

**Series: START STOPPING!**

SUNDAY MAY 31, 2020  
**STOP EXPECTING - START DOING**  
**Matthew 7:12**  
SPEAKER: KEN DAVIS

1. My Dad once gave me a riddle I've used a number of times; so I'm going to see if you know the answer to it:

**What's Greater than God  
Worse than the devil  
Dead men eat it  
If living men ate it they'd die?**

Any answers? I don't hear any. So let me ask it piece by piece again:

**What's greater than God?** *Nothing*  
**What's worse than the devil?** *Nothing*  
**What do dead men eat?** *Nothing*  
**If living men ate** *Nothing - they'd die!*

- a. So, let me ask a companion question.

\*What would've stopped most of the wars of the past 2000 years before they started?

\*What would've stopped the colonization of the world before the tensions erupted and created ongoing bitterness?

\*What would've stopped racism and slavery before it even got off the ground?

\*What would've prevented the Crusades, anti-Semitism, the Inquisition and the Salem witch trials?

\*What would've prevented the scandal of countless splits in the church?

\*What would've stopped the oppression of women?

\*What would've stopped the need for workers unions and minimum wage standards?

\*What would've prevented the hunger and misery of the poor in under-developed nations?

\*What would've put divorce courts out of business and kept millions of families together?

\*What would've stopped the hostility between races and between different religions, between the athletes and the geeks, between gay people and straight people, between in-laws and out-laws, between the rich and the poor—and saved **billions** of dollars in lawsuits—and **trillions** in defense budgets—and kept people from agony, alienation, loneliness, depression, addiction and suicide?

- b. Believe it or not, there **IS one answer** to this! It's how Jesus said to live:

**So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12 NIV)**

Eugene Peterson puts it like this in **The Message**:

**Here is a simple, rule-of-thumb guide for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for *them*. Add up God's Law and Prophets and this is what you get. (Matthew 7:12 MSG)**

- c. I believe that if the followers of Jesus—despite their failings, had simply lived as Jesus told us to live, the **world** would've been flipped on it's back, not just the Roman Empire. Most people in our world **know** that love and kindness is **way** more powerful than evil.

2000 years ago, Jesus said, "This is **what love looks like** in every day life. It's not what we **feel**—or even what we **say**—it's what we **do!**"

2. Some people said, "Actually, what Jesus taught has all been said before--just differently. There's a **tiny bit of truth** to that—but just a **tiny bit**. Confucius, Nicocles (an ancient Greek king), the Stoics, and Rabbi Hillel **all** said:

**"Don't do to other people what you don't want them to do to you!"** And those are **wise words**. That would be the 'Golden Rule' most people live by: **If you don't like people to cut you off, nag you, hog the family TV, criticize your kids or micromanage your work—don't do it to them!**

- a. That makes sense, doesn't it? But this isn't the kind of love Jesus is talking about; this is **preventative** love. In other words—when you live like this, it's a way of preventing retaliation. In some ways, it's a way of loving yourself. It's dealing things that you **don't** do. Jesus is saying something **very** different; that is, **Actively look for ways to love and show kindness to others; SERVE them.**
- b. Jesus starts the **Golden Rule** as we know it with the word '**So**' or, in some versions, '**therefore**'. And that word always points back to what was said before that, which was:

**If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:11 NIV)**

-The word, **so** is pointing to the goodness and the generosity of the Father—the **good gifts** He gives to us because He loves us. He is a Being of **perfect love**, we were made in **His image**—and His plan for us is that we simply be the expressions of **His love and goodness to the people He loves**. And that takes action.

- c. For example, does anyone know what these are? They're power drills! They may be **the** best tool in any DIY person's collection—mainly cause they're so versatile and save so much time. But drills can be used in **constructive** ways OR **destructive**

ways. You can drill the holes you need to screw something together. **Or** you can drill the hole too big and ruin the whole project—which I've done!

-You can put screws in—and build something really cool—**or** you can totally dismantle the really cool thing you built.

-Now, a person could say, "Hey, I've **never** drilled holes in anybody's car, gas line or boat—or used the wire brush to take the paint off anyone's car. I just keep the drill in my **handy-dandy** little case and everyone is happy. But. **That's not what drills are for!** They were created to serve a **useful purpose!** And so were **we!** More on that later!

3. The **standard** for how we love others is, in Jesus' teaching, very simple. We **do for them what we would want others to do for us.**

-Here's the way God's love works; He loves His children, the people He made—and He wants **us** to love them too! If you're a parent, one of the things you **long** for among your children is that they **love one another.** That when they get together, they are not there to judge one another, be better than one another, get even with one another, or ignore one another.

And the **way** that happens in any family or in any group of people—is for people to take **self-focus, self-interest and selfishness** out of the mix. Now, I'm guessing that, like me, you have some ideas of how **you** would like to be treated—expectations that seem, well, reasonable. Here are **my** expectations—see if you can relate.

\*I want to be treated fairly. That when I buy something, or bring in a repair person, or go into any situation where I'm dealing with people—I want them to be honest, kind, truthful, and err on the side of generosity.

\*I want to be valued as a human being, not just a customer, or some who can add value. And I expect that my family will be valued as well—by teachers, by other students, and by the people they work for.

\*I expect that people will be truthful with me; that they won't shine up some story to get my attention, my sympathy, my business, or my money.

\*I expect people to treat me with respect and kindness. To be treated rudely or disrespected or flipped off hurts and frustrates me.

\*I want people to be **patient** with me. A few weeks ago, I had to back a trailer into my daughter's driveway—and had traffic coming both ways. If you've ever backed up a trailer...well, you know that you need the patience of others.

\*I want people to show compassion. Years ago, I ran out of gas late at night, a few miles from my house. I'm standing out by my car looking at it. A guy stopped, drove me to the gas station—then drove me back to my car. I said, "Can I pay you for your trouble?" He said, "Just pass it on!"

\*I want people will **listen** to me long enough to understand what I'm saying. Have you ever been talking to someone—and you **know** that they're not listening, they're waiting for **you** to **stop** talking so they can **start?**

\*We have **all kinds** of expectations of our neighbors, the people who care for us, physicians, our children, our parents, our employers—the people we have to deal with every day.

- a. When Jesus tells us, as his followers to **do to others what we would want them to do to us**—I think he’s telling us that it’s **okay** to have an understanding of how we would like to be treated. But then we **use** that—not to sit around like customers at Tim Hortons—but as a **checklist** for how we love others.

-Think about it; what happens in a marriage or **any** relationship when one person feels entitled to be treated a certain way—and sits there and waits for it to happen? Nothing **good** I assure you! **Entitlement is** easy to spot in others, **very** difficult to see in yourself.

- b. There’s something else that sometimes happens. It’s when we listen to others, care for others, check up on others, help others, show compassion--**and then wait to see if they’ll do the same!** And **when we don’t see our efforts reciprocated**—we get jaded, ticked off, hurt, and angry.

-To just be blunt, **that’s not love! That’s buying someone else’s services with your OWN services.** And it violates everything Jesus is saying about love. Love is given freely. Asking others to pay you for the love you show is a form of prostitution.

- c. It is **so** important to understand that to treat someone lovingly, kindly, generously, compassionately, or fairly to **get something out of it**, or to **attempt to control them or manipulate them** is NOT love. God **could** do that—but He doesn’t. **Ever.** Remember what Jesus said earlier about this—on the issue of loving our enemies? He said, basically, God sends good things to both the good **and** the evil!

-We **love** because it’s right, because it heals us, because it’s like God, because we are changed in the process, because it brings dignity and meaning to our lives and the lives of others. It is how we **honor and love the One who saw us, loved us, found us, comforted us and gave His life for us!** Doing for **others** what we would want them to do for us pleases God—and **expresses love for Him.** It **grows us up!** Selfishness, self-preoccupation, and self-interest contaminate love.

4. We looked at the little word **SO** in what Jesus said—the one that describes how **tenderly** God loves us as His children—and cares for us. You know—**whether or not we deserve His kindness and love.** A parent’s love for their child is not based on whether or not they deserve it any given day. **So...**that’s our model.

-But there’s another key word here; **DO! Do for OTHERS.** How many of you have ever looked at **others** and thought, “Why do they do things so **weirdly?**” We don’t have **any** trouble spotting weirdness, do we? So—**what’s the definition of weird?** Let me save you the trouble—weird is defined as **different from ME** and **what I think is normal.**

\*For neat freaks—normal is—**neat and clean.**

For slow drivers, normal is—**driving slowly—at or below the speed limit.** For organized people—normal is—**organized, no chaos!** For introverts, normal is—**people who don’t**

***always have to have people around them.*** I like to title of John Ortberg's most recent book: ***I'd like you more...if you were more like me!***

- a. Sometimes we just need to think about what it's ***like*** to be outside of our own experience—to ***love people as we would want to be loved.***

-Think about it; 58% of the people in Markham were born outside of Canada. I'm ***one*** of those people. One of the things I noticed when I moved to Markham was the negativity to the US in general—and people from the US in particular. It's hard to know what to do when people dislike you—simply because of the country you were born in—and your accent.

-But I had it easy compared to ***many!*** Think of what it's like to come from a ***warm*** country—to one of the coldest countries in the world. Imagine what it's like to drive for the first time when ***everyone*** is in a hurry! Or to send your children off to school, when you can't read the papers they bring home—when ***every single thing has changed!*** What would ***love*** look like to you?

-Imagine what it's like to be a single Mom with 2 or 3 young children—living on half the income you used to have. You've never held a wrench, a screw driver or a hammer—your car is old and blowing smoke--and stuff in your apartment keeps falling apart—and you don't even have the time to fix it or ***take*** it to be fixed. What would ***do for others what you want them to do for you*** look like there? What I'm saying is that, to love, you have to ***see***, to ***think***, to ***engage and imagine***—and ***FEEL!***

- b. What is it that keeps us from thinking about love like this? I'm guessing that one of the huge barriers is our ***busyness***. Interesting, isn't it, how this corona virus has brought our entire culture to a screeching halt and outlawed connecting with others—for good reasons—at a time when people need connection the most!

-What happens is that we get our lives in a knot—I mean, our busyness is ***our doing, right***—and we're too busy to see. And instead of seeing obstacles—slow cars, waiting in lines as a way to ***learn*** patience, we get ***really*** crabby!

- c. To see need—you have to pull the insulation off your heart. See, insulation keeps what's hot—hot and what's cold—cold and what's wet, wet and what's dry—dry. It's pretty convenient stuff.

-The problem is that when insulation gets wrapped around our hearts—we don't ***feel*** the pain of others. We don't even ***think*** about what they need or what they would want! When we pray, ***Let me see this world dear Lord as though—I were looking through your eyes!***—and ***mean*** it—the insulation comes off. It's uncomfortable—but ***that's why we need to do it!***

5. Let me bring out one more progression of words here in this passage. If you were to read it in the original language, Greek, the first word in the sentence is ***panta*** or ***IN EVERYTHING, DO...!*** Now, ***what does that include?*** Well, it means that ***nothing*** gets left out. It's ***huge***—and humanly speaking—***impossible***. It would be a little like someone telling you, “I want you to give away \$2000 every day to help other people!” You'd say, “***Wha-a-a-at!?!?***” I can't afford to do ***that?***”

-Okay, that makes sense. But what if they said, “Your long lost cousin, Jeff Bezos, has had compassion on you and left you his entire fortune! It will come to you daily over the next 60 years of your life. So, 145 billion dollars divided up that way would bring you about 6.6 million dollars a day. **Could you afford it then?** Maybe, right?

-Know what the word **SO** means under these circumstances? It means that you have the full support of Heaven behind you—cause when you love like that, you are simply doing what a Heavenly Father—with **no limit to His love and resources** wants you to.

-In **everything...DO!** Stop sitting around and **EXPECTING** others to love, coddle, comfort, listen to, sympathize with and help you-engage and start **DOING** and see what happens.

a. The big question is always **how?** Let's get back to the drill analogy, okay. The reason a drill is so versatile is because of something on the business end called a **chuck**. This chuck will focus in--tighten up on--whatever you put in it.

-You can drill holes--microscopic in size, or big ones. You can drill wood, metal, masonry. You can even use a hole saw so you can **keep** the center. As I mentioned before, there are a gazillion attachments. See, the **drill** is kind of like the love part that motivates us--gets us moving. But the key is **focus**.

-A drill motor revving with no attachment is kinda like some people. They **talk** a lot about loving others—but that's it. If you're in another room, you can hear the drill motor revving--it sounds like they're loving up a storm.

-But it's just **noise and sparks!** You've seen these new high powered hand-driers in washrooms, right? Someone had scrawled near the button on one, **Push here for a message from your local politician! It made me think about the** hand-driers in our **church** washrooms...!

b. God wants our lives to kind of have a **chuck**--a focus. See, God will use our lives in many different ways--probably according to our giftedness. But **we** have to **focus in**--figure out specifically **how** we're going to love. Otherwise, it'll just be noise.

c. And we have to choose the right bit--the right application. Sometimes I've chosen the wrong bit and made a hole too small. That's not too bad. But if you make the hole too big, you're in deep weeds.

-You're also in trouble if you wax your car and use a wire brush instead of a buffer to take the wax off. Drills are pretty powerful--they're intended to do a lot of work in a short period of time--so you have to be careful you're in the right place with the right tool. Same with love.

-Would it be truthful to say that some people use the same tool to deal with every problem—like a wire brush? Here—let me help you get those ears clean! Let me help you **polish your car. THAT DOESN'T HELP!**

d. There's something else. For a drill to be effective, there has to be contact. You can have an excellent drill, have the chuck focused just right on the right bit or tool. But unless you make **contact** with something—nothing really happens. Same with love—for it to **work** you have to **actually engage!**

-Now, I want to say this carefully. Giving money long distance to other people is great, but it's **not enough!** For North Americans, sending money is the **easy answer**—and only a **small part** of what God wants to do through our lives. Right now, **touch** and **close proximity** is off limits—but that's **temporary**. God wants us to bring **warmth** to the lives of others—and them to bring warmth to **us!**

e. Let me take the analogy just a step further. Drills are intended to go deep. To penetrate. To get beneath the surface. Authentic, Spirit-powered, selfless love bores deep into the lives of people in ways they **never** forget. I know—cause **I've** been loved that way!

6. Now, believe it or not—I want to take this analogy to a different level. Hang in there—cause I think it will make sense of some things. About 40 or more years ago, they came out with a really cool innovation on the power drill. I know--some of you weren't even **alive** then! But it was the—**TA-DA--cordless drill**. Now you can take these things where no drill has ever gone--in the woods, under decks--they're very convenient. But there's a problem. Eventually, they run out of power. They really do--watch.

a. And that's **our** problem, isn't it? We can get **really charged up, inspired, enthused, excited**. We can sense the **power** of love that's freely given—and what it does for people, how it changes us. Loving the way Jesus asked us to is a **powerful** way to live.

-But there **are** some people who go so far, and just run out of steam. We can see them in most charities—social justice warriors who really try hard to do for others what they would want done for themselves. Speakers, films, pep rallies, sympathy can charge them up for a while--but it wears down. The **battery** goes dead!

b. Here's the deal; this kind of love is **supernatural**—that is, not ever **intended** to be done in human power. Cordless is **definitely** convenient--but **even cordless drills need to have a source of power where they are recharged**.

-**God's Spirit is this endless source of power**. In fact, if we'll listen carefully, He'll tap us on the shoulders and whisper, "Over there! Do you see that person? Look in their eyes! Do you see the ache? They need my touch! Will you be my hands?"

7. Jesus final words in the **Golden Rule** tell us something **really** important. Let me read them: **...for this sums up the Law and the Prophets**. In other words, **This has ALWAYS been God's will, God's plan for His people!** In other words, "Read through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; read through all the historical books and narratives.

-Read through the Psalms and Wisdom books—and then into the prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi. **This is what God has been saying! Love others as yourself. In everything...Do for others what you would want them to do for you!**

-That's what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. That's what Paul founded His churches on. See, even when you **love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind—THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!** Remember the cross? If you only have the **Love God** part—it's just a pole. Loving God supports the second part of the cross—**LOVE OTHERS**.

-Paul said to a church that was actually doing more damage than good—that they had a love problem. Man, they had spiritual gifts coming out the wazoo. They **loved** spiritual gifts—**especially the ones that made them look important!** Their worship services were like a **mosh pit** for spiritual gifts—people competing with tongues, prophecies, interpretations—faith—anything you can imagine—and some you **can't!** And Paul had to **redefine love** for them: **LOVE ISN'T ABOUT YOU!**

**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.**  
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV)

-But before he wrote these words, he made it clear just **how** important love—**God's love in our hearts** really is. He makes it clear that we can have **amazing, unparalleled** powers to give talks and persuade people—but if there's no **love** behind them—they're **JUST A BUNCH OF NOISE!**

-He said, "We're **all** impressed with faith; when someone comes along and has this faith in God that can conquer any obstacle—move mountains, if necessary! We're **all** impressed when someone comes along and can **actually see clearly what's going on, what's going to happen—and what the future** will be like! And when someone lays their life, their fortune on the line to serve the poor—**we stand in awe!**

-But **if it's not about love, if it's maybe 90% self and 10% love**—if it's not bathed in love and saturate in love—it's **nothing!** That is, it's possible to appear **astounding to others—even Christians**—impress others with your Bible knowledge and skill and wisdom—and be **nothing! Do nothing!** Just be a super-powerful drill motor revving and making a bunch of noise.

-That makes sense of something Jesus says in the next section, that there will be people coming up to Him at the judgment talking about all the great, miraculous things they did in His Name—and he'll say, **I never knew you!**

a. Paul goes on to say—as does Jesus—that the sign of being **spiritually mature** is, simply, love. In my early fudge-making days, Lori used to joke about my attempts—that I always needed her to bail me out. I'd be in the kitchen working away, cooking—then stirring. And **stirring**. Then there'd be a cry for help, **LORI! COME QUICK!** The fudge would stiffen up too quickly—and begin to petrify—before it was done!

-Apples turn red and bananas turn yellow when they're mature...done. We stick tooth picks in cakes and pumpkin pie to tell when they're done. How do you know when your kids are mature? It's when they start **thinking of someone beside themselves.**

-You know that a follower of Jesus is mature—by **how they love**. Bible knowledge is great—but the Pharisees who condemned Jesus to death knew all the original Hebrew verbs—and know pretty much how to hate—that's it.



-A lot of atheists know the Bible quite well. David Koresh **loved** the Bible and Jim Jones had great worship services. Going to church, taking the sacraments, praying for hours—all good things—but if, at the other end, you don't **love**? Doesn't matter.

- b. One of the things all students ask their professors as they lecture is, **Is THIS on the final exam?** According to Jesus, love **is** the final exam!

-A person's last words are always important. My Dad's final message to his little church in Pittsburgh was entitled, **Finally, Brethren...** It was the last message he ever gave. Jesus very last public prayer was that his disciples—and his future followers—which would be us--would **love one another**.

-Jesus **always** taught in parables—and his last parable went like this:

**When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take you're the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.**

**For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'**

**"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'**

**((Matthew 25:31-40 NIV)**

- c. It makes sense, doesn't it? When you're hungry and thirsty—what you want people to do for you is **give you something to eat and drink**. When you're a stranger, alienated, no one to identify with—you want to be **invited in. Included**. When you're unclothed—or sick—or in prison—what you want others to **do** for you is clothe you—show compassion!

The **ultimate surprise** is that when you simply respond—when you do for others what you would want them to do for you—you find out that it's **JESUS!** And if you do **anything** with your life—you'll want to **love Him!**

Jesus, I think, would tell us, "Stop just **expecting**—and **start DOING!** Go ahead! I'll **help** you!