

Love Unlocked: Loving Different and Difficult People

The Transforming Church

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (TPT)

Preached by Rev. Dr. Sam Oye. Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (TPT)

Transcript

AUGUST 9, 2026 (1st Service)

YEAR OF EL-EZER

Minister: Rev. Dr. Sam Oye

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (TPT)

Topic: LOVE UNLOCKED: LOVING DIFFERENT AND DIFFICULT PEOPLE

"If I were to speak with eloquence in earth's many languages, and in the heavenly tongues of angels, yet I didn't express myself with love, my words would be reduced to the hollow sound of nothing more than a clanging cymbal. And if I were to have the gift of prophecy with a profound understanding of God's hidden secrets, and if I possessed unending supernatural knowledge, and if I had the greatest gift of faith that could move mountains, but have never learned to love, then I am nothing. And if I were to be so generous as to give away everything I owned to feed the poor, and to offer my body to be burned as a martyr, without the pure motive of love, I would gain nothing of value. Love is large and incredibly patient. Love is gentle and consistently kind to all. It refuses to be jealous when blessing comes to someone else. Love does not brag about one's achievements nor inflate its own importance. Love does not traffic in shame and disrespect, nor selfishly seek its own honor. Love is not easily irritated or quick to take offense. Love joyfully celebrates honesty and finds no delight in what is wrong. Love is a safe place of shelter, for it never stops believing the best for others. Love never takes failure as defeat, for it never gives up. Love never stops loving. It extends beyond the gift of prophecy, which eventually fades away. It is more enduring than tongues, which will one day fall silent. Love remains long after words of knowledge are forgotten. Our present knowledge and our prophecies are but partial, but when love's perfection arrives, the partial will fade away."

Apostle Paul established something profound in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. He shows us that spiritual gifts, spiritual knowledge and spiritual power without love amount to spiritual immaturity. You can be spiritually gifted, spiritually powerful and spiritually anointed. You can be a man of vision with access into the very presence of the Almighty God. You can be a woman who traffics in the realm of the spirit and has access into the deep mysteries of the Most High God. You can have access to the depths of the knowledge of Scripture and traffic in the realm of power, so much so that through your ministry, the dead have been raised back to life, the blind have seen, the lame have walked, and the deaf have had their ears unblocked.

These are amazing spiritual powers and virtues, but here is where the point creates a bit of concern. You can have all of these things and still be nothing if you do not have

love. The body of Christ may celebrate you. The church may give you titles such as the most anointed man of God or the most knowledgeable man of God, based on your expression of giftedness, knowledge, or power. You may receive honour and attention, and it may feel good when people recognise the grace of God in your life. However, if you do not have love, the Bible does not even say that you are something; it says you are nothing.

So, the way God values things is totally different from the way we value them. What God calls success is different from what we call success.

There is a contest in the body of Christ now that, honestly, is unnecessary. For instance, you hear that if a church is prayerful, it is the most powerful church. Then some people tell you that word-based churches are the most powerful churches. Others say supernatural churches are the most powerful churches. We also get to the point where we say that a church that is not wealthy is not powerful, so wealthy churches become the most powerful. But then you come to the book of Revelation and listen to Jesus, the Pastor of all pastors and the Shepherd of all shepherds. In Revelation 3:17, Jesus says, You say, I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing. But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

Jesus was looking at a church that appeared successful, rich, and powerful, but His valuation was different. What Jesus saw about that church was different from what the church thought about itself. That tells you that what Jesus uses to measure who you are as a Christian, and what a church is, is totally different from what we use.

We use the building. We use the seating capacity. We use the numbers. Thousands of people may come, and many may be watching online and across our various campuses. Thank God for the numbers, but numbers do not inspire God to say that we are successful.

What God is looking for in the church is not the gift He gave to us; it is the love we give to Him and the love we share with one another. He measures the weight of a church, and He measures the weight of a believer, by the amount of love that is deposited and expressed through that believer. He measures how much love is domiciled in that church and how much love is communicated among its members.

Love is the True Measure of a Believer.

I am not a baby in the house of God. I am growing, and I have spent some years in this kingdom. I have been over three decades in this church and in the body of Christ. I have seen Christianity in different forms. I have been part of liberal Pentecostalism, conservative Pentecostalism, and now majorly mainline Pentecostalism. I have seen extremes.

One of the things I have found out is that you may pray powerfully and still be difficult to live with. You can be a great prayer warrior and still be the most miserable person for people to live with or work with. I have seen people who finish talking to God and immediately speak terribly to the people around them.

It is very possible for you to prophesy accurately, but communicate terribly. In other words, you may not know how to hold conversations with individuals, but when you stand on the pulpit and begin to prophesy, it is perfect. Why? The prophecy is a gift from God. The lack of communication is a reflection of your lack of maturity. Your overdependence on gifts will bring you to a place where your lack of commitment to personal development will show.

I have seen Christians who possess extraordinary faith, but when it comes to emotional maturity, they are emotionally immature. In essence, you can be full of faith and

emotionally immature. I have seen people who are generous, but use it as a means to control you. I have seen people who serve faithfully in church, but treat their spouses terribly at home.

Put it this way: gift reveals what God can do through you, and love reveals what God has done in you. In other words, gift reveals what God can do through you, and He can do it through anyone. But the show of love, reveals how much God has done in you.

Love Is Tested in Relationships

One of the greatest places where love, or the absence of love, is brutally tested is in a relationship, especially marriage. Anybody can say, I have love, for as long as they are single. But you do not know if you are patient until you are in a relationship with somebody. You do not know how kind you are until you are in a relationship with somebody. You do not know how generous you are until generosity is tested by scarcity. You can be generous when you have a surplus. It is when you are left with the last that generosity is truly tested.

The Bible says concerning the Macedonian church, In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 2

Corinthians 8:2.

The older a man gets, the more he begins to appreciate the teaching on the love of God. Several years ago, I would watch Kenneth Copeland teach on Love, and I would say to myself, What is wrong with this? Don't they know there are deeper matters to talk about in the kingdom?

Then I watched him pray in the name of Jesus and sicknesses would be gone. I would always hammer on the topic faith, the Hebrew and Greek of faith, only for me to realise later that faith was kept by love.

Where love abounds, compassion flows; and where compassion flows, the power of God moves. Jesus had compassion on them, and the power of God was there to heal. In essence, wherever there is love in operation, the power of God will not cease to flow.

What is love? Love is choosing goodness over selfishness. Love is giving grace to the undeserving. Love is choosing to be good rather than being selfish. Love is showing kindness over revenge.

Love is choosing to be good and kind over revenge. Love is making somebody else's well-being your responsibility. Love is seeking someone else's highest good above your personal comfort.

Love gives while selfishness takes. Love heals, hatred hurts. Love builds, anger destroys. Love restores, offence divides. Love sacrifices so that others can flourish.

Genuine love is scarce. You have people who make you believe that their love is with you, but their heart is far from you. Jesus said, These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Matthew 15:8.

Genuine love is a decision. It is not an emotion. It is a choice you make. When you make up your mind to choose one person, you lock it in. You burn all other bridges. You cannot get married with an exit clause.

Love is choosing patience. If not patience, long-suffering. Long-suffering is a fruit of the Spirit. So, to love is to choose patience.

People do not change quickly. It takes time. There are reasons why people change. Some suddenly understand, some have a bad experience, and some go through difficult seasons. Because you want someone to change does not mean they will change immediately. You have to use love to help people change. You have to slowly make them understand.

Love is a choice, and the first choice is the choice to be patient. If you are not ready to make that choice, you are not ready for marriage or a quality relationship.

The second choice is the choice to be kind. If you want kindness to flow in your relationship, let kindness flow out of you. David asked, Is there anyone still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show the kindness of God? 2 Samuel 9:3.

Kindness is not what the person deserves. David said, in essence, Find me somebody from the house of Saul. I don't need to have a relationship with him. He doesn't even need to be a good person. On the ground that I have a relationship with Jonathan, I will be kind to the person. He gave him houses he did not labour for, land he did not work for and access to the palace that he did not deserve.

What does that tell you about relationships? The person does not have to be perfect for you to show them kindness. Some of us are in relationships with women who are labouring for us, giving their best and doing everything, yet there is no show of kindness towards them. Your husband is labouring, giving his life and giving his best, yet there is no show of kindness towards him.

Kindness is not a reward. Kindness is not something you give somebody because the person has done something for you. Kindness flows out of you because you are a kind person. It is a reflection of your nature.

Love is a decision, and that decision requires choices. One of those choices is the choice to forgive.

Choose to forgive, no matter what the person has done. Not necessarily because the person requested forgiveness, but simply because you are indebted to do so. Forgiveness is a calling that we have from God.

Does choosing to forgive necessarily mean that we come back into fellowship or partnership? No. We do not have to be partners after forgiveness. In actual fact, in order to forestall the possibility of further offence, we may stay a little bit away from each other, but there is no offence between us.

Love is a decision, and that decision is powered by choices. One of the choices we make when we are in love is the choice to remain faithful.

Once commitment is made to your partner, that commitment is backed by choice, and the choice is to be faithful to him or her until death. The implication is that until you leave this earth, you have no business with another person. You do not swim in what you see because it is a choice to remain faithful.

Once you have chosen to be in a relationship with Christ, you have also made a choice to be faithful to Him. Love is a choice, not a feeling. Love is you saying, I choose to go to the cross. Although, it is not easy and convenient. The people you are even doing it for are not appreciative, but that is not going to stop you from doing what you are supposed to do. That is the agape love of God. It is a love that chooses to be faithful.

One of the choices you make under love is the choice to be understanding. So many wants the other person to understand them, but they have zero commitment to understanding their partners.

Next to your Bible, when you get married, the book you study is your partner. There are times my wife will just be passing by in the house and make simple statements, expressing a desire without necessarily speaking directly to me. The Bible says, Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives. 1 Peter 3:7.

There is a Yoruba adage that says it is not everything we use our mouths to talk about. Sometimes you study gestures, body movements, mannerisms and recurrent expressions.

Choose to be understanding.

Isaiah 42:19 says, Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? You can see and still not understand. You can hear and still not understand. Choose understanding.

There are people who are not immediately attractive, but when you start talking to them, wisdom flows. When you get close to some people, you see good character. Do not dismiss people easily. There was nothing in some of us to behold initially, but somebody was patient enough to bring out the best in us.

It is important to know that love is a choice: the choice to be patient, the choice to be kind, the choice to forgive, the choice to remain faithful, and the choice to be understanding.