

A Labor of Love – Romans 12:1-8

Let's wrap up this sermon series. We have been talking all summer about "Who We Are" as a church, looking at our mission, vision, and values!

We say we are a church where *"the love of Jesus is transforming lives!"*

We believe this transformation happens in 3 primary ways:

INWARD thru corporate worship & hearing the Word of God proclaimed

UPWARD thru studying the Bible together & growing in small groups

OUTWARD thru serving others, sharing our faith & laboring in love

That last part sounds like work, doesn't it? Isn't this Labor Day weekend?

Why does our work/labor, matter when it comes to being the "Church"?

Well, a very wise man once said, *"It's not who I am underneath, but what I do that defines me!"* – Batman.

Batman is completely known by his actions because his identity is veiled. If all people knew of us was based on what we do, what would they know?

We are a people saved by grace, through faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone! We are to show the world our faith by what we do! **James 2:14-26**

A great way to do that is through giving ourselves to the work of God's Kingdom! To labor towards something beyond ourselves, not out of obligation but out of love – love for God and love for others!

We can all do this in a million ways, on a daily basis, inside and outside this building, in unplanned, unstructured, and unscripted ways!

But we can also do this in a million ways, on a regular basis, inside or outside this building, in planned, structured and scripted ways as well!

It's called the ministries of the church! It's where we take seriously the call of the great commission and respond to it in a more systematic approach.

We can reach kids, teens, adults, marriages, athletes, prisoners, students, those with special needs, etc. all in very intentional and proactive ways!

Yes, there is always a time and a place for reactive evangelism – being ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us.

But there is also a time and a place for ministries where the church actively & intentionally provides the context for gospel transformation to take place.

This is why we have, and offer, all the ministries of our church!

But for us to have these ministries and be effective, we need people like you who are willing to give a labor of love – to serve in a ministry for the purpose of outward transformation in and through your life!

Let us consider what God's Word has to say on this matter – **Romans 12:1-8**

8 reasons why we should have a labor of love?

- **Because of God's mercies in our lives!** God's love is what motivates us!
- **Because every action produces a reaction!** We are to present our bodies, just as Jesus presented His body on our behalf! Jesus is our example!
- **Because Jesus' death brought us life!** Jesus' sacrifice of death, enables our sacrifice of life! Our labor of love is an extension of His!
- **Because worshipping God is more than just singing songs on Sundays!** Worship is the act of giving worth to God, & what better way to do that than giving our time, energy and gifts in service to Him & our neighbors?
- **Because God has given us gifts and has called us to use them in the church!** God has given us a unique S.H.A.P.E. for ministry.
- **Because sacrifice and service set us apart from a conforming world!**
- **Because Christ-like transformation is what is holy & acceptable to God!**
- **Because as we labor in love, God reveals to us His good & perfect will!**

There is much more that can be said on this topic, and much more to glean from this passage in Romans 12, but I would like to spend the rest of our time this morning hearing from people in our church who are living this out!

Here are 10 living examples of people laboring in love for the sake of God's glory, the advancement of His Kingdom, and the building up of the Church!

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