

Love Lets It Go, pt.4, 9.21.16

“Love is *not* rude. Love does *not* demand its own way. Love is *not* irritable, and loves *keeps* no record of when it has been wronged.” 1 Cor. 13:5 (NLT)

Intro

1. Gal.5.6 says: The most important thing is faith expressing itself in love.
2. Life is all about learning to love. We’ve established that fact. We’ve been looking at it in small groups and in our daily reading with the Relationship Principles of Jesus then here on the weekends. One of the ways that God builds your love is he tests it. He tests it by putting you around unlovely people. It’s easy to love loving people. But for God to teach you real love he’s going to put you around unlovely people.
3. This morning what I want us to look at is what I call special cases. These are people that I call VDP – Very Draining People: Difficult, Demanding, Disappointing & Destructive..

How do you respond in love to each of these groups of people?

1 Cor.13:5 . It says “*Love is not rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and love keeps no record of when it has been wronged.*”

4 Marks of Real Love

The first type of VDP – very draining person –are Difficult people.

Difficult people. They’re just people who are just hard to work with. They’re hard to get along with. They seem to be unpleasable. They’re cranky. They’re crazy makers. They can be irresponsible. They can be immature. They can have personality defects. The lights are on but nobody’s home. A few fries short of a happy meal. They’re just not all there. They may be a deficient in social skills. But one characteristics of difficult people is they’re rude.

Have you noticed there are a lot of them? They’re all over.

I’d like to ask you to participate in a little survey with me right now. If I were to ask you what form of rudeness irritates you the most, would you think about that for a minute? Then I’m going to ask you to take about five seconds and share it with your neighbor.

How do you respond in love to difficult people?

Love is not rude, so be tactful, not just truthful.

In other words you don’t return their rudeness. You overcome evil with good. You don’t respond in kind. When people are difficult, you don’t be difficult back.

One of the ways that you can be tactful is simply by listening to them first. They may have a point. If you listen to people sympathetically and then you respond tactfully, that is the loving response to a difficult person. .

This thing about listening really goes with tact because the number one form of rudeness in our society today. Interrupting people. Not listening. It is rude to not listen. It is rude to not let somebody finish their sentence. I do this all the time. My brain runs fast and I think I know what people are going to say and I answer back. That's dumb.

Look what the Bible says about this – Proverbs 18:13 “*Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.*”

We are rude because we jump to conclusions. We assume we know what other people think. No. Tact is listening. Love listens. And then love responds tactfully not just truthfully.

Eph.4.31f: “Stop being bitter and angry and mad at each other. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. [Circle “ever be rude.”] Instead, be kind and merciful and forgiving. Forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.” Love listens and love is tactful.

It was Eric Hoffer who said, “Rudeness is a weak man's imitation of strength.” Some people think they're being frank but they're just being rude. People who say, “I just speak my mind,” and they're proud of that. “I just tell it like it is.” And they're proud of that. Actually telling it like it is is not the best way to communicate. Telling it like it could be, telling it like it should be, telling it like it might be, telling it like it could be with hope, that actually builds people up.

Telling it like it is just labels people. If I came to you and said, “You're all messed up,” what does that do? *Yeah, I'm messed up. Look how messed up I am.* It just reinforces. Telling it like it is reinforces the negative. Telling it like it could be – you could be a great woman or man of God. You could make a difference with your life. That helps people move forward.

A lot of times frankness is just rudeness. You need to ask yourself, why am I saying it this way?

Proverbs 16:21 “*A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is.*” The more pleasant you are, the more persuasive you are. You might write down under this verse “I'm never persuasive when I'm abrasive.” When I'm abrasive with my wife, when I'm abrasive with my kids, when I'm abrasive with clerks, when Nagging doesn't work. Does it work on you? No.

The way you say something determines the way it's received. If you say it offensively it's going to be received defensively. That's why love is all about your words. It's all about tact. It's being truthful – you're not lying about it – but it's saying it tactfully.

I remember probably twenty years ago Lee and Penny, long term members of this church, their son Doug was just a kid at the time going to Little League. They had had a Little League game where his team just got creamed by the opposite team. After it was over the opposite team member came up to him and said “Your team sucks!” Doug, he's just a kid at the time, looked at him and said, “You pitched a great game.” You know that kid went away wishing he hadn't said that. Because when you get even with somebody it puts you on the same level with them. But when you return good for evil it puts you above them.

TS - The second kind of group you're going to have to deal with is Demanding people.

The second type of person that's a VDP are Demanding people. They have an agenda. They're aggressive. They're pushy. Whenever you're around a demanding person you always feel a little bit manipulated. It's like they want it their way and it's got to be right and they tend to be insistent. They tend to be stubborn...always right. They can be very self-centered because they're not thinking about anybody else. They can be demeaning. It's my way or the highway. Oftentimes they will expect perfection of you. How do you respond in love to demanding people?

The Bible says "Love does not demand its own way" so I must be understanding, not demanding.

Jesus is the best example of this. Philippians 2. *"Your attitude should be the same that Jesus Christ had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form."* He was God but he was understanding, not demanding. ."

Are you demanding? One of the greatest tests of your character is how you treat the people who serve you. The waiters, the waitresses, the flight attendants, the people at fast food places, the mail person who delivers your mail, gardeners, secretaries, employees, people who work with you. How do you treat the people who help you out? Do you even notice them?.

So here's my homework for you this week. I want you to practice being understanding, not demanding. If you go out to lunch this afternoon or you go to a store, be understanding not demanding, realizing that that clerk may have had a tough time. May have just gotten chewed out by their boss or whatever. If you go to a movie, just be nice to the people there.

You know the best place to practice it? How about home? Sometimes we're more polite to strangers than we are to the people in our lives. I've said this before, that I don't know if it bothers you but it bothers me that sometimes I say the meanest things, the most unthoughtful things to the people I love the most. I don't know if that bothers you but it bothers me.

How do you be more understanding of people who are demanding in your life?

The Bible tells us that patience comes from perspective. That the more you understand about a person the more patient you're going to be with them. I'm impatient with people I don't understand. But when I know them, the three B's – their background, their battles and their burdens – I have perspective. Before you get sharp and short with anybody, you need to say, do I know their background? Do I know the battles they're going through right now? Do I know the burdens they're carrying? That's going to make you a lot more courteous to other people.

We often look at people and go, look how far they have to go. But we don't stop and say, I wonder how far they've come? Maybe they were raised in a family where they had no model of kindness, no model of courtesy. Maybe they grew up in a very dysfunctional home and they've gotten this far and they ought to be applauded for that. We always look at how far they've got to go. We don't look at how far they've come.

"A man's wisdom [that means having that perspective] gives him patience. [Patience comes from perspective.] It is his glory to overlook an offense." Do you overlook offenses or are you offended by offenses? Love lets it go.

Does that mean I'm just supposed to let a demanding person run over me?

No. Be tender without surrender. You don't let people just push you around. Jesus never caved in to manipulators. The religious leaders always tried to manipulate Jesus. They were extremely demanding. They were very legalistic. Jesus would not let other demanding people push him into a corner. You be tender without surrender.

TS - There's a third group that we have to deal with. That is Disappointing people. You're going to be disappointed in life. These people don't always mean to hurt you but sometimes they're actually well intentioned. But they disappoint you. They just let you down. Maybe they break promises that they say they'll keep or they fail you in some way. Or it could be more serious than that. Disappointing people could be unfaithful to you. Disappointing people could be disloyal to you. They can break vows that they've made to you.

So how does love deal with disappointing people?

The third thing the Bible says is "Love is not irritable." So I must be gentle not judgmental.

Let's see what the scriptures have to say about how we can be gentle and not judgmental.

Galatians 6:1 says "Brothers and sisters, if someone in your group does something wrong [especially your pastor] you who are spiritual should go to that person and gently help make him right again. But be careful, because you might be tempted to sin too."

How do you have tough conversations with people in a gentle way? How do you confront people you love when you see they're doing something they shouldn't be doing. The Bible tells us to do it gently, not harshly, not in a mean way. But to do it with gentleness and respect.

There's a little equation: Right + Rude = Wrong.

It doesn't matter if you're right. If you're rude about it nobody's going to care what you have to say. They're immediately going to get defensive. So you do it in a gentle and a loving way. Not in a harsh or a cruel way.

The Bible says this in **Proverbs 15:4 "Gentle words bring life and health. A deceitful tongue crushes the spirit."** I love the way it says this in the Message paraphrase. It says **"Kind words heal and help. But cutting words wound and maim."**

ANG CPE Experience

TS - The fourth aspect has to do with dealing with Destructive people. This is the hardest one of all. How do you love people who intentionally hurt you? Who are mean. Who are hateful and deceitful and dangerous. Who are manipulative. When people hurt us we have two natural tendencies. Remember it and retaliate.

First we remember it. We stockpile it in our mind. We put it back in the database and say, I'm never forgetting that one. I'm never letting them off the hook. I'm going to watch them from now on. We remember it. We rehearse it over and over and over.

The second thing we do is we retaliate. We want to get even.

But that's not what the Bible says. Love takes a step up. The Bible says "*Love keeps no record of wrongs.*"

Here's what you do. **Love Keeps No Records of Wrongs, So Don't Repeat It, Delete It!** Wipe it out of the memory bank. Let it go. Forgive it and get on with your life.

Don't repeat it. What do I mean by that? Typically when we get hurt we repeat it three ways. We repeat it emotionally in our minds. We repeat it relationally as a weapon. And we repeat it practically and verbally in telling other people.

First we repeat it in our mind by going over and over and over it in your mind. We rehearse it. We've talked about this so many times. How resentment never helps you. It only hurts you. Resentment is self-destructive. It is emotional suicide. It is like taking fire in your heart. It will destroy you.

Psychology study after psychology study has proven that whatever you rehearse you begin to resemble. Uh-oh! Whatever you think about most that's what you move toward. If all you think about is how much you've been hurt in the past, you're moving to the past. And whatever you rehearse you will eventually begin to resemble.

So, Don't rehearse it over in your mind. "*Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop, leave it, and let it go, in order that your Father who is in heaven may also forgive you your own failings and shortcomings and let them drop.*" Mark 11:25 (Amp)

The second way we repeat it is we repeat it in fights, in relationships. We use it as wedges, as weapons. You did this, but you did that. Remember when you did that? But you did this! You pile it all back up again.

So, The second thing is you don't want to repeat it over and over in arguments. Proverbs 17:9 "*Love forgets mistakes.* [You don't keep bringing them up. You don't keep a record of things you just keep bringing back as ammunition.] *Nagging about them parts the best of friends.*" It also parts marriages and everything else. Nagging doesn't work.

We laugh at that but the truth is it destroys a lot of marriages. Bringing up the past is not the way to better your marriage because "*Love keeps no record of wrongs.*"

Let me take this one deeper. Some of you in your marriage have been hurt by a partner in a major way. An unfaithfulness, a disloyalty. Some kind of thing that really, really hurt you and I'm sorry. But they came back and said, "I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?" And they've stayed with you and they've stuck with you and you've said "I forgive you but I'm not ever forgetting it." Back there in the back of your mind you keep repeating it and no matter what they do good, it's never good enough.

I'll say this tactfully but truthfully. You're killing the marriage. It's not the big sin that's killing the marriage. It's the fact that you won't let it go. You won't let it go. As a result you have become unpleasable.

The third way is we repeat it to other people. We talk to others. That's called gossip. We tell everybody else. We don't talk to God. We don't talk to the person. We talk to everybody else

about the pain. We want to try to line up people on our side so that we're better and they're bad and they're hated as much by other people as they're hated by us.

All three of those are destructive, damaging, and self-defeating. You're only hurting yourself by repeating it in your mind, by repeating it over and over in conversations and using it as a wedge and by repeating it to other people. Don't repeat it. Delete it. "*Love keeps no record of wrongs.*"

There's a third way we repeat it. "Gossip is spread by wicked people. They stir up trouble and they break up friendships." Did you know that every time you share a gossip you are wicked? Did you know that God hates gossip? God hates it as much as he hates pride. Gossip is pure and simple ego. The only reason people gossip is to make themselves feel superior to somebody else. "I know something about somebody else that makes them look bad so I think it makes me look better. I have some secret here that gives me some sense of control."

Responding to a gossip: Why are you telling me this? Have you told the person you are talking about? Do you mind if I quote you on that?

One of the greatest tests of your love is how much you gossip. Unloving people love to gossip.

What do you do when hurt by another? We talk to everybody except the person who hurt us.

Proverbs 10:12 says this "*Hate stirs up trouble [if you want to keep trouble in your life, just keep hate in your life] but love forgives all offenses.*" Which of the "all" have you not let go? Which of the offenses in your life are you still holding on to?

Maybe as a child you were hurt by an adult. A teacher, an uncle, maybe even your parents. The Bible says that there will be severe judgment for child abuse, child neglect, child abandonment. One day God is going to settle the score on that.

He doesn't expect you to ignore it. He doesn't expect you to pretend it doesn't exist. He's not asking you to gloss over it or deny it or repress it or make excuses for the people. In fact God doesn't want you to fake it. He wants you to face it. Because you can't forgive it until you face it. And you'll never be free until you forgive and you'll never forgive until you face it. You've got to stop running and you've got to stop blaming.

Let me take this one a little bit deeper. How you relate to your parents affects every other single relationship in your life whether you realize it or not. We pull relationship patterns into existing relationships. We carry a lot of emotional relational baggage into our friendships, our marriages and things like that. That affects every other relationship including our relationship to God.

The truth is some of you were hurt as kids. Maybe even by your parents. You have some unfinished business. If you're going to become the loving woman, the loving man that God wants you to be, that you want to be, that I want you to be – that's the whole reason we're doing 40 Days of Love is so you can become a more loving, love filled person – you're going to have to deal with these past issues now.

As your friend, as your pastor I'm saying don't. Don't allow that any more. You've got to deal with the anger. You've got to face it before you can forgive it. And as I said stop blaming and stop running.

I don't know who you need to forgive but I do know today's the day. As we close I want you to think of the people who've hurt you in your life and I want you to let them off the hook. Love lets it go. Love forgives. Because they deserve it? No. You don't deserve being forgiven either by God. But because it's the right thing to do and it's the only way to be free.

The sermons during this series are adaptations of Rick Warren's messages from 40 Days of Love.