

THE POWER OF LOVE

Part 3 - Love Costs

We are in part three of our series, 'The Power of Love', where we are looking at how love is the key to us sailing into uncharted waters to share with people who don't yet know about Jesus.

Love becomes the central motivator, the thing we need to not only know, but experience, in order to go and share this love with others. Love becomes central to both our identity as sons and daughters of God, but also central to how then we live and act and fulfill God's mission.

The Vastness of God's Love – Ephesians 3:14-19

Today I want to take you to a place of thinking about just how vast God's love is, and alongside the Apostle Paul, try to encourage you to comprehend the incomprehensible love of Christ that is so vast that you can never really fully comprehend it.

In this letter to the Ephesians, Paul is grounding people in their identity so that they might walk out a lifestyle that matches. Paul knows firsthand that if we are to go and introduce the world to the power of God's love, we better know and experience it in its fullness first (Acts 9:1-19).

So, he prays this prayer for them to the Father, because he knows just how important it is that they really get the idea of how powerful love can be.

How many of us know it's easy to get worn down along the way from living out the mission of God in our world? It's the power of our identity that enables us to renew our strength.

Renewing our strength is not about working harder but becoming more deeply aware of "how wide, long and high", how vast God's love is for us.

God Kind of Love

The word Paul uses here for love is a word that Christians made up to describe the love of God.

In the Greek language they have four different words to identify four different types of love, English has only one.

- + *Storge* is liking someone through the fondness of familiarity, family members or people who relate in familiar ways that have otherwise found themselves bonded by chance.
- + *Philia* is the love between friends as close as siblings in strength and duration. The friendship is the strong bond existing between people who share common values, interests, or activities.
- + *Eros* love in the sense of "being in love" or "loving" someone, like a romantic love.
- + *Agape* is absolute unconditional love to the whosoever. Agape love is an exercise of the divine will of God in deliberate choice.

Agape – a deliberate choice of the will to love someone because of who you are not because of who they are.

This is why Paul is praying that we might grasp this idea of love and be rooted and established in this type of love. Why? Because the power of this love rests on our identity in Jesus and the assurance of His unconditional, immense and outrageous love.

It is our awareness of God's love that allows us to reach our full potential. When you are filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, it's then that you will live the abundant life where God's will takes place through you and you will find yourself loving others like God does.

Love Costs

Jesus modelled to us a sacrificial and costly love. His choice to enter into our brokenness and take upon Himself our punishment for our sins cost Jesus His life.

- + *It may cost you your time and convenience.* (Matthew 25:40)
- + *It may cost you your reputation.* (Luke 5:27-32)

Is this the type of love that the world experiences from Christians?

The truth is love when sourced from God never runs out. It may on the surface look inefficient and wasteful, but the truth is loving people well is sacrificial and inconvenient and costs us, but it is still worth it.

Because you have such a deep and incomprehensible love of God in you and behind you, and for you, and with you, then you needn't fear that you don't have what it takes.

You can be assured because of this love that is unfathomably high and deep and wide and long, will bring you to your full potential to love others in His power.

It requires His Presence to continually renew our strength, to make us aware of the power of our identity and the love we have to give.

Discussion Questions

1. Think on the four different types of love in the Greek language. Can you identify people you love with the four different types of love?

2. Is there someone you are withholding love from because they don't agree with you?

3. Discuss the definition of Agape love – a deliberate choice of the will to love someone because of who you are not because of who they are.

4. Have you ever thought about your capacity to love is tied up with your identity in Jesus and the love of God? Share together times when you have been overwhelmed and changed by the power of God's love. When was the last time you were overwhelmed by God's great love for you?

5. What does Love cost you? What of yourself are you giving to others, in light of Jesus' sacrifices?