

## LOVE THE CHILDREN

(1 John 4: 7-21)

Intro: When I lived in St. Louis.

- There were three Washington University coeds.
  - #Abducted at gunpoint.
    - \*From outside a Dogtown restaurant.
  - #Driven to Illinois.
  - #Brutalized.
  - #Shot in the face.
    - \*Left for dead.
      - +Two did die.
      - +One somehow miraculously survived.
- Whole university community was absolutely devastated.
  - #Violence had hit home.
    - \*Closer to home than many had previously experienced.
  - #University attempted to address the feelings on campus.
    - \*Among:
      - +Students.
      - +Faculty.
      - +Staff.
        - =Fear.
        - =Anger.
        - =Grief.
    - \*Planned a series of gatherings.
      - +To help folks on campus.
        - =Heal.
        - =Learn.
        - =Grow.
  - #Lutheran Campus Pastor.
    - \*Friend of mine.
    - \*Involved in planning these gatherings.
      - +He knew that I had some thoughts on violence.
        - =Causes.
        - =Effects.
      - +He invited me to be one of the speakers.
    - \*Deputy sheriff of my acquaintance.
      - +Knew I would be speaking on campus.
      - +He asked me:
        - = "What are you going to tell those students?"

+ I said:

= "I have lots of things to tell them."

= "But I would hope: "

- "That if they hear nothing else,"

- "They would hear this: "

# "Love the children."

\* "Those who are inclined toward: "

+ "Marriage."

+ "Parenthood."

= "Love your children."

\* "Those who are not inclined toward: "

+ "Marriage."

+ "Parenthood."

= "Love somebody else's children."

# "Because that's where we begin."

\* "To address the problem of violence."

On this Mother's Day.

- Our lesson from 1 John 4:7-21 conveys a similar message.

# Whether you are a mother.

\* Or not.

# Whether you are a parent.

\* Or not.

+ "Love the children."

+ "Love all of God's children."

+ "Love one another."

## I. God Is Love.

### A. Love Is From God.

1. It doesn't start with us.

a. Our heads.

b. Our hearts.

c. Our hormones.

2. It starts with God.

a. If it's love.

- It's from God.

b. If it's from God.

- It's love.

3. God gives it to us.

a. Giving us his Son.

- Born to be our savior.

- Crucified and raised as a sacrifice for our sin.

# God's gift of love.

# God's act of love.

- b. Giving us:
  - Moms.
  - #Dads.
  - Sisters.
  - #Brothers.
  - \*Biological.
  - \*Spiritual.
  - God's gift of love.
  - God's act of love.

B. So What Happens To The Love?

1. How come we see so many unloving things?
  - a. With three university coeds.
    - In St. Louis.
  - b. With a body.
    - Wrapped in plastic.
    - Dumped on somebody's driveway.
    - #Here in Tulsa.
  - c. Things:
    - We do.
    - We say.
    - #To one another.
    - #Even to the people we claim we love.
    - \*What happened to the love?
2. Maybe we have lost our special connection.
  - a. My bank in St. Louis.
    - Promoted itself with the marketing slogan:
      - #"Special Connections."
    - Everybody needs:
      - #Special connections.
      - \*Checking account.
      - \*Money market account.
      - \*Credit card.
      - \*Debit card.
      - \*ATM card.
      - #Without special connections.
      - \*You're lost.
  - b. 1 John 4 describes a special connection.
    - If God lives in us.
      - #And we live in God.
      - \*We love one another.
    - If God abides in us.
      - #And we abide in God.
      - \*We love one another.

- c. We can lose the connection.
- In the office downstairs.
    - #We have two computers.
      - \*Mary has a computer.
      - \*I have a computer.
    - #We have internet service.
      - \*Mary's computer has the direct line:
        - +Modem.
        - +Router.
      - \*My computer has a remote connection.
        - +Wireless USB adaptor.
  - When my wireless connection is intact.
    - #I get:
      - \*Email.
      - \*Internet access.
        - +Just like Mary.
    - But sometimes when I:
      - #Try to open an email attachment.
      - #Click on a link to another website.
        - \*I lose my connection to the internet.
          - +When I lose my connection.
            - =I lose the love.
              - I don't see the love.
              - I don't feel the love.
              - I don't show the love.
- d. Sometimes we exchange a greeting in church.
- “The Lord be with you.”
  - “And also with you.”
  - #This is more than a liturgical:
    - \*“Hi!”
    - \*“How are you?”
    - \*“How about those Cardinals!”
  - #This is our prayer for one another.
    - \*“May your connection stay strong.”
    - \*“May God live in you.”
    - \*“May God abide in you.”
      - +“So that you can love one another.”
  - #If (I) isn't right.
    - \*Then (-) won't be right.
  - #But when:
    - \* (I) is right.
    - \* (-) is right.
      - +Then it's all right (+).

3. To maintain the connection.
  - a. We continue in the Word.
    - Reading.
    - Study.
    - Prayer.
    - Devotion.
  - b. We come back to the Table.
    - So that God will:
      - #Feed us.
      - #Abide in us.
      - #Live in us.
    - So that we can love one another.

## II. God's Love Is Perfect.

- A. God's Love Might Be Described This Way.
  1. There's nothing you can do to make God love you more.
  2. There's nothing you can do to make God love you less.
    - a. That's perfect.
    - b. Perfect love.
- B. Our Love Is Often Imperfect.
  1. I've been known to say:
    - a. Opposite of love is not hate.
    - b. It's not caring.
      - I had a teammate.
        - #On my high school cross country team.
        - He was a decent athlete.
          - #But he had an attitude problem.
            - \*He took a black magic marker.
              - +To his gray practice sweat shirt.
              - \*He wrote in big, bold letters:
                - +I DON'T CARE.
                - =Imperfect love.
                  - For his sport.
                  - For his team.
                  - For his school.
  2. 1 John 4 would suggest:
    - a. Opposite of love is not hate.
    - b. It's fear.
      - Perhaps fear of being loved.
        - #Of letting someone get too close.
        - #Of letting someone hurt us (again).

- \*We have:
  - +Wounds to protect.
  - +Secrets to hide.
  - =Imperfect love.
- Perhaps fear of loving.
  - #Of having our love be:
    - \*Rejected.
    - \*Misunderstood.
    - \*Twisted.
    - \*Manipulated.
    - \*Taken for granted.
    - +Imperfect love.

C. But Our Love Can Be Perfected.

1. God says so:
  - a. "If we love one another,"  
 God lives in us,"  
 And his love is perfected in us."  
 -1 John 4:12.
  - b. "Perfect love casts out all fear."  
 -1 John 4:18.
2. No Fear.
  - a. Not simply a line of clothing.  
 -We buy in a store.
  - b. But a line of baptismal clothing.  
 -God gives to us in the waters of Holy Baptism.  
 -No fear of:
    - #Loving.
      - \*Being loved.
    - #Punishment.
      - \*Being judged.
    - #Living.
      - \*Dying.
 -God living in us.  
 -God abiding in us.  
 -God's love perfected in us.
    - #Christ-like love.
      - \*Simple.
      - \*Selfless.
      - \*Sacrificial.

Concl: Have a Blessed Mother's Day.  
-Love the children.  
-Love all God's children.  
-Love one another.

