

## 2-22-26 He Loves Me - Unconditional Love Transactional Action

### Overview

The message explores the tension between **unconditional love** (loving someone for who they are, not what they provide) and **transactional reality** (where actions/does matter in relationships and have consequences). True love is always unconditional by definition, but our actions serve as evidence of that love. The godly choice in any situation is the one that **builds up**, restores, and strengthens relationships—though restoration isn't always possible if the other person refuses to participate. The talk emphasizes doing what love does, extending grace/forgiveness, attempting restoration, and knowing when to set healthy boundaries (loving from a distance) while leaving room for future reconciliation.

### Main Points

1. **Doing is an indicator of loving**
  - Actions reveal what (or who) we truly love, just as works evidence genuine faith (James 2:14–17; John 14:15).
  - Love without corresponding action is dead/incomplete.
  - Example: Faithfulness in marriage flows from love, not to earn love.
2. **When you love them, you have grace for them**
  - Grace (empathy, compassion, unmerited favor) flows from unconditional love.
  - Practical steps when actions hurt:
    - Forgive (Matthew 6:14–15) – frees you, not them.
    - Give grace repeatedly (Matthew 18:21–22 – "seventy times seven").
    - Fix/attempt restoration ("as it depends on you" – Matthew 18:15–17; Romans 12:17–18).
    - Rely on the Holy Spirit for grace and sufficiency (2 Corinthians 9:8).
3. **Learn when to love from a distance**
  - Not every relationship can be restored—some people refuse God's work in them (examples: rich young ruler in Mark 10; Judas in John 13:30).
  - Scripture supports healthy boundaries/separation in certain cases (Matthew 10:14; 2 Corinthians 6:14–17; Ephesians 5:11; Proverbs 4:23).
  - Boundaries are sometimes the godly option; build them with **gates** for potential future reconciliation (Nehemiah's wall as metaphor).

Overall goal: Choose the option that **builds up**—through actions, grace, restoration efforts, or wise boundaries.

### Reflection Questions

- What actions in my life right now clearly show who or what I truly love? Are there gaps between what I say I love and what I do?
- Where am I struggling to give grace or forgiveness because of someone's repeated harmful actions? What would "seventy times seven" look like in that situation?
- Have I genuinely tried to restore a broken relationship (private conversation, witnesses, etc.), or have I given up too quickly?
- Are there people I need to love from a distance right now? Did I build a "gate" for possible future reconciliation, or is the wall completely sealed?
- How dependent am I on the Holy Spirit to supply grace, sufficiency, and wisdom in difficult relationships?

## Application

- Examine one key relationship this week: List 3 specific actions that would demonstrate unconditional love (even if the other person's behavior doesn't change).
- Practice immediate forgiveness: Identify one offense you're still holding onto and intentionally release it through prayer (declare you're okay and won't let it control your future).
- Take a restoration step: If appropriate and safe, initiate a private, honest conversation, write a letter, or seek counsel to address a strained relationship.
- Evaluate boundaries: Ask God if a current separation lacks grace or a path back. If a boundary is needed, prayerfully consider installing a "gate" (clear communication of future openness to change/reconciliation).
- Daily prayer: Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you toward restoration rather than separation driven by flesh.

## Group Discussion Prompts

1. Share a time when someone's actions made it very hard to keep loving them unconditionally. How did you handle (or struggle with) the tension between love and their behavior?
2. Read James 2:14–17 together. Where in your life might your "faith" or "love" be "dead" because it lacks corresponding actions?
3. How do you personally decide when enough is enough—when to keep extending grace versus when to set firmer boundaries? What biblical examples help guide you?
4. Jesus loved the rich young ruler but let him walk away. Share a time you had to let someone walk away. Was it painful? Do you have peace about it now?
5. The message says: "Be sure to build gates in the walls you put up." What does having a "gate" look like practically in a real-life boundary (e.g., marriage, family, friendship)?
6. End with prayer: Invite group members to name (silently or aloud) one person/relationship they need to apply today's message to—whether more action, more grace, wiser boundaries, or installing a gate.