____

Closing challenge;

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. Most who celebrate Christmas in our contemporary American culture would associate Christmas as a season of love. But while we may all talk about love, not everyone would agree on what that concept means.
 - a. How do you think most people in our culture would define love? What is love? How has this definition changed over the past few decades? Why is there such confusion about what love is?
 - b. Even many non-Christians would think of Christmas as a season of love. Why do you think this is? Apart from Jesus' birth, what about Christmas makes it a season of love?
 - c. As is revealed through the advent candle, love is traditionally one of the major themes of the Christmas story. What does the story of Jesus' birth teach us about love?
 - d. 1st John 4 teaches us "God is love." What does this mean? How is God love?
2. The Bible teaches that our need for love and relationship is innate to our soul and is rooted in creation. Our need for love and relationship finds its source in the character of God. Adam's loneliness in Genesis 2 was a result of his perfection; loneliness is not a result of sin and the fall.
 - a. How does the idea that our need for love and relationship comes from the image of God impact your understanding of the issue?
 - b. In his message Pastor Mike said that all of our other problems come as a result of sin, but loneliness is a problem that comes from the fact that we're made in the image of God; in a sense it comes from our perfection. What is your response to this idea?
 - c. If our need for relationship and love is rooted in God's character, then the more we are like God, the more we will need friends, and the further we get from God, the less we will need friends. Do you believe this is always true? Why or why not?
 - d. If love and relationship are so important, how should we view and try to deal with the isolation that so many are experiencing as a result of COVID? What can and should you do for yourself? What can and should you do for others?
3. One of the greatest statements about love is what Jesus taught in John 15:14, when he said, *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*
 - a. Why is this the greatest statement of love? Few of us will ever actually be asked to die for someone else, so how then can we apply this truth to our love for others?
 - b. Many have given their lives for their friends. Is Jesus' act of love toward us unique and in any way superior to those acts of love? If so, how?
4. In John 15:15 Jesus tells his disciples (and us), *"No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends."*
 - a. What does it mean to relate to Jesus as a friend rather than as a servant to a master?
 - b. In verses 14 he tells us *"you are my friends if you do what I command you."* Usually, we don't think of friends giving us commandments. How is Jesus' giving us commandments an expression of his friendship and love?
 - c. How is our obedience to Jesus' commands an expression of our friendship with him?