

UPCOMING WEEKENDS

Men's #48 April 11 - 14, 2013 Robert Bass • Rector

Women's #48 April 25 - 28, 2013 Hazel Long • Rector

Men's #49 October 10 - 13, 2013 Steve Simmons • Rector

Women's #49 October 24 - 27, 2013 Cathy Chastain • Rector "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of

love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Ephesians 5:1

There is a famous quote that encourages us to "love like you've never been hurt." After we've been hurt, offended, betrayed, slandered, and overlooked it's hard to get back up and love again. Yet without being able to receive and give love, life has little meaning. So how to we live a life of love?

First, receive God's love. "The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5) True love begins with God, not with us. When the Holy Spirit is in us and guiding us He is able to tap our deep passions and desires and turn them toward God. It takes God to love God. We can choose to obey God and do what is right but Jesus is worthy of more than that! He is worthy of us being passionate about our obedience and wholehearted in whatever we are doing because we're doing it for Him and with Him.

You and I love the most generously when we feel loved first. People $\,$

may or may not love you. Some people are so broken that couldn't love you if they tried. But God's love is full, free, and unwavering. "As dearly loved children...live a life of love." It is as we grow in receiving His love and delight in us, even in our brokenness, that we are able to extend love to others even when they're broken. Did you know that you are dearly loved? Believe it, receive it, embrace it, and then confess it. The enemy will try to keep us under condemnation so that we have nothing but condemnation for others. Don't let him do it.

Then forgive those who have hurt you as part of your love for God. Jesus gave Himself up for us while we were hurting Him and it was received by the Father as a fragrant offering. We give the same pleasing fragrance when we choose to forgive others for His sake. Jesus didn't ask Peter how much he loved the sheep. He asked, "Peter, do you love Me?" Do you love Jesus today? Then He has something He wants you to do to prove it: forgive those who have hurt you. Learn to live a life of love in practical ways. Notice the people around you; ask them questions and care about their answers; do what you can to light their load; and pray for them. Simple – yet profound.





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EBRUARY 2013