

Living Waters Chapel
1900 Jay St., Lebanon, PA 17046

~ *SERMON NOTES* ~

Pastor D. Dean Cover
March 23, 2008

SERMON SERIES: *“Lord, Whatever It Takes, Change My Attitude Before It’s Too Late!”*

SERMON TITLE: *“Loving Difficult and Imperfect People the Way God Loves Me”*

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:12-15

THEME: The only attitude big enough to overcome a critical attitude is an attitude of love.

INTRODUCTION: How do you keep from being critical towards difficult and imperfect people? The only attitude big enough to overcome a critical attitude is an attitude of unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness. Church needs to be a place where people are changed by the love of God flowing through His people in their relationships with one another. The purpose of the church is to produce people who love God and who love one another and who are willing to prove this love by accepting and forgiving one another. But what will this look like in a practical way? We’re going to answer that question with today’s message.

I. UNCONDITIONAL LOVE (v. 14)

- A. John 13:33-34 and 17:23
- B. C. S. Lewis once said: "It is easier to be enthusiastic about humanity with a capital “H” than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular."

II. UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE (12-13a)

- A. Matthew 9:9-13
- B. 1 Corinthians 13: 4-5
- C. The value of something is determined by what someone is willing to pay for a particular item.
 - 1. 1 Peter 1:17-20
 - 2. Acts 20:28
 - 3. Galatians 1:3-4
 - 4. Galatians 2:20

III. UNCONDITIONAL FORGIVENESS (v. 13)

- A. The word translated “forgive” is *karizomai*. It comes from the root word for grace. Paul is saying that our willingness to forgive others is based on grace. It means giving to someone what that person does not deserve.
- B. We must choose to treat people with compassion, kindness, patience, gentleness, and love.

CONCLUSION:

The only attitude big enough to overcome a critical attitude is an attitude of unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness. When we offer our unconditional love to difficult and imperfect people we are reflecting Christ. Loving one another is the evidence of Christianity. And loving one another is our response to God loving us. In 1 John 4:11 we read since God loved us, accepted us and forgave us unconditionally so we should response to one another in the same way. Loving character flows from our relationship with a loving God. When we finally grasp the extent of God’s love in Jesus Christ, a loving relationship with others is a natural outflow.