

YOU BECOME LIKE WHAT YOU LOVE

Series: God Is Love
November 25, 2018
Edgar King
Love, Service, Generosity
1 John 3:1

One of the biggest assets for businesses is their customers. Because satisfied customers will always make referrals. They will tell people who will tell others who will tell others. Especially if your product or service stands out.

Actually, a good number of you are watching a show that was recommended to you by someone you trust. They were probably led to it by someone whose taste they trust. Like you guys should definitely

When we hear of something that stands out, we just can't keep silent. Unfortunately, some people share information that is of no use to us. When on social media someone is too excited it's their birthday they decide to tell us to keep calm it's their birthday. I think they are unaware that Facebook sends all their friend's reminders that it is their birthday. So if someone said nothing on your birthday shouting it from the rooftop won't make a difference. They simply chose not to.

But when something is too good, we gotta share it. We have to shout it from the rooftops. This is exactly why John a friend of Jesus decided to write letters to the church. And I have pointed out before that when he was writing he was not a free man. He in exile on an island as his friends and peers were being killed off. Yet what he had experienced was so good he had to share it.

Having experienced Jesus, having seen him meet people and love people and even interact with the people who were opposed to him, John was convinced that God is love.

Here he goes

1 John 3:1

Consider the kind of extravagant love the Father has lavished on us—He calls us children of God! It's true; we are His beloved children. And in the same way, the world didn't recognize Him, the world does not recognize us either.

Other versions read, "Oh what kind of love is this."The literal translation denotes that the love is strange, it's foreign. Where does this love come from? John is simply awed, surprised, bewildered. God's love is so amazing not only did it carry him through the season he was in but all he could do was marvel at it.

And that is the kind of love we have been talking about the last 8 weeks. How do you even categorize this love? How do you even describe this love?

How do you respond to an amazing kind of love that gives you a beginning? We have our being and we move and breathe in God. Even when walk away from Him he still holds us together. How do you respond to love that gave us the first beginning and always hives a place to begin every time we need a fresh start.

How do you respond to an amazing kind of love that trusts you fully implicitly and explicitly. Trust is the one thing that makes love work. We have trouble trusting people especially when trust is broken once before. How do we respond to a love that trusts and trusts and even when trust is broken? Jesus trusts again?

How do you respond to an amazing kind of love that gives you freedom for freedom's sake? Some loves only give freedom to trick the other person into loving us, or for them to give us freedom in return. But Jesus frees us for freedom's sake. When it's easier to control and hold back, this kind of love sets free. How do you respond to such a love?

How do you respond to an amazing kind of love that says you can be naked and unashamed. A kind of love that says you do not have to wear a mask because terms and conditions do not apply. A kind of love that not only says there is nothing to fear but eventually drives out all fear from us?

This kind of love is what our soul needs. I think when we are caught up in the centre of God's love we can only end up saying the kind of things that John says. Oh, what manner of love is this? Oh, what kind of love is this?

Then you cannot stay silent. John when giving his reason for writing the story of Jesus says

John 20:31

These accounts are recorded so that you, too, might believe that Jesus is the Anointed, the Liberating King, the Son of God, because believing grants you the life He came to share.

And you know what? I agree with John. We need everyone to hear of this love that has so amazed us so that they can come to share in the life that Jesus offers.

Looking at my own Soul, looking at the few hundreds of people I have met in the short years I have been alive, looking at what is happening around the world the human soul desperately needs God.

The human soul desperately needs love, desperately needs hope needs meaning. The human soul desperately needs life.

I doubt there are any other creatures or plants or rocks sitting there and wondering, "Why on earth I'm I here?" I doubt there are any animals out there wondering if they will find never-ending love. This may be uniquely human qualities. Because our souls were created for something more

And maybe there's a dog out there also wondering if all dogs go to heaven and if life has meaning. If there is hope and if they can find never-ending love. And if that is true it is even more evidence that all of creation was created for something more.

And you see I am convinced that only Jesus invites us to that hope, Jesus invites us to life. Jesus invites us to an amazing kind of love. Jesus invites us to what our souls really need.

That is why I am so convinced that everyone needs to meet Jesus and know just how much they are loved and have an experience of this kind of love, never-ending, relentless, love that holds nothing back. Love that completes and makes whole. A love that gives freedom from sin. An amazing Kind of love.

And you know what that means? It is our job to invite everyone to experience this kind of love. Because we are children of God we are being transformed to become like Jesus and just like Jesus we are called to love the church like he loves the church, love the world like he loved the world. And therefore invite the whole world to the father just like he did.

And you know what that means? If Jesus demonstrated his love by dying for us while we were yet sinners and enemies of God, we will have to demonstrate our love by spending our life for the church and the world. And oh what greater love can someone have than to die for the ones he loves.

You see for a long time people have been scared into the Kingdom of God. You see if hell is a separation from God for eternity, people already know what that feels like. Look at what society turns into when God is not in the picture. When God is not the one ordering our politics and our economics, our science and our philosophy? You see already there is a hopelessness that humanity knows too well, there is a desperate need for God. There is an emptiness that only God can satisfy.

We need to be the generation that will shout from the rooftops that we have been found by an amazing kind of love. We have to be the generation that will say come and taste and see. Come and find rest, come and be fed, come and be loved by this kind of love. The generation that will invite people to freedom and not use fear as a tool.

Because when we experience God's love, we are awed and amazed. In that love, we are made more like Jesus and the Holy Spirit leads to like Jesus love the church and the world. Love the church and have compassion on the world.

And people know you love them not because you say it but because they can see it. People are more convinced by what they see us do more than what they hear us say. We should preach and only when necessary use God's love. People will remember more how you made them feel than what you said to them.

Here is the thing, Love led Jesus to action. As we become more like Jesus just like the one we love, love will lead us to action. Love and compassion always led God to action. Love led God to create, Love led God to give his son.

Love and compassion always led Jesus to action. Jesus was moved by compassion every time he healed or delivered people from being oppressed by the enemy. Love and compassion led Jesus to first spend his life for us and even lay down his life for us long before we even accepted him. Love led Jesus to the cross.

As we become more like Jesus we will be led to action because love is done, not just said. Actually, in God's way of love, Love is an action. We can say we love the church and the world and want them to experience God's love but unless that love moves us to action they are just empty words.

Who and what we love is seen in our action. If you want to know what you love, look at your action because. If the world will know that we are believers by how we love each other. If the world will be drawn to him by how much we love them and love each other, trust me it will be seen in our action more than it will be heard in our words. Actually, before anyone actually hears anything we clamour about, they will have seen what our words are actually saying. And that way know what we truly love.

We post Scripture after another on social media. Worship song after another fills our Facebook. The new fad is to take a selfie often and have a Jesus quote on it. This isn't how the world knows who we love or who we are becoming.

But you know how we were meant to be known? We are meant to be known by our fruit. And when we let the Spirit of God dwell in us we become like Jesus. We become love and we love. And we bear the fruits of love. That means we will spend our lives and even give up our lives for people because God loves them.

This speaks louder than songs and sermons we do in church on Sunday. It speaks louder than the quotes we put on our feeds and then eventually the world around us will ask us to show them Jesus.

And we are not loving them to trick them into coming into the Kingdom. We love them because Jesus loves them. We love them because it is who we are. We love them because you become like what you love. And when we let God's love through the Holy Spirit complete us, we become like Him. When we become like him we spend our lives and give up our lives for the world. For God so loved the world, he gave.

When I was young I could not help but notice that married people talked the same. In Africa it gets so crazy they even wear similar attires cut from the same cloth. And somehow even a few things about their faces become similar. I mean thankfully not completely because that would be weird.

The other day some friends of mine who are siblings came to church and someone noticed how much they looked alike and asked if they were husband and wide. No, they looked too alike to be married. The only explanation was that they were siblings. Or at least start from there.

But anyway, the more we love something the more we become like it. The more we love someone the more we resemble them. The more we love Jesus, the more we become like him. The more we become like Jesus, the more we love the church and the world. The more we love the church and the world we will be led to spend our lives and give our lives for the church and the world.

And we all know what to do to know what we look like. We look in the mirror. I must confess I have mirrors in the house that I barely use. If you have ever been here on Sunday and seen something on my shirt or hair or beard and wondered if I saw that before I left the house it is probably because I did not.

And God's word is pretty good mirror. And you get that from Jesus and promptings of the Holy Spirit. You can see the heart of God in his interaction with people in the Bible. How does it reflect on you? To know how our souls look like, look at Jesus and look at who you are.

If you do not know who you are ask your husband, your wife, your kids, your employees especially and your workmates. They know who you resemble. They know you by your fruit. Those fruits you bear tell the world what you love. Because we become like what we love.

And if you still are not sure what you love, watch where you are spending your time and your money. Because those are the currencies through which we spend our life. What are you serving? Who are you spending your time on? What are you spending your money on? It shows exactly who you love and therefore what you are becoming.

Jesus came to serve and in serving show us how much the father loves us. Who are you serving with your time? When we serve people they know just how much God loves them.

But when we serve ourselves in relationships and in life we simply push people away. But service, it does not just happen. Service will cost you time, it will cost you your life because time is life. Service has to be intentional. Meaningful service has to be intentional.

This is the story of my friend called Mohammed. At the mention of his name, people shun him. And even those who finally accept that he is a believer in Jesus are not too sure they want him around them. Sometimes based to change his name or not wear the cultural Somali gown or Kanzu.

You know the only thing that drew him to Jesus was the love that some believers showed him. They spent time with him. Training him in skills he did not have so that he could be equipped to function in this economy. They served him relentlessly and it became obvious they love him. They spent their time on him.

The one question he asked was, "Why do you people love me?" Oh, what kind of love is this? And when this led to a conversation about Jesus. He immediately left the room in anger. Swore never to talk to his friends again. But he could not deny the love he had experienced and after the Holy Spirit called to him even when reading the Quran he went back to those believing friends. Who accepted him and loved him.

It's the story of another friend called Joel and Julius. He is a really cool guy. He goes to the prisons to walk alongside the inmates.

This is what I love about what he is doing. He is not just out to set up a ministry. He is seeking friendship with these guys. And friendship means intentionally spending time with people. He and his team is opening up his life to people who have been accused and removed from society. Some falsely some truly.

And you might think, well it's easy to love people when you just meet them on some day of the week and they sit in some class and listen to you. And I agree. But pursuing friendship and genuinely loving people means opening up your life and spending your time with them.

Well, Joel and Julius invite them into their homes and they live with their families. Commit to restarting their lives up. This part goes beyond theology and teaching and all that. This is laying your lives on the line. They see who you are, they get to know whether you really love them or you just say it. You have no choice but to spend time with them. Such service does not happen accidentally. You see it is this love that I believe opens some of them to what God is inviting them into.

If you want to know who you love, watch who you are serving. If you want to know what you are serving watch who you are intentionally spending your life on. If you want to know who you are spending your life on, see who you are intentionally spending your money on.

Asking for Money. Loved one vs. Random person

When random people ask us for money we can honestly tell them we have none. But when people we love ask us for money we create money if we had none. We will go to any lengths. Where you spend your money tells you who and what you love.

What you love tells you who you are becoming. And if we are becoming like God, we are led to love the world and when we love the world we are led to give.

Our time in service and our money is the currency in which we spend our lives. Where or on who do you spend most of your money? Is there any of it spent just to speak love to a world that needs God?

And I am not talking about your family. I am glad that you spend money on your family. It shows you love them. How about a world that desperately needs to know the love of the Father? A world that desperately needs life and Hope?

And just like service, generosity is not accidental. Generosity is intentional and consistent. Generosity is not giving out of pity because you have been told a sorry story. Generosity is not giving out of guilt because someone has scared you into it. Generosity is a lifestyle that we cultivate through the help of the Holy Spirit because our Father is Generous. It is something we do intentionally and consistently.

I am inviting us to be a generous church. I want you to know that before we even get to pay our bills we take a portion of all the gifts and donations given in the brown box and set it aside in a mercy kitty. Of course, we are not able to help everyone, of course, we have not been able to do massive things.

But for some members of this community being able to pick a bag of food from the food bank at the back makes a difference. For the other ways, we are able to be generous for those people it makes a difference. In that small way, we hope it is a reminder that Jesus loves them. That is how we want to spend the life of Trinity Vineyard. So we are intentionally and consistently trying to live generously.

But it has to be more than a communal thing. It has to be both communal and personal. What God is inviting you to will transform your life. Where are you spending money? Have you intentionally budgeted to be generous? Where are you spending your time? Have you intentionally scheduled to serve? Who are you laying your life down for? It has to be intentional. It has to be consistent. Love moves us to give of ourselves. It makes a difference.

It's the story is of some friends from mine visiting us today. I was told they run a school and when I visited we were in the heart of Mathare one of the biggest slums in East Africa. And we kept walking by these shacks and what I thought is that maybe we will arrive at a clearing with a fence and some beautiful buildings in the heart of the slum, and maybe that is where they will be one day. We then made a turn into one of the rooms. Kids who could never afford school. Kids whose parents find it hard to afford food itself and so the thought of school does not top the priority list.

The guy who runs the school I realized did not have to be there. He grew up in Mathare but made it out. Has a life outside of this community. He made a conscious decision to go back and start this school which means hire teachers and have to pay them some times from his own pocket. Keep encouraging parents to value school and feed these kids because why else would they want to come to school then? This is how he has decided to spend his life. Money and time.

And I want us to be careful. This is not a sad story, rather this is the story of 400 kids who previously could not go to school and now they can get an education. The mothers of the kids are mostly part of a women's foundation that they run. They try to help them set up businesses and match their donations to the school fees. Therefore encouraging them to work towards something while helping them at the same time.

They spend their life and money bringing these ladies up. By serving and being generous to this women, something beautiful is happening. When most of the ladies were asked about Rose foundation, of course, they talked about financial empowerment but many of them increasingly talked about the fact that they have realized that they have value, that they are beautiful, that they are worth a lot and they have found a community and learnt to trust again.

You see when we love people by investing our lives in them, they begin to see themselves as Jesus sees them. They begin to see that God has always loved them even when they were down and out. They begin to see that there is hope for their souls, they begin to realize that there is future to have faith for. They begin to realize that this Kind of Love is embracing them. And only then will they in freedom and joy say, “Show me Jesus Christ”

If this kind of love is amazing to you, let it lead you into action. You can not stay silent. Let it lead you into intentionally being like your father in heaven.

1 John 3:16

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Closing Prayer