



Valentine's Sacrificial Love

Grace Christian Fellowship
February 14, 2010 Pastor Rose Brewer

1 John 4:7-21, TNIV

Lord Jesus, help us to love others sacrificially because of Your love for us.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Do you know that God would love for you to be like Valentine? But who was Valentine?

Ask your neighbor who Valentine was.

We were created to love God and love people. But too often, we are surrounded by the damage done by people's failure to love sacrificially.

We wish people, "Happy Valentine's Day", and there are some people who are very happy on Valentine's Day. But many of us simply don't really care about the holiday, and many of us get stuck really disliking Valentine's Day.

I don't know about you, but recently, I've seen:

- people thinking everything would be better if they had a sweetheart.
- people struggling with forgiveness (or in bondage to unforgiveness)
- young people not loved by their parents, or by people they considered their parents.
- people ignoring their spouse as they escape into the television.
- people with broken hearts because of unhealthy relationships.

None of this would be the case if the world loved like Valentine.

But too often, what is Valentine's Day about...?

romance
sex

candy, flowers, chocolates

Now I'm all for those within marriage, and even some of those outside marriage, but is that all there is?

Is that God's hope for us on Valentine's Day? Can there be more to our Valentine's Day Celebration?

I think so. I think we can celebrate

Valentine's sacrificial love. I think we can be God's Valentines to others.

No one is totally sure who Valentine was, but he was almost certainly a Christian who was killed for his faith. The most probable "Valentine" that the day is

named after was a Christian priest. The emperor had made marriage illegal (so he'd have more single men to fight wars). Valentine knew it was wrong, and secretly performed marriages for many young couples. He was thrown in jail and eventually executed. And sometime in jail, he may have fallen in love with his jailor's daughter and written her a note that he signed, "From your Valentine."

But why would Valentine be willing to sacrifice his life so people could be married?

God loves ME / us sacrificially.

I think it's because Valentine felt God's love for young couples who loved each

other and wanted to be married. And God's love was so strong that Valentine was willing to sacrifice his safety and ultimately his life because of that love.

16 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. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

Valentine loved sacrificially because he knew God loved him sacrificially. God gave his Son so that people would have eternal life with Him. Valentine sacrificed his life because he loved God and loved people.

(Short tangent here: God sent his Son to what? Save the world. Not to what? Not to condemn the world.

We're going to dream today about a world where we love sacrificially like Valentine did. That's a world that is not readily apparent in our neighborhood. It's not what we see on TV, and it's not what we hear in our music. And often, it's not even what we see in our own homes.

But Christ came into the world to what? To save the world. Not to what? Not to condemn.

If this world, where we live out Valentine's sacrificial love is not what exists in your home, don't stop dreaming. **Dream God's dreams for your home.**

We've all made mistakes, but let's dream of God's kind of Valentine's Days, all year around.)

I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 John 3 and 4.... Mark these chapters

– this whole little book of 1 John – to read this week. If your Valentine’s Day leaves you feeling flat and unfulfilled, read 1 John, and you will be amazed at God’s love.

1 John 3 tells us:

1 How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God. ...

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.

1 John 4 continues:

⁹ **This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.** ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.... ¹⁶ **And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.**



Accept God’s valentine to yourself today. Look at this cross and see how much God loves you. Go home and look in the mirror and tell yourself, “Jesus loves me!” And ask the Holy Spirit to really help you believe it deep down!

I will love people SACRIFICIALLY and healthily.

God loves me, SO I will love others.

Sinful, imperfect families (and others) hurt us... we carry that pain... and we

often give out that pain to others.

Or people hurt us... we let God heal that pain... and we let God love others through us.

1 John 4:11, 19-21

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.... ¹⁹ **We love because he first loved us.**

There are two great dangers to our hearts – one is to let your heart get hard through unforgiveness... and the other is to let it get broken in unhealthy relationships.

It is a sacrifice to forgive... and it is a sacrifice to not just take any “love” that comes along, but to hold out for higher, healthy love.

First, let’s look at how

We can love like Valentine through sacrificial forgiving.

Fred Craddock tells a story of a 6-year old boy who was running through the house. His mother told him to stop running through the house so that he didn’t hurt himself or break something. And the 6-year old... ☺ continued to run through the house.

And the little boy crashed into a vase, sending it tumbling to the floor, breaking it into pieces.

The father saw it all happen, picked up the little boy, dusted him off, and said, “Son, don’t worry about it. It’s just a vase. Stop crying. It’s okay.”

His mother, however, knelt down,

gathered up the pieces of the vase, and said softly, “Son, this wasn’t just a vase. It was my favorite vase. My mother gave this vase to me, and her mother gave it to her. And I looked forward to giving it to you.” And she wept, and the little boy wept. The mother took the little boy in his arms and hugged him, and he hugged her back.

Who really forgave here? The father or the mother?

Too often, we gloss over things in the name of forgiveness. That is lifting up denial and calling it a godly character trait. It’s not.

True forgiveness does not gloss over the reality of what happened. It also does not ignore what needs to happen.

Forgiveness is acknowledging that someone has done something wrong or hurtful or unjust. And then, in light of God’s grace to us, not hurting them in return.

A sign of a healthy relationship is where the other person also acknowledges that they’ve done something wrong, and they repent and ask for forgiveness. They may even weep with you.

Let’s look at how we can celebrate Valentine’s Day by

We can sacrifice to hold out for higher, healthy love.

The second danger is to let our heart get broken in unhealthy relationships.

Signs of unhealthy relationships:

- Your friends and family don't know or like them.
- You have to get into relationship now, because the other person won't wait.
- They don't know who you really are.
- You're not free to think and be different.
- You're not free to say no.
- They talk badly about others. (When they're irritated with you, they'll probably talk the same way about you.)
- It's always everyone else's fault. (It will be your fault, too.)

My heart is CONNECTED to my mind, body, and spirit.

My heart is connected to my SPirit.

When we deeply know & understand God's love for us, we will be transformed into people of love.

In Christ, we can die to our sinful nature and selfish ways. Filled with the Holy Spirit, we can overflow with love.

My heart is connected to my MIND.

What we think has a huge impact on your relationships!

If you're always thinking about someone romantically, that's not healthy. God has much more than romance for you. He has a whole life full of things for you.

If you're always thinking about sex, that's definitely not healthy. And if internet porn is a problem for you, get "Safe Eyes" from <www.internetsafety.com>.

My heart is connected to my BODY.

You knew I'd get to this, didn't you? Yes, it's Valentine's Day, and we're going to talk a little bit about sex.

I need to make sure you hear two things:

One is that sex outside of marriage is not God's plan for you. The other one – that seems like a no-brainer, and is a topic for another sermon – is that loving sex within marriage is a wonderful thing to keep on improving.

(I'll let Pastor Kelly or Pastor Tonie preach that one, maybe!)

For today, turn to your neighbor and say, "It's good to be a virgin when you get married!"



There are definitely some good, solid marriages in our congregation. Three of those good marriages are Pastor Kelly & Sara, Pastor Tonie & Walter, and David & I. Virgins or "secondary virgins"

Was it easy? No, it wasn't easy for any of us to wait. It was sacrificial love.

Are we all glad we waited? Yes!

Why? Because it actually helps your sex life. You trust each other more, and

there's no regrets. Just freedom to be naked and unashamed, the way God created us to be.

Because most importantly of all, your relationship with Jesus Christ cannot get any better if you're ignoring him so you can have sex with someone you're not married to.

That's partly because God loves that person, and wants them to have someone who will truly love them forever. Sex shows forever love – and builds forever love.

Kids need forever love.

Lovers need forever love.

So I know that more than one of you is sitting there thinking, "Okay, so I won't have sex, but I'll..." do this or that.

Once we know where the line is, we think we can tiptoe right up to it and not feel guilty. **But sex isn't about lines or guilt or pushing the limits. It's about love and commitment and sharing something with another person that you don't want to share with anyone else.** So don't spend a lot of time thinking about how far you can go without getting into trouble. Instead, **think about how you can demonstrate unselfish love, respect and friendship toward young women [or men] who are created in God's image.**

Carla Barnhill is an editor of the Teen Devotional Bible. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/tyf/advice/lovesexdating/23.42.html>

If Jesus was sitting there with you, what would you do?

I'm guessing you'd love a bit more sacrificially.

"If we don't have sex, what do we do?" brochure

Anyone can have sex. But can they build lasting relationships? Will they be there to

raise the kids, when you hit your midlife crisis? When you're old and wrinkled and sick?

It's okay to say no because you're holding out for a greater love.

Some of you might be sitting there thinking, "Well, if I don't have sex with him or her before we get married, how will I know?"

I can tell you who will be a good lover based on a few things:

- Are they free from pornography? (This is the only thing that may not be apparent to most people. Everything else are things anyone can see and discern.)
- Are they kind to their family? (If so, they'll be kind to their spouse. If not, they will probably not be kind to you, either.)
- Are they controlling, or do they give people freedom to be who they are?
- Do they encourage people or criticize them?
- Is what they want to do more important to them than what you want to do?

So you knew we'd get around to romantic relationships and sex. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we would love others sacrificially? If we would be God's Valentine to others?, and help others know what Valentine's love is like?

I look forward to that kind of world.