

Youth Sunday Sermon
February 3, 2013
Gordon Wiersma and Hope Church Youth

Texts: I Corinthians 13

GORDON: *(music: "All You Need Is Love"...begins to play)* Hello everyone! You hear the music, so you know what time it is! – time for everyone's favorite gameshow:

"WHO GETS THE LOVE?" *(Heart balloon pops up from behind communion table; Amy hangs the GAMESHOW sign on the pulpit; Sophie holds up applause sign; Alex & Clara hang the GAMESHOW sign on the lectern)* That's right, it's "WHO GETS THE LOVE?", the show for people with big problems and the one lucky winner who gets the love to get that problem fixed! It's everyone's favorite gameshow with your favorite gameshow host – me! Nodrog Amsreiw! *(Sophie holds up applause sign)* thank you, thank you! Along with my fabulous crew of interns working for nothing but donut holes, I'd like to welcome our studio audience to today's show. Just to remind everyone, what we do each week on "WHO GETS THE LOVE?" is talk about your problems – because you've all got problems! - and we offer God's love to one lucky winner. So let's get to it – we've randomly picked some lucky contestants from our audience – and now we'll describe your private personal problems live on national television – isn't that great? *(Sophie holds up applause sign)*
So, interns, let's introduce our lucky contestants!

ALEX: Let's meet...RIC! *(Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down')*
Lately Ric has been having a hard time with bragging. Ric, Ric, Ric – it's all about Ric! Sometimes people don't want to hang around with Ric anymore, because other people don't like hearing about his wonderful life all the time – but deep inside he's not happy at all. God's love could help Ric figure this out - Ric REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!

GORDON: Yes he does!...but there's just one winner! – so the question is *(cue the audience to say...)* "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

CLARA: Let's meet...JEAN! *(Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down')*
Jean is really hard on herself and is feeling really down. She feels unliked and can't see what a wonderful person she really is. Sometimes Jean doesn't feel worthy of any love at all, but she heard that maybe God's love could help her – Jean, REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!

GORDON: Yes she does! – but there's just one winner! – so the question is *(cue the audience to say...)* "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

ALEX: Let's meet...ANNE! (*Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down'*) Anne has been dealing with bullying this school year and it's wearing her down. She's at a new school and she doesn't feel confident enough to stand up for herself. She's being picked on – gossiped about – it's tough. Anne thinks God's love could help her - Anne REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!"

GORDON: Yes she does! – but there's just one winner! – so the question is (*cue the audience to say...*) "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

CLARA: Let's meet...KRISTY! (*Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down'*) Kristy's best friend has been diagnosed with cancer. It's been really tough, and this has her questioning her faith in God: "How could God let this terrible thing happen?" Kristy is doubting God's love, so there's no question that she REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!"

GSW: Yes she does! – but there's just one winner! – so the question is (*cue the audience to say...*) "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

ALEX: Our next contestant is...JIM! (*Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down'*) Jim struggles with making bad choices. He's been in prison before, and can't seem to get back on the right track. Jim is feeling discouraged lately because he has no idea what to do to start over, but the other day a friend mentioned that God's love could help him. Jim would like to give it a try, because Jim REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!

GORDON: Yes he does! – but there's just one winner! – so the question is (*cue the audience to say...*) "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

CLARA: Now we have...JOCELYN! (*Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down'*) Jocelyn really struggles with school. She has a hard time keeping up with her work and getting good grades. Jocelyn is upset a lot of the time because she feels like a failure. Jocelyn wonders if God's love can make a difference - she REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!

GORDON: Yes she does! – but there's just one winner! – so the question is (*cue the audience to say...*) "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

ALEX: Next up is...GRETCHEN! (*Sophie holds up applause sign – Gordon: 'Come on down'*) Gretchen unfortunately is going through a very painful divorce. She's feeling angry and hurt – she's worried about her kids – she's worried about what's ahead in life. With all Gretchen is going through, she REALLY NEEDS GOD'S LOVE!

GORDON: Yes she does! – but there's just one winner! – so the question is (*cue the audience to say...*) "WHO GET'S THE LOVE?"

Alright – so there we have our 7 messed-up contestants! They've all got big problems, but one lucky winner is about to receive God's love. Because what we believe here at

"WHO GETS THE LOVE?" is that God's love is the answer to any problem...IF you're lucky enough to receive it!

Which means the time has come...to pick this week's winner of God's love: Alex & Clara, the envelope please!...and remember, all winners on "WHO GETS THE LOVE?" are selected by God – so clearly, all decisions are final!

And the winner is *(drumroll from Jake)*...RIC!!!! *(Sophie holds up applause sign – Amy brings up balloon to Ric)*. Ric, now you know that God loves you – and that can make all the difference – God's love forgives and heals and makes you whole! The rest of you...well, better luck next time...there's just enough love for one winner...*(heart balloon pops up from behind communion table)*

Wait! – what's happening?! – more love? *(Sophie holds up GASP sign!)* – this has never happened before! Interns, what should we do?!

ALEX: Well – let's give God's love to...Jean! – I thought she should've won...!

GORDON: Alright – I suppose we should – Jean: you're a winner too!...*(Sophie – applause!; Amy delivers balloon, then another heart balloon pops up from behind communion table; Sophie – GASP!)* What? – I don't understand - this is unprecedented – how can there be more of God's love?!

CLARA: Let's give God's love to Gretchen!

(Sophie – applause!; Amy delivers balloon, then another heart balloon pops up from behind communion table; Sophie – GASP!)

ALEX & CLARA: ...and to Jocelyn...and Kristy...and Anne...*(wait for awhile)*...and even to Jim!!!

each time: Sophie – applause!; Amy delivers balloon, then another heart balloon pops up from behind communion table; Sophie – GASP!

GORDON: *(Music plays)* What a day we've had on "WHO GETS THE LOVE?"!!! – I don't quite understand it, but you all have God's love, so congratulations! – go ahead and take your seats as you carry God's love with you wherever you go! And please join us again next week for "WHO GETS THE LOVE?" *(Sophie – applause)* although we might have to change the name to "EVERYONE GETS THE LOVE!" *(Sophie – GASP!)*
(Music plays and fades)

...OK – so now I can stop talking in my gameshow announcer voice! - and we can wrap up what we think all of this means. *(Sophie and Amy come up to pulpit)*

ALEX: When we talked together about the passage from 1st Corinthians 13, we put together some ideas about God and love. The Bible teaches us that "God is love". We hear that story of God's love for us in Jesus Christ, and in this passage we're given a lot of helpful descriptions of what love is and what love looks like. But then when it says

"love never ends", we think that helps us to understand what it really means when we say "God is love".

AMY: The reason love never ends is because love depends on God – God IS love. Love isn't something that can run out, it's the truth of who God is. And when the reality of that sinks in, we can start to see God's love for us in new ways.

CLARA: God's love isn't something we have to compete for, or worry about, or earn - God's love for us just is. And when you learn and trust that God's love is for you, no matter what your situation is, then God's love can really make a difference in our lives. In 1st Corinthians love is described as the power that brings you through any situation, and that's because God is love and love never ends.

SOPHIE: Even though we can't give everyone a balloon today, we do want you to know there's enough of God's love for all of us. All of us have problems – some that we share and some that only we know about – but God's love is big enough for everything we are facing in our lives. It's not a gameshow here every week, but it is a place where we bring our lives to receive God's love.

ALEX: So we want to give you a symbol of God's love. Everyone take out the pew Bibles and turn to 1st Corinthians 13 - that's page 934! – and see what you find...it's God's love for you! And there should be enough for everyone, so share with those around you. "God is love" & "Love never ends" are what we want you to carry with you from today.

AMY: And when we say "share with those around you", we don't just mean here – because the other part of knowing God's love is for you is also realizing that God's love is for everyone. It seems like in our world love often is treated as a competition with winners and losers, and that's sometimes how the church has acted too - and sometimes how we are tempted to act.

CLARA: But that's not how it has to be. When we listen to the truth that "God is love" & "Love never ends", we can look at the people around us as God does: people loved by God and who need to know God's love to bring forgiveness and healing and hope in their lives. When you know God's love, the only thing that makes any sense is to love others.

SOPHIE: So carry this symbol of God's love with you, but don't keep it to your self – you could share this little symbol with someone who needs it, or simply find a way to express God's love and care. Love is the presence and power of God in all things, and God has called each of us to receive and share that love in our lives.

ALEX: The question isn't "Who gets God's love?" – we've all been given God's love, so we can look to God in all of our problems and hear God's call to share God's love with

everyone. So the real question is "How will you share God's love?" (*turn gameshow signs around – "How will you share God's love?"*) Carry God's love with you wherever you go and share it in all you do.

GORDON: We'd like to read 1st Corinthians 13 for you again, but this time from a paraphrase of the Bible called "The Message", prarphrased by Eugene Peterson.

CLARA: *If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. 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.*

AMY: *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.*

ALEX: *Love 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. Love never dies.*

SOPHIE: *We don't yet see things clearly now. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing God directly just as God knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.*