



FIREPROOF

YOUR MARRIAGE

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NEVER LEAVE YOUR PARTNER BEHIND

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*“For Better...For Worse”*



***Unconditional Love***  
**Fireproof Your Relationships: Sermon Six**  
Mark 12:28-34

Good morning!

Today is Palm Sunday and it is the day that we remember Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem for the purpose of dying on the cross for our sins.

Last year at this time I walked us through the various events of this day and concluded with Jesus leaving the city for Bethany to await the moment when He would walk back into the city for the last time.

Today and especially during our upcoming Good Friday service this week I want us to look at several events that took place during the last week of Jesus' life – events that I call **Extraordinary Moments.**

Today we will also conclude our series ***FIREPROOFING OUR MARRIAGES.***

And the subject of our last message in this series on marriage comes right out of Jesus' teaching during his last week on earth prior to his crucifixion.

For the past couple weeks we have been looking to God for guidance on how to keep marriages from falling apart or how to rebuild a marriage that has gone through trials so severe that divorce seems to be the only option.

We have discovered that in order for a marriage to survive the tests that inevitably come there must first be a **COMMITMENT** to the marriage. **(show slide)**

And since the possibility of failure in the marriage relationship always exists and we can and will sometimes make mistakes there must also be a commitment to **FORGIVENESS.** **(show slide)**

Today we are going to take a look at the third ingredient to restoring a relationship or the third ingredient for keeping a relationship from falling apart and it is found in Jesus' response to a question asked him by a teacher of the Law – Mark 12:28-34.

**Linda read – First Service**

Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbor (spouse) as yourself.

Jesus said that everything in the Bible can be summed up in these two truths.

Notice what Jesus does not say.

He does not say that the greatest truth in scripture is knowing about love ... but loving.

We can get caught up in just knowing truth, God's word, but if we don't use God's truth, the information is useless and we are arrogant.

Listen to I Corinthians 8:1 "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."

Jesus says in this context in Mark that God doesn't want us to just know about loving God and others; he wants us to love God and others. He wants us to do it, not just know it.

And this context in Mark is the "key" to making any relationship work.

And, though I am looking at this as the third element in rebuilding a marriage relationship, it is really the one that drives the other two – COMMITMENT / FORGIVENESS.

But the love that Jesus talks about here in Mark is more than a "love" song, or a romantic feeling toward someone else – it goes much deeper than that.

**(Set up for movie clip)**

For the past five weeks we've been learning lessons from a couple named Caleb and Catherine, who are husband and wife and the central characters in the movie *Fireproof*.

Not knowing how to really love each other, Caleb and Catherine have done a lot of things to hurt each other.

They've come to the resentment stage in their marriage, and both of them want out. Then, Caleb's dad hands him a book called, *The Love Dare*, which teaches him the fundamentals of expressing love.

One of the issues that has pushed this couple apart is Caleb's obsession with owning a boat. He's been saving money to buy one for years, while Catherine's mother needs medical equipment but has no money to purchase it.

Watch this video, and see what happens when Caleb finally figures out the true nature of love. The first scene occurs early in the movie, and the second scene happens weeks later. ( Play the Session Six clip from your *Fireproof Your Marriage DVD*. SHOW CLIP.)

The word “love” means different things to different people.

As a matter of fact there are several Greek words for love that are used in scripture and Greek literature.

This tells us that love is something that needs to be explained before it can be rightly understood.

***THREE TYPES OF LOVE:***

***EROS (not used in NT but used in Greek literature)***

***PHILEOS***

***AGAPE***

You’ve heard these words before.

Our word, “erotic,” comes from **eros**.

The city of Philadelphia (“the city of brotherly love”) comes from **phileos**.

And nothing comes from agape, because agape stands on its own. It is the better way of loving.

Eros love is sensual love.

***EROS = “WHAT CAN I GET OUT OF THIS?”***

Phileos is relational love. It’s a deeper kind of love.

***PHILEOS = “WHAT CAN WE GET OUT OF THIS?”***

Agape is unconditional love. It’s the deepest kind of love.

***AGAPE = “WHAT CAN YOU GET OUT OF THIS?”***

Another way to think of these is,

***EROS LOVES WHEN...***

***PHILEOS LOVES BECAUSE...***

***AGAPE LOVES IN SPITE OF...***

And agape love is what Jesus is talking about in Mark 12.

We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, strength...

Regardless of what is taking place in our lives God wants this kind of love **from** us... because He has shown this kind of love **for** us – Cross!

He wants us to sacrifice time for him in prayer, Bible study, service, etc.

He says, “If you really love me you will make time for me. You will be involved in what I am involved in. You won’t make excuses!”

Secondly, we are to love others like ourselves.

We have no problem sacrificing for ourselves – it’s our nature!

But, God says agape love shows up best in a relationship when I am willing to love my spouse in a way that she needs to be loved.

Let me give you a couple of principles of this better way of loving:

**1. AGAPE LOVE THINKS ABOUT OTHERS MORE THAN SELF.**

**2. AGAPE LOVE MAKES THE FIRST MOVE**

**3. AGAPE LOVE TAKES RISKS.**

**4. AGAPE LOVE GOES THE LAST 10%.**

A psychologist once asked a group of children about a better way of loving. It was surprising how close they came to agape with all their answers.

One little girl said, **“WHEN MY GRANDMOTHER GOT ARTHRITIS, SHE COULDN’T BEND OVER AND PAINT HER TOENAILS ANYMORE. SO MY GRANDFATHER DOES IT FOR HER ALL THE TIME, EVEN WHEN HIS HANDS GOT ARTHRITIS TOO. THAT’S LOVE.” – REBECCA, AGE 8**

Another little girl said, **“LOVE IS WHEN YOU GO OUT TO EAT AND GIVE SOMEBODY MOST OF YOUR FRENCH FRIES WITHOUT MAKING THEM GIVE YOU ANY OF THEIRS.” – CHRISSY, AGE 6**

A little boy said, **“LOVE IS WHEN MY MOMMY MAKES COFFEE FOR MY DADDY AND SHE TAKES A SIP BEFORE GIVING IT TO HIM, TO MAKE SURE IT TASTES OKAY.” – DANNY, AGE 7**

Another said, **“IF YOU WANT TO LEARN TO LOVE BETTER, YOU SHOULD START WITH A FRIEND WHO YOU HATE.” – NIKKA, AGE 6**

Which is pretty good advice, because if you can learn to love a friend you hate, then you know you’re not thinking “me,” or “we,” but “you.”

And you know you’re not waiting for them to start, but making the first move yourself.

You also know you’re taking a risk, because they might reject you.

And you know you’re giving the last 10%, because loving someone you hate is probably the last thing you’d ever want to do.

Here's what I know friends.

Our world needs a better way of loving. Our friends need a better way of loving. Our families need a better way of loving. We need a better way of loving, and Jesus' way is it.

Not "love when," not "love because," but "love in spite of."

Question: Who do you need to love this way today? How will you love them this way?

Here's another thing I know: None of us are going to become better at loving *by accident*.

It's very unlikely that any of us will just kind of drift into becoming more loving people.

The drift in life is always in the direction of ease and taking the easy way.

It's always toward getting the world to rotate more towards our agenda, not us towards others'.

But we can do this. If we think about it, pray about it, talk about it, work on it, we can develop a better way of loving.

So who will you love this way today? And how will you do it?

### ***LOVE DARE CHALLENGE:***

#### ***COUPLES:***

Remember that better love thinks about others more than self?

This week your Challenge is to love your mate in a way that is not self-seeking. For the next week, focus on this point and put your spouse first.

Each time you make a decision that affects your mate, set aside your needs and make the choice that is best for him or her.

Pray for God to give you guidance and encouragement in this area. You might even want to find a good way to remind yourself of your challenge to not be self-seeking.

#### ***INDIVIDUALS:***