

Sermon for May 25, 2008

Boscobel & Mt. Zion UMCs

Text: John 13:1-5; 12-17

Title: "Love is a Choice"

Introduction: This week we are concluding our series on communicating love to those we love called, "Talking Your Language". In order to express heartfelt commitment to the ones we love and care about, Dr. Gary Chapman argues that we need to know the language to say it in. In his book, *The Five Love Languages*, Dr. Chapman explains that although there are many different dialects, all people have a Primary Love Language and it's one of these: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service or Physical Touch.

If you have missed any of the previous messages in this worship series, I invite you to get caught up by going to our website, [www.bmzchurch.org](http://www.bmzchurch.org) and listening to or reading the notes from previous weeks. I would also still encourage you to pick up one of Dr. Chapman's books that pertains to your needs ... *The Five Love Languages*, *The Five Love Languages of Children*, *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers*, *The Five Love Languages for Singles*, *The Five Love Languages for Men* and *The Love Languages of God*. These are all excellent and are specific to our needs in our different relationships. You can find all of these and more at [www.fivelovelanguages.com](http://www.fivelovelanguages.com).

Okay, last week we talked about Physical Touch as a Primary Love Language. I feel like it's a good idea to put some finishing touches on that Language before we get into our conclusion to this series.

Remember as we talk about Love Languages we are talking about filling the emotional needs of another person or having our emotional needs met. There are times that men get their emotional needs mixed up with or overshadowed by our physical needs. Most men at one point or another feel like their Primary Love Language is "Physical Touch". Why?

Men and women are different (really?). When it comes to physical intimacy, men have something called 'build up'. This is a physical push to be intimate.

Women do not experience a physical buildup like men do. Women desire to be physically intimate when their emotional needs are being met. When a woman feels loved, desired and appreciated by her husband, then there is 'emotional buildup'. It's not physical.

That's why we have these exchanges that go on ... Man: "Wow! It's been a long time." Woman: "Not long enough!" Get it!?! Man = physiological ("It's Time!"). Woman = Emotional ("It's NOT Time!").

Please understand that all this is *not* to say that a man cannot have "Physical Touch" as a primary Love Language. We just need to be aware of what is and what isn't.

At this time I invite you to take the insert out of your program. On one side you will find our Scripture for today and on the other side you will find an outline of what we are talking about ... complete with fill-in-the-blanks! My hope is that you will hear something today that will help you in a relationship with a loved one or that you will be able to offer help to someone you know...

Let me start, again, with a brief reminder of what the 5 Love Languages are and how they are spoken...

1. Words of Affirmation = Compliments and encouragement. Some people will fly high for days off of a good compliment from someone they love! Careful to tell the truth ... empty compliments or encouragements do not help.
2. Quality Time = Set aside time to give undivided attention to the one you love. This may include talking face-to-face about feelings, desires, hopes and dreams ... Who's taking the kids to practice does not count as quality time.
3. Receiving Gifts = Giving gifts that are not so much about the price, but about the thought behind it. Giving gifts shows the one we love that we are thinking about them even when we are not with them.
4. Acts of Service = Some people hear "I Love You" the loudest when someone we love offers to help make our load lighter. Be ready to help with whatever is needed without complaining.
5. Physical Touch = For some it speaks volumes to hold their hand or put your arm around them or rub their shoulders or feet. Physical intimacy is part of this. For some that is the way they hear clearly, "I Love You!"

Okay, now we have Five Love Languages. And Stan has been telling us that we each have a Primary Love Language so that we can hear clearly that we are loved. Now the question comes: "How do I know or find out what my Primary Love Language is?"

#### I. Discovering Your Primary Love Language

If you have not figured out what your Primary Love Language is yet, or you think you know but or not sure, or if you think you have two or three Primary Love Languages, there are three questions we can ask that will help.

##### A. What Hurts You Most?

1. Remember last week I said that if you hit a child it will hurt, but if you hit a child whose Primary Love Language is "Physical Touch" you will destroy that child? That's the idea behind this question.
2. It's looking at the Love Languages from the opposite side.
  - a. If someone cuts you down verbally ... calls you a name or describes you unfavorably with words ... and that hurts you deeply, "Words of Affirmation" may be your Primary Love Language.
  - b. If the one you love does not spend enough time with you and it makes you question whether he/she still loves you ... or, if you have no idea how they feel about the present or the future ... "Quality Time" might be your Primary Love Language.
  - c. If it bothers you that you do not receive a gift for a birthday or at least a card ... if you don't get

something from the one you love periodically ... your Primary Love Language may be “Receiving Gifts”.

- d. If you feel stranded and lonely because all he ever does is sit on the couch and watch TV while you work, “Acts of Service” is possibly your Primary Love Language.
  - e. If you have tried to hold hands and have been pushed away or maybe even (extreme) hit by the one you love and it has or is taking the life out of you, your Primary Love Language may be “Physical Touch”.
3. Now, all of these probably have bothered us at one point or another, but which one of these causes you to think, “He/She might be leaving this relationship”?
  4. If this question did not help you discover ‘for sure’ your Love Language, remember, there are two more questions to be asked.

B. What Have You Requested Most?

1. Ever feel like you are nagging your spouse? That may be a clue!
2. Often times when we are annoyed about the things that mean the most to us, we bug and irritate the other person about those things.
3. Whatever you have most requested over the months and years is probably a pretty good indicator of what you need to feel loved ... Primary Love Language.

C. What Have You Done Most?

1. Another way to discover your Primary Love Language is to examine the ways in which you have attempted to love your spouse or loved one.
  - a. If you find yourself trying to help the one you love with whatever project (cleaning, dishes, yard work, etc.), “Acts of Service” may be *your* Love Language!
  - b. If you are always trying to hold hands or give backrubs, you may have “Physical Touch” as your Love Language.
  - c. Ever find yourself talking the ear off the one you love about all the things that mean something to you? “Quality Time” is possibly a primary Love Language.
  - d. How many gifts do you buy or make for the one you love in a year?
2. Please understand that this one is not always fool-proof. There are times that we act the way we saw our parents or other adults act and we carry those actions over as “Love”.

Our Scripture for today comes from the Book of John. This is Jesus meeting with His Disciples in the Upper Room for the Last Supper.

**READ JOHN 13:1-5; 12-17 NOW AND PRAY!**

II. Love Is A Choice

- A. Now, remember that according to the Books of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the disciples have recently been trying to jockey for position to be the greatest in Jesus' Kingdom. A political kingdom that they thought Jesus was going to put together on earth (Jerusalem).
1. Matthew = Salome coming to Jesus and asking if her sons ... Jesus' cousins could sit at Jesus' right and left when He established His Kingdom.
  2. Mark = Disciples sneaking around behind Jesus' back discussing who they thought would be the greatest in the coming Kingdom.
  3. Luke = Again arguing about who would be greatest and Jesus had to remind them that they were still thinking in earthly, political terms and not Godly ways.
- B. So, now Jesus does the unthinkable. In the world that these disciples lived in, the roads were dusty, people wore sandals, and it was a lowly job to be hired to wash feet.
1. It was prestigious to hire a slave to wash feet at a special dinner.
  2. Most homes would at least offer water so you could wash your own feet.
  3. In families, the children washed the adult's feet and the women washed the men's feet ... no status without the man!
  4. One of the lowliest jobs was to wash feet, especially of people you do not know!
- C. Jesus got out a basin of water, pulled off his robe and started washing the feet of the disciples (as they lounged around the table with their feet pointing away from the table).
- D. Then, Jesus tells them what He's done.
1. 1<sup>st</sup> = Do you get it?!?
  2. 2<sup>nd</sup> = I'm your Teacher and Lord.
  3. 3<sup>rd</sup> = Since I am your Teacher and Lord, you WILL DO what I do. Wash feet. Do the menial jobs if that's what it takes.
  4. 4<sup>th</sup> = I have set the example (not just with washing feet, but the ministry of caring for the lost and least). Do as I have done!
- E. Do you know what Jesus just taught us? It's not about how we feel!
1. Do you think Jesus was lounging there that night and said to himself, "You know what I'd really like to do now? Do you know what would be fun?"

2. Jesus probably did not FEEL like washing feet. We know that he had times the He didn't FEEL like healing the sick or feeding the poor or teaching the same thing to same people one more time so hopefully this time they would get it!
- F. How does this translate to LOVE LANGUAGES? Love is not a feeling ... Love is a Choice!
1. You may not *feel* like doing the dishes ... so what!?!?
  2. You may not *feel* like rubbing her feet or back ... so what!?!?
  3. You may not *feel* like finding him a gift ... who cares?!?
- G. Remember, like I said the first week of this series, "Feelings are for children. Grown ups know what it is to Choose to Love."
- H. Well, that brings us to our final point of this series...

### III. Loving the Unloving

- A. Way more times than I care to say, I have people come into my office and tell me that either they don't love their spouse anymore, or they've just recently found out that their spouse no longer loves them.
- B. That's tough stuff. It's hard to find out that a person we have invested our lives and our time into want to pull the plug.
- C. For some reason I feel like I need to say this stuff this morning. I believe that some here know someone who has been through this, have been through it themselves, or will go through it some day.
- D. Many people in marriages have been hurt repeatedly over the years, but really want to have a good marriage. This happens even with men and women who have taken abuse verbally or physically. So the question is: "Is it possible to Love someone you Hate?"
- E. Answer: Well, here is what Jesus said to do ... Luke 6:27-28; 31-32; 38

<sup>27</sup> *"But if you are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. <sup>28</sup> Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. <sup>1 31</sup> Do for others as you would like them to do for you.*

<sup>32</sup> *"Do you think you deserve credit merely for loving those who love you? Even the sinners do that!" <sup>2</sup>*

1. Well, if you are willing to listen ... and if you have decided that you are willing to do whatever it takes to have a happy marriage, here is Dr. Chapman's advice...
2. Wait! Before I start this, you understand that whether you decide to give up on a marriage or fight for it, there will be pain and disappointment, right?!?
3. Okay, here's what you do...
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> = Find out what your spouse's Primary Love Language is.

<sup>1</sup>Holy Bible: New Living Translation. 1997 (Lk 6:26). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House.

<sup>2</sup>Holy Bible: New Living Translation. 1997 (Lk 6:30). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House.

- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> = Decide that you are going to learn to speak that language and speak it well ... “but, that’s not me.” It’s you now!
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> = Put aside all of your requests for your needs to be taken care of (write them down ... you will use this list later).
- d. 4<sup>th</sup> = Tell your spouse, “I want you to know that I am going to try to be the best husband/wife I can be. Is there anything you would suggest I do?”
  - i. Understand that this may be replied to with sarcasm or unreasonable requests; but, remember them.
  - ii. This is letting your spouse know that something is about to happen.
- e. Make an agreement with yourself that you are going to carry this plan out for the next six (6) months ... non-stop. It will be hard work!
- f. According to their Primary Love Language, do whatever they need to hear you say, “I Love You!” at least 1 or two times each of the first two weeks.
- g. The third and fourth week, increase that to 3-4 times per week.
- h. After 1 month, say, “I’ve been trying to be a good wife/husband for you. How am I doing? Is there anything you would suggest I do?” (Remember, you want your marriage back and it’s not about you!)
- i. Do this each month...
- j. When you get the response, “yeah, you are doing pretty well, thanks...” Then, reply with a request of your own, “Remember when we used to play checkers back when we were dating? I can get Holly to watch the kids on Thursday night and we could just have that time alone if you’d like.” (Try not to let your jaw drop too fast if he/she says, “yes”.)
- k. Key to this = make sure you ask for something specific that is all planned out ... “I really need some Quality Time with you sometime” is not precise enough!
- l. Call me after six months and tell me how it’s going ... remember, there are no guarantees!
- m. I pray for a recovered marriage!

Remember to go on [www.fivelovelanguages.com](http://www.fivelovelanguages.com) and get your hands on the books you need. “The world will know that we are Christians by our love.” We’d better be able to show love!!!

Let’s Pray!