

john 15:4  
**A b i d e** in **ME**



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 4 - Number 12  
The week of February 3, 2019

Sermon Series: *The Real Thing*  
Love Works  
1 John 3:11-18

**THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT**

**Love - a sincere affection for others** 1 John 4:10-12

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

**The Secret to Loving Difficult People<sup>1</sup>**

Bob Goff's book *Everybody, Always* explores the simple but difficult Christian imperative to love one's enemies. As the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Uganda, and human rights lawyer, Bob has encountered a lot of difficult people. He did an interview with RELEVANT last year about the lessons he's been learning about loving them all.

**RELEVANT: So, what is the inspiration behind the book?**

Bob: The premise of the book, *Everybody, Always* is to see people who creep us out for who they're becoming. I'm just reminded that God makes people and people make issues but people aren't issues. People are people.

If you want to get a report card on your faith, see how you are dealing with people who are really difficult to deal with. So, it's just stories about people who are my teachers, really, on this idea of how do you navigate this idea of turning into love in a world that's full of difficult people.

**RELEVANT: There are some really compelling stories in the book. What teacher are you most excited for people to encounter when they read this *Everybody, Always*?**

Bob: Oh gosh, everyone's tied for first really.

There's one fellow whose name is Lex who lost his sight completely when he was ten years old, and by the time he got to college he figured out he could run like the wind. So, he went out for the track team, which seemed like a bad idea at first, but what he got is a friend who runs in front of him and calls his name, so he just runs toward this voice he could trust. Then he had to pick an event, so he picked the long jump, which seems even crazier; because you run down this really narrow path for 110-feet, jump off a board you can't see, into the air as far as you can. He can't see a thing but he's got a friend: and his friend stands at the edge of the sandpit and calls his name. Isn't that beautiful?

**RELEVANT: One thing you mentioned after that initial story in the book about your computer being stolen and all of that is that we have to love everybody, always, including the people who stole the computer from you. What does that love look like for people who have wronged us personally or have done things people might consider unforgivable?**

Bob: I have the sense that whoever here on earth we couldn't get along with, Jesus will make us roommates in Heaven. These are principles that Jesus talked about: to love everybody, always, and to start with the people who are more difficult. The people that are my friends and are easy to get along with, they make me feel like I'm a boss at loving people. So, I'm trying to get beyond that.

From the book, we have a witch doctor school. These guys were sacrificing children; they were death penalty cases. I tried the first [case] in the country. But then I ran into Matthew 5 about loving your enemies, and I'm like "These guys are actually my enemy because of what they do." So, I had to decide for me, do I want to be right or do I want to be Jesus? And there's an opportunity to be bold, [but] you have to be humble.

So we started meeting with witch doctors, I actually met with over 1,000 witch doctors so far in Uganda. I command every witch doctor to meet with me and they come, and they're creepy dudes. And I asked them, what do you need? And they said, "Well we don't know how to read or write." So, get this, I started a witch doctor school a couple years ago. It's so creepy.

And the only books they have in witch doctor school are the Bible and *Love Does*. And there's something beautiful that happens, and some of the stories in the book of unlikely calls of people who used to do the most horrific things or have actually changed. Like, they bumped into not all of my opinions, but they bumped into Jesus. I'm a lawyer, I win arguments for a living. But I'm not trying to be Jesus' lawyer. He said, follow me, not represent me.

**RELEVANT: It's such a relevant conversation because we're seeing lots of people being exposed for things that they've done that are wicked or evil. And I wonder how this idea that we should love everybody always might apply to someone like Harvey Weinstein or Larry Nassar.**

Bob: I think that, for the people who are most defective and the people who are closest to that, I'm just really confident that they'll know where their next steps are. The problem is when we start telling people what their next steps might be.

So I can just say for the people who have wronged me, this is what I've decided to do. But when we start institutionalizing that and saying "this is what you ought to do," we're actually walking through people's minds with our cleats on.

No, actually I am just so empathetic towards the people who have been affected the most, either by people's wrong-mindedness, or evil conduct or reprehensible behaviors. And there are some people who are just not safe to be around. So, the whole underlying idea isn't to rush to the people who feel unsafe. But maybe instead to re-read these things, these impossible, simple, mentally hard things that Jesus talked about, and then to say "What's my next move?" I'm not going to tell you what your next move is, but this is what my next move needs to be.

**RELEVANT: A hindrance to us loving everybody always, in the way that we're talking, about is that there's a need for justice. People don't always know how to achieve both of those things: to love difficult people—or, [as you put it] enemies—and also tend to that need for justice.**

Bob: What that is, in my mind from the Scriptures, is that God loves justice. There's no love without justice, but there's no justice without love. So, I think it's both-and. You [don't have to] either think, "Well we can be really nice to them and blow off justice or we could do justice and be really mean to them." Having tried this death penalty case against the guy, and [then] developing a friendship, and learning a lot about my faith from a guy inside a jail cell in the most horrible place you can imagine—there's that beautiful juxtaposition that Jesus always tended...

I'm a lawyer. I do justice. That's my thing. But I'm going to be a follower of Jesus and try to do both. And it's sometimes a little easier to do justice than to do love because they get the impression that there's something very noble about doing justice but not very noble about doing love; but I'd say they're both as noble [as the other].

Sometimes we also get the impression that if we go across the ocean, it's more noble than going across the street. And I think... all of Heaven is leaning over the rails hoping we'll go across the room, the campus, the street to someone who hasn't been that easy to love, and that we'll express love without agenda because we want to grow in the faith.

<sup>1</sup><https://relevantmagazine.com/culture/bob-goff-shares-secret-loving-difficult-people/Andre Henry>: April 16, 2018  
(This article is slightly edited from the original).

STEP ONE . . .

**OBSERVATION**  
*What does the text say?*

**1 John 3:11-18**

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup>By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup>But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

- Circle all six occurrences of the word **love** in this paragraph.
- In the left margin of verse 11 write: *The Priority of Love*.
- Write the word **because** above the word **for** in verse 1. Then draw a backwards arrow to indicate that John's appeal for love flows from verse 10.
- Write John 13:34-35 in the right margin of verse 11.
- Write Genesis 4:1-6 in the right margin of verse 12.
- Place brackets around the phrase **Do not be surprised** in verse 13. In the margin write: = *a command*.
- Double underline the word **hates** in verses 13 and 15. Draw a connecting line between the two and from there draw an arrow to **murderer** in verse 15.
- Write John 15:13 in the right margin of verse 16.
- In the left margin of verse 16 write: *The Pattern of Christ*.
- Double circle the word **has**, the word **sees** and the word **closes** in verse 17. In the left margin write: *The progression of indifference*.
- Double underline the phrase **word or talk** in verse 18. Underneath it write: *the same thing*.
- Underneath the word **deed** write the word: *works*.

## STEP TWO . . .

### UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

*What does the text mean?*

**11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.** Verse 11 begins with **For** or “because”—connecting it with verse 10. The **message** [*anggelia*] is another word for “gospel.” In the gospel taught by Christ, love for others is at its heart (see John 13:34-35). The illustration that follows in verse 12 suggests the **beginning** could also refer to the dawn of creation.

**12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous.** The emphatic use of **we** in the original language contrasts the way Christians love and the way the world loves. John takes us back to the first murder in human history (see Genesis 4:1-6). This is the only direct Old Testament reference in 1 John. Cain’s actions revealed the evil one was his spiritual father who delights in taking life (see John 8:44). The word **murdered** used here means to butcher, slay, or cut the throat. Cain’s murder of his brother was a violent, brutal killing.

**13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. Do not be surprised** is a present imperative. It can literally be translated, “Stop being surprised.” The world’s hatred is natural to their nature.

**14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Death** here refers to spiritual death. **Life** is eternal life. Eternal life is not earned by loving others, but it is an evidence that we have eternal life. The word **brothers** occurs 15 times in 1 John. The Bible affirms the call to love all people in general and brothers and sisters in Christ in particular (see Galatians 6:10).

**15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.** Hatred is so detestable to God, it is akin to murder (see Matthew 5:21-22).

**16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. We know** is literally, we have known (perfect tense). 1 John 3:16 is the John 3:16 of this letter. John 3:16 says that out of love God gave His Son for us. 1 John 3:16 says that out of love we should give ourselves for others (see John 15:13).

**17 But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?** “If thou art not yet equal to the dying for thy brother, be thou even now equal to the giving of thy means to thy brother” (Augustine). **But** introduces a negative example using a greater to lesser argument based on the previous verse. Notice the shift from brothers (plural) to **brother** (singular). Does this refer to only our fellow believers? The term brother cannot be limited to Christians since the term has the sense of fellowman (Leon Morris). **Goods** [*bios*] conveys the idea of livelihood. It does not describe someone who is rich in this world’s goods but one who has basic resources. **Sees** means more than a casual glance but a careful and informed awareness of the need. **Closes** denotes the slamming of a door. Heart connotes compassion and pity.

**18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.** Here is the positive exhortation that follows the negative implication of verse 17. **Word or talk** are essentially synonymous. **Deed** [*ergon*] means work or action. **Truth** is an idiom that means really or actually.

#### Complementary Passage

##### John 15:12-17

<sup>12</sup>“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, so that you will love one another.



## STEP THREE . . .

### EXPLORING the passage through discussion

#### Questions

1. **Read 1 John 3:11-18.** In 3:22 John states, “from the beginning.” What beginning? What is the point of remarking that they have heard this teaching from the beginning?
2. How do Cain and Abel illustrate the two basic distinctions within humanity?
3. Why is Cain given as an example here? Does this mean that love is just not killing? What motivated Cain to kill Abel? What causes us to not love the people around us?
4. Give a brief summary of the reasons why the world hates believers. Why is verse 13 here?
5. Why is Christ’s death on the cross the supreme example of love?
6. In what practical ways might we ‘lay down our lives’ for each other?
7. How can we know that we have been saved? By implication, what does it mean if we do not love?
8. Who is our brother? Why does John say the person who hates his brother is a murderer considering that no court of law in this world would convict somebody for hating his brother?
9. What is the connection between loving the people around us and loving God?
10. How is God’s true love seen to be real in the believer? What is the progression of indifference in verse 16? What does verse (17) tell us about God’s view of our possessions?

11. Does verse 18 teach us that we shouldn't say "I love you" to others? If not, what does it mean?

12. What are some ways we can actually and truly love in deed (Love Works!)?

STEP FOUR . . .

APPLYING

How is the text lived out?

*Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the Word but doers ~ James 1:22*

You're encouraged to journal your answers to the following questions in order to apply what you've learned this week.

1. How is God making Himself known to you?
2. What is going on beneath the surface of your life that Jesus is trying to change?
3. How is God calling you to serve your family, community, and world?

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Prayer<sup>2</sup>

O Lover of the loveless  
It is thy will that I should love thee  
with heart, soul, mind, strength,  
and my neighbor as myself.  
But I am not sufficient for these things.  
There is by nature no pure love in my soul;  
Every affection in me is turned from thee;  
I am bound, as slave to lust,  
I cannot love thee, lovely as thou art,  
until thou dost set me free.

By grace I am thy freeman and would serve thee,  
for I believe thou art my God in Jesus,  
and that through him I am redeemed,  
and my sins are forgiven.  
With this freedom I would always obey thee,  
but I cannot walk in liberty,  
any more than I could first attain it, of myself.

May thy Spirit draw me nearer to thee  
and thy ways.  
Thou art the end of all means,  
for if they lead me not to thee,  
I go away empty.  
Order all my ways by thy holy Word  
and make thy commandments  
the joy of my heart,  
that by them I may have  
happy converse with thee.  
May I grow in thy love and  
manifest it to mankind.

Spirit of love, make me like the loving Jesus;  
give me his benevolent temper,  
his beneficent actions,  
that I may shine before men to thy glory.  
The more thou doest in love in me and by me,  
humble me the more;  
keep me meek, lowly,  
and always ready to give thee honor.

<sup>2</sup>The Valley of Vision, A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions,  
Banner of Truth Trust (1975): Christian Love, p. 137.

## A Bible Reading Plan for 2019

(on LCC website)

Sunday, February 3 thru Saturday, February 9, 2019

Leviticus 7-9; Leviticus 10-12; Leviticus 13-15;

Leviticus 16-18; Leviticus 19-21; Leviticus 22-24; Leviticus 25-27

### THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

#### 10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

**Love - a sincere affection for others** *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

**Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances** *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

**Peace - an abiding sense of harmony** *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

**Patience - a willingness to stick with things**

*Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

**Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart** *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

**Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly** *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty** *Psalms 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

**Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness**

*Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control. Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

**Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely**

*Titus 2:11-13*

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

**Hope - a certainty of what is to come** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

### Memory Verse

~1 John 3:16~

<sup>16</sup>By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,  
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.