

CCC LOVING LIKE JESUS LOVES ME PART 3

40 Days of Love – Part 3

I Cor 16:14 *“Everything you do must be done in love”*

Good morning Calvary! I'm so glad you're here. We are in Part three of 40 Days of Love. If you missed either of the first two messages, I highly recommend you go to the website and listen to the first two messages that I did in the series because I'm building each week on how do you build strong relationships. Our goal for you during these forty days is that you have better relationships and you become an expert at love. I want you to become a master lover. I want you to get a black belt in love. I want you to be the very best world class lover that anybody knows. I want Calvary Church to be known for its great love.

When it comes to learning did you know that some of the best ways to learn anything is to learn by a model. When

we see somebody else doing it, We go “Oh, that's how you do it! I've got that!” We always learn faster, quicker and deeper when somebody gives us an example... When it comes to love who is the best example for love? There is no question, it's Jesus Christ. Jesus was the only person with perfect love, with perfect understanding of relationships. In John 13:34 Jesus said, *“I'm giving you a new commandment, love each other in the same way that I have loved you.”* I encourage you to circle *“in the same way.”* Jesus says in the same way that I have modeled for you, in the same way that I have loved you I want you to pass that on to other people. Jesus is saying to you and I that He is the model and the way that He loves you is the way He wants you to love other people. John 13:15 *“I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”*

We talked about this in the first message you can't fully understand how to love other people until first you understand how much God loves you. You cannot offer to other people what you don't possess yourself. You can't be gracious to others if you haven't felt God's grace. You can't be merciful to others if you haven't felt God's mercy. You can't be forgiving to others until you have felt God's forgiveness. You can't be loving to others until you feel God's love, when you understand the incredible, audacious, indescribable love that God has for you and you feel it in your life, then you're going to be a whole lot more loving of other people. It's going to be a whole lot easier for you to love other people.

Today we're going to do two things. First, we're going to look at how much God really does love you and I really want you to experience this today. Then second we're

going to look at how God wants you to pass it on to other people. Let's get right into it. We're going to look at four ways that Jesus loves you.

1. First, I must accept others like Jesus accepts me.

Followers of Jesus ought to be the most accepting people in the world. Titus 3:7 "*Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable. He made us acceptable to God and he gave us the hope of eternal life.*" How does he make us acceptable? By his grace. He just says, "You're acceptable." It's not that you changed. It's not that you got any better. It's not that you are perfect. It's not that you never sin. No, you're going to sin the rest of your life. Jesus just says I'm going to make you acceptable by my grace. It's not based on performance. God wants you to do that with other people but one of the problems is most people don't know the difference between acceptance

and approval. Very, very different. Jesus Christ accepts you completely. He loves you and accepts you. But, that doesn't mean he approves of everything you do. No, he doesn't do that. But he accepts you.

You can accept someone without approving of what they do. Without approving of their lifestyle, without approving of the way they're living.

A good example is one day Jesus was walking down the street and some religious leaders who were trying to trap Jesus caught this woman in the act of adultery. It's interesting they didn't catch the guy but that's for another message someday. But it says they caught *the woman* in the act of adultery. They bring her before Jesus and throw her down before Jesus. This woman was caught cheating on her husband. What are you going to do about it, Jesus?

Jesus looks at all of the accusers and says, "Ok, anybody who has never sinned, you get to throw the first stone."

And of course they all start going away.

What is Jesus doing here? He's giving acceptance, not approval. He didn't approve of what she was doing. The first thing that Jesus did was he defended her dignity. He said, I'm not going to let anybody treat a woman like that. I don't care what she's done. He actually defends her dignity.

Which, by the way, when you come to Jesus Christ and you've got a messed up in your life, you've got sins and faults and failures and mistakes he's not going to go, "See? I told you so." He's going to defend your dignity. He accepts you.

Then in the private one on one moment after everybody's gone in a personal moment with Jesus, he looks at this

woman and says, “Where are your attackers?” And she says, “They’re all gone, Lord.” He says, “*Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.*”

You may sit there and sometimes theologians try and make more than what is there. Because most people say, That’s it, there must be more? That’s it and that’s all he’s going to say to you? He says I don’t condemn you either just don’t do it any more. Learn from this and let my love not condemnation spur you on to do good.

Now listen If it had been me and not Jesus with that women. I’d pull out my eight-point sermon on adultery. And I would of said to her, let me tell you why you’re evil, wicked, mean, bad and nasty. You shouldn’t do this. It hurt you, it hurt him, it hurt them, it hurt the kids. Many years ago that is what I would of preached but guess what...

Guess what I have discovered? You don’t have to make people feel guilty. That’s why we don’t waste any time here at Calvary trying to make people feel guilty. Why? Because we already do feel guilt. I don’t measure up to my own standards, much less God’s. If I’ve had fifteen accidents in a car, I don’t want to wake up on Sunday morning saying, “Honey, let’s drive up to the courthouse and let the judge tell me what a bad drivers I am.” No, that doesn’t do any good. I want somebody to teach me how to be a better driver. I want somebody to save me from myself.

So when you come to Jesus with all your sins and your mistakes and your faults and your failures he doesn’t go, You’re right you’re a mess. No, he defends your dignity and then he says, “You know better than that ... and you’re better than that. Don’t do that any more.” That’s it. He

doesn't go in and pound you into the ground. As we said last week, love doesn't rub it in, love rubs it out. So Jesus didn't approve of what she had been doing. But he did accept her. Can I make a suggestion here next time your children make a mistake try and tell them that they are better than that and they don't have to do that... It works sometimes.

That's what you need to do with other people around you. You don't have to go around approving of everything, everybody does. Let me tell you something Edna-Wynne doesn't approve of everything I do, you don't have to approve. But you do have to accept them. Because that is a mark of love.

The Bible says that God chose to accept us. He *chose* to accept us and make us acceptable to Himself through Jesus Christ.

Here's the point. What God does for you, he expects you to do for other people. God says I accept you unconditionally. I don't approve of everything you do but I accept you unconditionally and I love you. And God says I want you to do that with everybody in your life. Romans 15:7 "*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you.*" He says you are to do for other people what I have done for you.

During 40 Days of Love we're going to work on this stuff together. I told you, we're going to teach you the habits of the heart and the skills for genuine loving. Here's our homework for week number three: practicing love. The first action step says "This week I will show acceptance _____" Fill In the blank... somebody who really irritates you. Now I don't look at them if there next to you or elbow them. If it the person next to you, don't even write

their name down if the person is in your same row. Wait till you leave..

This week when we work on love I want you to show acceptance to somebody who really irritates you or is hard to love. When you start thinking, “Lord, I don’t want to love that person!” You start thinking about how much God loves you.

Loving like Jesus means I’ve got to accept other people the way Jesus accepts me.

2. Loving like Jesus means I must value others the way Jesus values me.

How valuable are you? I’m not talking about your valuables or how much are you worth? I’m not talking about your net worth. I’m talking about your self worth. How much are you worth? Let me tell you how valuable or worthwhile you are. You are infinitely valuable to God.

First, God created you. Second, Jesus died for you. Third, he puts his Spirit within you. Fourth, he wants you to be with him forever in eternity. That’s how valuable you are to God. You are infinitely valuable to God. What makes something valuable? There are two things that make something valuable.

The **first** is who made it. **Value depends on who made it.**

So the question is who created you? God did. God created you. What does that mean? It means you’re valuable.

“Everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected if it’s received with thanksgiving.” 1 Timothy 4:4

God doesn’t create junk. God created you and you’re not junk. You are *good!* You’re *really* good. You are valuable. Why, because God created you. *“For we are God’s workmanship* [that word in Greek – “workmanship” – literally means “masterpiece.” Eph 2:10] It’s a poem. I

am a poem of God. I'm a piece of art. You are God's masterpiece. That's what the Bible says about you. You may not think I am a masterpiece and guess what, I may not think you are either... but what really matters is God does.] *We are God's masterpiece, God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.*" In other words before you were born God planned out what he wanted you to do with your life. He said you're my masterpiece and you're exactly what God wants you to be. So value depends on who made you. God made you.

Second, value depends on what someone will pay.

How much is your house worth... only as much as someone is willing to pay for it. How much is my coin collection worth. It's only worth what anybody's willing to

pay for it. How much is a piece of art worth? It's only worth what somebody's willing to pay for it.

You are a child of God, you are a child of the king. You were created by God and Christ gave his life for you. 1 Peter says "*He [God] paid for you with the precious life blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.*" 1 Peter 1:19 How much are you worth? What is your value, only what somebody's willing to pay. Look at the cross. Jesus said, I'm willing to die for you. You are so worthwhile God says I'll pay the ultimate price. I'm willing to give my Son for you. That's how valuable you are.

You want to know how much you matter to God? You look at the cross. Jesus who had been whipped and beaten and tortured and scourged and nailed to the cross and with arms outstretched he's saying, "I love you this much. This

is how much you matter to me. This much is how much you matter to me. I love you this much.” The cross proves your value.

Let me get real pointed here. The people who told you growing up that you didn't matter, that you were worthless, that you'd never amount to anything, that you weren't worth squat were liars. They lied to you. They may have even been your parents but they lied to you. They may have said it in anger, they may have said it in hurt but the fact is it was a lie. You are valuable because God made you and you are valuable because Jesus paid for you. He died for all your sins. And God says you are worthy enough, you are valuable enough for me to send my Son to die for you. I'm willing to exchange my Son's life for yours. You're not just worthy, you're not just acceptable, you are valuable. God says that's how much I value you.

Now Jesus says I want you to treat that kind of value to everybody else that I love too. Because I don't just love you that way, I love everybody else that way. Even the people you can't stand. I love them this much. So I expect you, if you're my child, to love these people the same way I love them because I died for them not just you. Value others the way Jesus values me.

How do you do that? 1 Peter 2:17 “Treat most people you meet with dignity....” No, I misread that! “*Treat everyone you meet with dignity.*” That means everybody. I looked up that word “everyone” in the Greek and you know what it means? It means *everyone!* That means there's no one you are allowed to not treat with dignity. You must treat everyone you meet, the people you agree with and disagree with. Those you like and don't like. Everyone with dignity.

So look at the second homework assignment. “This week I will affirm the value of _____” I want you to write in somebody’s name there who has low self esteem, somebody that you can affirm the value of, you can affirm their value. When everybody else treats them like dirt, treats them like an outcast, treats them like they don’t matter, you treat them like they do matter because they do. They matter to God.

Write down a specific name. Don’t write somebody in your family because you can always do that. I’m talking about somebody outside your family. “I will show acceptance to and affirm the value of....”

Third way to love...

3. **I must forgive others like Jesus forgives me.**

Now we’re talking about a step up in being a genuine lover. Some people think that God carries grudges. They

think that God’s always mad at them. They think that no matter what they do, whenever they have a problem, they think, God’s getting even with me. Like something fell apart this week so “God remembers what I did three weeks, or three months or three years or thirty years ago. Now God’s getting even with me. I know he’s doing that.”

Is that really the way God acts? No.

Is that the way God really responds to us? No. No. God does not carry grudges. All the payment for all the stuff you’ve done wrong, Jesus Christ took on the cross. You don’t have to pay for it. Jesus paid for it. So God says I want you to learn to forgive others as I forgave you.

What’s God really like? We grow up and we get this idea that he’s up in heaven waiting to zap me for something I do wrong. But here’s what he’s really like. Isaiah 43:25 “*I am the God who forgives your sins* [not the God who is

waiting to get you, I'm the God who forgives your sins] *and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you.*" That's who God is. God is a God who wants to forgive. Who has done everything he can to forgive our sins in Christ.

Here's the amazing thing about this. He's been planning to do this for a long time. Ephesians *"Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes."* Eph 1:4 Even before you were born, even before the world was made God was already planning in Christ to forgive your sins. That's amazing.

Just think about that for a minute. All the guilt that's in your life, God made a plan for that guilt, to give you forgiveness even before you were born. He knows every wrong thing I'm going to do, every wrong thing you're

going to do. None of it is a surprise to him. None of it.

It's not like "I'm really disappointed in you today. I didn't see that one coming. Look at what you did today." Never. God knows everything we're going to do and he's already planned to forgive us in Jesus Christ.

So that's why God can say this *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* Romans 8:1 You might circle the word "no." Not a little bit of condemnation or less condemnation. There is absolutely no condemnation because of what Jesus Christ did for us. There's no condemnation but that's not at no cost by the way. The next verse in Matthew, reminds us that Jesus said, *"This is the blood of my covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin."* Matt 26:28 It came at the cost of Jesus' blood. He gave his life so that you and I

can be forgiven. Because of that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That means unconditional, complete, consistent, eternal, by grace forgiveness in all of our lives. What a relief! What a relief that I don't have to pay for my own sins, make up for my own sins, suffer for my sins somehow in eternity. It's paid for by Jesus Christ. I am forgiven.

Once I recognize that, that he's forgiven me, then I'm enabled, I'm strengthened to forgive other people in my life.

These next verses talk about how you and I can do that. The Bible says this in Colossians 3:13 *"You must make allowance for each other's faults"* [I hate it that the Bible says that. Don't you in some way? I want other people to

make allowance for my faults but do you like it when you have to make allowance for other people's faults. It's tough to do. But the Bible says make allowance for other people's faults.] *and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."*

And Jesus said this in Luke 6 *"Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn..."* let's stop there for a minute. If you feel like Christians are sent into the world to condemn the world you've got it all wrong and sorry to say today that's about all we here on Christian radio and Tv any more. Condemning condemning condemning. Judging, Judging, judging. Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn the world. In fact he said it. He said, I didn't come to condemn the world I came to save the

world. And he sent us into the world for the very same thing. If you're trying to condemn the world around you or think that's what we're here to do you're going to be a miserable person. We didn't come to condemn. When we do that we're only going to be miserable. "*Do not condemn,*" Jesus said, "*and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.*"

Or at the end of a story that Jesus told once about mercy he said this "*Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant just as I have had mercy on you.*" Because God has given me so much mercy and forgiveness that gives me the ability to give it to others.

When I take a good look at myself I see the ugliness. I see the selfishness. I see the sin. But when I take a good look

at God, *a good look*, I see the forgiveness that only he can give. When I get that forgiveness in my life then I'm able to give it to other people in their lives. I'm able to forgive others because I know that Jesus has forgiven me.

So how about this one? Look at this action step. Who is there this week that you could forgive, that you could offer forgiveness to? It might be somebody who has hurt you. Somebody that you have been hurt by and you go to them and say "I've not talked to you for a long time. Let's get this going again. Let's connect again." Or it might be somebody that you know who is just under a burden of guilt in their lives. They're just hurting. You just need to let them know that God has forgiven them just like he's forgiven all of us.

Write their name down then make plans this week to let them know about God's forgiveness.

If you're going to become a world class lover you have to accept people the way God accepts you, you have to value people the way God values you, you have to forgive others the way God forgives you and the fourth one... This is important...

4. I must believe in others like Jesus believes in me.

Did you know that all around you are people with low self-esteem? Everybody has insecurities. Studies have shown that the younger you were when you first experienced rejection in your life the more serious it is in your life. It's almost like a curse when people say, You're not going to amount to anything. You're dumb, you're stupid, you don't matter. It's like they have put a curse on you.

How do you reverse those things said to you, how do you reverse a curse? And the answer is you start believing what Jesus says about you and not what other people say about you. You have before you a choice. Who will you believe, who will you trust 1 Corinthians 13. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13 *"If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him. Love believes. You will always believe in him. Always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground defending him. Love believes. When everybody else believes the worst, love believes the best."* This is that God wants you to do.

It's exactly what Jesus did. He affirmed people around him. Jesus looked at people and he didn't see what they were. He saw what they could become. He saw their potential. He saw their growth. He saw what God

intended for them to be. He brought out the best in people not by labeling them but saying, I believe you can do it. I know you can do it.

Let me show you a series of verses. *“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there and it will move.’ Nothing will be impossible to you.”* Jesus is saying, You can do it.

With faith you can do it. I believe in you. You can do it.

Jesus said, “Everything is possible for him who believes.”

I believe in you. You can do it. With me in your heart and God’s Spirit and power in you, you can do it.

Jesus told them “I assure you, if you have faith and you don’t doubt you can do things like this [he’s talking about the miracles he had done.] and much, much more.”

In fact this is one of the most amazing verses. Jesus says *“The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same*

works I have done, and even greater works because I’m going to be with my Father.” How is that possible?

Here’s how it’s possible. When Jesus Christ was here physically in a body he could only be in one place at one time. Now Jesus can put his Spirit in me and you and millions of other people and he can be doing miracles in many places all at once. He can answer prayer in many places all at once. He says you can do it.

Jesus wants you to believe in others too. *He says “help each other with the faith that we have. Your faith will help me and my faith will help you.”*

In other words this is why you need to be in a small group. Sometimes you have a really tough week and you get the faith kicked out of you. You don’t have any faith. And you’re dead and you’re doubting and you’re down and depressed and discouraged. Maybe in despair. He says

when you're down the other people in your small group will have faith for you. Then later when they're getting the faith kicked out of them you can have faith for them. We help each other out. We don't just believe in God. The Bible says if you're going to be a believer that means believe not only in Jesus but believe in each other. If you're going to be a follower of Jesus it means you believe not only in God and in Christ it means you believe in each other. That's what the church is for. We believe in each other and we help each other through tough times and we love each other right where each other are at and we expect each other... we are a family.

The Bible says we are to show love to each other. *"Let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and to good deeds."* We do that in our small groups.

Henry Greirson Small group Testimony

So as your friend, as your pastor, somebody who loves you I'm telling you, you should make Jesus Christ the most important person in your life. He says you are valuable. You are acceptable. You are lovable. You are forgivable. You are capable. You need to stop listening to what everybody else is saying about you. You need to stop listening to what your conscious is saying to yourself. You need to make Jesus Christ the most important person in your life and listen to what he says about you. It really doesn't matter what other people say. What matters is what God says and who are you going to believe anyway?

I know without a doubt you've had wounds in your life.

You've been hurt, no doubt. They're wounds from rejection by peers and parents and all the other people I've

talked about. God cares. I care. This church cares. You need to make Jesus Christ the most important person in your life and start filling your mind with what he says. That is the starting point for love. You can't love others until you know how much God loves you. Ephesians 3:18 *"May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love really is."*

Prayer:

Thank you Father, that you can heal broken hearts and bitter memories and damaged self esteem and even the tears that are falling right now. Thank you. Thank you that we matter to you. Thank you that patterns can be erased and curse can be reversed. Thank you that you turn nobodies into somebodies. Jesus, I ask that you help people today, these dear friends of mine, you help them

begin to see themselves through your eyes of love. Thank you that we can depend upon your love.

Now you pray. In your heart say this, "Dear Jesus Christ, help me to see myself the way you see me. Thank you for creating me. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for dying for me. I don't understand it all but thank you that you accept me and that you value me. And that you forgive me and that you believe in me. I want to believe in you. I want to trust you. Help me to care more about what you think of me than what other people think. May the truth set me free."

With our heads still bowed I want you to repeat these truths aloud after me: "Because of Jesus I am acceptable. I am valuable. I'm lovable. I am forgivable. And I am capable. Jesus, help me to see myself through your eyes of love. And help me to see others the same way. Amen"