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Series- Putting Feet to Faith:

Becoming a Matthew 25 Church

Part 7- In Deed and in Truth

Text: 1 John 3:16-18

I don’t usually date my sermons, so that they might be replayed at any time without sounded dated. However, I want the listeners and viewers to know that today is Sunday, February 2021. It is Valentine’s Day. Love is in the air. Many of us have purchased, or *will* purchase cards, chocolates and/or flowers for our significant others. Perhaps we will eat a special meal. The tradition has been that couples would go to a restaurant for a romantic dinner. Some will continue that tradition today. Others will, in light of our COVID-19 pandemic, remain at home, cooking for themselves or ordering food to be delivered. Today love is in the air. But what *is* love???

**I**

**Love Defined**

What is love?- It is a grand life question. Love is both positive and negative.Cf. V. 11-12. Love is the *doing* of good and the *not* doing of evil (Cease to do evil, learn to do good- Isaiah 1:16-17)

C.H. Dodd has written,

Love is “the willingness to surrender that which has value for our own life, to enrich the life of another”[[1]](#footnote-2)

**II**

**Love Demonstrated**

John references the sacrifice of Christ. John uses a phrase peculiar to his writing: *(he) laid down his life.* Cf. John 10:1,15,17-18; 13:37-38; 15:13.

**III**

**Love Imitated**

Love is ideally imitated by the Christocentric acts of the ecclesia. Cf. Deuteronomy 15:7-9. There is an *oughtness* in this. This imitating Christ’s sacrifice is not a suggestion. It is an obligation. Cf. 2:6; 4:11.

**IV**

**Love Summarized**

Whereas most of us will never have opportunity to lay our lives down, we will certainly encounter a person in poverty. What do we do then?

In my study I was greatly helped by C. Renee Padilla’s three suggestions on how to apply 1 John 3:16-18. Padilla says,

1. The place to begin acting is the church (Acts 2:45; 4:32-37).
2. We must make sure that our evangelism takes the whole gospel and the whole person seriously- not merely an offer of benefits won by Christ, but a call to repentance as well (remember the rich young ruler).
3. We must do all we can to foster justice in society, locally, nationally and internationally.

William Barclay:

*Fine words will never take the place of fine deeds; and no amount of talk of Christian love will take the place of a kindly action to someone in need, made at some personal expense or with some self-sacrifice, for in that action the principle of the cross is at work again.*

John Trapp:

*Words are light and cheap; and there is a great deal of* ***mouth mercy*** *abroad.*

John is saying our actions speak louder than our words. One is reminded of Jesus' warning at the end of His Sermon on the Mount…

*Therefore, everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on the rock.* (Matthew 7:24)

Let us bid farewell to **mouth mercy** and honor God by hands on ministry in God’s name!!!

Amen

1. C.H. Dodd, *Commentary on the Johannine Epistles,* Moffett New Testament Commentary (Hodder & Stoughton, 1946) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)