



Love Like Confetti
Part 1 – Love One Another
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Confetti, we love confetti. Over the next five weeks, we're talking about getting ridiculous. Just throwing this stuff around. We're going to look at loving one another, forgiving one another, encouraging one another, praying for one another, and serving one another. We're going to do this in ridiculous ways. We're going to be known for this in our faith. We are using confetti because this is what we use during times of great celebration.

Maybe some of you were alive... I know Gene back there was at the end of World War II. Soldiers came home, the war was won, Hitler was defeated, and they marched the streets of New York and cities all over the country. The confetti was flowing. New York also celebrates the new year coming in every year and you see this. When midnight strikes, you can barely see the streets because the confetti is flowing and flowing.

How many of you had confetti at your wedding? We throw confetti whenever we are celebrating. American Idol, which is coming back... This could be my one chance. I may go stand in line, but you can't even see the stage when they start throwing confetti. It sends out the season with the new winner and Cary Underwood is going to be on all of the radio stations.

If you're a Cardinals fan, you've seen a lot of confetti. I can admit that. I called my buddy Paul this week who lives in Nashville now, but he has a place here in Branson. I said, "Hey, you told me you were at the 2006 World Series when the Cardinals won. I remember you telling me you stayed after the game, waiting a long time, and you collected the confetti and you put it in a jar." I said, "I'd love to share that story, would you take a picture of it and send it to me?"

This is what he tells me. He texts me back and says, "Oh, bro, I have that in my safe back in Branson."

Now, I'm willing to admit this, Cardinal fans, you have plenty of this stuff. It's not special anymore, it's not rare, you don't have to hold it in a safe. Who should put their confetti in a safe? The Cubs fan should put their confetti in a safe because it's rare, it's precious, it needs to be protected because we may never see it flowing again. And all the Cardinals fans said...

Nick Fowles... I love the Super Bowl. I love the thought that at Super Bowl and Championship games, any sport, they have two different batches of confetti ready to go. I just love that. What do they do with the leftover stuff?

But, here's Nick Fowles, a Liberty University online student... I'm just throwing that out there. He plans on being a pastor when he leaves the NFL. He's getting ready to kiss the trophy during flu season, which I thought was a terrible idea with all these players kissing it and moving it around.

But, not everybody enjoys confetti, right? This guy is not into the confetti right now. [picture of Bill Belichick at 2018 Super Bowl] When the other team's colors are flowing, it's not good. This is just how my mind works. If I were there. I would walk up to him and go, "Hey Bill, you've got a little piece right there; let me get that from you right there."

We throw confetti around in times of great celebration. So, we're excited for this series to talk about throwing around love, throwing around forgiveness, serving one another, praying for one another, encouraging one another in big, bold, beautiful ways. This series is not called Love like Sprinkles. We knew if we titled that, you wouldn't invite your hunting buddies to this series. That's because what do we do with sprinkling? The big idea here is just throwing it at you and being shocked when you get it.

Here's what we're good at today and this is really coming out of last week. I don't know if you noticed this with our series, but our new series kind of always start off of the last message in the past series. We talked last week about unity and how we are to be one. And now we're starting with loving one another because we are always trying our best to listen to what's going on in culture.

Right now, I believe this is the culture that we live in and it's every day: **We share our opinions in bold, shocking and immediate ways.** That's social media. It's just bold and I'm going to throw my opinion in there. Adam Donyes talked about this some time ago, I think at the end of last year. That's what social media is. We just come into the conversation, blurt our opinion, and then we run out. And it's like where did that come from and it's so shocking and so immediate; it's bold and in your face. How many of you are just tired of that? We're running on empty with this. It's depleting us, it's draining us.

With this series, the big idea is that we would do the same thing but with loving one another in full, shocking, "didn't see that coming," and immediate ways. "Do you know something we should do? Remember to do that when it's their birthday..." No, no; like right now, immediate, unexpected, on the spot love.

Somebody from our church told me this last week. They were in a meeting around a big table and they were just going around, getting to know each other and when someone at the table found out this person is part of Woodland Hills Family Church, he, in a cutting way, said, "Oh, you go to that feel-good church."

It really offended the person that it was said to, but not me. I'm thinking, *Good, I'm glad word is getting out.* What's the opposite of that? You go to the feel-bad church? Do we really want that out there? "I go to the feel-bad church. I leave every Sunday feeling terrible." It's not called bad news; it's called good news, so if you want to call us the feel-good church, we're great with that. We're alright with that.

It's where we're headed today. We're supposed to be loving each other. But, this is how we are supposed to be known. This should be so shocking to the world that they're like, "Okay, I've got some

questions. Why are you all that way? I'm sure that question is being asked all over the world. "Why do you treat each other like this?" "Why are you so kind and loving and generous and compassionate and you rejoice when someone is rejoicing, and you mourn when they mourn. Why is this?" We just sang about it; it has a name. Love has a name and it's Jesus.

We're confused in our culture today because you go to concerts... A buddy of mine went to a Christian concert last night and he said, "My orthodoxy meter was going off the charts. Everything was about love, love, love, love, but let's get back to the source." That's very important to understand. Love is overflow, not the source. And I love Garth Brooks. I'm passionate about his music and I can sing every one of his songs. When he stands up and sings Love One Another, we've got to talk about the source. This isn't something and you and I just manufacture. We don't just create it. There is a source for love and we're going to talk about that today, here at the feel-good castle. And the feel-good chapel. And the feel-good internet.

Jesus, in John 13... There is a lot said in these two verses. We learn three things about love, but then the command to love one another is spoken three times in two verses. **34 "A new command I give you...** So this is a command; it's not an option for the follower of Jesus. If you claim the name of Christ, you're a Christian and this is commanded of you, as we'll see. Just like the precepts of scripture, you are called to love. It's not an option, it's not a "let me see how this person behaves and then I'll determine whether or not..." No, love. **...Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.** So, Jesus tells them "I have modeled this for you. I'm going away, I'm going to the cross and then after that I will be resurrected and then after that, I will ascend to my Father in heaven. When I'm gone, I need y'all (I don't think he said y'all, but I'm using for our context) to keep this up. I need you to keep this going." And then, he says, "This is your testimony. This is how the world is going to know you." **35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

Jesus commanded it, he modeled it, and he says this is what's going to get the world going, "Tell me about this." "What is going on? Why are you able to do that?" I love the idea of our church... You know, people come in and they see us loving and caring for each other. We think a lot about our expressions during the week and our environment and our experience. It's not something we manufacture to try to spin something that's not really happening. We want our Sunday morning service to be celebratory, to be full of life, to be full of love because we know where that flows from. It flows from Jesus.

So, if someone comes in and goes, "Yeah, but, man, I knew that guy from ten years ago and you've received him..." He's in? He's part of the group? How does that work?" It works because of Jesus, the source of everything we're talking about this morning. Environment is so key. It should just be flowing out of this place to where people come in and they're like, "I just don't get it. You're going to have to explain this to me."

After the first service, a guy came up to me and said, "I got saved 50 years ago because of everything you talked about this morning. A guy came up to me and spoke words of love over me like I'd never had a parent do, like I'd never had a family member do. And he just shared these words of expression of love over me." He had tears in his eyes and he was crying.

He said, "I had to figure out how someone who barely knew me could speak this way and that's when I bowed my head and got down on my knees, repented of my sins, and asked Jesus to be my savior. I wanted what this guy had."

That's exactly what Jesus is saying. The environment here... My wife is passionate about environments and last year when we put the kids in camp... I just want to encourage you. There are so many good, valuable reasons why you should put your children in camp. Their spiritual growth and development? Yes. Time for mom and dad to be alone for about five days? Yes. Don't put your kids in different terms; you put them all on the same term and you go on a little trip.

I planned a trip. I planned a restaurant... We kind of stumbled on this restaurant. It was an outdoor restaurant. Everything was perfect about this environment. The outside was kind of a "toes in the sand" type place. I know my wife; she doesn't like loud restaurants. When we go into loud sports type restaurant, it's like too much. She likes more of a quiet setting.

So, we walk into this restaurant and we sit down. They put the menu in front of me. Once the menu is in front of me, I disconnect from my environment 110%. I'm looking at the food. But you know that fishnet-like fabric is creating rooms outside and it's just beautiful. The candles, the fresh flowers... The weather was perfect. The volume of the place was perfect. I'm picking out my food and I'm thinking, *Boy, this is good*. When you say, "Eat your food with gladness and drink your wine with a joyful heart for now God favors what you do," I'm thinking I'm sitting in it right now.

I look up and my wife is emotional. Her eyes are watery, and tears are forming. As husbands in here will tell you, that's a scary moment. We go into "oh no, what did I do" mode. I have no idea. I'm sitting there thinking *Man, I thought this through*.

I asked the question "Babe, is everything okay?" She couldn't talk. *Oh, man this could be really bad, or this could be really good*.

I said Babe, "What's going on?"

She goes, "I'm overwhelmed by the environment."

Now, I'm 44 years old. I've never cried once over an environment. I mean, some movies can choke me up with plot development and storytelling. I can choke up over stories of war and the heroes. I can get choked up at stuff, but like place settings have never done that for me. Fishnet flying has just never done it, but my wife... Hospitality is everything to Amy. She believes hospitality screams to people, "You matter to God and you matter to me."

So, she's in a restaurant and she feels it. By the way, it doesn't have to be a fancy restaurant. It can be fast food. Why is it.... And I'm not going to name names today. You can go into a fast food restaurant and they couldn't care less you were there, but you go to this fast food restaurant... Again, not naming names, but Chick-fil-A, the Christian chicken where we share the gospel with the chickens before we take their heads off and enjoy them on a biscuit.

I've got news for you and I don't... Dan, Cathy, I love you and I'm not saying this to offend, but you know what? It's fried chicken. They have the same little baskets that you unhook and stick in the deep fryer that the four restaurants that surround them have. Why do I leave Chick-fil-A eating fried chicken, waffle fries, and a 900-calorie shake feeling good about myself? I shouldn't feel that great about myself over 3,000 calories. But why do I feel great? It's because when you go up and ask for a refill, you matter. Isn't that true? Some of you are like, "I've never been to Chick-fil-A. I didn't know." "You matter to me and you matter to God" is what you feel when you walk in that place. I don't know why every restaurant can't have this.

I don't know why every church isn't being called the feel-good church. Why in the world would we have a church exist that you feel terrible when you leave. You've got to help me with that one. If we're sharing the good news... I mean Amy just... That environment, that's a picture for me. It's like I want people to walk in and see followers of Jesus gathered and get emotional because they are so overwhelmed with what they see, so overwhelmed with what they experience.

My wife feels the exact same thing and gets teary-eyed when we drive by a Pottery Barn, West Elm. Restoration Hardware puts her over the top. I think when they drive by, having heard about our church, that should be the same thing. "Have you been there?" "Have you experienced it?" "What they've got going on, I can't really explain it." We want you to be able to explain it in one name and that name is Jesus. By this you'll be known. Frances Schaeffer called it the mark of a Christian. This is the mark: love for one another.

Jesus never said:

"You'll be known as my disciples by the way you spew your opinions." But, boy, it was going around again this week. I just talked about boycotting last fall. In 1998, when the Southern Baptist Convention told me, as an ordained Southern Baptist Minister, "Don't go to Disney, we're boycotting Disney," I said "No." I just don't think Christians are called to remove themselves from the conversation over issues like LGBT. We should be talking. We should be engaged in the conversation. Last fall, when we were boycotting the NFL, I can't believe I told you to watch the NFL. Stay engaged in the conversation.

I can't believe out of that whole thing, and I was going out online, there was only one letter... Some of you are like "Oh, we can send letters? I didn't know we could send letters." I was expecting more because that's what Christians love to do. "I don't agree with you, I'm done, I'm out, I'm walking this way." It's happening in marriages, it's happening in sports. And this week, what are told to boycott? Boycott the NRA. What will we be boycotting next week? What will we be spewing our opinions on next week?

"You'll be known as my disciples by the way you love those who agree with you." Listen, we talked about this last week. We're united over the essentials, but we have a lot of differences of opinion on the non-essentials. And it works. I don't just love the people or spend time with the people that agree 100% with my way of thinking in my mind. *Love For One Another.*

Bob Goff wrote the book *Love Does*. If you have not read that book, I encourage you to read it. Most people need love and acceptance a lot more than they need your advice, than they need you to fix them. You want a great marriage? Stop trying to fix your spouse. Listen to your spouse, love your spouse, accept your spouse; stop trying to change your spouse. What do people need? People need love more than our opinions.

I think a lot of people come into our church a little bit on guard. They're like, "I don't know this place. A family member is making come here on vacation" or "a friend invited me here and this is a castle and a theme park, and I've been told it's a church, but David Koresh said the same thing about his church and now that's a miniseries." The guard is up because they want to see what we're doing.

I just think about them walking in today to all this and going, "If he brings out Kool-Aid, I'm gone. I'm so far out of here, I ain't sticking around at this place."

We want you to experience the love of Jesus by the way we love one another. Again, love is the overflow, not the source. Jesus is the source and we want you to receive that. Sometimes, as a pastor, I have to be careful because people come up to me talking and I'm on guard because I'm waiting for the opinion. I talked more last week about gun control than I've ever talked about. I have opinions on gun control, but if you want to talk about it, you missed the whole point of the message. The whole point of the message was let's not focus on it but stay rallied around the essentials. Don't forget you're attending Bass Pro Community Church here in the Ozarks. You're missing it. We are loving one another more than just spewing our opinions.

So, what's the extent of love? It's very important to understand the extent of love because it ties in next week to the extent of forgiveness. As we look at, "Jesus, how many times do I have to forgive this guy?" Jesus gives it a number. He doesn't give it a number so you will count; he gives you a number so you won't count. It's a large number because you're not supposed to keep track. It's the same thing with love.

Watch what Paul says about loving one another in Romans 13. ***8 Let no debt remain outstanding...*** In other words, be wise with financial debt and credit; pay off your debts, but this is one debt that is never paid in full, period. ***...except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*** Then he's going to go into the Ten Commandments and quote a few of them to make the point. ***9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*** Jesus was asked a question: "What's the greatest of the commandments?" "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself." ***10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.***

Right now, you're probably thinking of the one who is difficult, the one online... "I can't love this person; they are so far out there, they are so liberal. I can't love them and you're always talking about listening to them." Listening is an expression of love. Listening is an expression of acceptance. "I can't do that, Ted, they make me so mad! I'm boycotting this friendship."

I don't know why I get so worked up on this piece here. It's like we're so screwed up with the way we love people. I'm first in line to tell you I need to work on this. Yesterday, I was a little worn out. It was a tiring weekend and I was a little short with people in traffic. Coming back from Oklahoma City, I'm like, "Use your cruise control!" And then a semi would pull over, slow down to 60 and I would get so frustrated. Then two of them would just stay side by side for ten miles.

That's when Amy goes, "Hey, Pastor Ted, when you get a chance, if you could pull over..." Pastor has nothing to do with it; it's follower of Jesus. I just have a different titled. That doesn't mean I have a different expectation than you do. I'm supposed to love people. You're like, "How do you have room in your heart?" Some of you have given up on loving a certain person. You're thinking about a certain person that has done you so wrong. They've messed with your family for too long. They've said this, they've done that, and you're done. No, that debt of love is never paid off.

Here's why loving is so important. **God's love does not run out on us.** He's unlimited, free refills, connected to the true and only source. **God's love does not give up on us.** So, our expressions of love, if we're receiving that, is to go out the same way. **God fills us to love one another.**

In 1 Thessalonians 3, Paul writes this to the church of Thessalonica. ***12 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow...*** We should be getting better at this and doing more of it, not less of it. ***...for each other and for everyone else...*** And then he uses himself as an example. ***...just as ours does for you.*** Watch us. We're increasing. Our hearts are growing bigger for you. May that be true of each one of you.

Some of you feel like you can't do it. If you have a hard time loving someone right now, understand this. **If you can't find it in your heart to love someone, you have a source problem, not a people problem.** It's not that person; they're not the issue. The issue is you are not connected to the true and only source of life and receiving free, unlimited refills from the source. Again, love is the overflow, not the source. Jesus is the source.

1 John 4 – ***11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*** God so loved us and he poured it out on us that we now want to pour it out on each other. And if you watched this, and it did something to you, as it did to the man who talked to me at the end of the first service... He just watched this group of men loving one another and caring for one another. This was 50 years ago and he's telling me this story from fifty years ago and as he's telling me this story, his eyes are getting watery and he's beginning to cry. That's the power of God pouring out his love on other people and it was poured on you, but that's not how it's supposed to end, and not how it's not supposed to stay. God pour into you; he pours into to me that I would pour into others.

So, you go to a concert or you just hear somebody this week; find more love in your heart, understand the same thing that's true of both of these diagrams: It's starts with God. It doesn't start with you. You are not the source. So, when you see a talk show host telling you to cuddle your inner self, don't do it. Your inner self is a mess. But, when Jesus fills you, when the love of the Lord is just gushing into you, you have something then to give.

Continuing in 1 Thessalonians 4 – **9 Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God...** So, this is something you've received directly from the Lord. **...to love each other. 10 And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia.** So, it's not just the people you're closest to that are in your town, this spreads out. It's going out beyond you.

Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more... This is increasing. **11 ...and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life.** Quiet here isn't speaking of inactivity. He's not encouraging us to live lives free from activity. He's speaking of rest and peace. Live peaceful lives. **You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you...** Don't be a burden to people. **12 ...so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders...** They're watching the way we love each other, the way we're working, the way we're caring for each other. **...and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**

This week, Amy and I listened to a podcast from David Brooks. He talks about the difference between eulogy virtues and resume virtues. I love this idea, this concept because he said most of us are going to spend all of our adult life going after resume virtues, our accomplishments. That's what gets us a job and makes us the money, but at the end of your life, when your eulogy is read... I was thinking about this. I've not heard one degree a person had mentioned at their funeral. I've never heard that because it's at a funeral. The eulogy virtues are love and respect and generosity and care giving and hospitality.

David Brooks said, "I've just come to point in my life..." He wrote a book called *The Road to Character*. It's not a Christian book, but he's saying, "I've spent so much of my life pursuing the resume virtues that I want to start living right now for the eulogy virtues." When I heard that I thought that it tied in perfectly with what Jesus said. This isn't what we are to be known for. We are to be known for our love for one another.

Peter says it this way in 1 Peter 1. **22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere (real, authentic) love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.** This is where love flows from, but the heart connected to the true and only source of life is the only way that it works. Love flows out of you. It's the overflow of your heart. It's something that we should be practicing daily.

Love is best expressed every day, not just on special occasions. We don't want a Hallmark faith. We don't want a Hallmark love where we only express our love to people on their birthdays, anniversaries, or holidays. We are called to more than that. We're called to an expression of love that is daily. That it's just part of who we are; it comes out of us all the time.

For some of you, your opinions flow out so freely. What if it just changed and love started flowing out of you more than your opinions.

I was taught honor almost 20 years ago by Dr. Gary Smalley. He made it a part of his life, esteeming people as highly valuable. People matter. You want people to leave your presence thinking to themselves, *I matter, not only to that person, but to God and they made it very clear to me that I matter*

to them. Gary practiced honor all the time. I watched him honor people, random strangers in grocery stores and malls and on the street. He would, in bold and shocking and immediate ways, speak blessing over people. I've seen more people cry and hug Gary after knowing him for 60 seconds. I just remember watching that and that welled up in me going, *that's who I want to be*. God gave me a brain that when I see something happening, I just get on the defensive. No. *Lord, post a guard at my mouth because I want to be what I'm watching right now. Someone being blessed and cared for and loved and they leave going, "Wow..."*

It shouldn't be that shocking in the church, though. This should be the norm, not the "Wow, that was neat that you just did that."

So, we brought this practice into birthday parties. I love going to birthday parties. Do this today at lunch. I've been a part of this the last year at several birthday parties. The last one was a week or two ago. We were all gathered around a big, huge table at Salt Grass Steak House down at The Landing. The lady was having a birthday party and the husband got it all together and I thought it was wonderful. I asked the husband if he had anything special planned for that night and he looked at me and said no.

I said, "Alright, if you don't mind, we're going to do the old Gary Smalley honor bombardment." I told everybody at the table, "Can I have everybody's attention? We're going to go around the table. Everyone is going to share one word of honor over her tonight. The only rule is you can't repeat the same word." That gets very difficult when you're like the 20th, 21st person.

I said, "Share that one word of honor..." I keep track of it on my phone, so I can text it to them afterwards. I said, "One word of honor and then you can tell a story or give somewhere you've seen this in her life." No one had said the first word and people were already wiping tears from their eyes. Words started being shared. We get to one gentlemen and he couldn't say his word. He's so overcome with emotion. I sat there thinking it's sad... Again, I'm giving you my opinion right now. But, I think it's sad that we only do this on birthdays and special occasions. I sat there watching people... Someone would say a word and it would turn into a church service. Some would say, "I love your caring heart" and you'd hear people go, "That's right. She does; she has that." It was this love-gush fest.

This is the church. This is what we're supposed to be doing all the dang time. And you can tweet that, "All the dang time." The bottom line is this. Don't wait for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, or funerals to speak words of high value over those you love. Do it now! Do it immediately! Do it in shocking ways and bold ways where people don't expect it.

I want to give a demonstration of it today and see if we can just get this started in our humble little community of Stone and Taney Counties, Southwest Missouri. I'm going to invite Martha to come up here. Martha, will you please join me on stage? My favorite Cuban member of Woodland Hills Family Church. You don't know this about Martha, but she fled from Cuba when she was ten years old. To watch what God has done in this woman's life and in the life of her family...

Martha, come stand right over here. I want you to pretend we're just having coffee. I have to demonstrate this in a little bit different way, but what I'm going to encourage you to do, if you grab a

box today, is to do this without speaking. I'm going to do it today... I'm going to say what I'm writing so you can hear it, but I want you to do this. It's bold, it's shocking, it's immediate. The person doesn't know what's going on.

When you pull this box out... So, you're at Starbucks with a friend or a family member or someone and you brought this in. You just pull it out. Don't say anything. They will be like, "What's that?" Don't answer. "What are you doing?" No answer. You go about your business, writing on the top of the box like they are not even there. They are going to be confused, but they'll see it. This is what we call the Love Like Confetti Celebration Kit. It's got everything you need in here. I'm going to write words of value about my friendship with Martha. I love this woman. I'm grateful for what God has done in her life. I love your testimony. I love how you share it with people boldly. And you have strong opinions, don't you? You have very strong opinions about politics and refugees.

You've got strong opinions so I'm just going to say dear "Martha..." But, I wouldn't be saying this; I would just be writing it as your talking. "What are you writing?" You don't need to see what I'm writing. "You are my favorite church member. True dat." That's what the young people are saying these days. "I love watching your marriage. You love Ross. You love your kids. Those who are here and those who are with the Lord."

I could go on and on writing words about Martha and speaking high value over her, but all I want you to do is, after you write that note, just pop up the top of the box and let them read it while you throw a little party. [Ted blows up balloons and gives them to Martha, pulls out party noise makers.] I want to think about all the people in the restaurant. You can do this in your home or out in public. [Ted throws confetti. Then, as Martha gives Ted a hug, lots of confetti falls from the ceiling.] Martha, you are dearly loved at Woodland Hills Family Church.

Martha, here's the whole point. Here's why we're doing this. Someone came in here today and they haven't had anybody say anything like that to them in their whole life. Parents, grandparents, family members, friends, they've not heard that. This visual for them is time to say "Yeah, I can express love over you and care for you," but we want them to know – and I know you'll amen this – where it all flows from and it is from our heavenly Father who pours it out on us. This confetti is a limited expression, but we want people leaving today knowing they are showered in love all the time, 24/7, unlimited free refills. This is a limited illustration of what we should be understanding. Love flows from God to us, we give it to each other, and that's what we should be known to the world for. And all God's people said... Amen.

I wish we could give everybody a box. Is there anybody in here that says, "I'd like to do that this week to a teacher"? You come up and get this. Would anybody like to do this to a principal? How about a coach? How about a veteran? They don't see it coming. Don't give them a heart attack, especially the World War II Veterans. My favorite thing to do is go in... You find a few of them at Cracker Barrel. You walk into Cracker Barrel and you can find two sitting there with their wives. Lay this on the table and write, "Thank you for literally saving the world for us." And then open it and throw the party for them, grab the bill. For four of them, it will be like \$8.32. It won't be a lot.

You all tell me. Who else could use these? A mom and not on Mother's Day. Who else? Grandparent. Nurse. Husband. Co-worker. I would think this would be awesome if a boss pulls you in all serious and says, "Matt, come here. There are some things I need to talk about with you" and then they throws a party for their employee. Would that not be unbelievable?

Go out and love people in bold, shocking, and immediate ways.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for the love we have received from you, and we receive that today with thanksgiving. We want to go out today, toning down our opinions and the spewing of those, knowing that's not what we're known for. We don't want to be known for what we're against; we want to be known for you and what you continue to do in our lives.

I pray a blessing over each member as they go out and think about people and friends and family and total strangers that they can show love in bold, shocking, and immediate ways too.

As we continue through this series, I pray we take the same idea with forgiveness and encouragement and prayer and serving one another and for that we are grateful for what you continue to do here.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.