**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** This year the word we've been focusing on is Essential. So, what is essential in our Christian walk? When we get to the end of our lives and we finally meet Jesus and He asks us "What did you do with the life my Father gave you?" How will we respond? The two greatest commandments boil down to this: Love God with everything you have, and love your neighbor as yourself. In this series, we are tackling two hard questions: What on Earth am I here for? And, How do I love God and the people God has trusted me to love well?

**Week Overview:** We’ve understood the importance of loving God, and our “front row” or our oikos over the past few weeks and we’ve implemented the right habits in order to do so. This last week brings everything together, and we uncover who needs this love the most, and the types of people we tend to overlook.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Survey on loving others

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** How do we love those that look different than us? How do we love people that we don’t even know?

**Text: 1 John 3:18; John 15:12-17; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Romans 2:3-4; Romans 12:10; Romans 13:10 Matthew 20:28; Mark 12:30; 1 Timothy 5:8; Galatians 5:13**

**THP**: You cannot fulfill the Great Commission without the greatest commandments.

**Supporting Points:**

1. If we are unable to love God, we won’t have His heart for other people
2. We need to love even the unlovable, the ones who hate us
3. Our purpose is rooted in God’s will for our lives, that we love.

**Application (call to action)**: Love people radically

Northview Students!!! Are you so hyped for tonight?? This is the LAST week of this sermon series “What On Earth Am I Here For” and the LAST sermon I will give before I have this baby! I am PUMPED. And I’m also very big and very tired! I am so excited and thankful to be giving the last message of the series. This whole series is like my heart poured out on paper. But in reality, it’s God’s heart revealed to me to be poured out on paper.

The last couple of weeks we covered some important groundwork. We know that EVERYTHING we do in love is a direct reflection of our relationship with God. We know that when we love God with all of our heart, mind, and soul, we can start to see our hearts change and begin to love others as Christ loves us. Last week we talked about Godly friendships and how to steward those well in order to continue loving the rest of the world. If you think of the last 2 weeks like a target, God is in the center, the bullseye, with our families being the next ring, and our friends being the ring after that, and the last ring, the one we most often struggle with is: loving everyone else. 

Now, I don’t know about you, but I’ve always had a heightened sense of stranger danger. Admittedly, it’s hard for me to be so open and loving right off the bat to someone I’ve never met. Have you seen that meme of the little blonde girl making a face in her car seat like she was extremely uncomfortable and offended at the same time? This face? Yeah, on the inside this is how I feel about strangers sometimes. Hopefully it doesn’t translate to my actual facial expression, but I’ve been told I have a horrible poker face… I digress. We can SAY as Christians that we love everyone, but in reality, it’s best to check our actions rather than our words. Do we really? In **1 John 3:18** scripture says *“Little children, let us not love with words or speech but in action and truth.”* Let’s find out together if we have been doing this!

We are going to play a quick game. The rules are simple, stand up if the statement I say applies to you, or stay seated if it doesn’t. For good measure, I want everyone to go ahead and stand up right now to get loosened up. Perfect, okay you may be seated. Alright, first round. Again, stand up if this applies to you, if it doesn’t, just stay seated. 1. I have put someone else’s needs above my own this week. 2. I have given someone a compliment in the past 24 hrs. 3. I have been hugged, or have been given a hug in the past week. 4. I have prayed over someone this week. 5. I have prayed for a member of my family every day this week. Oh man, that is bonus points right there! Keeping up with the challenge from 2 weeks ago! Let’s gooo! Okay, you may all be seated! Not bad students, not bad! These actions that I described are ways we as people show love toward one another, and some of you did not disappoint!

Remember how I quoted that verse in 1 John about loving each other not with words or speech but in action and truth? Let’s take a look at some more scripture that spells out what it really means to Love in Action.

If you have your bibles, turn with me to **Romans 12:9-21.** It says *“9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

This right here, these verses are not only exemplified by Christ when He was on Earth, but is required of each of us in order to truly, sincerely love one another. Did you catch the part about loving your enemy? We definitely don’t like talking about that one. Sure we will love God, our families, our friends, but.. our enemies? People that hate my God and my beliefs, I’m supposed to love them too? People that make fun of me on a regular basis like it’s their favorite hobby? People that have abused me...I’m supposed to love them?? Surely not the people that want to kill me for my faith. They are off limits, right? Actually, no. Scripture is clear. No one is left out of this inclusivity of love.

This might not seem fair but there is a bigger purpose, a bigger reason behind this love that we think is a waste on the types of people I just mentioned. I want to remind us all of God’s heart and His true desire for us and eternity. **2 Peter 3:9** says *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”* In other words, God’s heart and desire is that ALL of us are home in heaven with Him in the end. Why am I saying this? Well, I don’t know if any of you have successfully hated someone into repentance and thus accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This is where the Westboro Baptist Church gets it so, so wrong. LOVE is attractive. Not hate. LOVE brings people to Christ, not indifference. LOVE is the fulfillment of the law, not religion. **We cannot fulfill the Great Commission without the greatest commandments.** Here that again. In **Romans 2:3-4** it reads *“So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”* God’s kindness, God’s LOVE brings us to repentance. Shouldn’t we be modeling the same love in order to win souls for God’s Kingdom?

I hate to break it to you all if this sounds too simple. Your purpose here on Earth is this: Love. The meaning of life is this: Love. It is NOT “do what makes you happy.” It is NOT the American Dream. It is not “find your career, make a lot of money, retire early and travel the world. It is NOT become Tiktok famous. It. is. LOVE. Is this such a simple request that we overlook the two greatest commandments? It seems as though everybody wants to change the world, but nobody wants to love their neighbor. Yet all God needs us to do to change the world is to love God so we can love our neighbor as much as ourselves.

Like I mentioned in the first week, 1 Corinthians 13. If I do not have love, I have NOTHING. I am so passionate about this topic of love because I KNOW we overlook this as a society and as a church. Although I hate giving the enemy any credit whatsoever, he has made it harder and harder to love one another, and that’s on purpose.

Listen students, I’m going to be very, very clear here. Our purpose has nothing to do with us and our own personal gain. Nothing. Our greatest commandments given to us weren’t “God wants you to be happy so go find it because He wants you to be comfortable.” Absolutely not. In fact, we were told we would have trials! We were told that living this life in pursuit of God’s plan would not be easy! Our identity is not rooted in our career or what we think our purpose is. Our identity is not found in our personality, or our preferences. It is rooted in God’s personality and what He has asked of us, His will for our lives.

So here is your purpose. If you’ve been asking God for direction and what your purpose is, here is the umbrella or the foundation that your purpose falls under: Love. Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself. This includes everyone, and excludes no one. And it’s not just love in the way that we understand it, but the way Jesus exemplified it. Radically. To the point that the rest of the world gets uncomfortable. Love radically. Choose today whom you will serve. Yourself, or God. Our will is that we love ourselves. God’s will is that we love one another deeply. Did you know that even the shyest most introverted person influences approximately 10,000 people in their lifetime? Your actions and your life story are going to impact many people.

Here’s what I want to see for this coming school year. I want to see that radical love being shown in this place. It starts with us, students. Did you know that YOU are currently making the greatest impact on our society? It’s because you are the YOUTH. Society wants to control you, but YOU get to control the trend of society. You get to say what’s cool and what’s not. You are the trendsetters, the trailblazers. Let’s start here, today. Here are 3 practical ways to start right now:

1. Start by merging friend groups. We’re not going to get very far if we don’t expand our reach to those outside of our oikos or our “front row.”
2. Get involved by volunteering. There is a MAJOR need, not only within these walls at NVS but the church as a whole for volunteers in almost every area of the church. I promise you, if you ask Micah or Devyn or your leaders, they will have an opportunity for you.
3. Pick one person to love radically this year. Someone that God has placed on your heart. This could be someone you already know, or a complete stranger but I want us to START. Pick one person.

As a collective, start bringing more friends to church. There is nothing more loving you can do for someone and their eternity by inviting them to church. I want every new student that walks in here to feel like a celebrity because of how radically loved they are. Share your burdens with one another, and pray over each other. No more gossip, or slander or lies, from now on it will be love, and to love radically. If you were here for the first week of this series, I read to you all a near death experience. That man George was shown every single scene from his life from beginning to end, and he was asked by Jesus *“What have you done with your life to show Me?”* I want us all to be encouraged, that from this day forward, we can face Jesus at the end of our lives and tell Him how we loved one another as He loved us. Stand with me. We’re going to proclaim this out loud so it sticks. This will be our war cry for the year. When I yell, “Who do we love?” You’re going to yell at the top of your lungs: ALL PEOPLE. And when I yell, “How do we love?” You’re going to yell RADICALLY. We’ll do this a few times so we can get our reps in.. You ready?

“WHO DO WE LOVE?”

“ALL PEOPLE

“HOW DO WE LOVE?”

“RADICALLY”

(repeat x3)

*Prayer*