

Sermon Title: **Love - Behind the Scenes**

Bible: **2 Samuel 7:4-11, 16 & Luke 1:26-38**

Where & When: at Gilroy UMC on the 4th Sunday of Advent, December 20, 2020

Audience: about 25 YouTube Live-streaming viewers

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, your love is always with us. Sometimes, it is not easy to see your love. In this Advent season, please help us to open our eyes. Please guide us to see your love behind the scenes. In this time, please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Fourth Sunday of Advent with Love

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent. Each advent candle has a meaning: Hope, Peace, and Joy. The fourth Advent candle means Love. I love you. You love me. We love each other. Love itself is the relationship, the mutual relationship. So, one-sided love is not easy. But, love is patient. Mihyun and I had been seeing each other for 7 years, and then, we got married. It took 7 years for us to say "I do." Now it is the 8th year to have our own family or home. Saying "I do" was a great moment. Caring for our own family and home day by day is also a wonderful moment. And I got to know more and more about this: love is patient and love is kind. To have and care for our own home or family takes a lot of love, which can be found behind the scenes.

2. God's house

When we lit the fourth Advent candle, we read 2 Samuel chapter 7. It tells us a behind the scenes story of the beginning of building God's house, a temple. God did not have a house for many hundreds of years. God had been moving around in a tent, a tabernacle. At the time of

King David, God wanted to have a house to live in. That's because God's servant David loved God so much. This is kind of the moment of God's proposal to David, "Are you the one?" How long had God been waiting for 'the one'? "Are you the one to build me a house to live in?" God proposed to David and God's people to live forever together. There was a love for building a house for God.

3. Our home, our church building

There was also a love to build our home, our church buildings. On June 4, 1853, our church was established, even before the city of Gilroy. As Gilroy grew, our church grew as well.

On Sunday morning, November 13, 1938, there was a fire. Unfortunately, it was not a spiritual fire, but a real fire. A furnace exploded, and the fire started. The church buildings were completely destroyed by the fire. It was a Sunday morning. I cannot imagine how the church members felt, watching the church buildings turned into ashes on the ground. There were many firefighters, and volunteer firefighters, including 36 year-old Russell Heck who died to save the church. I want to remember this volunteer firefighter. You can also see many names, like the pastor and many church members, if you google this fire at the church through the Gilroy Dispatch. At the bottom of this sermon script, I shared two links from the Gilroy Dispatch. You can see my sermon script via our church website.

The ground breaking ceremony was on January 1st, 1939. The church members were there, with the passion of "We shall build again" and with volunteer labor. There were many gifts and help from all the other churches and organizations in Gilroy to rebuild our house, our church buildings. A little more than six months, on June 11, 1939, the new church was dedicated. Our

church members sang the version of “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow” that is our doxology response song now. Today, when I enter this church building, I cannot help but remember the love from our former church members, our former pastors, and the other churches and organizations in Gilroy. That’s because this building was built on the love from many, many people.

4. Mary & Joseph’s Family

Sometimes, we cannot see the love behind the scenes. When the angel Gabriel visited Mary, I wondered where Joseph was at that moment. In many artworks of the Annunciation, there is an angel and Mary, and a lily, which is a symbol of virginity and purity. However, it is very difficult to find Joseph. Where was Joseph? Where was Joseph? Then, I felt Joseph’s sincere trust and love for Mary. About two thousand years ago, if you were Joseph, what would you do? You are engaged to a beautiful woman. But she is pregnant. And the father is not you. Can you trust this woman and still love her? Because Joseph is not mentioned in this story, ironically, to me, Joseph’s love feels bigger than Mary. Not only Mary’s love for the baby Jesus, but also Joseph’s love for Mary and the baby Jesus fills me with awe. I do not know how to describe Joseph’s love. Joseph’s love was very deep and very mature. Maybe, that’s why in many artworks, Joseph is described not as a young man, but as an older man, compared to Mary.

5. Our Love

There was the love of God and David in the story of God’s temple. There were many loves from many people for our home, our church buildings. And there was a love from Joseph for

Mary and the baby Jesus. Sometimes, love is behind the scenes. During this Advent season, and during this difficult time, I hope for us to see the love behind the scenes. The love is great at the moment of saying “I do.” But the love is also great, wonderful, and beautiful, behind the scenes in our new normal life. Sometimes, we cannot see all of the love. But surely there is love in us, with us, and in our daily life.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, your love is already here. O Lord, please open our eyes to see your love. Your love is what we are looking for. And please lead us to love ourselves and others more and more as you love us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Reference

<https://gilroydispatch.com/returning-town-history-to-gilroy/>

<https://gilroydispatch.com/celebrating-161-years-of-methodism-in-gilroy-part-ii/>