

There is no big secret that I have been gone for a couple weeks. I have still been here, just not on Sundays. And I really want to thank everybody that chipped in last week. It was fantastic. I got to watch. I got to be everybody else last week. I got to watch the live feed and it is so different sitting at home or in our case a hotel room watching on your phone. It is great, the words are great, you can feel all of the fellowship here within the building but you want to be a part of it so bad. You want to be there and you want to be with everyone. HYou want to be sharing that wonderful moment. And it was fantastic and I want to thank you all, especially Debbie for doing all of that.

The Scripture reading last week was Ecclesiasties and it was talking about perspective. And it was talking about it from two extremes. This week was definitely those two extremes. On Sunday we started with a funeral, and yesterday I ended with a baptism and a wedding. So I think we covered everything possible during the week last week. And the wedding was fantastic with the exception that we were outside. So we're in the middle of that heat in the middle of the Arboretum and I got a full robe on, and I had to have my black robe because this one's wired and I didn't want to mess with all of that. so we're standing there with the sun beating down on us. The groom is in a three piece suit and the bride is in a full wedding ensemble. She's in a bridal gown, full makeup, full hair, and the three of us are just kind of swaying like this by about halfway through the sermon. So we wrapped up as best as we could and we did the same scripture.

We talked about love. We talked about the love the two people have together. We talked about the love that God has put within all of us. Cuz I get asked how do you know what God is, who God is, if there's a God, what God means, what happens in all these things. And I asked them, now I ask them, do you know what love is? And everybody always says yes I know what love is. And I'm like okay, define it. Put love into words. And they say what do you mean? I don't think I can be any more clear, put love into words. Tell me what it means, and they start to tell me that they love their family. They love their pets. They love their friends. They love their community. They love their school. They love this; they love this. I am like that's great, not one of those things tells me what love is, so then they tell me about different aspects of love. How they can see love, how they can feel love from acts that they do, from what they see, from what they do to other things. I am like that is great, but what is love? How do we know what love is? We know what all of those things are, we know all of those things mean. But you still haven't defined what love is.

And they say well I can't; I can tell you these things. I can tell you what I love. I can tell you why I love something. I can tell you how we can see love in other people, but I can't define what love means. And I say that's it. That's how you know that God exists. It's one of those things that he put inside all of us. He put in his love for us. He knows we know that he loves us, and he puts that little bit inside each and every one of

us that helps us understand. We might not understand better, but we understand what love is because of that love he has given us. It's an opportunity that we don't necessarily have to know how to define it. We don't necessarily have to know what it is because we already have it. The people that don't have love, the people that hate, the people that are angry all the time, because they don't understand it they don't know what it means to be loved in that same way because they can't do it they aren't capable of being a part of it.

At the reception last night we're all happy; we're all having a great time. We're all talking about how great everything was, and somebody stops me and says hey you're a minister. Yes. I don't know what gave it away, whether it was the robe, the collar, or me standing up there, but yes I am a minister. She's like well we got a question. I'm like okay. And you know this could go anywhere. But this woman looks at me and dead in the eyes asks me something very hateful. She asked me something very mean and degrading and just one of the most awful things I've heard this person ever say in my life. And I know this person very well, which surprised me even more that she didn't know as a minister. But I was shocked because all of this time this person I thought was more open-minded than how she perceived herself to be. And she threw out some very slanderous statements about what's going on in the Olympics.

She was talking negatively about transgender people and homosexuals and things, different opportunities that really didn't matter at that wedding right then. And I looked at her, and I said, I don't know why you're asking me this right now but what I can tell you is that I don't have a problem with any of those things because I have God's love. I know that is an opportunity that I am never going to have to be faced with. I'm not going to go through the challenges that those people are going through everyday. I'm not going through anything that you have asked me about. I will gladly be there and support the people that are having to face people like you. But right now, we're here celebrating God's love between these two people. These two people who have fought so many things and you can't see passed your own prejudice. She's forgotten what it means to be loved by God. She's forgotten what it means to be part of a community that loves one another. We all know we're fallible, we all know we sin. We all know we have problems. We all know that everybody in this room will do anything they can at any given moment to help us. We know that everybody in this room loves one another. We know everybody in this room, I should also say the people that are watching on their phones or on their TVs also, love everybody in this room and not just the people in this room. We know that we love everybody everywhere, people we know that are struggling through things, people that we know have a different way of life than what we do. People that we know are just trying to find a way to get through everyday. The couple yesterday, they went through a time in their lives where they weren't making it very well. They were struggling with everything they were going through. It seemed like every choice they were making was the wrong choice. Every opportunity they had was the

wrong opportunity; they were just making problem after problem after problem for themselves.

They got to the point so bad that they actually both met because they were in car accidents, and were going through physical therapy together and then one day they both are sitting there and they're like hey let's go to church. And they started going to church again, and they started to feel God's love again. And then they started to feel love for each other. And then they started to feel love for everyone else in their lives. They start to feel love for everybody in their communities. They start to feel love because they were sharing the love, something that was there this whole time. They started to embrace it and bring it out because God loves each and every one of us. He loves us for who we are.

No one knows better than he does who we are and what we go through. He loves us so much that he gave us his only son. He gave us his son to show us that he loves us. That's a sacrifice that I don't think many people could make, but we know his love through that. We know his love through everything that we do. We know love because he gave it to us. We don't have to be able to define it. We know that it's there, and we know there's a part of who we are and what we try to do everyday let us pray.