

**“Finding a Faith that Matters”
“Living out Love”**

We have begun a new sermon series “Finding a Faith that Matters.” This sermon series will invite us to recommit our lives to Christ, who has come to offer light and life and love. We have pondered our call to authentic faith. We have looked at finding a faith that matters in the midst of conflict. This week we focus on Living out Love. Love is many things, but the most important thing, Love is a command of Jesus. Loving God and loving others is not easy, but it is the way of faith and finding a faith that matters. During this week where we culturally celebrate “love”, may we faithfully live out love.
---Pastor Cindy

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **“Living out Love”**

Prayer for the Week

God, help us become truly great at loving others, give us an unending love: for our families, for our friends and neighbors, for strangers and far-off peoples, and as Jesus taught, for our enemies too. Make us, like you, God, truly great at love, willing to give all for those you have called us to love. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. (adapted from a prayer by Robert D. Ingram)

This week's sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, February 13 Isaiah 43: 1-4

In the second part of Isaiah (beginning with chapter 40) a restoration theme is dominant. The people of Israel are tired, overwhelmed and the word of Isaiah brings hope. In Chapter 42, we have the first of the Servant Songs (which describe the Messiah or the Christ and in the Christian tradition describes Jesus for us.) The four verses remind the people of Israel that they are loved and precious. No matter what might happen in their lives, God is there and calls them by name. That is real love, love that walk through the fire and the waters and the craziness, a love that withstands the most powerful storms. How do you experience God's love in times of difficulty? How to you share God's love with others in those times?

Tuesday, February 14 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Happy Valentine's Day!!! This day if more than a @Hallmark or @FTD holiday. It originally was a Christian celebration of a saint. Saint Valentine was a martyr for the faith and was known for reaching out in love to others. Today's scriptures is known as the "love" chapter. Not particularly romantic, it has very specific understandings of how love is made real in behavior. Valentine's day doesn't just have to be a "romantic" holiday, in fact, it is more powerful if it is a day when all people can hear again they are beloved children of God. Human beings are crying to know they are loved. Today call or visit or send a note to someone you love, someone who needs to be reminded they are loved or someone you have never told you love them.

Wednesday, February 15 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

These may be the most well-known verses from this chapter. This "love" letter is found on posters, embroidered on pillows or on wall hangings. Often it is read at weddings. The words seem very simplistic, but actually are not easy to live. Paul encourages people to not be arrogant or brag or seek their own advantage or keep score. Love stands up for truth and against injustice. In fact, love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." In the four phrases, two are positive, two not so positive. To bear and endure all things makes the point that life is not always easy, it is often difficult and uncertain. Love strengthens a person and a community. How does love help you in the difficulties of life and in the delightful things in life? How do you live out love through your words and your actions in terms of these verses?

Thursday, February 16 1 Corinthians 13: 8-13

Sometimes we call a person a "know-it-all." The reality is that person may act that way, but no one truly knows it all. Love enables human beings to live with the understanding that people can experience and have knowledge, but never truly understand and know everything. The promise is, that if we as human beings allow ourselves to be known, we will know more fully and understand greater things. It is in vulnerability, that we live out the same kind of love we have experienced in Jesus. God became vulnerable as a human being, in order to lead us into loving as He loves. What have you learned as you live out love? How have your grown in faith and hope and grace?

Friday, February 17 Isaiah 43: 5-7

The prophet reminds the people that out of love God will bring them home and will restore them. Their families will be reunited and they will know in a real way God's grace and love. I think Jesus promises us that kind of hope and love through the community of faith. Jesus invites us to love one another and in loving one another, experiencing and seeing God in a new way. In what ways can the community of faith be restored in love and share that love with others?