

UNITY
CHURCH OF BAKERSFIELD
"A POSITIVE PLACE TO GROW!"

Today's Lesson
**Living in Process:
An Act of Love**

Power Point notes available at:
www.unityofbakersfield.org

Living in Process: An Act of Love

The Season of Advent

Today is the third Sunday of Advent. This Sunday many Christian churches are celebrating the activity of "Love" as we travel the holiday road to Christmas.

Living in Process: An Act of Love

I recently had the privilege to see an act of love demonstrated in such a way that it could never be misunderstood as nothing less than the love talked and taught about by Jesus.

*"If you judge people,
you have no time
to love them."*

~ Mother Teresa

www.memorymuseum.net

Living in Process: An Act of Love

THE LETTERS

1. A life of service is an act of love.
2. A commitment to help alleviate suffering is an act of love.
3. Honoring the divine (Christ) image within the person regardless of their faith is an act of love.
4. Caring for those who can't care for themselves as they are allowed to die with dignity is an act of love.

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Charles Fillmore outlined love as:

- The essence of Being;
- The power to join and bind in divine harmony the universe and everything in it;
- The power to heal;
- The power to love for the sake of loving.

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Someone once said, "If you are to find love in any relationship then you must first find it within the relationship you have with yourself."

Based on the current image you hold for yourself, does your love allow you to accept your past, support where you are right now, and encourages you to seek your future?

If you answered yes to all three then you are ready for a loving and meaningful relationship with another person.

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In her book, No Less Than Greatness, Mary Manin Morrissey tells this story about the kind of judgments we make about our loved ones and the relationships that are the product of that judgement:

I once knew a woman who had two sons she loved very much. She also had precise expectations how they were to behave and show up in the world of appearances. Whenever they failed to do as she expected them, she would immediately point out their faults and remind them of how imperfect they were.

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As the boys got older they would sulk, snap back at her, and eventually every day was filled with constant struggles and arguments over what was “best” for them.

Many years passed and her sons—now grown men—called to say they were coming to spend some time with her. When her younger son arrived, the mother’s mouth dropped open. There in the doorway stood her “baby boy” with long hair, streaked blue and in a ponytail.

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An un-kept beard covered almost all of this once clean-cut baby face. His clothes, wrinkled and torn, looked like he’d hadn’t changed them in a month. Hugging his speechless mother, he came in and sat down and started to talk. She was ready to pounce, thinking to herself, “This isn’t how I raised you. You don’t look like my son at all. You’re an imposter, what have you done to yourself. What have I done to deserve this from you?”

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She stopped herself from saying anything as her son continued his non-stop storytelling. She started to remember what it was like and how lonely it felt when he left home over a year ago. During that time she had committed herself to developing a closer relationship with God.

She had come to recognize her creative capacity and to understand that she and she alone had the power to create a different kind of relationship with her sons.

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As she sat there looking at this man sitting on her couch she asked for God’s help in forging that new relationship based on unconditional love. Just as silently spoke the words: “So, what shall I do?” The answer came: “Does your son have to look the way you think he should in order for you to love him and listen to him?” “But the blue hair...” “What do you what more?” To be right about your rules or to have a closer relationship?

Living in Process: An Act of Love

So she sat down and listened to her son talk about his work, his friends, his experiences, never once uttering a word of criticism. At the end of their time together it was as if a miracle had occurred. She learned more about her son during that week and felt closer to him than she ever did before.

Later in the month her oldest son arrived. She looked out the window breathing a sigh of relief as he pulled up in a fancy car, wearing a three piece suit and designer tie.

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Clean-shaven and smiling as he walked up the steps. “Wow! Doesn’t he look good!” she thought. He kissed his mother on the cheek, walked in, sat down, and turn on the TV. “How was your trip she asked?” Clicking the remote he responded with a few grunts and continued his channel flipping. Instantly frustration started to mount as she thought about how she had anticipated his visit, and all he cared about was channel surfing.

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She was about to let her anger bust out and shout, “You can watch the darn TV anytime. How often do you get to spend time with me? Instead she stopped and asked God for help in creating this new relationship based on new behaviors for exhibiting unconditional love. “Does my son have to behave in a certain way, to accommodate my rules in order for me to love him, to just be with him?” So, she said nothing and sat down on the sofa with him and commented on the shows they watched.

Living in Process: An Act of Love

When the weekend ended, her son gave her a hug. One that was longer and tighter than ever before. He held her shoulders, looked into her eyes and said, “Mom, my job has been so stressful with people coming at me from all sides wanting answers and solutions to all the company’s problems. I felt as if I had to be a superman and impress everyone. I can’t begin to tell you how healing this weekend was for me. How good it felt just to veg out, relax and not worry about having to respond, perform, or be a certain way for anyone. I was great to just let go with you.”

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Some people live ninety years, and some live one year ninety consecutive times. With God’s help, you really can alter the patterns that no longer fit the life you choose to design for yourself.

In the study of what kept people together for years and years couples were asked what their secrets were. And for the most part, they responded that there were no secrets just a lot of attention and work to make it happen. Here are three major activities that were acknowledged:

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1- Surrender – No matter what obstacles you may face, you can’t do it alone. Even Jesus had 12 disciples to help teach his new spiritual program to the people. When problems arise find help by ask, seeking, and knocking.

2- Coexisting with the unresolved – Victoria Moran shares this insight from her article, [Creating a Charmed Life](#): The ability to coexist with the unresolved has immense practical value.

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Most of the unresolved irritations we have to live with are simply that: irritations. Maybe you get a letter from the bank saying you’ve bounced a check. You’re sure it’s an error—well, pretty sure—but it’s Friday evening and you can’t do anything about it until Monday. Occasionally we have to coexist with something serious. Waiting for test results about a health challenge can be agonizing for us or a loved one. We learn to get through these times by surrendering with courage and faith.

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3- Develop new patterns of behavior—to do this part requires lots of practice. As in the story of the mother and her two sons. We can help ourselves by remembering that:

- 1) There will always be something to work on.
- 2) You are not in denial when you recognize a problem and behave normally in spite of it. That's the difference between having a problem in your life and making a problem of your life.

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3) Fence off migrating negativity. Don't let the negative things in life contaminate the positive things. When you build healthy fences around your environment, one, two or even a dozen things going wrong won't negate the hundreds of things that are going right.

4) And finally, fulfilling and meaningful relationships happen by design, not by default.

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When we practice to love ourselves by loving the divine in everyone we meet, we discover as Mother Teresa did, that we are in a symbiotic relationship with all life; and because of that relationship we can look out upon our world and honestly say that:

L ove
O perates
V icariously
E verywhere

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Love begins at home, and it is
not how much we do... but
how much love we put in that
action.

- Mother Teresa

Love of Life Quotes.com