

Good morning! Welcome to TL Church outside! My name is marlin and I'm the pastor here at TL and we are delighted that you are here! There are several wonderful things about meeting outdoors.

#1 We are one step closer to creation out here underneath these trees.

#2 We never know for sure what might happen when we meet outside... a cow may start mooing or the neighbors goat may jump the fence and pay us a visit or one of our tenants may start distracting us in their back yard.

#3 We can all worship together instead of splitting up between two services.

#4 We always enjoy a great meal afterwards. There is a time to fast... and we do that! There is a time to sacrifice for our Bucket Offerings... and we do that! But the Bible makes it clear there also a time to feast and a time to party... and that's what we are going to do this morning.

For those of you joining us for the first time... we have just completed a 6 part series called Truth and Dare and this morning I would like to put a PS onto this series... and do 'Truth of Dare' one last time. However, we are going to do it a little differently this time around... instead of Truth or Dare it is only going to be Dare... and instead of asking for volunteers I have already picked the volunteers. So come on up Bryan Snyder, Megan Waltman, Chris Hess and Micah Waltman. Would you please give them a hand!

Bryan Snyder: Step through your arms

Megan Waltman: Say the alphabet backwards

Chris Hess: Juggle 3 raw chicken legs

Micah Waltman: Back flip

You are going to need a pen this morning... so if you don't have one... come on up and get one at one of the pillars. Let's stand up and find someone we don't know and shake their hand and tell them... it's a wonderful day and remain standing for worship through singing!

Youth Share: As most of you know our youth had a City Life Mission Trip this past week through Young Life and I have heard from a number of them that it was a fantastic trip... one that will impact them for a lifetime... so I have asked four of them to share briefly. So come on up Quinn Beitzel, Kristin Beiler, AJ Beyer and Mariah Hall. These kids spent the week installing insulation in attics, cleaning up junk, painting and building relationships... if you want to know more about their work... ask them. But this morning we want to know... how did this trip impact your life for eternity?

This has been a really fun series and yet there has been enough practical challenges to sober any of us up... so I have received some really great responses and I would like to just share a few:

From Michele Beyer: When 'Truth and Dare', was first introduced a few people (single like me) asked me what my thoughts were, as it sounded like it would be aimed at married people. I responded that #1, I was pretty sure you would make it relative to everyone :) and #2, if it was for married people, it could still be relative as we live among married people, some struggling in their marriage and others setting Godly examples. I also felt it was an opportunity to pray for the marriages in our congregation and I have done just that.

Each week... there have been several nuggets of truth... but these are the ones that stood out to me and are lessons I have learned recently and over the past few years:

- 1) Everyone needs someone to listen to their story... I work with clients who have incredible stories to share and love to share them, if only someone will listen.
- 2) Sometimes silence is the best answer. So often we say way more than what is necessary, especially in conflict. I have learned... being still and knowing God... really is the best way. God will let us talk and talk and rant and rave, even though He knows most of the time we need to sit down, shut up and stay out of his way... let Him do the speaking and let Him work... because, after all, He always has much more creative ways and more eloquent words to get the point across to the other person.

From Brittany Hershey: I have a quick story to tell. I had a favorite coffee mug that I would always drink from. One day I clumsily dropped it on the floor and it shattered to pieces. So sad!!! Then a few weeks went by... I was grabbing my coffee cup from the cabinet one morning when right in front of me was a new mug... identical to my favorite one that I had broke!! Inside the mug was a note 'I'd like to see you drinking from this again.' Just a simple action of love that really brightened this coffee lover's day!!

From Jo Border: The dare to swallow my pride and ask for help. In doing so I have been continually blessed... getting to know new people and allowing them to enjoy the blessing of giving. Thank you... just isn't enough... they are all in my prayers.

From Megan Waltman: Here was one of my thoughts I had while thinking about this series. So many times in life we have a habit or we do something without thinking (cracking your knuckles, saying umm a lot, or even how you say words with a 'Lancaster County' accent) and then someone points it out to you. At first you don't believe them but then you realize you actually do it a lot and then you are very conscious of it!

That's how I feel about all the different sermons in this series. I never really realize how selfish, rude, unkind etc. I was in my life until I really sat down and thought about it. Then I was like 'oh crap I am really bad at this whole love thing' (I actually wrote that in my journal). Now I try to be very conscious and aware about how I am treating others and if I am living the love dare, even when I am super stressed out and tired!

From Wayne Anderson: For a couple of months my wife and I have been stressing out on what to do about our deteriorating 'in ground' pool that was already here when we bought our house... neither one of us can swim or float! In eleven years my wife was in it about six times, but our grown children just love it.

Lately we have been worried about how we are going to keep up this expensive pool when we get in our golden years and when we have grandchildren... what if one of them would fall in the pool... how would we ever be able to save them if they fell in the deep end of the pool.

To upgrade and repair this pool would take thousands of dollars and we just didn't know what to do. This past Sunday morning before church... I got my morning coffee went outside and sat down by the pool. I looked up to the heavens and I asked God to "give me a sign just like in the movies". Then I prayed about it... the more traditional way.

Three hours later Marlin started his truth or dare sermon... it was... **GET RID OF THE STRESS IN YOUR LIFE.** Three hours after I prayed to God for a sign... I received my sign.... pretty cool right!

Tuesday morning a contractor knocked in my pool and started filling it up with dirt. Thanks for your down to earth sermons, this one really hit home!

Let's give those folks a hand for telling their stories... what a blessing!

The Apostle Paul writes in...

1 Timothy 3:14-15 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

These verses are all about behavior and I don't apologize for preaching about behavior for the past six weeks... because behavior impacts relationships, and relationships are crucial for successful living.

Deep within each one of us lies a room called the 'Appreciation Room'. It's where we store positive and encouraging thoughts about other people. On the walls of this room are written kind words and phrases describing the good attributes of other people. It may include words like honest, intelligent, physically strong, diligent worker, wonderful cook, beautiful eyes, full of life etc. These are the things we have discovered about other people that have become embedded in our memory. The more time we spend in this room... the more we become appreciative and grateful for other people.

Most of the words on the walls of this 'Appreciation Room' were written in the early stages of our relationship with others... be it the beginning of a new job, the first years of romance or the initial time of getting to know people at a new club or a Church. But as time goes on... we learn to take each other for granted and often find ourselves spending less and less time in this room... because there is another room deep in the recesses of our inner being demanding our attention.

This room is called the 'Depreciation Room'. On the walls of this room are written the things that irritate and bother us about other people. These words are often penned out of our hurt, frustration, disappointment and unmet expectations... words like... jerk, selfish, ugly, stupid, annoying deadbeat etc. Often we write these words in capital letters and italics and we highlight them with neon colors.

Many times we hang out in this room... stockpiling ammunition for the next tell-off, the next argument or the next big fight. This is the room where people fall out of love, marriages die, resignation letters are written and violence is conceived.

We may even justify the end result by saying... he really is a jerk... but the reality is... the writing on 'The Appreciation Room' is still true as well... regardless of how we are feeling today!

Slide # Steven and Alex Kendrick, authors of the Love Dare, say it this way...

'We all have this unfortunate tendency to downplay our own negative attributes while putting the failures of others under a magnifying glass.'

How many of you recall our magnifying glasses from last year at our outside service? Remember... we had writing in tiny tiny little font... that you needed to use a magnifying glass in order to make it large enough to read. Our tendency is put the failures of others under the magnifying glass and make them big and then look at our failures through the wrong end of binoculars... so they look tiny and far away.

Let's go to our notes. Make a note of this... the more time we spend in our 'Depreciation Room... the more our heart begins to devalue others! You can take it to the bank... its true!

Here is the assumption for the morning... No one benefits from our 'Depreciation Room'... absolutely no one! You don't benefit, I don't benefit, our boss doesn't benefit, the school doesn't benefit, the soccer team doesn't benefit, our spouse doesn't benefit... no one benefits!

There would be no point to this message this morning if others would benefit from our Depreciation Room... but the truth is... they don't! And yet we so often find ourselves in

this room. Why? What do we devalue others and depreciate them? What is underneath it all? Let's go to our roving mic.

Roving Mic Response:

The title of the message this morning is...

Title: Love chooses to believe the best!

Love chooses to believe the best about other people. Love chooses to give others the benefit of the doubt.

There is a guy in the NT named Philemon that is one of the Bible's best kept secrets... and the reason is this... cover to cover... his name is only mentioned one time in the entire Bible.... even though a book is named after him. Philemon was the kind of guy who spent a lot of time in the 'Appreciation Room'. The Apostle Paul writes this about him.

Philemon 4-7 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

Philemon believed the best about other people.... he refreshed the hearts of the saints! Isn't that a wonderful way of saying it! So how about you... are you refreshing the hearts of other saints... are you refreshing the hearts of other Christ followers? How can we do this? How can we believe the best about other people? Let's go to our notes.

Believing the best:

1. Rejoice whenever possible.

1 Corinthians 13:6-7 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Think about this past week...what can we rejoice over? Beautiful weather, food, health, medicine, freedom, relationships, we can walk, we can see, we can laugh... the list is endless! Love always finds something to rejoice over and catch this... when we find ourselves rejoicing... it's easy to believe the best about others.

Believing the best:

2. Focus on thoughts that bring life.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

Folks it starts in the mind! It starts with our thoughts. Paul tells in Ephesians to put on our spiritual armor and one of those pieces of armor is... the helmet of salvation... it covers our mind... our thinking...

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJ) reads... 'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.'

What do we think about... it will shape us! Focus on thoughts that bring life... it will inspire us to believe the best about others!

Believing the best:

3. Share words of encouragement.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

There is nothing like encouragement to motivate us. Think about what it does for us when we hear the words... good job, well done, you look great, that was helpful, thanks... words of encouragement motivate us to work harder and play better!

Let's go to our notes and I would like you to write down our dare for the week.

Dare for the week: Go to your appreciation room and pick a positive attribute about another person and then thank them for living it.

It's time to move into our 'Appreciation Room, to settle down and make it our home. Dreams and hopes have yet to be realized. Talents and abilities may be discovered in this room like buried treasure... but the choice to explore all of this... starts with the decision to hang out in the right room.

As we wrap this series up... I would like you to think about the ONE... the ONE above all others... that truly believes the best about us.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

God believed there was something in us that was worthy of great sacrifice and so he gave us a gift... his son. He believed the best about us... that we were worth redeeming... and so he gave his very best. That gift is available to each of you this morning and if you have never received it... I invite you to open your heart up to Jesus this morning. Let's just spend some time in prayer and reflection this morning.

Announce:

1. Reminder: Next week... no church.

2. 'How then should we live' starts Sunday morning July 13 and combines stories, interviews and teaching from six different authors into an original TL series on Practical Christian Living.

3. The meal will be served in about 15 minutes up on the deck. Please drop your dishes off up on the deck at one of the tables and be sure to go through the line with your children.

Let's Pray... for the food!

Benediction:

Might we be encouragers:

As we recognize strength in the character of others,

As we seek to enliven the hopes of the downcast,

And as we hold up the arms of the saints, both weary and the great

Might we cheer, spur on, and inspire those who toil in Your kingdom.