

“What Does Love Look Like?”

I. **INTRO:**

A. For the past 40 years **Eunice Pike** has worked with the **Mazatec Indians** in *Southwestern Mexico*. During this time she has discovered some interesting things about these beautiful people. **For instance**, the people seldom wish someone well. Not only that, they are hesitant to teach one another or to share the gospel with each other. If asked, “**Who taught you to bake bread?**” the village baker answers, “**I just know,**” meaning he has acquired the knowledge without anyone’s help. Eunice says this odd behavior stems from the Indian’s concept of “**limited good.**” They believe there is only so much good, so much knowledge, so much love to go around. To teach another means you might drain yourself of knowledge. To love a second child means you have to love the first child less. To wish someone well - “Have a good day” - means you have just given away some of your own happiness, which cannot be reacquired.

1. **Limited good?** No, we can do good without any limit, because we serve a limitless God!

II. **WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?**

A. **Ghgjghjg!** (16)

B. (16) He defined love by way of example; our example of love is Christ Himself!

1. As **Cain** was the supreme example of hate; **Christ** is the perfect picture of love
2. **One took a life, the other laid down His life.**
 - a) To rob a person of their life(murder) is the worst of **sins**.
 - b) To *give up one’s life for another* is the supreme example of **love**.
3. His act was real, meeting us at our deepest need.
4. It was active. It reached out to us. It changed our situation.
5. Thus we too are called to “seeing, reaching, active love that makes a difference”...as next 2 verses makes clear.

C. If need be we should be willing to **lay down our lives for others**.

1. The **effects** of Christ’s loving self-sacrifice are unique; **but** The **pattern** for our social behavior is set by Him.
 - a) We must sacrifice for others!

D. **LOVE IN ACTION!** (17,18)

- E. Love is more than words. It's Love in action. It's love that's extremely practical.
1. **Christianity is love, & love means *action!***
- F. **Note** how John's switches the target of love from **the brethren**(*pl.*) to **his brother**(*sing.*)
1. By doing this he brought the command from the world of **theory** to the world of **practical & attainable** action.
 2. True believers love by sharing what they have with those who are in need.
- G. It's **not** the utterance of some great or profound truth, **or** the accomplishment of some wonderful deed, **but** the quiet, simple help of a needy brother that beyond all else demonstrates our possession of the love of God. (Griffith Thomas)
- H. 3 words tell the story of a terrible selfishness: **Has - sees - shuts!**
1. To possess life's good things **& then** to gaze at a needy one, **& then** shut up our compassion like a key turned in a lock, **is to** disapprove our possession of the 1st principle of love.
- I. **ASSURE YOUR HEART!** (19-23)
- J. Expressing God's love to others benefits us as well:
1. It **confirms** that **we are His!** (**we know that we are of the truth**)
 2. It pours **confidence** into **our faith!** (**we assure/set at rest our hearts b4 Him**)
 3. It assures **our prayers** ring w/the security & assurance of an obedient child before a loving father. (**whatever we ask we receive from Him by keeping & doing**)
- K. (19) This obedience will give us great assurance as we approach God.
- L. **Assure our hearts** - $\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\theta\omega$ *peithō* only here & in Mt.28:14 (high priests giving the guards assurance they'd "appease" the gov if he heard about disciples stealing body from them)
1. "To pacify" "soothe" "reassure" "to set at rest". As a **tranquilizer** can calm a **wild animal**, **so** the **truth** can pacify a **confused heart**.
 2. **Assure our hearts BEFORE HIM** - assured as we live before **the face of God**.
- M. **So the visible evidence of Christlike love produces the assurance of a Christ-saved life.**
- N. (20) **A Condemned heart** - God is greater because He knows all things.
- O. (21) **A Non-Condemned heart** - is because he/she is practicing all the characteristics of a truly Christian life like **obedience, love, & faith**.
1. **What blessings does this person enjoy? (21-24)**
 - a) Confidence (21); answered prayer (22); answered prayer (23); 2-fold abiding (24a; **he in us - us in Him**); have the Holy Spirit in us(24b).
 - b) **Confidence** = boldness (as in the other 3 places in the epistle)

(1) A “*freedom of speech*”.

(2) An attitude of perfect *frankness* in our personal relation to God.

P. When doubt enters a believers heart we can be “set at rest” **not by trusting our feelings, but by trusting our knowledge.**

1. Our hearts & consciences cannot always be trusted.

2. **God is greater than our heart & knows all things...**in that He is more knowledgeable & is more true.

3. Paul spoke about the **reverse effect** (1 Cor.4:4) **My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.**

Q. (22) **Ask/receive** - A **Jewish saying**, quoted by Dr. Brooke(International Critical Commentary) **“Do His will as if it were yours, that He may do your will as if it were His.”**

R. **The world** is characterized by hatred that comes from **the devil**.

1. Such **hatred** produces murder, proving their existence in **spiritual death**.

S. **The true believer** is characterized by love that comes from **the Father**.

1. Such **love** produces self-sacrifice, proving their existence in **eternal life**.¹

T. Acts 24:16 I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

U. **Title?** *What Does Love Look Like?*

III. **We Are Rich!** Adapted from, *The Hole in the Gospel*; Richard Stearns.

A. **Show** GlobalRichList.com (25,000 richer than 90% of world) (50,000 richer than 99% of world)

B. 93% of our world doesn't own a car.

C. **American church** is the wealthiest Christians in the history of Christendom.

1. **How wealthy?** Total income of churchgoers 5.2 trillion.

a) Or more than 5000 billion dollars.

2. It would take a little over **1%** of the total # of American Christians to lift the poorest 1 billion out of extreme poverty.

D. American Christians make up **5%** of church world wide, yet we control about ½ of the global Christian wealth.

1. **A lack of \$ is not our problem.**

E. Only 5% of American households tithed(10%)

¹ Shepherd's Notes; pg.55

F. What did we give? (2005 stats) 2.5%

1. As our income has increased in U.S. our giving decreased.
2. **Our economy?** At the height of the depression in 1933, giving was 3.3%.
 - a) 27% more than in 2005.

G. Where does it go?

1. 2% to overseas missions of any kind.
2. 98% stays right here in our churches & communities.
3. **So, what do the wealthiest Christians give to the world?** 2% of 2% or 5/10,000th of our income.
4. That's, **6 pennies per person per day** that we give to our world through our churches.

H. What if we gave 10%?

1. We'd have **168 Billion** to spend on the work of the church world wide.
2. 705 Billion - what Americans spend on Entertainment/Recreation.
3. 179 Billion - amount spent by teenagers (12-17) (2006)
4. 65 Billion - amount spent on jewelry (2008)
5. 58 Billion - amount spent on state lottery (2007)
6. 39.5 Billion - total US government foreign assistance budget for the world.
7. 31 Billion - spent on pets (2003)
8. 13 Billion - spent on cosmetic surgery in US (2007)
9. 5 Billion - total overseas ministries income to 700 protestant missions agencies (including denominations, inter-denominations, & independent agencies) (2005)

I. If every Christian tithed(10%) we can literally change the world!

1. 65 billion (less than 40% of the **168 billion**) can eliminate **extreme poverty** for more than 1 billion people.
2. Universal **primary education** for children just 6 billion.
3. The cost of bringing **clean water** to the poor 9 billion.
4. Basic health & nutrition 13 billion.

J. Now imagine not only what this would do for the **poor** but for the **image of Christians!**

1. To give so generously (**ex: news anchors in regards to Rick Warren short budget**)
2. The whole world would stand up & take notice.
3. Let this vision catch the imagination of every follower of Christ!

K. **But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?**