

ADVENT AND THE HEART

“*A Flowing Heart*”

Scripture Reading: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8a

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 8**. This is our final week in this series titled “Advent and the Heart.” We eagerly anticipate celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. And this Savior promises He will make many changes in the heart of the believer.
-) **SLIDE 9**. The first week we learned that hope would mature the heart of the believer. Week #2 we learned how peace will guard the heart of the believer. Last week we saw how joy excites the heart of the believer. Today we move on to our fourth and final week in this season of Advent for 2020.
-) **SLIDE 10**. I have titled today’s message “*A Flowing Heart*.”
-) **SLIDE 11**. And what is our theme word for today? Today’s word is “*love*.” Today we are going to see how love will flow from the heart of every believer. (LIGHT CANDLE)
-) **SLIDE 12**. GALATIANS 5:22-23. Love is also a fruit of the Spirit. That means a true believer will exhibit this fruit of love.
-) Love is something that can be given or received. But for this morning I am going to look at “*love*” as something we give. We’ll look at it as something that flows from our hearts.
-) I did not look up the Webster Dictionary definition for the word love. Today I want to allow the Word of God define what love is and what love is not.
-) Love goes against the grain of our human nature and is foreign to the human condition. Why is that?

-) I believe it's because pure love is unconditional. But we are sometimes very good at placing conditions on our concept of love. It's not unusual to hear someone say, "*If you love me, then you will do such and such.*" More than likely the "*such and such*" has something to do with satisfying their wants and their needs and not the other way around. Even as Christians it is often difficult to leave the "*self*" out of the love equation.
-) But let's do a review. 1) we have been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. He is our hope. 2) Our hearts are guarded from the anxieties and worries of the world. He is our peace. And 3) our eternity is secure. That brings us joy.
-) When we really understand these things that we have been freely given, what should be our response? Love. Love should flow freely from our hearts.
-) **SLIDE 13.** MATT 22:34-40. Jesus is asked by the Pharisees what is the greatest commandment. So, I ask. How good of a job are we doing loving God? How good of a job are we doing loving our neighbor?
-) Let's get back to our Scripture reading for today and see what the Word of God tells us about love.
-) **SLIDE 14.** The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us what love is and what love is not. On the positive side love is patient and kind. Love rejoices with the truth. Love protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.
-) **SLIDE 15.** On the negative side love does not envy, it does not boast, and it is not proud or rude or self-seeking. Love is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil.
-) What happens when we go through this list and do a self-examination? What do we find out about ourselves? If this is love, how good are we at allowing love flow from our hearts?

-) The journey of a Christian has a goal of becoming more Christ-like every day. So, for the remainder of our time this morning I want to look at these attributes of love as listed in 1COR 13:4-8 and see how Jesus did with them. He is our model.
-) **SLIDE 16.** Is patient. How many times did Jesus have to tell his disciples, “*O ye of little faith?*” He had to have patience with them.
-) Is kind. Jesus had no problem eating with sinners and talking with a Samaritan woman. He did not have favorites.
-) It rejoices with the truth. Jesus was all about truth. He is the way the truth and the life and the truth will set you free.
-) It protects. In JOHN 17:12 Jesus tells us that He protects those whom the Father gives to Him. Our eternity is secure. No one can snatch us out of His hand.
-) It trusts. Jesus never trusted in man but always trusted in the perfect will of the Father. Do we?
-) It hopes. Jesus knew His sacrifice on the cross would bring redemption to all who believe. He is our hope.
-) It perseveres. Regardless of His earthly circumstances, every hour was an opportunity to preach the good news to all who had ears to hear. He never gave up.
-) **SLIDE 17.** It does not envy. Jesus’ priorities were not who had more possessions than He did, or which prophet had more followers than He did. That wasn’t important to him. He focused on His mission.
-) It does not boast. If anyone had a reason to boast Jesus did. He could have boasted about who He was—the Son of God. But He never used that to His advantage. His true followers would come by faith.
-) Is not proud. Pride is all about self and Jesus was the most selfless person ever to walk the face of this earth.

-) In not rude. Jesus was willing that anyone who hears His message and believes would be saved, including the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the Teachers of the Law. Even the people who put Him on a cross.
-) Is not self-seeking. Jesus always diverted all glory to the Father and not to Himself. And three times when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He resisted those things (food, power, popularity) that appeal to the flesh.
-) Is not easily angered. If we were betrayed by one of our best friends like Jesus was betrayed by Judas, we would be angry. But Jesus knew it was part of the sovereign plan of God.
-) Does not delight in evil. In JOHN 8 Jesus never condemns the adulterous woman. But He does tell her to go and sin no more. In JOHN 5 Jesus says this to the lame man he just cured, “*Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.*” Jesus never gives us just cause to sin.
-) Keeps no record of wrongs. I saved this one for last. Peter denied Jesus three times. Thomas doubted that Jesus rose from the dead. James and John wanted positions of power in God’s kingdom. And even at the very end Jesus never says, “Remember that time when ...”
-) I think too often we carry that silver bullet, that record of wrong, right here in our pocket ready to load into our gun and fire when the right opportunity arises. Explain.
-) As a Christian, any time we want to know what should flow from our hearts we just need to read 1COR 13:4-8. When we arrive at the point in our Christian walk when we can get good at these things, then we will find out that love never fails.
-) **SLIDE 18**. Hope **MATURES** our heart. Peace **GUARDS** our heart. Joy **EXCITES** our hearts. And now we know that love **FLOWS** from our hearts.

-) The season of Advent and the words that represent these four lit candles do present a challenge for every Christian.
-) I am challenged to have a mature heart that is more Christ-like. But meeting that challenge gives me hope.
-) I am challenged to have a guarded heart that does not worry and is not anxious. But meeting that challenge gives me peace.
-) I am challenged to have an excited heart that rejoices in the assurance of my salvation in the midst of all my troubles. But meeting that challenge gives me joy.
-) I am challenged to have love flow from my heart to a world that sometimes I really do not like or want to love. But meeting that challenge defines me as a Christian.
-) **SLIDE 19**. And we must persevere in all four of these challenges and not just during the Christmas season but throughout the entire year. Why? Because love never fails.
-) Next week we will end 2020 with a review of this year and pick up our study of the Book of GALATIANS the first Sunday in January.

12/20/2020 at Beech Grove Christian Church