

Sermon for April 13, 2008

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: I Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13; Song of Solomon 5:9-16

Title: "Words"

Introduction: Last week we started the series, "Talking Your Language". The idea behind this series is that we need to be able to communicate with the ones we love the love we have for them. Often times our attempts at expressing our love gets lost in translation. We think we are saying clearly to the other person how much we love them, yet they are still standing there looking like you just told them that you enjoy playing football in a tutu.

I believe that one reason our divorce rate is so high is that people don't know how to communicate the love they feel with their spouse. Like I said last week, when the excitement of the "In-Love Experience" wears off, we don't want to put forth the effort to be "Committed to Love". So, we choose to be miserable in our marriages or end it and try someone else! But, guess what? The "In-Love Experience" wears off every time!

That's what this series is about. It takes effort on our part to learn HOW to COMMUNICATE the LOVE WE FEEL to the ONES WE LOVE. If we will put forth the effort to learn our own Love Language as well as the Love Languages of the ones we love (spouse, friend, co-worker, sibling, parent, child, etc.), we can have better relationships.

Now, like I said last week, every human being has a LOVE BANK. That Bank needs to be filled up in order for us to function properly has human beings! We need to know what we need to be filled up and what our loved ones need to feel like deposits are being made into their Bank. In other words, we have to know Love Languages / proper Currency for our loved one's Bank!

Dr. Gary Chapman claims that there are Five (5) Main Love Languages that humans use (learn 5 languages in 5 weeks). There are many different dialects within each Love Language, but 5 main languages. It's kind of like speaking English. We speak the same language as many other people around the world, but some of it is hard for us to understand ... different DIALECTS.

Example: Someone says something about a "boot", what do you think of here in Wisconsin? Right! Something you put on your feet when it gets cold and snowy. In England, that means the trunk of a car.

If someone in Wisconsin offers you a "Coke", what do you think of? Right! A dark cola in a red can. If you are down south, a "Coke" could mean any kind of soda / pop ... "I'll have a coke ... a Dr. Pepper please." "I'll have a coke ... make it a Diet Dew."

Did you know that in some parts of this great country we live in, people do not know what a "bubbler" is? Yea, to them it is a 'drinking fountain' or 'water fountain'. Yet, we all speak English! And we could go on and on.

So, the idea here is that as I go through the FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES over the next six weeks, please understand that I will just be giving an overview of the languages ... there is always more to them than what I mention.

Before we go any further, I invite you to take the insert out of your program. On one side you will find our Scripture for today with some room for notes. On the other side you will find an outline for today's message as we talk about the 1<sup>st</sup> Love Language. My hope is that you will hear something today that will help you in a relationship today or in the future. If nothing else, my hope is that you have someone in your life that could use help in their relationship and you will be able to be there for them.

Our Scripture for today comes from I Corinthians 13 ... also known amongst Bible Scholars as "The Love Chapter". I think it is good for us to understand the details of this writing in it's context. Here it is:

Paul was writing to a Christian church that he had started in the city of Corinth in Greece. The city of Corinth was a trade city; a cross-roads for much of that part of the world. There were Roman roads that came in and out of the city and Corinth also sat on the water, so it was a port city as well. Now, guess what happens in a city where people are coming in and out from all over the world? Right! It was a city of nomads, prostitutes and organized crime. **WHAT A GREAT PLACE FOR A CHURCH!**

Paul had spent a couple years there helping get the Christian church started and now he had to write to people there because he was getting reports that these new Christians were going back to their old ways. So, he writes to remind them what LOVE looks like. It was not their romances that they were struggling with. They were struggling to get along with each other in Church. You can tell by the way Paul writes that a few too many things had become about "ME"!

Here's what Paul writes:

### **READ I CORINTHIANS 13:4-8a; 13 NOW AND PRAY!**

This is what I was talking about when I talked about being "Committed to Love". It takes effort. It does not happen by accident or with ease. It is intentional. I think we all know that, although none of us are perfect, we are still worth the effort to love!

What Paul is talking about here is unselfish, unconditional love that only happens through the Love of Christ. Essentially, Paul describes here what we read about what Jesus was like. We cannot do this on our own ... we need to ask God to send this kind of Love!

Let's break it down...

- A. "Love is patient and kind (v.4)."
  - 1. It's easy to love when people are loveable ... harder when they are not. Think about Jesus love for Peter even though Peter denied Him three times ... that's patience.
  - 2. Do you have anyone you need to be patient with? Can you act in kindness toward that person?
- B. "Love is not jealous (v.4)."
  - 1. How do you react when something good happens ... to someone else?
  - 2. Are you envious or happy for them?
- C. "Love is not proud (vs. 4)."
  - 1. Is it about you?
  - 2. Is it about what you feel like inside?

- D. "Love is not rude or demands it's own way (v.5)."
  - 1. True love seeks the good of others.
  - 2. True love is unselfish ... how you doing?
- E. "Love is not irritable and keeps no record of wrong (v.5)."
  - 1. Easy. Don't get irritated with the one you love!
  - 2. Oh, and always forgive them and don't hold it against them.
- F. "Love never gives up (v.7)."
  - 1. How'd you do?

In all of our love languages, you will see these aspects of unconditional love come out!  
Are you ready for the first LOVE LANGUAGE?

- I. Words of Affirmation
  - A. Verbal compliments and words of appreciation are powerful when it comes to the people we love.
    - 1. Mark Twain said that he could live a good two months off of a good compliment. I think the ones we love might need more than six per year, so here's some suggestions:
    - 2. Keep it simple:
      - a. "Wow do you make that dress look nice!"
      - b. "You look really handsome tonight."
      - c. "No one bakes apple pie like you. Awesome!"
      - d. "Thank you so much for making dinner tonight. It's delicious."
      - e. "I love that I don't ever have to worry about putting the garbage out."
      - f. "Thank you for doing the dishes so I didn't have to."
    - 3. Can you imagine what a marriage would be like if those were thrown around freely? Notice that they are not made-up compliments ... it's about noticing what the other has done!
  - B. Women, how many of you have asked your husband or loved one to do something for you ... clean the garage, paint the back porch, clean out the gutters, sweep the basement, etc.?
    - 1. Do you get frustrated when you ask 100 times and it still doesn't get done? Do you feel like you are nagging him?
    - 2. New tactic: Stop Asking! I repeat; Stop Asking!
    - 3. Why? Well, let me ask you this ... does he know that you want it done? Have you given enough detail the last 10 times you asked that he knows what to do? GREAT!
    - 4. You can stop asking ... INSTEAD, notice what he does do!
    - 5. Does he take out the garbage? Does he pay the bills? Does he take care of the cars? Does he pick up his clothes once in awhile?
    - 6. Instead of nagging him about what he hasn't done, compliment him for what he has done!

7. Don't be surprised if he does some of the things you've already asked him to do.
8. This is not manipulation! "The object of love is not getting something you want but doing something for the well-being of the one you love." It will do your loved one good to hear your compliments!!!
9. Most men are simple. We just want to be appreciated for who we are and what we do!
10. Here's what it says in our Bibles ... (Read Song of Solomon 5:9-16 now!)

### THE CHORUS

What's so great about your lover, fair lady?  
 What's so special about him that you beg for our help?

### THE WOMAN

My dear lover glows with health—  
     red-blooded, radiant!  
 He's one in a million.  
     There's no one quite like him!  
 My golden one, pure and untarnished,  
     with raven black curls tumbling across his shoulders.  
 His eyes are like doves, soft and bright,  
     but deep-set, brimming with meaning, like wells of water.  
 His face is rugged, his beard smells like sage,  
     His voice, his words, warm and reassuring.  
 Fine muscles ripple beneath his skin,  
     quiet and beautiful.  
 His torso is the work of a sculptor,  
     hard and smooth as ivory.  
 He stands tall, like a cedar,  
     strong and deep-rooted,  
 A rugged mountain of a man,  
     aromatic with wood and stone.  
 His words are kisses, his kisses words.  
     Everything about him delights me, thrills me  
     through and through!  
 That's my lover, that's my man,  
     dear Jerusalem sisters.

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11. Can you imagine what your marriage would be like if you said that about your husband?!?!?
- C. Please understand that this is not every man's or woman's PRIMARY LOVE LANGUAGE, but it never hurts your relationship to verbally affirm the one's we love.

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<sup>1</sup>Peterson, E. H. (2003). *The Message : The Bible in contemporary language* (So 5:8-16). Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

## II. Encouraging Words

- A. Another dialect of “Words of Affirmation” is ‘encouraging words’.
1. To encourage means “to inspire courage” ... to give courage to someone else.
  2. All of us have areas in our lives that we feel insecure! And when we lack courage this causes us not to live up to our potential!
  3. It’s about seeing a skill or gift in someone else that they may or may not see...
    - a. I remember when I was in early high school around Christmas. The youth group usually all sat together in our worship and I happened to be sitting by a girl who was a senior.
    - b. We got done singing “Go Tell It On the Mountain” and sat down. She leaned over to me and said, “Stan, you really sang that song well. Nice voice.”
    - c. Without that compliment that day, I’m not sure I’d have the courage to still be singing today.
  4. Some of you here are on to me. I try to use “words of Encouragement” often when I see potential.
- B. Please understand that I’m not talking about pressuring your spouse or sibling or children to do something that YOU want. I’m talking about ENCOURAGING an interest they already have!
- C. Hear Me: We can only give encouragement when we know what is important to our spouse, etc. We have to first see the world from their perspective!
1. Most of us have more potential than we will ever develop.
  2. Why? We lack courage!
  3. A loving spouse, sibling, co-worker, parent, etc. can offer what it takes to live up to our potential!
- D. For some people, words of encouragement are hard to speak. It’s not our primary Love Language. It may take *great effort* to learn this as a second language. BUT, if your spouse needs it, remember; Love takes EFFORT!

## III. Kind Words

- A. “Love is Kind”. That’s from I Corinthians 13. This has to do with the WAY we speak. We can say the same phrase or words, but they can mean two different things ...
1. “I love you!” vs. “I love YOU?!?”
  2. “I would love to wash the dishes tonight (sincere).” Vs. “I would love to wash the dishes tonight (sarcastic).”
  3. It may matter more what tone of voice we use than what words we use!

- B. This works the opposite way as well. We can share our hurt, pain and anger in a kind manner ... and, believe it or not, it can be an expression of love.
1. "I have to tell you that I'm disappointed that you did not help me tonight."
  2. This person desire to BE KNOWN by their loved one. Said in a kind tone, this can help bring the two to a better understanding of each other.
  3. Kind words can also help put out fires ...
    - a. If someone is very upset and yells at you for what you did or didn't do, with a kind tone it can be brought back to a conversation.
    - b. You might get to a point where, calmly, you can say you're sorry for hurting the other person, if necessary.
    - c. A mature love seeks understanding ... Love is Kind even in the heat of battle!
- C. Part of Kindness is Forgiveness. "Love ... keeps no record of when it has been wronged.
1. Love does not bring up past failures. Love understands that none of us is perfect!
  2. We all screw up. We cannot take back what we've done in the past. When we do hurt the ones we love, all we can do is go and admit we've screwed up and ask for forgiveness.
  3. We can only try to do better in the future ... not the past!
  4. When I have been hurt, I have a choice. I can either hold the grudge or forgive.
  5. Guess what God says we should do?!?
  6. Remember God created us and knows what's best for us!
  7. I cannot understand why so many people mess up today with yesterday!
    - a. "I cannot believe you did that! You hurt me so bad that I will never forget it!"
    - b. "I cannot tell you how much you hurt me. You ought to be begging for forgiveness, but I don't know if I'll ever forgive you anyway!!!"
    - c. These are words of bitterness and revenge, not Love...
- D. We can choose to live today in the windshield and not the rearview mirror! Forgiveness has nothing to do with our feelings ... it's a commitment!

#### IV. Humble Words

- A. Love makes requests; not demands!
1. In marriage, we are adults and equal partners.
  2. If we are to have an intimate relationship, we have to know each other's desires.

3. If we are going to know each other's desires ... what we like, what we don't like ... guess what?!? We have to talk about them! Stop expecting the one you love to know how to read minds! They don't!
  4. If we are going to share what we what we like/need/desire, it's important that they don't come across as demands, but as suggestions!
- B. We need to give guidance about how we want to be loved; not force others to love us our way.
1. "Wow, honey, you make the best lemon bars. Any chance you have time to make some this week?" is different from, "Haven't had lemon bars since the baby was born. Guess I'll look forward to having those again in, oh, about, 18 YEARS!!!"
  2. When we make a request of our spouse/loved one, we are affirming their worth and ability. "You have something or can do something that is meaningful to me."
  3. A request brings in that word again ... Choice. Love is always a choice, so your spouse or loved one can choose to accept or deny your request (like Vista)!
  4. If there is a positive response to our request, that is another way we hear that that person loves me, values me enough to do something to please me! It's not forced ... it's their choice.
- V. It's Going to Take Effort (lists, 5 minute compliments, suggestions, etc.)
- A. I don't know if you've noticed, but this is going to take some effort!
  - B. If you know that this is your spouse's or children's or sibling's or friend's Love Language AND you know that it will be like learning Portuguese to use it, here are some ideas:
    1. Make a list of all the positive things that your spouse/ loved one does. Then use that list to make sure you affirm with words the things they do:
      - a. "Thanks for making sure my car is ready to run each day. I like not having to make sure the oil is changed and it's filled up with gas."
      - b. "Hey, I appreciate you making sure the bills get paid. I don't know how you keep up with it all."
    2. 5 minutes of compliments when needed ... bad day at work, school or otherwise. Tell the one you love how YOU feel about them (6 rules for happy married life)!
    3. Compliment your spouse in front of other people ... like your parents. Double bonus points!!! Cha-Ching!!
    4. Set a goal of complimenting the one you love every day for a month. That will help you create the habit if you're not used to doing it!

- C. Again, if this is your spouse's Love Language; learn it! Let them know that they are worth putting forth the effort!

Next Week: What could be better than sitting around watching TV with the one you love? Come find out!

Let's Pray!!