

Forty Days of Love
Mark 9: 2-13

Have you ever been confronted with a message that changed your perspective? One church chose as its Lenten theme, "Forty Days of Love." Each week members of the congregation were encouraged to show their love and appreciation in different ways. The first week they were encouraged to send notes to people who had made positive contributions to their lives.

After the first service a man in the congregation wanted to speak to his pastor. The pastor describes the man as "kind of macho, a former football player who loved to hunt and fish, a strong self-made man." The man told his pastor, "I love you and I love this church, but I'm not going to participate in this Forty Days of Love stuff. It's OK for some folks," he said, "but it's a little too sentimental and syrupy for me."

A week went by. The next Sunday this man waited after church to see his pastor again. "I want to apologize for what I said last Sunday," he told him, "about the Forty Days of Love. I realized on Wednesday that I was wrong."

"Wednesday?" his pastor repeated. "What happened on Wednesday?"

"I got one of those letters!" the man said. The letter came as a total surprise. It was from a person the man never expected to hear from. It touched him so deeply he now carries it around in his pocket all the time. "Every time I read it," he said, "I get tears in my eyes." It was a transforming moment in this man's life. Suddenly, he realized he was loved by others in the church. This changed his entire outlook. "I was so moved by that letter," he said, "I sat down and wrote ten letters myself."

Receiving that letter was a transforming experience for Mr. Macho. It came from a mailbox rather than a mountaintop, but the effect was the same - his perspective was changed. God breaks into our lives, and we are changed.

Love is the greatest way to change our world for the better, to bring the light and love of Christ in a world that seems too dark right now.

Let us continue to be the light of Christ to each other and to those who still need to come to know Jesus our Lord and Savior, Amen.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara