A young couple was overheard talking on St. Valentines Day;

He said,

* I would do anything to be with you!
* I would climb the highest mountain…
* I would crawl thru the lowest, thorn infested valley…
* I would take on the most powerful army…

just to be with you for 30 min.

To which his young lady replied, sweet! When will you be over?

He said; “Around 8, if it’s not raining”!

What is true love? Song of Solomon 8:6 “Love is as strong as death... It burns like a blazing fire, a mighty flame.”

V7 “Mighty waters and rivers cannot quench it. If someone tried to offer money to buy it, they would be despised and laughed at.

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Before marry couples, we go thru weeks of premarital counseling together to help them learn & develop True Love, so they can have a STRONGER, more SUCCESSFUL marriage…

Keeping the vows they make before God, each other, and their company of witnesses; “for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, til death do us part”.

A wife asked her husband once; if I die first, would you remarry?

He responded: Yes, only after a considerable period of grieving… we all need companionship.

To which she responded: Would you let her drive my car, live in our home and sleep in our bed?

He said; Sugar, we’ve got the house the way we want it, the bed is new and everything is paid for… I’m not going to buy new… so I guess I would.

She asked him one final question; will you let her use my golf clubs?

He said; No! Definitely not!

She’s left handed!

To say the world is mixed up about what TRUE LOVE is, is an understatement… But it’s been going on for a loooong time.

1. True Love is a Purpose

1 Cor 13 Paul had to write to the church in Corinth to straighten out their confusion about “TRUE LOVE”…

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

1 Corinthians 13:13

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

True love is the love that doesn’t focus on self or what self can gain…

1 John 4:8 “Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love.”

Jehovah/Yahweh is His name, the one True, eternal God is the source of love.

1 John 3:16 defines TRUE LOVE fo us – “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”

* True love is following the example set or us by the source of TRUE LOVE… Jesus. Choosing to unselfishly and unconditionally serve God & others regardless of cost.
* Faith is very important because it’s the positive response to the “Good News” of Christ.
* Hope is the positive result we experience when we put our faith and trust in the person & work of Jesus Christ.

Why does Paul say that the “greatest of these is love”?

James 2:14-21 – Because faith without works is dead…

1. TRUE LOVE is proof of one’s faith in Christ. Because as James so plainly puts it… even the demons believe in Jesus… but they live in fear of the judgement that is coming…

Why? Because although they maybe believe Jesus exists, the TRUE/obedient/LOVE & devotion of Jesus is not visible in them, nor will it ever be...

Their work is proof of who they have chosen to follow…

There are more than three kinds of love in our world today, but there are three that God has led me to speak to you about today…

1. If you… - do things my way. If you give me things. If you’re a good provider… I will love you…

That’s not TRUE LOVE, it’s emotional abuse/extortion&bribery.

Many times the “If you’s…” are not even communicated.

But the moment “you don’t…” the other shoe drops… and physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse becomes a reality in one’s life…

It’s conditional love, it’s childish, we’re born with it … Psalm 51:5

We learned this from our first baby, Sarah… She was a big time extortionist… It took us showing tough-TRUE LOVE to change her…

1. Because you… – are young, attractive, got a good job, money/toys.

This promise delayed hurt/pain… Because things may start out good, but age, gravity, and wrinkles are gonna change things!

A downturn in the market can take you from a somebody to a nobody in a heartbeat…

From living high on the hog, to eatin out of the trough with the rest of us hogs…

This is a very unstable/fair weathered kind of love… a walking on eggshells kind of love, that breeds fear, tension, worry and doubt. Which manifests itself in very negative ways.

Many men (and women) are living with very real fear/anxiety today…

Kids live in fear that mom & dad may divorce like so many others…

Spouses fear that their mate may run off and leave them for “greener pastures”, or a “younger model”…

Or because they’ve had prostate/breast cancer… and they’re no longer able to satisfy their spouse.

That when they run out of money, their spouse will run out on them…

TRUE LOVE is the answer…

Lastly TRUE LOVE is POWER… Power to love…

1. In Spite of… - who someone is or isn’t.

No matter what they’ve done or didn’t do.

No matter what they have or don’t have.

In spite of what they can or cannot do.

Praying for, helping and encouraging others… that’s TRUE LOVE.

Not condoning or becoming indifferent to their sin/shortcomings.

Galatians 6:7 reminds us that we always “reap what we sow”. Give TRUE LOVE, get TRUE LOVE…

How do 37 year, 50 +, 60 + year anniversaries happen?

Romans 5:6-8

By loving unconditionally those in your life who aren’t perfect… Why?

Because we don’t deserve that kind of TRUE LOVE ourselves.

Jesus did die for us, not because we were especially good or worth dying for.

But because He and His Father in heaven knew we were enslaved by sin and could not save ourselves…

TRUE LOVE looks beyond who/what a person is to what they can be…

“in spite of” who they are today!

Ephesians 3:18-19

To better connect with the love of God, in this moment of grace, we are going to change the order of the service to receive Holy Communion.

Let us pray: Our Father, may your Holy Spirit be present with us in this moment of love, mercy, grace & forgiveness…

Your love has no equal. As we remember the sacrifice of your Son, Jesus Christ in your house this morning…

His body that was broken & spilled out for each one of us.

May your love spill over and transform our hearts to begin loving more like you…

Come forward and partake in God’s grace. Dipping the bread into the cup.

How can God’s TRUE LOVE become the way WE LOVE?

Ezekiel 36:26-27

John 3:3

Galatians 2:20

The TRUE LOVE OF GOD gives the follower of Christ a second chance at life…

A second chance to live & love the way God intended and created us to in Genesis 1&2. For His Glory! To make a great name for Him by loving others like He loves us.

Max Lucado devotional on God’s love & second chances.

Taylor Storch heart given to Patricia Winters

When God puts His stethoscope to your chest by way of the Holy Spirit, does He hear the TRUE LOVE of His Son Jesus beating in you?

Is His “In Spite of” love beating in your home/family, in your relationships, in you at church, outside with strangers?

If not, why don’t you come and kneel at an altar to pray and make things right with the Lord.

If you’re not able to kneel, come and sit on the front row and pray.

We’re here to help… come now as we sing a couple verses of “I Surrender All”…