

Introduction:

- Last Wednesday: Love a more excellent way.
 - Working for love is empty.
 - Becoming love is a more excellent way.
 - To love is to step away from carnality. "Let love rule in your heart and it won't be about serving yourself it will be about serving others."
- "Jesus replied, " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.'" (Matthew 22:37-40, NLT)
- Olaf in Disney's movie Frozen says, "Love will thaw a frozen heart!" There is something about the power of love that melts the human heart, destroys darkness and brings down strongholds in communities, people and relationships.
- One of the most magnificent New Creation Realities is the heart transformed to LOVE and to do that unselfishly, unreservedly and unashamedly!

I. The Power of Love Destroys Religion

- A. Religion puts people in bondage and attempts to keep them there. "*They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden.*" (Matthew 23:4, NLT)
 1. The religious leaders are called hypocrites because they are actors. They are pretend people of God.
 2. They create a system of religion that has no life, offers no life, and only pretends to live.
- B. Blind guides - They dwell in darkness. They lead into darkness. They market darkness. They shut the door to the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus is all about the Light. "*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*" (John 1:4, NKJV)
- C. The bondage of the Sabbath
 1. Mark 3:1-5 Man with withered hand. It is not lawful to heal on the Sabbath.
 - a) Jesus was grieved by the hardness of their hearts.
 - b) Jesus heals the man's withered hand. Love healed the man's hand.
 2. Luke 13:10 Jesus heals the bent over woman on Sabbath.
 - a) 18 years in bondage. Love healed the woman back.
 - b) Jesus calls them hypocrites because they untie their donkey on the Sabbath. They offer their animals life but not their people.
 3. Luke 7:44 *Simon do you see this woman?* She was a sinner that we repulsed by the Pharisees.
- D. Love destroyed religion!
 1. People are more important to God than rules. IE. MASH - Hoolahan - "*When policy takes precedent over people there is a problem.*"
 2. People are more important to God than their sin.
 3. Jesus is life, offers life, gives life.

II. The Power of Love Destroys Sin

- A. Sin put people in bondage and attempts to keep them there.

1. Mt 18 The forgiven man did not love.
2. Two men on the cross. One asks to be remembered. Love melted his heart.
3. The woman in Luke 7:44 was there to anoint Jesus feet. Her hard heart had been melted by his love.
4. The woman of John 8:1-11 Caught in adultery. *"Neither do I condemn you go and sin no more."*

III. The Power of Love Destroys The Demonic

- A. Demons put people in bondage and attempts to keep them there. The Bible describes these people in two ways: As captives and as prisoners. *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;"* (Isaiah 61:1, NKJV)
 1. Do you know that there is a difference between a captive and a prisoner?
 2. Captive is held against their will.
 - a) As a captive we are taken from being free to having constrains or bondages placed upon us. Although we might still be in a familiar place we are restrained from being able to move freely. Captives are usually dealt with harshly, they receive no mercy, and are usually abused therefore suffer horrific treatment.
 - b) A captive is demonized. And a captive can be lead to prison place.
 - c) Annanias and Sapphira Acts 5:1-11
 - d) Simon the prior sorcerer. Acts 8:9-24
 - e) Corinthian immorality 1 Cor 5:1-5
 3. Prisoner is held legally - the word prisoner is used by Paul to describe himself as a Prisoner to the Lord Jesus. Matthew 18 a man is legally held by hell because of his choice of unforgiveness. They are Possessed.
 - a) As a prisoner we don't have liberty (freedom) we may be still restrained but we are also now confined and or contained in an unfamiliar place. Not much movement can happen if any at all. As a prisoner we move from being captured and shackled to now being in a prison cell.
 - b) Prisoner may still be restrained but are now also confined - possessed.
- B. Mark 5 Demonic. Is a prisoner of hell.
- C. Canaanite woman Mt 15:22 has a daughter who is severely possessed.
 1. She is a prisoner.
 2. The mother is a captive. She is not free to live life.
 3. Jesus came to bring Freedom and Life to people and glory to God.
- D. Jesus came to bring Freedom and Life to people not chains, bondage and limitations.

IV. Love Destroys Religion, Sin and Demonic strongholds.

- A. Lk 10:25-ff Jesus says...Love your neighbor. The rich man replies, *"Who is my neighbor?"*
 1. Neighbor - the person next to you: *"Formed from plēsíos ("close by"), ho plēsíon is the "neighbor," "the person next to one," then more generally the "fellow human being." The word is a significant one in ethical discussions."* Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 872). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. Mt 22:31 love neighbor; Paul in Gal 5:14

(use your freedom to serve one another...and love your neighbor) ; Ro 13:8-10 (*don't harm your neighbor*)

2. Neighbor includes ones enemies as well as friends. The neighbor includes enemies as well as friends (Mt. 5:43ff.).
 - a) At the root, Jesus is here reversing the question. We are not to ask whom to love, for to love is to be a child of God, to be perfect as God is, and hence to love generously and spontaneously. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 873). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
 - b) **"The real point is not to define the neighbor but to be a neighbor."** Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 873). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- B. In the middle of spanking the Pharisees, Jesus says: *"The greatest among you must be a servant."* Mt 23:11 NLT
 1. And in John 13:1 Jesus showed them the full extent of His love. He took off his garment and put on a towel and washed their feet.
 2. We did not get saved to populate heave but to dominate earth through love by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Mt 11:19 Jesus is called a friend of sinners. That is way different than the religious community acted and spoke. Jesus is after transformation of the sinner!