

life groups

NLC Weekly Sermon Study

Week of March 5, 2017
Sermon: Overwhelmed by God's Love



Schedule

30 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Most Embarrassing Moments**. Challenge the group to see who can tell the most embarrassing moment they've ever experienced. Lead off by telling your most embarrassing moment! Whoever tells the funniest story wins bragging rights!

OPENING PRAYER

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S SERMON, "OVERWHELMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT."

- The first week of Overwhelmed was about taking our thoughts captive and making them obey Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The next two weeks were about feelings versus faith (Hebrews 11), and overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit. Key points include:
 - › The biggest mistake we can make when we're overwhelmed is to focus on the problem, instead of on God.
 - › **But God is always there (Acts 17:24-28)**
 - › **You can't do life alone; do life with believers (Acts 2:42-47), because you don't know how you are growing in God until it's displayed in relationship with others**, like how you handle pride, anger, kindness, gentleness, and self control (John 13:35).
 - › **You need the Holy Spirit to fill you (Acts 13:52).**
 - › Two weapons of self-destruction include **hopelessness** and a **bitter heart** (Romans 15:13; Hebrews 12:14-16). **Be quick to forgive and release, and choose to be thankful to God in every situation (Phil 4:6-7).**

45-60 MIN Overwhelmed by God's Love

- Howard Shultz transformed Starbucks shops into places that made great coffee and provided a community atmosphere. Then he stepped away and someone else became CEO who didn't have a love affair with coffee or community.
 - › Shultz returned and reset the brand in 2008, focusing on passion for great coffee and a great atmosphere.
 - The life lesson for our careers, relationships, and ministries is this:
 - › We start doing something we love but lose the love along the way.
- MATTHEW 24:12** "Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold."

Q1. How are you doing in relationship to the things and people you love?

HAVE SOMEONE READ 1 JOHN 4:7-9

- God showed His love to us when we were not attractive in any way, giving us life when we needed it most.
 - › It was like a love affair with God, which motivated us to serve and help others. But love can get cold and stale if we are not careful!

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT KEEPING LOVE ALIVE:

1. Love is a Decision, not a Feeling.

- It's common to take for granted the person you fell in love with. Staying in love takes work, accountability, and honesty.
 - › You don't fall out of love; instead, you give up trying, because of too much conflict or too much distance. Maybe it was easier to withdraw than to work on it or tell someone.
 - › This is God's love for us (definitely not just a feeling!):

HAVE SOMEONE READ ROMANS 5:6-8

- God will never love you any more than he does right now, but he also will never love you any less than he does right now.
- God is FAITHFUL. His love is not conditioned by your response.

HAVE SOMEONE READ I JOHN 4:16-18

2. A Loving Person is Confident and Courageous.

- Many Christians struggle with fear, guilt, and condemnation.
- You might think you have a fear issue but it may be a love issue.
- Every time you've seen courage you've likely seen real love.
 - › EX: Irina Sendler, who saved 2500 children during the Holocaust. "...If you see a person drowning, you must jump into the water to save them, whether you can swim or not."—Irena Sendler
- If God's love is active inside you, then you will reach out to others. in spite of the possibility of rejection.
 - › Just because you are outside someone's circle of love doesn't mean they have to be outside yours.

Q2. Have you ever felt so overwhelmed that you checked out before the project was over, you quit before the finish line, or you emotionally gave up before you gave that relationship a real chance?

- The Christian life is a long relay race, and God has a specific part for you to play.
 - › You need courage and confidence to endure, and the secret to

living with confidence is WHO we place our confidence in.

- › When you let go of confidence in yourself and choose to be confident in God:

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 “We can do everything through Him who gives us strength.”

3. Love is lost when it becomes a List

HAVE SOMEONE READ REVELATION 2:2-5

- One thing Pastor Rick makes sure is going right is our **heart**, motivated by **love** to reach others and serve their needs.
- There is no **system** that can cause people to genuinely **care** for others.

Q3. What is on your list that nudges out God’s love in you?

- Take a look at your life—all the things you do at work and home. The only that matters or lasts is what is done from Love.

READ I CORINTHIANS 13:3-7 (MSG) “If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don’t love, I’ve gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I’m bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn’t want what it doesn’t have. Love doesn’t strut, doesn’t have a swelled head, doesn’t force itself on others, isn’t always “me first,” doesn’t fly off the handle, doesn’t keep score of the sins of others, doesn’t revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end.

HAVE SOMEONE 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14 “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.”

HAVE SOMEONE REVELATION 2:4-5 NCV “You have left the love you had in the beginning. So remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do what you did at first.”

- **How does God go about restoring love and joy?**

FIRST, ADMIT YOU’VE LOST IT.

- Confession means agreeing with God’s assessment of you. Simply look at your past and ask yourself a couple of questions:

Q4. Has there ever been a time in your life when you were closer to God than you are right now?

Q5. Has there ever been a time in your life when you were more joyful in the Lord than you are right now?

- God wants to restore that love and joy again.

SECOND, REMEMBER ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU.

- Remember his grace, his unconditional love, his mercy, and his forgiveness, and receive what He offers us.

THIRD, WHEN WE REMEMBER, WE CAN CHANGE DIRECTIONS.

- Repentance is all about turning back to God's love for us and getting our focus back on JESUS.

LASTLY, DO WHAT YOU DID AT FIRST.

PSALM 51:10-12 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

PRAYER

- Take prayer requests, and take time to pray over any needs that have come up during discussion, especially around losing your edge.
- Encourage any who are challenged with this week's message to spend some time in thankfulness, remaining open to receive a renewal of God's love and mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Check NLC worship guide for local announcements.