

Text: Mark 14:1-9

Title: "Gifts"

Introduction: Over these past few weeks we have been talking about how to express heartfelt commitment to those we love. We are attempting to discover the ways in which the ones we love RECEIVE love. In other words, how can I communicate how I feel about my spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend, sibling, friend, parent, etc. so that they REALLY KNOW that I love them? How can we fill their "Love Bank" so that they can function at their highest potential?

For this series we are using Dr. Gary Chapman's book *The Five Love Languages*. In this book, Dr. Chapman argues that there are five main love languages that each human being uses to give and receive love. Although many of us would not mind being loved with any of the languages, each of us has a PRIMARY LOVE LANGUAGE.

Two weeks ago we talked about the 1st Love Language: Words of Affirmation. Many people know more than ever that they are loved if they receive compliments or encouragement from the ones they love. I'm not sure I know anyone who does not like to be complimented or encouraged, but for some this is the end all. For many though, being told that we are loved is not enough.

The second love language ... from last week ... is: Quality Time. For the people who have this as their primary love language, nothing says love like the other person stopping everything else that is going on in their lives to give complete attention to me. This time can be spent in "Quality Conversation" (which means we need to learn how to listen, and for some of us, learn how to talk) and/or in "Quality Activities" (being active together can be great memory-makers and times to really get to know the one you love). I know that I have to learn to do this with my daughters too!

Well, this week, we are going to learn about our 3rd Love Language: Receiving Gifts. 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 and some room for extra notes. On the other side you will see an outline of where we are going today complete with 'Fill-In-The-Blanks'!! My hope is that you will hear something today that will be worth writing down and remembering how to say it to that person you wish knew how to love you!

You may start filling in the blanks right away:

I. A Universal Language

- A. Dr. Gary Chapman, who is the author of this book, says that in his studies of people, he has had a chance to travel to many places to study people. Dr. Chapman has been to Central America and the Caribbean to study different tribes of people. He has been to Japan and way up north to study the Eskimos.
- B. His goal was to find out more about how those people live and are in relationship. Through his time in these places as well as here in North America, he discovered that one Love Language must be Universal ... the Language of Receiving Gifts.

- C. He discovered that no matter where he went, people gave some sort of gifts to the people that they loved and cared about.
- D. Back in 2003 we had a group from here go down to Grand Bahama Island to build a transition house for abused women and children. It was a ministry of one of the churches on that island.
 - 1. It was a great trip for many reasons ... and God was good!
 - 2. We gathered all of the supplies here. Trucked (thanks Jim Richardson) them to Florida to get on a boat for Grand Bahama.
 - 3. We had a crew there ready to work on Monday morning. We had to leave to come home on Saturday morning and we had promised the people of the church that we would get the house completed before we left.
 - 4. Foundation poured ... We received our materials on Tuesday around noon. We unloaded, worked hard, watched God do what God does and completed the house Friday evening.
 - 5. That night we had a small celebration there at the church and one of the pastors from the area came up to me, knowing that I was the pastor in our group, and said he wanted to give me something.
 - 6. He then handed me a Bahamian Dollar and told me that it was all he could give me, but he didn't want me to forget them. I have it in my office...
 - 7. It was not much, but it was a gift of love and friendship ... it is a Love Language that is Universal.

Our Scripture for today comes from the Book of Mark. We're in the 14th chapter, and according to Mark it is Jesus last week with His Disciples. He has just spent most of Chapter 13 telling His Disciples and followers what is about to happen. He tells not so much of his own death and resurrection, but about the 2nd coming; when Jesus will come again as King. Jesus is trying to take this time for final warnings and instructions for His Disciples and followers because He knows that his time is short. Not sure the Disciples really understood though.

Anyway, Chapter 14...

READ MARK 14:1-9 NOW AND PRAY!

II. Jesus' Love Language

- A. Did you catch Jesus' Love Language in there? Jesus had to tell all of His disciples to back off and that He appreciated the gift.
- B. I love this story... Catch the details of it:
 - 1. 1st you have the teachers and priests who are looking to get rid of Jesus – because if Jesus is the Messiah, they will have to change their ways.

2. Notice they decide that they will wait until after the Passover celebration when many of the people who are in Jerusalem for the festival go back to their homes. That way; no riots.
3. But, God had other plans. Judas steps forward to help the leaders of the church get to Jesus without a riot on Jesus' behalf.
4. 2nd Jesus is in Bethany—Lazarus hometown—and He and His Disciples are having dinner at the house of “Simon the Leper”.
 - a. If Simon still had leprosy, no one would have been having dinner at his house but him, because it was a dreaded skin disease that was possibly contagious.
 - b. Lepers were to stay outside the city walls and shout, “Unclean!” if anyone approached.
 - c. Chances are that Simon the Leper had, at some point, been healed by Jesus.
5. During supper, a woman comes in with a beautiful alabaster jar filled with spikenard (an herb based perfume or ointment with roots in India).
 - a. The woman was Mary the sister of the resurrected Lazarus (according to John's account).
 - b. The perfume was worth over 300 denarii's (300 was an average yearly wage of a worker in those days).
 - c. She breaks the jar and pours it over Jesus head as a sign of honor and respect.
 - d. The Disciples scolded her harshly ... could have sold that jar and used the money to feed the poor.
6. Jesus reply? You will always have the poor among you, but I won't be around her very long and she knows it!
7. Mary essentially gave a huge gift to Jesus to show love and Jesus showed appreciation for the gift!
8. When Mary was at her house, she must have been thinking, “Jesus is at Simon's house just a few doors down. I have to do something to show Jesus I love Him before He is gone.”
9. She thought seriously about what to do. Her plan? Extravagant, expensive gift that Jesus won't ever forget!
10. She was sitting in her home thinking of Jesus!

III. Thinking of You

- A. Anytime we receive a gift, we know that the person giving it was thinking of us.
- B. It doesn't matter if it costs a lot of money or not ... there's intentionality in giving a gift to someone you love ... you have to think of that person in order to do it. And, if you are receiving the gift, it's nice to know that the other person was thinking about us ... giving some thought to what they would get us!

- C. I don't know about the rest of you, but my kids have given me gifts ever since they were very small. They've given me rocks and drawings and notes and flowers and plants and all sorts of stuff.
1. Why? Because giving gifts is part of loving ... if we love another we have an unstoppable desire to give them something.
 2. Gifts are tangible symbols of love ... you can hold them in your hand.
- D. When we get married, most couples exchange rings. Why?
1. "The wedding ring is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, signifying to all the uniting of Brent and Many in holy matrimony, through the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord."
 2. Why exchange rings? It's a symbol of the love they share.
- E. If an individual's primary Love Language is Receiving Gifts, the cost of the gift won't matter.
1. What matters is that the person you love was thinking about you.
 2. Gifts can be bought or gifts can be made (or picked).
 - a. You can pick flowers and give them as a gift. Just ask your neighbors first...
 - b. You can purchase a card or make one.
 3. If this is your loved one's primary Love Language, you're fortunate ... it's the easiest language to learn! Not sure how?
 - a. Make a list of different things he or she has said they have appreciated as gifts over the years. What do you remember her or him making a big deal over?
 - b. Are there things you remember them mentioning wanting or needing more than once?
 - c. If you are clueless, ask a relative who knows the one you love maybe better than you!
- F. If he/she has been critical of your gifts in the past and almost nothing you have given has been acceptable, then receiving gifts is almost certainly not his/her primary love language.

IV. How Much Will It Cost?

- A. For some people, once they find out that the one they love has "Receiving Gifts" as their Primary Love Language; their first question is usually, "How Much Will It Cost?"
1. Some people have a bent toward spending and others have a bent toward saving.
 2. For those with a bent toward spending ... those who do not mind spending a little money ... this is a very easy language to learn; just watch your budget!

3. For those with a bent toward saving ... those who feel an emotional resistance to spending money ... this language will be more difficult to learn.
- B. Those who like to save often feel it unnecessary or a waste to spend on the ones they love ... especially on things that die within a few days (flowers). They say thing like, “Why would I spend money on her? I don’t even spend money on me!”
1. Remember that if you are not spending money on yourself and instead putting the money into savings, you ARE spending money on yourself ... you are investing in your future!
 2. Think of buying gifts for the one you love as an investment in your future! Why? Because retirement is not going to be very fun if you spend it alone!
- C. Again, if your spouse or loved one truly has “Receiving Gifts” as his/her Primary Love Language, those gifts DO NOT have to be EXPENSIVE!
- D. My wife Sarah gave me a gift that I have kept longer than anything else she has given me. It’s so important to me that I keep it with me wherever I go. I keep it in my wallet.
1. Here it is.
 2. A note that she sent to me through our college post office soon after we started getting interested in each other ... want to hear what it says?
 3. Read note...
- E. If you love someone with this Love Language and you don’t like spending money; two things:
1. #1 = Loosen Up! Spend some money so that other person understands that you love them ... a sacrifice by you will go a long way.
 2. #2 = Don’t spend money every time. Post-it notes or short love letters tell that other person that you are thinking about them too!
 3. Oh, there’s another way to not spend money...

V. Gift of Self

- A. The “Gift of Self” or the “Gift of Presence” will mean more to some people than any gift they can hold in their hand if the timing is right.
- B. This is simply being sensitive to the person you love’s needs.
1. If her family is having a get together, it would be a gift to make sure you are present. Especially if you had something else planned!
 2. If he has a loved one that is sick, be there to help support.
 3. Sometimes our presence ... just being there ... even if you don’t have the right words ... means more than any long-stem roses.

- C. For those of you who have this as your Primary Love Language and you need your spouse or sister or child to be physically present with you at some occasion, please do not expect them to read your mind!
1. Please tell them, "I need you to hold my hand through this."
 2. Yes, you may be setting yourself up for rejection, but you will feel the same rejection if they don't read your mind and they don't show up WITHOUT being asked!

VI. Some Ideas...

- A. A couple of quick ideas if someone you love speaks the Love Language of "Receiving Gifts":
1. If you suspect that this is your loved one's Primary Love Language, try giving them some sort of tangible gift every day for a week and see if things change in your relationship. *Make sure you do this on a non-special-occasion-week ... then you can make it one!*
 - a. If you really want things to change ... do it for a month! Then, the one you love will know that you are in it for the long haul!
 - b. When he/she asks what is going on, tell them: "I'm just trying to make deposits in your Love Bank ... Cha-Ching!"
 2. Keep a "Gift Idea" notebook. When your loved one says, "Oh, I'd really like something like that!" ... write it down so you don't forget it. Maybe at some point the time will be right to present them with "Just what I wanted!"
 3. If you're struggling ... Ask Somebody who knows the person you love and their taste in gifts better than you. You don't have to be the Lone Ranger on this one.
 4. Offer the "Gift of Presence". Say to that person that you are available to go do any one thing THEY want to during the next month. Then, have a good attitude about whatever they pick for you to be at!
 5. Give a book that you know your spouse/friend/child would love to read and offer to read it with them. This will bring opportunity to grow closer... (Harry Potter books!)
 6. Give a living gift. Plant a tree in a loved one's honor. You will get credit for that one year after year...
- B. Next Week ... We will have a guest speaker here for communion.
- C. Two Weeks ... We are back together for Mother's Day and we are going to talk about ... well, I can't really tell you. I'll have to show you...

Let's Pray!