



## **Fueled by Love**

**Message Notes, February 4, 2017**

1 Corinthians 13, 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

In Matthew 9:35-10:1, Jesus sees the multitudes and is deeply moved for they are “harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus turns to his disciples and urges them to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field. This is followed by Jesus sending them out to proclaim the good news of the kingdom.

Jesus was not simply “following the strategy.” When he saw the harassed, shepherd-less multitudes, he was “filled with compassion.” He was stirred by love. Love is the fuel for harvest.

Love: To give oneself for the highest good of another. Not lust. More than emotion. Not rooted in self-fulfillment. Love is, by nature, other-oriented.

God exists in a relational loving trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit know, enjoy and love one another.

We are made in God’s image to experience this same kind of loving relationship. It is the core of our human nature.

1 Corinthians 13 (esp. 4-7) is a profound and poetic expression of the nature of love.

### **How does love connect to the Harvest?**

1. God loves the world. John 3:16-17 expresses this simply and powerfully.
2. Jesus lived out this love of God tangibly as he walked among us. He sought out and loved outcasts and sinners. He was often called “the friend of sinners” (derisively by the religious leaders, but he gladly embraced the title). “I have come to seek and to save the lost.” He was a champion for “the least of these.”
3. We, who follow Jesus, are called to be his ambassadors of love and ministers of reconciliation. See 2 Cor. 5:14-20. What does verse 14 reveal as the motivator for this ministry of reconciliation?

### **Love on Three Levels**

I. God’s love for us. The cornerstone of loving others is knowing how deeply we are loved. If God’s love for me is a “?”, then I will struggle to love others well.

- Yes, we are made for love, but our love nature/capacity was corrupted by the Fall. We cannot love perfectly.
- Love is therefore inherently vulnerable and risky. If we love others, we will get hurt at some point.
- Two faulty responses to this risk of hurt:
  - I shut my heart off. I do not risk love. I may avoid hurt, but I will not live. My heart will become cold and hard.
  - I desperately depend on others or things/experiences to fill the void of my heart. This leads to empty, damaging relationships, co-dependency, addictions, etc.
- Only God is able to love us perfectly, unconditionally, unshakably. He demonstrates his perfect love in this – Christ came to die for me, “while I was yet a sinner” (Romans 5:6-8)
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Ponder these expressions of God’s love toward you.



## II. Our love for one another (as brothers and sisters in Christ)

- Jesus said it quite plainly – our love for each other reveals to the world that we follow Him. See John 13:34-35
- Our love for each other is our strongest witness to Jesus.
- Our failure to love each other well is the greatest hindrance to Harvest!
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Ponder how well are we living this out toward each other.

## III. Our love for those who do not know Jesus.

“God so loves the world ...”

- Jesus set the example by his own life.
- Jesus has given us clear command:
  - To love each other (John 5:9-12),
  - To love the lost (Matt 25:31-40)
  - To even love enemies (Matt. 5:43-47)
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 – “Christ’s love compels us.” Why? Because He died for all.
- Read over 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Ponder these expressions of love toward those who don’t know Him.

### Reflection Questions

1. Do you struggle to trust and embrace God’s deep, personal, unshakable love for you? What makes this hard for you? Ask the Holy Spirit to break down whatever barrier is in the way – to reveal it, to give you understanding, to aid you in releasing it, to free your heart.
2. If you haven’t already, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (slowly) and hear these expressions of love from God toward you.
3. Shifting focus, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 again and ponder how well you are living these expressions of love toward others:
  - spouse, parents, children, siblings
  - co-workers, neighbors
  - strangers, those in need
  - difficult, antagonist people
4. Does this reflection above stir any conviction? Come freely before our loving Father (who knows your heart); confess these things, receive grace and forgiveness.
5. Does the reflection above inspire you to any specific action of love toward someone? Ask God to lead and empower you with His love to live this out.