

LOVE DOES: LIVING THE TRUTH WE KNOW

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That's what we get to talk about today -- is love. Aren't you excited? Here we go, right? Oh, no, she's got the mic again. Shhh, don't tell them. [Laughs] Rev. Stacy's not here in town tonight. She's off having fun, and so I got the mic.

Valentine's Day is coming, right? And that's when we think about love. That's what we think about -- is Valentine's Day. Everybody's wanting to, *"Oh yeah, let's run and get candy bars and candy for everybody and give them cards."* I've heard it said many times that this is the Hallmark holiday. It wasn't really a holiday until everybody made it one. But they talk about love.

And tonight, I'm not going to talk about that kind of love. I'm actually going to talk about God's love. And I'm going to start with the foundational teaching that we have here at Unity, which is "The 12 Powers of Man." Now, if any of you haven't been here long, or you don't know about this book, this is the co-founder, Charles Fillmore -- him and his wife started Unity -- and he wrote this book. And he talks about that we have all the powers. And love is one of the greatest powers that we have. Not just love of our humans, but it's actually God's love he's talking about.

When he shares about love, I get excited about this, so I'm trying not to go too fast. Okay. So, when he talks about love, he says that love is one of our powers. It rests right behind our heart. Makes sense, right? And the disciple that it falls under is John. Now, if you've ever read the Gospel of John, it is all about love. They call it the love Gospel.

I'll just give you a couple of the Scriptures from here. John 13:34: *"A new commandment I give you: love one another as I have loved you. So, you must love one another."*

Another one -- John 15:12: *"My commandment is this: love each other as I have loved you."*

There's a theme, right? He didn't say, *"love each as I've liked you."* He says, *"the way I've loved you."*

So, 1 John 3:11 also says, *"For this is the message you heard from the beginning: we should love one another."* God's love is not primarily a feeling or a belief. Love is something we DO.

People often say, *"Oh, I love you!"* But love is motion. Love is action. That's why my talk started with love is, because it's not about the exterior things that we're talking about. Love is an active, creative force that transforms ordinary life when we choose to participate in it. And that's the thing! We still have choice, right? We actually have a choice in that.

So, according to Fillmore, in his Metaphysical Bible, he says this about love. And you can correct me if I'm wrong, Rev. Kim! *"Love is the divine attribute; it is an idea in the One Mind. God is love and love is God."* I'll say that again: *"God is love and love is God. It's a quality in being."*

The difference between divine love and human love, Fillmore says, is that divine love is broad and unlimited. It's a universal harmonizing power. And in our humanness, if you've ever been in love -- and in all my years I might have hit that road a few times too many -- my human love, my understanding of humanness and love, is not like broad and unconditional. It was always based on something; you know, that give and that get. That did I get enough done?

I thought when I was growing up maybe it was like, *"Okay; well if I did enough right and I did enough well I would be loved."* And that's not the kind of love that actually is the love God's talking about. But Fillmore says, in reality, there is just one love. And when man expresses divine love in limited ways, he

makes it a separation in consciousness, and his expression of love is personal instead of universal. So, it's what we do with it, is what he's saying. What are we going to do with it?

Divine love will be established in fearlessness and courage, for God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness but of power, love and discipline. By establishing ourselves in the consciousness of divine love and expressing that love at all times, we are helped to fulfill the commandment: love your enemies; do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you.

Now, this is hard. When you're talking about love, it is so easy to love people that love you, isn't it? I mean, come on. Yeah, they love me back! Try to love the person that almost runs you off the road, you know. Try to love the person that has backstabbed you or has talked about you or is just who we deem, as humans, "unlovable." This is what they're asking us to do. This is what Fillmore is asking us to do.

And there's lots of barriers to love. We want to say that they're barriers, but they're humanness, right? We say these barriers are **fear**: fear of being hurt or rejected. Fear of being misunderstood.

Unprocessed pain. My own pain could block my love for somebody. You know, I've been through a lot in my life. I've been up and down some roads, and I've shared some of those along the way. You don't get 29 years in AA by walking the perfect road. Right? So, I've been through those valleys and those hills. So that pain can be there.

The need to be right. [Sarcastically] I've never been that! No! Nobody ever needs to be right, right?

Resentment or scorekeeping. *"Well, you did this to me 14 times, so I can't possibly love you in that way."*

Whatever it is, our **ego and our identity attachment** -- the ego, edging God out, right? It's always trying to get in there and tell us, *"No, it's this way. I can't love them because they're mean, or I can't love them because they don't follow the same political party."* That's a big one right now, right? It makes them unlovable. Are they really unlovable? Or is their behavior is a whole different thing?

We could be **disconnected** from our body.

We could choose to love them on **conditions** -- only if they meet these standards. Only if they act in this way. You know, this used to happen a lot, I feel like, in our childhood. And I'm dating way back when, you know, if you just had to walk the line or otherwise you were shunned. I remember at one point my mom didn't talk to me for three weeks. I would walk up to talk to her and she would turn her back on me because I didn't meet her standards for love. I had not followed in the way she wanted me to, so she rejected that. And that was like, *"Whoa; okay."* So, there's the conditions on it.

It could be **burnout**; it could be **depletion**. It could be wanting to not be vulnerable -- *"I've been hurt too many times."* Has anybody even hurt in here? Yeah, right? More than once! I'll raise my hand. That could block us. That could be a barrier.

Forgetting our shared humanity; that's a big one. We forget that we're all human. And bigger than that, we forget that we're all God's children. So, people tend to want to think, *"No; because they act like that, they can't be a child of God."*

So, we don't need a special calling to love like this. We only need to -- and you're going to hear me say this probably for the rest of my life -- willingness. *"I'm willing."*

I remember when I first started my healing journey -- I've probably shared this before but I'll be brief. They asked me to forgive some people for things that I thought was completely unforgivable. And my sponsor said, *"Be willing."* I was like, *"I can do that. I can be willing."* And that willingness went on and went on and went on. And then finally I got to, *"Okay, I'm able for this person. Okay, I'm able for this*

person.” But without that word “willing” or “willingness” inside there, I would have been like, “No, they're beyond my love. They're on the outside of it.”

So, let's stop overthinking what it is, and let's start showing love through what we DO. Let's start being love in the world: being love.

And it's not as hard as we think it is. We want to say that it is, but it's a remembering of who we are. A lot of this stuff that we teach here in Unity -- and a lot of the things that the Fillmores and all the people that were a part of this rising of the Unity movement -- remind us that we already have everything we need. We just have blocked it and shoved it down and made it something else. Or for whatever these conditions -- these barriers -- came up in our life and we said, “No; that can't possibly be.”

So, a lot of it's about remembering. And a lot of it is about sometimes you just got to take the first step. You guys remember that piece in Indiana Jones where he's in that big circle thing. And he's like, “There's no bridge!” And there's a door over here, and he's standing at a door ... and he's being chased by something. And he's like, “That's a long way's down!” Right? And then he realizes he has to take a step. Because they're going to get him back here, whatever it was. I can't remember what was behind them. But he put his foot out and the bridge shot out.

So sometimes it's just about taking that next step and knowing that we are all connected. God is in it all. And you can discover God's this love as you go.

So, here's some short little things on how to get there.

Start where you are. Not where you should be. Let's not “should” all over ourselves, okay? Let's start where we are. Love in action begins with honesty. Notice what you're actually feeling; what you're actually fearing: irritation, numbness, whatever ... tenderness; whatever it is; and choose not to abandon yourself because of it.

So the next one is: **be curious instead of judgmental.** “It's curious that they said that to me, right? I wonder where that came from.” If you remember the old quote that says, “People see you as they are, not as you are.” They don't see you as you are. They see as they are. So, what's curious that that changes for them? The curiosity will help you stay in the love. So, when someone comes to annoy you or disappoints you, ask: “What might be going on here? Hmmm. *W* is really at the root of this?”

So **do small things** unglamorously and consistently. This is the biggest one for me. Small things. It doesn't have to be a grand gesture to love somebody. We don't have to go buy them a new car and say, “Hey, *this is how I prove I love you.*” Right? What if you were to just love them by listening and not trying to fix them. That's a big one for me! When I talk to somebody, I want them to listen to me.

Several times in my life I've had to pick a new therapist. And when I go to pick this therapist, I always start with, “Can you hear me and tell me what I said. Don't fix me. Don't tell me what I need to do. Don't give me some kind of little, ‘This is how you work through; this is cognitive/behavioral.’ No; listen to what I'm saying, because I know it's there. I need you to repeat it back to me so I can hear it from another person. I can hear it from the perspective of being outside of myself.” And I always -- when I find that therapist -- I stick with them until I have to move out of that area, because then they can hear me. I'm being heard and I'm not being fixed. They're not offering to fix me. They're offering to walk with me in this.

Keeping your word. When you say you're going to do it, do it. Now there's always, you know, you get sick or you get nothing like that ... but that's a way to love people: by saying, “*I'm going to show up. I'm going to be there for you.*”

Apologizing without defending yourself. That doesn't mean you have to say you're sorry, but just in a way that's like, *"Okay, forgive me for being, you know, not being there one day."* But don't go into, *"Oh, but you don't understand. There were four cars on the freeway ..."* You know, *"Well, you don't understand; this happened to me, so now I can't be that for you."* Just: *"I wasn't there for you, and that wasn't right, and I'm here now, and I love you, and I'll hold you in that space."*

Show up when it's inconvenient. Not when, *"Oh, I have time today."* But when they're hurting and it's inconvenient, show up and be there for them.

Let someone else have the last word. That's a big one. That's a big one. I notice that, because I'll be saying something; somebody else will say something; and I can feel it coming out. And I'm like, *"Nope! Pull it back. Just let it be."* Because it's not about the last word, you know? Let them be where they're at. Not everybody is going to be able to meet you where you are. Believe it or not, on your spiritual journey, you're going to be ahead of some people and behind some others. So let them be where they're at. And if you can't, if they're ahead of you, they're going to do the same for you if they've learned along the way.

So big gestures are nice, but **daily small gestures** really make a difference.

So **love them with boundaries.** People without boundaries are not being honest. They're not being truthful. So keep your boundaries lovingly. That's not like screaming/saying, *"No, you crossed my boundary!"* That's just being, *"This is my boundary. Here it is."* That is a way to love. It's hard to believe, though. I thought for a long time it wasn't. I thought, *"That's kind of mean, your drawing a line."* But it's not. It actually is. It does help them show that this is the line. I love you, but this is as much as I will go.

Practice compassion when you're triggered. Triggers are invitations to ask yourself, *"What is going on? What's going on here that I need to look at?"* Because, believe it or not, people are mirrors. The lesson's coming. It could show up here or it could show up here, but someday it's going to show up. And if I'm not learning it, it's going to keep showing up. I'm going to keep getting a lesson. So, the trigger is mine. What do I need to look at?

And **choose to repair things over being right.** That's something they teach in co-dependency: Do you want to be right or do you want to be happy? You know, sometimes it's just ... Let's repair it. Let's fix it. Let's make it better. Let's make it what it's really supposed to be.

And **let love move through you, not be performed by you.** There's a difference. Don't make it an act. Don't make it, *"Oh, if I show up this way, then this is your love language that I'm giving you."* BE the love. Walk in it. Be a part of it. Be present. Love flows because we are love. God is love; Love is God. We already are love.

So, this shows up in every single one of our principles, believe it or not. The first principle, of course, is: One Presence and One Power; all is One. Right? The way Unity sees this is: everywhere love appears, God is being revealed. So every ordinary moment is a place where the activity of God as love can be made visible. Every moment of your day.

That can be in the grocery store when the people in front of you are arguing, or you get up the ... This happens to me a lot. When I get up to the counter, and the person's just frazzled because the line is so long. And they're like trying really hard to get everything done. And I just walk up and say, *"Hey, let's take a breath. You know, slow down for a second. If they want to move from behind me, that's cool. Let them move. But just take your breath; take your time. I've got all the time I need here."*

And you should see the change in their face. Sometimes they won't even look up until you say, *"It's going to be okay; take a breath."* And then they go, like, *"Oh, my gosh."* That might have been the first time in

the day that they actually picked their head up to look at somebody because the line's been so long; so busy for so long.

So Principle #2: Our essence is God. Therefore, we are love. We just need to remember it. The way Unity sees this is: love is our innate nature. And the book stories are people remembering. We just have to remember that this is our nature. We have to uncover it from all this other daily stuff and all this other stuff that's trying to push it down.

And our Principle #3 is: We're creating reality through our thoughts. The way Unity sees this is a consciousness of expectancy, curiosity and compassion shapes what we notice and how we respond. So, if we're curious about it, we'll respond different. If we expect something to be good, in my experience, most of the time I see the good in it. If I expect it to be negative, it's been my experience that most of the time I see the negativity. So what am I doing to help myself here?

And #4; it says: Through prayer and meditation, we connect to this Presence. Right? We pray not only for the words, but for the willingness, the openness and the action. Where is it here that I can do something? How can I be love in the world? How can I show up and be that love, especially when it's not expected or when you see that an overwhelming someone that really needs it?

And in Principle #5: We put it all into action. That's when we start moving our feet. The African proverb, right? *"Pray and move your feet."* Pray: *"Oh, I want to be love. I want to be all this. I want to connect in this way. Show me where I can show up and be what I need to be."*

So, here's your call to action this week. I got you a call to action, and I want a report back from you guys, okay? **Show up for someone.** Visit; call; sit with a person who's struggling, grieving, or in transition. Don't fix them; just be present as love. Just sit in there and remind yourself, *"I am God's love, just by being here."*

A lot of times, especially when you're ... If anybody's had any chaplain experience, sometimes all you have to do is be there and witness what they're saying, and you can see the change/the shift inside them. So just be present for them. Show up as love.

Do one quiet act of service. Help a neighbor or support a co-worker or volunteer at something. We have plenty of places to volunteer around here! Or handle a task that no one wants you to. Regularly the kids at the house do the dishes. Sometimes I just walk in there, you know; they're like ... I'll say, *"So who's turn for the dishes is it?"* Because they take turns. So, I'll just go in there and just do them. And they just ... And I'm just like: just get them done. Just get them done. It's not that big of a deal. It takes less than 10 minutes, 15 minutes, to get the dishes done in the kitchen. So, go in there and do it and move on from it. Because love does. This is an act. Oh, they got the night off. It'll be their turn the next time, right?

And **live one truth you already know.** So, you're going to ask yourself: *"What spiritual truth do I already know, but I haven't been living?"* That's how you love. What do I already know? And how can I live it? How can I be that in the Presence this week? Take one specific action.

So, the affirmation -- you're going to say it with me one more time -- is this. Together: [with congregants] *"I live the truth I know by letting love become what I do."*

Namaste.