
LOVE•unlimited

SPRING 18' STUDY SERIES

Third City Christian Church

Scott Jones

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LOVE•unlimited

Of all of the descriptions of the characteristics of God, the most startling may be that God is **LOVE•unlimited**. Love is the WHY!

God shows us in the story of Abraham's command to sacrifice his son Isaac, the extent that God would one day go to prove His love to us (Genesis 22).

David and the Psalmists describe God's love as unfailing or UNLIMITED (Psalm 13:5, 18:50, 21:7; 26:3, 31:6, 32:10, 33:18 and 22).

Jesus states that the greatest command is to love God and to love people (Mt. 22:39). Throughout his ministry, he taught us about a God of love unlimited. Jesus tells stories about a father who loves his Son but is willing to sacrifice him for his people (Mark 12). He teaches us to love our enemies in Luke 6:27 ff. Virtually every thing that Jesus said and did in his earthly sojourn, was infused with the loving actions of God toward us.

John, one of his best friends and key disciples, goes the furthest of all his followers to describe Jesus as the personification of love. He includes in his writings possibly the most well known statement about God of all time:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Jn. 3:16

God— the loving father— took our sins to the cross as Jesus became the true sacrifice for our sins-

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 1 Jn. 3:16

God wants us to know that his is a LOVE unlimited, and He calls us to live out love toward each other! He gave his followers this command in John 13:34: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

LOVE•unlimited IS OUR PROMISE

This study accompanies a series of messages taught at Third City Christian Church in the spring of 2018. To listen to the messages, you can go to the sermon archives at thirdcitychristian.org and look under the title: **LOVE•unlimited**.

"HOW"

The following three elements or commitments show how our church will be unstoppable force living out LOVE•unlimited in the world.

The mission of Third City Christian Church is to WORSHIP God, to SERVE Him with our lives and to GROW as followers of Jesus Christ. In a very broad way, worship, serve and grow describes HOW we can accomplish love individually and corporately.

Are you willing to develop your capacity to receive and give love?

How successful do you want our church to be at loving the world without limits?

1. WORSHIP without limits

INTRODUCTION

Def: Worship

Ps. 29:2- Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; **worship** the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

Mt. 4:10- It is written: '**Worship** the Lord your God, and serve him only.'

Rom. 12:1- Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper **worship**.

gr: Proskueo- To revere one as over all

gr: Sebomai- To awe and to honor

gr: Latreuo- To serve

Some relegate worship to an event or a building. As if being at a certain place is what matters most. Some identify certain actions: Occupying a seat at a church on a Sunday morning, lighting a candle, crossing themselves, raising hands in singing. While those can be healthy expressions, they are not worship in themselves. The music in a corporate service that is followed by the preaching. An entire style of music has been labeled "praise and worship". Another style is labeled "sacred." While music can be a method of worshipping God, notice Jesus does not mention it with the woman. The only time we ever see him around singing is when he sang a hymn with his disciples at the conclusion of the last supper. Adapted from Rooted, pg. 203

Is there a place or an experience where you seem to be most able to worship God?

Why is joining others in a worship experience important?

CASE STUDY

In John 4 Jesus explains to a woman what it means to worship without limits. Notes from the sermon:

Why is it so important for Christians to worship?

John 4:1: Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. 4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) He did something that surprised her.

- 1. Worship brings me to the place of recognizing my need for God's help- 4:10-18**
- 2. Worship is where God's Spirit deals with the Truth about Me**
- 3. Who (or what) I worship defines me- 4:19-24**
- 4. Worship responds to his WORTH- 4:25-27**
- 5. Worship changes me into His life-giving source- 4:39-41**

Observations about worship ...

1. What are we showing God when we are willing to reveal our true selves to Him, and how is that related to worship?
2. Who needs worship more? God or us?

We worship the Lord for the same reason we charge our phones: We need it. Joe McKeever

3. There are good ways and wrong ways to worship...

What false narratives did the woman have regarding worship that people still have today?

How do false assumptions about worship impede people from responding in worship?

When does the woman talking with Jesus recognize that He is the One that we must worship?

Why is it important to deal with the truth about ourselves as we present ourselves before God?

Why is repentance an important prerequisite to worshipping God?

Telling others about our hope in Christ is a natural outflow of the person who worships Him.
Who has God put in your village who you could bring hope to?

Going Deeper

See: [Churchleaders.com/Three Worship Tips That are Easy to Forget- Jamie Brown](http://Churchleaders.com/Three%20Worship%20Tips%20That%20are%20Easy%20to%20Forget)

It is the never-ending goal of a church with love to move the people who are a part of the church beyond the "consumer" mentality that permeates our culture. A worship "consumer" mindset can create negativity and criticism.

Negativity is cancer to your culture. Consistently negative people are often selfish people who "offer" themselves in order to satisfy an emotional or ego need, not a Kingdom-building need. As such, a common by-product of negativity is divisiveness.

On the subject, the apostle Paul instructs, *"If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them."* (Titus 3:10 NLT)
Yikes! As severe as those words are, it goes to prove how important unity is in our team culture.

To me, it comes down to understanding that the local church is the house of God, not the "restaurant of God." And in a house, we serve.

I pray that we stir each other up to keep the main thing...the main thing. May the resources we're blessed with simply be tools to advance the cause of Christ in our local churches. May we find the greatest treasures in each other as we bring the Gospel to the world. And may we realize that the root in our hearts determines the quality of fruit we all desire.

2. SERVING as a lifestyle

INTRODUCTION

Last week, we discussed worship as the first of three commitments that a Christian makes so that we can live out love. Another core characteristic is to serve.

Def: Serve (Minister)

Mk. 10:25- For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jn. 13:14-17- Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Rom. 7:5-6- For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

gr: Diakoneo- to serve God/in the Gospel/one another

gr: Hupereteo- of the service of God by hire/as a living sacrifice

Galatians 5:13-118 (NLT)

13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18 But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

GUARD AGAINST LOSING HEALTHY PURPOSE! v. 13

Why do you serve? Do you serve to...

...honor God
...feel good about yourself
...to give a glimpse of what heaven is on earth
...because you will feel guilty if you don't
...other

"When you are serving others, for a moment, on earth you are interacting with God. You are doing it for him, you are experiencing it with him."- Parker Loghry

Observations about serving...

1. "We don't do good things to secure of salvation, we do good things because of our salvation." Rooted pg. 106

Is there a difference between serving out of purpose rather than from an agenda? Explain.

2. (on serving) Jesus' heart was pure and his motive was love.

Discuss this statement: THOSE WHO WANT TO BE GREAT MUST BE WILLING TO SERVE.

Let's start bite size: Have you lost purpose? Relationships? Humility? Do 1 thing this week that moves toward serving someone, a better relationship and/or greater humility - and share with someone else what it did for you.

Going Deeper

-What is the primary act that God has purchased our freedom for?

-List some of the attitudes and actions that are contrary to a life of service.

-What is the primary result of living a life that is out of the control of the Spirit?

-What is your favorite way to serve on behalf of Jesus and why?

3. GROWING as His disciple

INTRODUCTION

Two weeks ago, we discussed worship as one of the three core commitments of a follower of Christ. Last week, we discussed serving. Today we will look at the third mission imperative which is to keep growing.

Def: Grow

1 Cor. 3:6-7- I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

Eph. 4:15- Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Gr: Auxano- to grow or increase as a natural course of life and spirituality

Gr: Ginomai- to become great or grown up

Gr: Huperauxano- to increase beyond measure as in faith and love

Jer. 17:7-8: "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by a stream. It does not fear when the heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has not worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Discuss:

Describe the time in your life (if you have reached it) where you decided, IT IS TIME TO GROW UP!

What is the difference between being a "convert" and being a "disciple"?

Growth is not a check list, it is a state of being (just as worship and serve are). Scott

Hebrews 5:12-6:3; 9-11

How were the people in the passage acting like "babies"?

Of the following growth factors for a Christian, which are you the strongest in and which challenge you the most?

- Taking in God's word as your life source (knowing God better)

- Praying at the level where you are communicating the real you to God
- Worshiping in a way that elevates God in your life and lets Him be your anchor
- Repenting of sin regularly and with the intention of changing your direction away from sin and to wholeness

A good article on measuring personal growth: **The Dramatic Difference Between “The Good Christian Life” and Spirit-Filled Transformation-** <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/173237>

There's a difference between living a "good Christian life" and allowing the Spirit of God to transform you from the inside out. The difference is not a small difference, but a drastic one. Scott

OUR "WHAT"

Every organization on earth operates with a set of core values. Core values are the internal operating system (like in a computer) of the church. Our core values define what we stand for and what we want to contribute to the world God has placed us in. Our core values are deeply ingrained in the DNA of our church.

CULTURE IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE CONSISTENT BEHAVIORS OF OUR MEMBERS —
Mark Miller

The five core values that we are going to examine are the behaviors. They originate from the heart of Jesus Christ. But it is up to us to live out the values that the Lord places before us.

1. Biblical Authority

INTRODUCTION

Def: Word, Scripture, Authority, Command

Gr: logos- "Word"- Expression of thought— the embodiment of a concept or idea... an authoritative statement

Gr: graphes- "Scripture"- a writing expressing the character of the originator.. a truth emanating from the divine author

Gr: Exousia- "Authority": To exercise power or dominance over

Gr: Diatasso- "Command": To set in order, appoint, command or charge

Jos. 3:9- Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the **words** of the Lord your God.

Jesus as the "Logos" or "Word"- John 1:1-18- Jesus is the embodiment God. He is the super infinite being who is the personal manifestation of God.

John 1:14- The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Lk. 4:21- "Today this **scripture** is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jn. 3:34- For the one whom God has sent speaks the **words of God**, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

Mt. 22:19- Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the **Scriptures** or the power of God.

Mk. 12:10- Haven't you read this passage of **Scripture**: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;

Lk. 24:32- And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the **Scriptures** concerning himself.

Luke 24:45- Then he opened their minds so they could understand the **Scriptures**.

Col. 1:25- I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the **word of God** in its fullness—

Heb. 4:12- For the **word of God** is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

1 Jn. 2:14- I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the **word of God** lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

2 Tim. 3:14-17- But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the **Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

A command that is obeyed- If I buy into their message, it changes me

You are deciding who gets to have the authority of your life... If we buy into their narrative, we are believing our own.

The news MEDIA... social media (fake news)

Words of others... They have a remarkable capacity to fail us

Your parents... holding tight to what they said (principles or hurtful words)

Me... Insecurity and pride

Advertising... the paragraph Dodge used quoting MLK... the paragraph after....

This is you deciding who gets to have THE LAST WORD in your life.

Why would we accept biblical authority? Because it is the one that will get the last word in my life.

Jesus put his stamp of approval on those he called to carry forth the message. The words out of their pen...

A God who can create the universe... can put words in a logical context so that you and I can get a glimpse of him.