

Do you see other evidence of God's love expressed in this passage? The birth of Jesus is the greatest event in a long series of events mentioned in the message from Sunday. Which of those events do you remember and mean the most to you? Do you see a continuity of God's love throughout these events? The story of our scripture is one of us being unfaithful and God's love being constant. Meditate on these questions and write your reflections here.

Thursday, December 22

Read Matthew 25:31-46. This is often a story that is mentioned as a day of judgment but in Sunday's message it was provided as Jesus' "Christmas Wish List!" What do you think of this wish list? Which item on the "list" touch your heart? Which do you believe should be a priority within the ministry of Central Church? Which ones are we already addressing and where can we do better? Think about this concept of what Jesus would truly want as a celebration of his birthday. Write your thoughts here.

Friday, December 23

Go back and review the thoughts that you recorded for Monday's devotion. Which love language do you believe best describes you? Have you asked others what they think? Now consider Jesus' "Wish List" from the message and mentioned in yesterday's devotion. Which of the items capture your attention, breaks your heart and moves you toward action?

Now, consider how your love language intersects with Jesus' "Wish List." Are there some natural connections between your love language and the list? Pray for wisdom and guidance as you reflect on these questions and write your responses here.

Message Notes – December 18, 2022

Christmas Is Not Your Birthday - Jesus' Wish List*

- I. In 1992, Dr. Gary Chapman wrote the book, *The Five _____*.
 - A. Words of affirmation, acts of _____, receiving _____, quality time and physical touch; these are the five major ways that we give and receive _____.
 - B. "What would Jesus _____ from us? What would Jesus want for Christmas? After all, Christmas is his birthday!"
 - C. When it comes to what Jesus would want for Christmas Jesus actually gave us a _____ of what he would like from us.
- II. The nature of God's _____ and _____ that is the foundation of the birth of the Christ Child.
 - A. Last week I shared with you that what we receive through the miracle of the Christ Child is God's unconditional, everlasting, _____ and abiding, crazy, shameless, _____ love of God.
 - B. God's mission is one of reconciliation and _____; God wants for all of humanity to be _____.
 - C. The outrageous love of God is at the foundation of our entire _____.
 - D. The story of our scripture is one of us being unfaithful and God's love being _____.
- III. How do we _____ to this scandalous love of God? How do we _____ with God in God's mission that has at its core, love?

*Matthew 1:18-25 and Matthew 25:31-46

A. Christ's Mission is good news for ____ and ____ means ____; it is good news for the _____.

B. As Pastor Slaughter puts it, "The _____ is good news for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. And if it is not, then it is not the _____."

IV. What would _____ want for Christmas?

A. The gift Jesus wants from us: "I was hungry and you gave me _____, I was thirsty and you gave me something to _____, I was a stranger and you _____ me, I was naked and you gave me _____, I was sick and you took _____ of me, I was in prison and you _____ me.

1. Jesus calls us to live _____ for others, changing our world with his love.

2. What _____ we experience when we give just the right gift!

B. What would you sacrifice if that sacrifice meant that you might have to live a little more _____ so that other can _____ live?

C. In this parable, Jesus also invites us to a _____.

D. The reality is the party has already begun and the gift giving started; thank you Central Church family; well done, good and _____ servants!

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 19

In 1992, Dr. Gary Chapman wrote the book, *The Five Love Languages*. Chapman's research reveals that while there are many ways to express love, there are five categories of expressing love that he calls love languages. Those love languages are words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch; these are the five major ways that we give and

receive love. The premise of the book is that each of us has a primary love language and if we understand our love language and the love language of others then we can express love in meaningful and lasting ways. This book has remained popular and many copies are sold each year. While you could go online and find any number of free websites to help you discover your love language, you can reflect on your personality and speak with family and friends and most likely determine your love language. What do you think your love language is? What evidence do you have to support your thoughts? How does knowing your love language and the love language of others help you in giving and receiving love? Contemplate these questions and write your thoughts here.

Tuesday, December 20

Read I Timothy 2:1-4. God's mission is one of reconciliation and restoration; God wants for all of humanity to be blessed. From the scripture reading, we know that God's love is for everyone (even powerful people) and that God wants us to experience peace in our lives. Third this little passage of insights tells that God wants all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. What is that truth? That truth is the love of God is at the very core of God's mission on earth. Where do you see this mission and ministry of reconciliation and restoration needed most? Pray for God's wisdom as you consider the many needs of our world and write your reflections here.

Wednesday, December 21

Read Matthew 1:18-25. If you read this passage carefully you can discover wonderful evidence of God's love. The name of Jesus means "he will save his people from their sins." God wants us to know wholeness in this life as well as peace. We're also told that they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."