

SERIES: "LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING"

MESSAGE: LOVE DEEPER

TEXT: JOHN 12:1-8

DATE: APRIL 13, 2008

Love Deeper **John 12:1-8**

Introduction

- A. Do I really deserve to be here? Wow! I don't know if I know how to answer that.
1. What things would make you think you deserve to be in heaven?
 2. My first thought would be "NO", because all of us have sinned and none of us have died for our sinned, so it seems logical to say "NO".
 3. But if we say "NO" then that seems to make Jesus' death on a cross worthless, or in vain, so maybe that makes the answer "YES".
 4. Or maybe the better way to look at it is that on my own merit the answer is still "NO", but Jesus invites me in on his ticket.
- B. There have been a few times in my life when I have been able to go places that I could never have gone on my own, but someone paid my way and took me as their guest.
1. When those things have happened I have been so appreciative I wanted to make sure that I didn't do anything to embarrass them.
 2. I would have done whatever I could to show my appreciation.
- C. If you knew that you were going to be standing at the entrance to heaven within a matter of weeks, how would you live your life?
- D. If the only way that we deserve to get into heaven is because of the wonderful gift of Jesus, what can we do to show our appreciation?
- E. I think that the best way would be to live a life that truly honored Christ.
1. Last week, we talked about "Speaking Sweeter" and I challenged you to encourage others with your words.
 2. As we dig in today I want to suggest that living for Christ is much deeper than what you say, it is even much deeper and what you know. I want to challenge you "love deeper".

- F. When you get a new credit card in the mail it most often comes with a sticker across the front, with a 1-800 number for you to call to ACTIVATE the card.
1. It might even be a platinum card that looks really impressive to your friends, but if you don't activate the card it is useless.
 2. The same is true of our faith. Far too many of us haven't ACTIVATED our faith beyond words and knowledge.
- G. The Apostle Paul said, "now in the end there is faith, hope and love ... but the GREATEST of these is LOVE."
1. Wouldn't it be great if our life was defined by extravagant love ... motivated by a Savior who will take us to the gates of heaven and say, "This one's with me!"
 2. The Bible teaches that it is impossible to put God First and be a God Follower and not "love deeper".

H. LISTEN TO THIS STORY FROM JOHN 12:1-8

DO THE UNEXPECTED! (v.3)

A. Background

1. It is days before the crucifixion and Jesus knows it, so he goes to be with the people He loves.
2. It is just a few days before the Passover. Granddaddy of all Jewish holidays. It was a time to remember their delivery from Egyptian bondage.
3. A man named Simon is hosting a pre-Passover party for Jesus and friends.
 - a. Martha – is doing the usual thing working
 - b. Lazarus – is talking about his four days in the tomb
 - c. Disciples – enjoying the evening
 - d. Mary – walks in and does something totally unexpected
 - 1) Opens a bottle of "nard" – very expensive perfume made from the roots of a herb grown in Northern India.
 - 2) Pours all of it on Jesus feet.
 - 3) Commits social taboo and lets down her hair, which a woman only did with her husband.

- 4) Starts wiping Jesus feet – clearly receiving the “I Didn’t See That Coming” Award for the party.

B. What a moment!

1. No doubt a little awkward as everything gets quiet, until Judas begins to criticize.
2. Mary was desperate to express her love and worship and did so in an impulsive and spontaneous kind of way.
3. Deep down we all like being surprised by gestures of love.
4. Many of us love to be spontaneous with our gestures of love, but we talk ourselves out of it.
5. I wonder how many moments you missed this week to do the **UNEXPECTED** and **LOVE DEEPLY**.

C. I heard a story about a church that was across the street from a university and wanted to make an effort to reach the college students.

1. Printed brochures and placed them around the campus, but everyone was skeptical.
2. Sunday arrived and no students showed up.
3. After the music the preacher began to speak and the back door opened and one young man walked in.
4. Wearing old dirty blue jeans and a college sweatshirt, he looked for a seat and no one offered for him to join them so he made his way down the center aisle and sat on the floor right in front on the platform.
5. The preacher kept talking and after a couple of minutes one of the elders stood up and began walking to the front.
6. Many people thought, “finally someone is going to tell the boy that is inappropriate”.
7. The elder reached the front and leaned over, but didn’t say a word as he sat down on the floor next to the young man.

DO THE UNAFFORDABLE (v.4-6)

A. Can you remember trying to do something nice for someone and them arguing with you over how much it costs?

1. There is the moment when it is polite, but then if they take it too far it can suddenly steal the joy of the gift.
2. It is as if they are saying “you can’t afford that”!
3. We all need to be wise with our spending.

- a. Mary apparently already owned this perfume.
 - b. It was hers. She didn't borrow it. She didn't steal it and she didn't buy it on credit.
 - c. She had something that not everyone could afford and she chose to use it to show the DEEPNESS of her love.
- B. I love watching EXTREME HOME MAKEOVER because they do extravagant things for people who can't afford it.
1. It is what happened in the early church, "***All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.***" Acts 4:32
 2. Then Paul described the bizarre actions of the church at Macedonia, "***For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford but, far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the Christians in Jerusalem.***" 2 Cor.8:3-4(NLT) They begged to take up an offering!
 3. But the greatest description of an unaffordable gift is in Paul's letter to the Romans. "***When we utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for sinners. (Who didn't deserve to go to heaven.) Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.***" Romans 5:6-8(NLT)
- C. What precious valuable thing do you have that you could share with someone this week as extravagant over the top expression of love?
1. Not everyone will applaud, so they don't all need to know.
 2. Some won't understand and will accuse you of being wasteful.
 3. So what? Go for it. Let's bust open some perfume this week.
- D. Lest we think it is all about money, we need to remember the various Master Card commercials that have reminded us that some

of the most priceless things in life are things that cost us nothing except our time.

DO THE UNIMAGINABLE (v.7-8)

- A. Many times the right thing, is the last thought of thing. In fact, many people will tell you the right thing is the wrong thing. How do you think Mary felt when one of the disciples criticized her in front of everyone?
1. In Mark's gospel there is a parallel account of this story in which I love the way Mark records Jesus' response.
 2. Mark 14:6-8 – Jesus replied, ***“Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time.”***
 - a. I think Mary knew what she was doing wasn't expected and was very expensive, but I don't believe in her wildest imagination she thought of this as anointing for burial.
 - b. She was living in the moment she knew right then, and no one, not even Mary could imagine the full significance of what was happening.
 3. It is also interesting that Jesus reminds Judas, ***“Hey buddy, you could have been helping the poor anytime you wanted instead of stealing money from the collections.”***
- B. None of us know where we will be this time a week from now, so if we are going to “Live Like We Were Dying”, by loving deeply, we better do it now.
- C. For some of you this week, God will call you to a radical expression of generosity.
1. Maybe it is doing something for a widow in our church or a friend who has lost a job or a single mom who needs a car or a student in your school who is outcast.
 2. Maybe it is blessing someone on the mission field or an unexpected opportunity that God will bring across your path this week. Look for opportunities this week.

- D. Who knows the impact your love could have? Can you imagine what could happen if just the people gathered in this room today took this seriously.
1. What if our primary objective this week wasn't a paycheck, or our to-do list, or getting a new gadget but THIS WEEK we lived to love.
 2. What if THIS WEEK we broke opens the perfume?
- E. The final part of this story comes from the lips of Jesus. In Mark 14:9 he says, *"I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman's deed will be remembered and discussed."*

Conclusion

There is so much talk today about wanting to do the right thing with your life and giving to others. But something is missing.

1. The Last Lecture – follow your dreams
2. Oprah's Big Give - *"The Name of Jesus Christ as such is but a symbol... It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of all the gods to which you pray."*
3. Idol Gives Back – Shout to the Lord without the name of Jesus.

Bottom Line

There is nothing we can do to DESERVE heaven, but because of what Jesus has done we can receive the promise of Heaven.

You know what the Bible teaches? It teaches that you can't have an authentic encounter with the gospel of Jesus and you can't have a true invasion of the Holy Spirit into your life without a detonation of love taking place. That's the NORMAL Christian life. It is abnormal, it is dysfunctional, and it is a sign of heart disease to become less loving.

When it is all said and done and when history is written may our legacy be a legacy of extravagant love for Jesus