

5 Day Devotional Sermon by Ed Burns on March 2, 2025

Day 1: Love as the True Expression of Faith

Our faith is most authentically expressed through love, moving beyond rituals and rules to genuinely care for others. This means reflecting the love of Christ in our actions, fulfilling the law and the prophets as Jesus taught. When we love others, we demonstrate our devotion to God in a tangible way. This love is not just about being kind but involves a deep, sacrificial commitment to the well-being of others. It challenges us to look beyond ourselves and our comfort zones, inviting us to engage with the world in a transformative way.

"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 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?" (1 John 3:16-17, ESV)

Reflection: Think of a specific person in your life who needs your love and support today. How can you show them the love of Christ in a practical way?

Day 2: The New Commandment of Sacrificial Love

Jesus' command to love one another as He loved us is both an old and new directive. It challenges us to love sacrificially and unconditionally, going beyond mere duty to embody the transformative love of Christ. This love is not limited by conditions or expectations but is a radical call to action that mirrors the selfless love Jesus demonstrated. It invites us to break down barriers and extend grace and compassion to everyone, regardless of their background or beliefs.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35, ESV)

Reflection: Identify a situation where you can practice sacrificial love this week. What steps can you take to love someone unconditionally, even if it requires personal sacrifice?

Day 3: Moving Beyond Rituals to Genuine Devotion

The old model of religion often focuses on rituals and self-centered practices. Jesus calls us to a new way of living that centers on loving others, which is the true measure of our devotion to God. This shift from ritual to relationship requires us to prioritize people over practices, ensuring that our faith is not just a series of actions but a genuine expression of love. It challenges us to examine our religious habits and ask whether they truly reflect the heart of Jesus' teachings.

"For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6, ESV)

Reflection: Reflect on your daily spiritual practices. Are there any rituals or habits that have become routine rather than expressions of love? How can you realign them to better reflect your devotion to God?

Day 4: The You Beside You

Jesus' model of love focuses on the person next to us, regardless of their background or beliefs. This radical love breaks down barriers and calls us to love even those we might consider enemies. It challenges us to see every individual as worthy of love and compassion, inviting us to engage with others in a way that reflects the inclusive and unconditional love of Christ. This approach transforms our interactions and helps build a community rooted in genuine care and understanding.

"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." (Luke 6:27-28, ESV)

Reflection: Think of someone you find difficult to love. What practical steps can you take to show them kindness and break down the barriers between

you?

Day 5: Living the Question of Love

Continually asking, "What does love require of me?" guides us in our daily interactions and decisions. This question helps us align our lives with the teachings of Jesus, leading to personal and communal transformation. It serves as a constant reminder to evaluate our actions and attitudes, ensuring that they reflect the love and grace of Christ. By living this question, we open ourselves to the possibility of growth and change, both in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV)

Reflection: As you go about your day, ask yourself, "What does love require of me in this moment?" How can this question shape your interactions and decisions today?