



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
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<https://aulc.us>

Today's sermon is called "A Couple of Things About Love".

Our scripture lesson today comes from First John Chapter 3 verses eleven to eighteen...

Pick up your Bibles and follow along with me...

Starting at verse eleven...

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another, unlike Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

Do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you.

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers.

If anyone has this world's goods and sees his brother in need but closes his eyes to his need—how can God's love reside in him?

Little children, we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His Word.....

Beloved, all of us use the word "love." We say we love chocolate pie. We love to go fishing. We love to take a vacation. Oh yes, we love our family, and of course we love God. But have you ever stopped to consider,

does our "love" mean the same thing every time we use the word? I'm afraid not.

In our text today, the Apostle John gives us a couple of things to consider about the word “love.” And I want to ask you right now: Is it the same kind of love you have? Because the love of God is not a feeling that comes and goes; it is not a word we throw around like confetti. The love of God is a living, breathing, self-sacrificing reality that changes everything.

Let’s look together at God’s Word and see what real love truly is...

First, let us consider love’s greatest act. John writes in verse sixteen: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us...”.

Where did love originate? It originated with Almighty God Himself. It did not begin with us; it did not begin with a feeling; it did not begin with a greeting card. Love began in the heart of the Father. And it was manifested in its clearest form through the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Now notice this: love revealed itself not in words only, but in action. Jesus laid down His life for us. He offered Himself for our sin. The Scripture says, “In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”. That is the strangest circumstance. We were not good when He loved us; we were rebels. And yet, He reached out to the entire world with a love that has no limits.

Beloved, this love intends to save you, to purify you, and to bring you into the presence of God, accepted as His child. This is not a casual love. This is love in its greatest act—the cross. There is no greater love than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends. And that is exactly what Jesus did for you...

Second, let us consider love’s greatest lesson. John goes on in verse eighteen: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”.

Love teaches us a truth about ourselves that we have forgotten, or maybe have never known. And here it is: everyone is very precious in the eyes of God.

Every person you meet today, whether they are easy to love or hard to love, is precious to God. And anytime we practice self-sacrifice on our part for someone else, that is the noblest expression of love.

This kind of love needs to be used...

In removing stumbling blocks and obstacles to human advancement, whether inside the church or outside.

In creating and sustaining new efforts to lift a person up—both physically and spiritually.

It will teach and reveal that love first came from Heaven, and it shows us the right way to live.

Love also shows us a new duty—the duty of giving ourselves for others. It is not enough to say, “Be warmed and be filled.” No, love becomes an inspiration within us. Love is the test of our true character. The question is not, “What do I believe about love?” The question is, “How much do I really love my neighbor?”.

So love generates a new and tender desire in us: “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” That is love’s greatest lesson, the lesson of a changed heart that reaches out to a broken world.

Now, thirdly, I want us to see love’s greatest claim. This love was done by God and His Son, Jesus, for you and me, for us. And here is the claim it makes upon us: It demands a response.

Some have accepted this great act of love. Others have been delaying to accept it. But let me tell you, when this love is accepted as God intends us to accept it, it causes a great change to happen.

Look at the state from which we are changed...

We were already condemned, living in a world of spiritual darkness.

We were morally and spiritually dead.

We were living in a continual state of sin, separated from God.

But look now at the state to which we are changed...

We are adopted as children of God.

We are united, joined to God by our faith in Jesus Christ.

We have entered into true life and light.

We have the continual presence of the Holy Spirit to help us in all things.

That is love's greatest claim... that the love of God does not leave you where it finds you. It lifts you up. It transforms you. It brings you from death to life.

So, my friends, let me ask you plainly: What kind of love do you have? Is it the love that simply likes chocolate pie and fishing and vacations? Or is it the love of God, a love that gives, a love that sacrifices,
a love that serves?

Let us not merely talk about love. Let us love in deed and in truth. Go this week and do something loving for someone who cannot repay you. Forgive someone who has wronged you. Give to someone in need.

Remove a stumbling block from someone's path. Because you have been loved with an everlasting love, now let that love flow through you.

And if you have never accepted the love of God displayed so clearly through His Son, Jesus Christ, if you have been delaying, let me tell you: right now is the time.

Right now, I want to invite you to accept this love of God that He has displayed so clearly through and in His Son, Jesus. If you have never given your life to Christ, if you have been running from Him, if you have been trusting in your own goodness, come to Him now. Receive His love. Let it change you. Let it save you. And if you are a believer but your love has grown cold, come back to the cross. Let the fire of His love be rekindled in your heart this very moment.

The altar is open. Give yourself to Him right now...

Please bow your heads with me as we pray....

Father, we thank You for Your great love. Thank You for Jesus, who laid down His life for us. Lord, teach us to love as You love, not just with words, but with deeds and in truth.

For those who are here and have never accepted this love, open their hearts to receive You now. For those whose love has grown cold, rekindle that flame.

Transform us by Your love, and let that love reach through us to a lost and hurting world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Go out this week and be a blessing. For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed.

Thank you for watching and listening. We will see you all next week.

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