

Pursuing Love & The Great Commandment – Pt. 4

God's Love With Skin On

I. Introductory Remarks.

In this series of messages I have been talking about the importance of receiving the revelation of God's love into our hearts, and the response God desires from us as a result of His great love being poured into our lives.

In this message I want to address another area in which God's love needs to be expressed before we can fully comprehend the depth and the width of His great love towards us.

Ephesians 3:17-18 *Being rooted and grounded in love enables us to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height of God's love.*

I am convinced that in order for us to have a complete revelation and understanding of how great God's love is, we must experience it as it is expressed through our lives to one another. This is the tangible expression that we must all see and experience in a very real way.

Illustration: Love - With Skin On.

Frightened by the clamor of thunder in the night, a little child cried out. Holding her securely in his arms, her father explained that she needn't fear. God would take care of her because He loved her greatly.

"I know God will take care of me and love me," she replied. "But right now, Daddy, I want someone with skin on to love me."

We are to be God's love with skin on!

1 John 4:12 *No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.*

Illustration: Love in Action.

In her book, "living with Love," Josephine Robertson tells a story. "In 1983, a youthful clergyman, the Rev. Joe Roberts, arrived by stagecoach in a blizzard to minister to the Indians of Wyoming. This great, wild area had been assigned to the Protestant Episcopal Church by President Grant. Soon after Joe Roberts arrived, the son of the chief was shot by a soldier in a brawl, and Chief Washakie vowed

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to kill the first white man he met. Since this might mean the start of a long, bloody feud, young Roberts decided to take action. Seeking out the tepee, fifteen miles away in the mountains, he stood outside and called the chief's name. When Washakie appeared, Roberts opened his shirt.

"I have heard your vow," he said, "I know that the other white men have families, but I am alone. Kill me instead."

The chief was amazed and motioned him into his tent. "How do you have so much courage?" He asked.

They talked for hours. When Joe left, the chief of the Shoshones had renounced his vow to kill and resolved to become a Christian.

Washakie had seen love in action with skin on.

Every group which calls itself Christian would do well to decide what it should do to make love visible in the home, church, community, and world. For unless love becomes visible it is not love at all.

II. The Love Of God Must Be Expressed Through His Body.

If the church is ever to come to the position of strength and maturity that God has ordained for it, it will be through the expression of His love being worked through us that it happens.

Ephesians 4:16 *from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

This passage of scripture speaks of the importance of the members of the body being knitted together in godly relationships that are ruled by the Love of God. It is through this love that the body edifies itself.

Colossians 2:2 *...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Ephesians 3:19 *...to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

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Colossians 3:14 *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

The more of God's love that flows through our lives to from one to another, the more of His fullness we will experience in our lives and in the life of the body. It will become a strong motivation factor in our lives.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.*

Love needs to be the dominating factor in the life of the church otherwise we will shrivel up into our legalistic strongholds which bear very little fruit if any.

III. Love with Skin Requires Vulnerability and Removal of Facades.

If we are to honestly express the true love of God through our vessels then it will require a vulnerability and a removal of our facades, because love demands that we be real with one another.

1 Peter 2:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.*

Colossians 3:12 *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another and forgiving one another.*

Are we willing to be tender, humble, meek and kind with one another or does our pride and ego prevent us from properly expressing God's love to one another.

Romans 12:10 *Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.*

Illustration: Vulnerability

No one ever said it better than C.S. Lewis: To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket - safe, dark, motionless, airless - it will change. It will not be broken; it will

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become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable... The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers of love ... is Hell.

IV. Divine Expressions of Love to One Another.

In this portion of scripture we find a long list of divine expressions of love. This is the love of God with Skin on.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ **Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails.***

Love is:

- Slow to suspect - quick to trust.
- Slow to condemn - quick to justify.
- Slow to offend - quick to defend.
- Slow to reprimand - quick to forbear.
- Slow to belittle - quick to appreciate.
- Slow to demand - quick to give.
- Slow to provoke - quick to conciliate.
- Slow to hinder - quick to help.
- Slow to resent - quick to forgive.

V. Concluding Remarks.

2 Thessalonians 3:5 *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*