

**Sharing Our Love Languages**  
Sermon by Lisa Crismore  
October 4, 2015 – John Knox Presbyterian Church

*1 John 4:7-21 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

*And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.*

*Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the Day of Judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.*

With the horrible events that have transpired this week in Roseburg, Oregon, I come with a heavy heart. We also had a shooting within the last 24-hours at International Village (right next door to us). It seems only fitting and proper that we talk about love today. It seems to be missing in our society as these shootings keep occurring in our nation. It is true that we love and support others here at church but are their times when we fail to love each other? I know I struggle some times to love my own family.

Our scripture today was the theme for the children at Pyoca. Love seems so simple especially when we think about God. The letter from 1 John speaks of the tremendous love that God has for us. We know the love that God poured out for us as we celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We feel the love of God that abides in us as the Holy Spirit. We know that God love us as we are created in God's image. We know that God loves us not because we love God but because simply put "God is love." God's love is that unconditional love that never leaves us.

What I find challenging in this text is the requirement that we must love each other. 1 John writes, "Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another." The letter goes onto say, It is true that we can't see God. But, God loves us and that love abides in us. So as we love one another, that love of God can be shared through us. How do we show our love for each other? How do we love each other in the way that God created us?

Gary Chapman is a Relationship Counselor and Director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants. He has written and sold over 8 million books which speak of the love languages that people speak. It is true that Gary Chapman began talking about the five love languages to help married couples, who were struggling in their relationships. But over the years, he has written a series of books that speak on how these love languages can help all of us love each other including the way we love our children.

We can relate to all the love languages in one form or another. But most of us primarily speak one (maybe two) of the love language. But if my language is different than your love language, we will have a difficult time understanding and loving one another, if we don't realize it. It is as if one of

us is speaking French and the other Danish. If we aren't aware of each other's love language, we can't fully love each other. Gary describes each of us as having a love tank inside of us. We are happy when our love tank is full. But if our love tank is not filled up like a gas tank on a car, we can become stuck when our tank becomes empty. And just like running out of gas would not make us happy, we are not very happy when our love tank is depleted. Can you imagine how miserable someone would feel if they go weeks, months or years without their love tank being filled up?

So, what are the five love languages?

- Acts of Service
- Gift giving or receiving
- Quality Time
- Words of Affirmation
- Physical Touch

(The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts; Northfield Publishing; 2015; by Gary Chapman; p. 138)

I don't want to make this into a book report. But, I can relate to what Gary Chapman is saying. When my husband and I were first dating, my birthday came up and he didn't have a gift for me. He wanted for us to go out and pick something up. I remember being very disappointed. I realize not that my love language is gift giving or receiving. It wasn't that I wanted something big and expensive but I wanted him to put thought and energy into my gift as I did when we had celebrated his birthday. Now, he has learned that he has to ask me ahead of time for ideas so that he will have it on my special day. He has even gotten better about paying attention to what I need or getting me something that center around my current interests.

For him, his love language is acts of service. I never understood why he had to make sure I noticed that he mowed the lawn, emptied the dishwasher or fixed something around the house. Now, I know that he wanted me to realize that those things were important to him because he wanted to show his love for me. But more importantly, he wanted me to recognize that love. Every once in a while we go check-in and see a marriage counselor. I remember one time the counselor asked him to share what he appreciated about me. It wasn't about the gifts that I had given to him. He appreciated me for washing, folding and putting away his laundry. At the time, I thought he was nuts! But, it was the act of service that I did for him that showed him that I loved him.

As for my children, I would say my daughter Sarah's love language is quality time. When she was going to school in Florida, it killed her to not come home for Thanksgiving. Her freshman year, she didn't come home until Christmas. After this first time, Sarah begged to come home as she couldn't bear to be away from family during this special holiday. Since she has moved to Kentucky, there has not been a month goes by that one of us has not travelled to spend time with each other. She was also the one that came home to see me off on the Camino in Spain last year.

As for Bethany, her love language is physical touch. I can recall when she was going through her transition out of college and was struggling with this. She constantly needed hugs. Whenever she comes home, she is the hugger. She is the one that is constantly picking up the dogs and hugging on them. One of them weighs 30 pounds! She needs that physical touch to fill her love tank.

One thing that Gary Chapman points out with children and adults is that once you know a person's love language you don't want to use it against them. Especially when you are disciplining a child, you don't want to punish them by withholding their love language. If a child's love language is quality time, you don't want to punish them by sending them to their room for hours and ignoring them. If a child's love language is words of affirmation, you don't want to put them down by telling them how bad they are or how disappointed you are in them. This is why it is so important to learn your child's love language as it can be devastating. It can also hurt a marriage as well as a friendship.

I believe this is what the letter in 1 John is saying when it says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love."

Striving for perfection in loving someone else can be a huge obstacle. It may be difficult or challenging to speak somebody's love language especially if it is one that we, ourselves, are not comfortable in doing. The challenge or the sacrifice is realizing that other people need this to feel loved. Gary Chapman says, "Love is something you do for someone else - not something you do for yourself. Love is a choice." (The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts; Northfield Publishing; 2015; by Gary Chapman; p. 138)

How do you find out your own or other people's love language? Sure, you can buy Gary Chapman's book, The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts or The 5 Love Languages of Children. Or what I would urge you to do is be attentive to each other. God wants us to love each other just like God loves us. We need to observe and talk to one another so that we can figure out how to speak each other's love language. I look around our church and there are a lot of people who live on their own. What if their love language is physical touch or quality time? How are they to get their tank full? Who is going to fill it?

Jesus was great at reading people's love languages. **Acts of Service** - he was constantly healing people and performing miracles; **Quality Time** - he had long talk with the Samaritan woman and when she brought the town's people to him, he spent 2 more days with them; **Physical Touch** - Jesus washed his disciples feet and defended Mary when she washed his feet with the costly perfume; **Words of Affirmation** - Jesus heard God say to him when he was baptized, "You are my beloved and with you I am well pleased!" Jesus also told Peter that he was "the rock" of the church. **Gift giving and receiving** - Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana, he served the 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish and his ultimate gift was his life for us all.

We give thanks to God for loving us and for showing us how to love in Jesus Christ. May we find it in our hearts to love each other. Amen.