



Love for the Lost

Brownsburg Church of Christ

by Edwin Crozier

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PM Assembly



Introduction:

Well-known atheist Penn Jillette of magic duo Penn and Teller shocked the vlogsphere some time ago when he uploaded the following statement to YouTube. "I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward... And atheists who think that people shouldn't proselytize, 'just leave me alone; keep your religion to yourself'... How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them about it?"¹ Does that quote shock you? Is that what you would expect out of the mouth of an atheist? Of course not. How does it feel getting told off about evangelism from an atheist? Last month, we focused the entire month on being zealous for good deeds and loving our neighbors. And now this atheist schools us in what it means to love our neighbors when it comes to spreading the Gospel. How can we gain the kind of love that measures up to this challenge? I've got four questions we need to ask to help us love the lost.

Discussion:

I. Why do we love?

- A. Where does our love originate? It originates by recognizing God's love for us (**I John 4:19**). John doesn't explain who we are loving. So, we can't limit it to any particular group. But whether we are talking about loving God, loving our family, loving our friends, loving our enemies, or even loving the lost, it is all going to begin as we understand God's love for us.
- B. This also means that God is our example of love. As we see God's love for us, we learn how to love others. That means if we want to learn how to love, we need to examine how He has loved us.

II. Who are the lost?

- A. But if we want to get to the heart of loving the lost, no matter how hard it is, we need to consider who the lost are (or who they have been). We need to think about all the lost people we've known. We may even need to nail down who is, to us, the most important lost person we have known.
- B. Read **Romans 1:29-31**. Have you done any of those things? What about **I Corinthians 6:9-10**? Have you ever done any of those things? What about **II Timothy 3:2-5**? Have you done any of those things? Even if you didn't pay much attention to those lists, consider what Paul says about all of us in **Romans 3:23** and what John said in **I John 1:8**. The fact is every one of us is a sinner.
- C. Now look at **Romans 1:32**. If you have done any of those things, what do you deserve? We are sinners. We deserve death and judgment. What can you do about these things by yourself? When you consider all of this, the question we need to consider is with all of this in mind, when we talk about loving the lost, who was lost? We were.
- D. So, when we talk about people loving the lost, who was the first person we are hoping someone loved? Are you glad that someone loved you enough to teach you the Gospel? How should that impact the way we treat the lost around us.

III. Why is it hard to love the lost?

- A. But let's face it the lost are hard to love. Paul told Titus about the lost people around him in **Titus 1:12**. The worldly people around Titus were lazy, immoral, deceitful, and evil. They do malicious things. And sometimes they do these things toward us. It's hard to love people when they treat you like this.
- B. In **I Peter 4:4**, Peter points out that the folks in the world will malign us for not following along with them in their sinful behavior. They mock us and make fun of us. According to **I Peter 2:12**, they will speak against us as evildoers even when we are doing good. It's hard to love people when they act like that.
- C. And then there is just the sin. As we strive to serve the Lord, we are striving to overcome sin. But folks in the world are continuing in it. It's tough to be around some of the sin that folks in the world are doing, even if they aren't doing it specifically against us. Listening to the foul language, hearing the vulgar jokes, witnessing the sinful behavior makes it hard to love folks who act like that. It's hard because for us who love

¹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhG-tkQ_Q2w

the Lord, this rebellion against Him is offensive. It's also hard because being around this sin can sometimes be like a siren call to return to our old ways. It's tough to love someone who is leading you back to slavery.

IV. When did God love us?

- A. **Romans 5:6-8** makes it very clear when God loved us. He loved us while we were still weak, sinful, and ungodly. He didn't wait for us to get ourselves fixed and then loved us. He saw us while we were still doing all those things we talked about a few minutes ago and loved us anyway. And consider what He did to love us. He didn't just do nice things for us. He sent His Son to die for us (**1 John 4:9**).
- B. This is the basis for Paul's teaching in **Titus 3:1-7**. We are to love the lost because we were just as lost as they were. But more than that, we recognize that we are saved now because of the grace of God not because we are somehow awesome. We should not allow our present state before God to cause us to turn our backs on those who are not where we are. Instead, we should remember how God loved us and offer that exact same kind of love to them.
- C. If God would send His Son to die for us while we were lost in order to save us, what should we do for the lost who are around us? If someone else loved us enough to talk to us about Jesus while we were lost, what should we do for the lost who are around us?

Conclusion:

So, where does this leave us? Do you have any friends who are lost? What about co-workers? Any family? Have you said anything to them about Jesus? Have you invited them to attend assemblies or classes? Have you discussed spiritual things with them? How much do you love them? Do you remember what Penn Jillette said? "How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them about it?" Remember God's love. Remember the love someone had for you. Then love the lost folks around you.