



Beauty and the Beast

On the surface Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* is an unlikely love story. It begins with this handsome young prince, transformed into a beast because of his inability to look below the surface and see inner beauty, something many of us struggle with.

His only escape from the curse would be if he could learn to love another and earn their love in return by the time the last petal fell off the rose. Only then would the spell be broken. If not, he would be doomed to be a Beast for all time.

Ice Breaker

Why is beauty only skin deep?

Opening Question

What stood out to you from the weekend message? Was there a scripture, principle, or action step that has stuck with you?

Beauty and the Beast was definitely not a case of love at first sight. Belle's father got lost and stumbled into the Beast's castle. He's creeped out by talking tea-cups and candlesticks unaware they're all trapped under a curse. He rushes out of the castle. He pauses to pluck a rose for his daughter Belle, and when he does the beast captures him and throws him in the dungeon. Belle comes to his rescue and finally this unlikely pair meets for the first time.

Scripture

Read John 15:13

Belle took her father's place. When Jesus went to the cross he took our place. He pushed us out of our prison cell and took upon himself our punishment, so we could go free. That's what real love looks like. People think love is a feeling, based on emotions. Feelings fluctuate up and down, but love doesn't stop when feelings stop.

Would you call yourself a loving person? What is your definition of love?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The word for love in this passage is the Greek word agape that speaks of an unconditional, self-sacrificing love. It is the love we should have for one another.

Love is willing to take the place of another, and when that kind of sacrificial love is present in a friendship, in a family, in a marriage – it changes things. It lifts others up. We move from selfish to selfless. When we experience life-changing love we want to share it, pass it on to others

Read Ephesians 4:20

When have you had someone who spoke words of life into you or invested in and mentored you? What impact did it have on your life?

What are practical ways we can show others God loves them? Is there a situation or relationship in your life that could benefit from words of intentional encouragement and kindness?

Read Philippians 4:8

In a world that is quick to respond, when emotions are high, it is easy to blow a problem out of proportion. Before you start throwing stones take a breath and try to focus on the good in the person you're dealing with. What is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy? When you focus on those things you'll stop believing the lies Satan is trying to tell you.

We all need to be transformed by Jesus to remake us into something new. Belle says to the Beast "Come back, I love you." That is the beauty and the message of the gospel, God saying to us, "Come back I love you."

When was there a time in your life that you were in need of a lifeline and sensed God calling you back?

Application

Identify action steps you can take to grow and become more like Jesus.

Pray