

# Rooted - February 14th - A Portrait of Love - Clay Weed

## Key Scriptures:

Colossians 1:21 - 23

Romans 3:24-26

1 Peter 5:8-9

Romans 5:12

Romans 3:10

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23a

John 14:6

## Start reading

### Colossians 1:21 - 23

**21**This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. **22** Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. **23** But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

### Romans 3:24-26

**24** Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. **25** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, **26** for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

### 1 Peter 5:8-9

**8** Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

**9** Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

## TALK IT OVER

### Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Clay talked about a game he played as a child called "Jump the Creek". What childhood games do you remember playing?

### Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- How does it make you feel to be labeled an "enemy of God" apart from a relationship with Him? Does God love and accept everyone?
- Read **Colossians 1:21**. "Our sin separates us from a holy God." Let that statement sink in. What are some thoughts that come to mind? What would you say to someone who believes they can get to heaven by being a good person?
- Read **1 Peter 5:8-9**. What are some ways that you can "stay alert" and "stand firm"?
- Read **Romans 3:24-26**. What does it mean to "believe in Jesus"? Is there anything that you put your faith and trust in above Jesus?

### Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- God wants to use you to make a difference just like he used Paul. Does this make you nervous, excited, hesitant, or something else?
- How do you stay committed to Jesus and live your day-to-day life for Him? It can be easy to let your relationship with God get stale. What tools do you use to keep that from happening?
- Jesus chose to sacrifice His life so that everyone can be forgiven by God if they believe in Him. Does this change your definition of love? Why? How?
- If you have a relationship with Jesus, how are you demonstrating His sacrificial love to those in your home, neighborhood, town?
- If you don't yet have that faith in Jesus, how do you think believing in Him might change your life? Your relationships? Does it change anything to understand that God's love for you is not defined by what you've done or are currently doing, that His biggest concern is having a relationship with you through Jesus? Does it help to know that you can have that relationship simply by going to Him in prayer, confessing, believing, and surrendering to Him? If you have any questions or would like to pray, please speak with your small group leader.

### Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to not let your relationship with Jesus get stale. Do this by daily reading your Bible and praying. A great tool is the Our Daily Bread devotional. You can pick one up on Sundays or during the week at the church or access it online.

### Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Jesus, thank you for your gift of the Cross and how you demonstrate Your love for me. Help me to live my life with true passion to have a deeper relationship with You and to share what I have found with others. - Amen

### Start digging. For further study.

**Question: "What does it mean to let all that you do be done with love (1 Corinthians 16:14)?"**

**Answer:** In the closing verses of his first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul returned to the theme of loving God and loving others as the believer's ultimate ambition: "Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14, ESV). Paul had repeatedly underscored this principle to the Corinthians so that they would always remember to let love be their highest goal (1 Corinthians 14:1). Love for God and fellow humans is to inspire and govern everything we do.

When Paul stated, "Let all that you do be done with love," he had in mind the goodwill and benevolence that shows itself in self-sacrifice. Love requires an unconditional commitment to the loved one. In his command to let all be done with love, it was as if Paul glanced back to consider everything he had addressed in his letter to the Corinthian church. Among other things, He had dealt with divisions and quarreling among members (1 Corinthians 3), lawsuits between believers (1 Corinthians 6:1–8), selfishness at the Lord's communion table (1 Corinthians 11:17–34), jealousy over spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12–14), and disorderly worship (1 Corinthians 14:26–40). Paul wanted to emphasize and remind the Corinthians that everything they did must be accompanied by love.

Earlier in his letter, Paul pointed out the "the most excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13), teaching that love is the most valuable of all the gifts of the Spirit: "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). Without love, all the other gifts of the Spirit fall short of the mark. Essential as these gifts are to the church, they are worthless without love.

Love is the ecosystem in which our lives as believers operate and thrive. Paul taught the Romans, "Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other" (Romans 12:10, NLT). To the Ephesians, Paul said, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). And again, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (verse 32). Love is the prevailing attitude that Christians are to demonstrate toward one another and all humankind.

Jesus Himself said that His disciples are to be distinguished by their love: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). Jesus sets the example of how we are to love one another. Husbands and wives ought to love one another sacrificially as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it (Ephesians 5:22–33). When we correct or rebuke someone, it is to be done with love (1 Timothy 5:1; Proverbs 27:5). If we must speak a hard truth to a brother or sister in Christ, our motivation ought to come from a place of love (Ephesians 4:15). We are always to work together as one body, inseparably joined for the purpose of building one another up in a spirit of unity and love (verse 16).

We learn to love by imitating the example God demonstrated through the life of Jesus: "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions" (1 John 3:16–18, NLT; see also 1 John 4:19–21). *Let all that you do be done with love* means that we love like Jesus.

Knowing God means loving like He does: "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us" (1 John 4:7–12, NLT).

*Let all that you do be done with love* means that God's unconditional love abides in us through our relationship with Jesus Christ. God's love becomes the indispensable force and driving motivation behind everything we do. No matter where we are and who we are with, we are compelled by love, cultivating love, pursuing love, and demonstrating love.