

Perfect Love Casts Out All Fear

Gina Witt - 2025-02-27

INTRODUCTION: We welcomed Gina Witt to TASTE for the first time. She talked to us about the most extraordinary love story ever written, not in a book, but in our hearts. This love story is special and unique to each one of us, our personal love story with our triune God, fueled with a love so powerful it casts out ALL fear.

A SPECIAL TIME & TWO QUESTIONS: We are in an incredible season right now – we are on the threshold of Lent in the Jubilee Year of Hope. There are many, many graces before us. We need to ponder in our hearts, sitting before the Lord, opening our spiritual eyes and ears, inviting the Lord to remove the obstacles that keep us from receiving His love.

- What are we hoping for this Jubilee Year? What is on our hearts? What have we been asking the Lord for?
- How do we encounter Lent intentionally this year? How will we grow in trust? How will we avail ourselves of the amazing graces before us?

Gina prayed for us that Jesus, the author of love, reveal to each of us what He desires us to know.

THE WAY OF LOVE: Gina quoted at length from **1 Corinthians, Chapter 13** – the way of love: If we do many great things, but do not have love, we gain nothing. And then she went into the beautiful verses describing everything that love is, culminating in “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:7). Love never fails, a promise we are all invited to claim. Are we ready to claim it, to fully believe it? We are all called to holiness, to sainthood, to be filled with the fullness of God. It is difficult to let go of the many contrary messages of the world, noisy, strong, powerful messages of force, self-reliance, of hyper-responsibility — especially for us women. It is hard to let go and let God. We strive for control, and a fierce independence, but we are called to be dependent on God. That dependence is not weakness, it is His strength in us, but we must invite Him into our hearts. Sanctity cannot happen in retaliation, by asserting ourselves against others. Gina gave us several scriptural references to affirm this point:

- **Luke 6:37** — “Stop judging, and you will not be judged; stop condemning, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven...”
- **James 1:19** — “Everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of a man does not accomplish righteousness of God...”
- **Ephesians 4:29** — “No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good and needed for edification that it may impart grace to those who hear it.”

We have a choice when something crosses the threshold of our lips – it can be a curse or a blessing. We have been desensitized because there is so much harsh language in the world today – foul language has become a mere exclamation point at the end of a sentence. We have to ask the Lord for prudence and wisdom to bridle our tongues.

Our Lady of Silence has become a dear friend of Gina's!

THE GIFT OF WOMEN: All women have the unique gift of maternity that is part of the feminine genius. This gift does not require natural children. This gift gives us the power to set the tone in a room. There is so much blessing, so much opportunity, and also some burden in this gift. We have the ability, with the help of our triune God, to allow what we speak to be life-giving. That is part of our feminine genius.

Throughout our lives, we have heard many things, sometimes from those entrusted with our care, that in our adulthood, we understand to be lies and curses that we have adopted as truths. We have built these false truths and the lies they come from into our belief system, and living out that belief system, we find ourselves making vows, many of them unwittingly. Self-reliance, and hyper-responsibility are lies. When we make vows, like “I will never be loved, so why try?” “I do not matter.” “I will be alone the rest of my life.” “I cannot trust anyone.” These are important places to ask the Lord to provide His light on the lies that led to these vows that now influence our freedom.

- **Philippians 4:8** — “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things...”

Gina reminded us to stay with these things.

MESSY DIVINE ORDER: Are we good at seeing God in the messes? In divine order, and in the ministry that Gina is a part of, there are a lot of messes. We all struggle with the world, the flesh and the devil, and we are all afflicted to some degree, but by God's grace most of us will only encounter “ordinary” temptations, “ordinary” afflictions. The souls Gina serves have crossed the line into “extraordinary” afflictions. Gina is blessed to participate in the great gift and journey of their love stories, their stories of healing, conversion, and transformation. The only reason the Lord would allow these afflictions is that there is a promise of a greater good.

How good are we at seeing God in the messes? Divine order looks messy when the Lord is beginning something new. It is like labor pains, when new life is being born, there is some suffering. And very quickly we can get disoriented. It is then important if we cannot see Him, to ask Him, “Lord where are you in this mess? We need Your Light now. Show us where you are so we may persevere in this storm and in this trial.” And He will answer. If we keep on doing what we have learned and received and heard and seen in our Lord, claiming His every promise, then the God of peace will be with us. God is tender, kind and generous. He is literally incapable of anything else. He will not force us. Without free will, we cannot choose Him, we cannot truly love Him the way He loves us, and desires us to return that love.

A DIFFERENT WAY: The tactics of the devil include manipulation, coercion and oppression. He is called the annoying one because that is exactly what he is. Why do we project the annoying one's stuff, the mess of the dark world onto God? Why do we project the lies, the beliefs, and the vows of broken love, of broken humanity? It is part of the Fall, original sin, and concupiscence, both in giving and receiving, but God has something more for us. Let us not stop at what we have experienced thus far, and then project that limitation on our limitless God. Let us make a promise together here, a holy vow that we will trust the Lord in a different way this Lent. Let us open our hearts, and let Him in, scary as it might feel, and claim his promises with a new fervor. The truth is He is NOT the punitive father. He is filled with mercy. He created us in and for freedom and love. He created us in love, for love, ALL OF US, no exception, not even Satan. St. John of the Cross says "Faith will make us believe in the greatness, the mercy and the infinite charity of God, but love will make us taste and experience them." He is a good Father. Let Him lavish and spoil us.

DO WE TRULY KNOW THAT WE ARE LOVED BY GOD?: if God stopped thinking and loving us, we would cease to exist. We have been breathed into being by His love. All human love from all time is but a drop in the ocean of love and mercy the Lord has for us. God is the source of living water that is to fill us to overflowing. Part of our gift of receptivity and sensitivity as women is that we are reservoirs of His love. We are given that great grace to be able to set the tone in a room because we have something special when we allow the Lord to till the soil of our soul, to sow His seeds that will one day grow into something incredible and beautiful. His love fills us and then that love naturally pours out from us. This means we have to be keep returning to the well, so we can be filled to overflowing again and again, so we can give to all those the Lord brings into our presence, that He has entrusted with our care. When God designed us, it was so that we would manifest in the world unique aspects of Him, aspects that only we possess, and in a way so unique that He desires to enter the world through us. It is hard for us in our humanity to even imagine that there are so many aspects of God, but He is infinite. Let us not limit our limitless God. He made us to delight in us, to enjoy us in this life and in the next. He desires to spend time with us, and to receive our love back in return: A love that comes from our free will, that is not forced, or coerced, or obtained by oppression.

HOW DO WE REST, ABIDE AND REMAIN IN THE TRUTH OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US?: We must claim our identity as beloved daughters of the living God through adoption in Jesus Christ. We are created by love by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in love. The Spirit breathes us into being for love. And Jesus Christ died for love of us. The Blessed Virgin Mary taught us to ponder in our hearts. We need to be attentive this Lenten season. Are we spending a lot of time in our heads or in our hearts? Are we listening to the three voices in our head: our voice, the voice of the bad spirit and the voice of the good spirit? The bad spirit is the enemy of the soul. He is very convincing, he seduces and he tricks. Our voice and the voice of bad spirit are the loud voices. We need to fight back by listening for the still, small voice, the voice of the good spirit, the whisper of God.

DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE CHOSEN WITH SO MUCH FERVOR AND EXCITEMENT BY OUR GOD?: We are perfectly imperfect. We are a temple of the Holy Spirit. He dwells within us. Born after the birth of Jesus, we do not have to live in the darkness of the pagans. Yet we have to fight to be in the world, but not of the world. God will show us the way, and then we will be witnesses to something more, to a promise meant for every single human person. When we think "I AM loved, I AM chosen," the truths of our identity, that we are created for freedom and love, fills our hearts with gratitude. And when filled with gratitude, we are filled with joy, contentment, all of the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is the love that casts out all fear. The enemy cannot stand being around love.

WHO IS AT THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES?: If it is not Jesus Christ, we will find ourselves in the same temptations or trials over and over again. And if Jesus is not at the center, where is He? And who or what is at the center? It is most likely something good, like a family member, or a worthy cause. When we are on the narrow path, and know, love and want to serve the Lord, the devil gets crafty, and he distracts and seduces us with goods. What are our idols? What is our identity outside Jesus Christ? The devil challenges identity with cognitive distortions, patterns of thinking that distort reality, and stir chaos, disunity and discord. He challenges us with over-generalizations, polarized or black and white thinking. None of this is of God because as we desire to grow in virtue, virtue is a golden mean of balance between two extremes. Mercy and justice must cohabitate. It is easier to blame others than to look within and face the pain of our own shortfalls. The devil encourages catastrophizing, believing that nothing will ever change, the fallacy of fairness which leads to victimhood, jumping to conclusions, the fallacy of change as in people need to change to accommodate us. Satan wants to pit us against each other. As women, we fight back with the gifts of God, with grace and with love.

HANDOUTS: Gina gave us 3 cards and suggested we use them as tools for prayer this Lent. Two of the cards cover patterns and themes of lies, beliefs and vows. One card titled "Who are you listening to?" juxtaposes God's love to Satan's hate, using St. Paul's definition of love found in 1 Cor 13. Satan's hate is the exact opposite of God's love. The dark world looks to pervert and distort good. The card also lists the fruits of the Spirit from Gal 5, contrasted to the fruits of Satan. God's love makes us His beloved children, and Satan's hate makes us his miserable victims. Another card lists Christian thinking versus magical thinking. It is easy to be pulled into magical thinking – we do NOT pray novenas for outcomes. In the Q & A, Gina clarified that the proper disposition of our heart must be a disposition of trust. We pray the novena for an intention in trust that God will answer it, but we say "Your will be done." The card also lists outcomes from the Holy Spirit, and from the spirit of divination, the false holy spirit. The devil is always at work. The third card will send him back to where he came from. It lists the three "Rs" of renunciation, of casting out the demonic: reject, renounce and rebuke, followed by a deliverance prayer.

CONCLUSION: As beloved daughters of the living God filled with the feminine genius, may we be heralds of Hope this Jubilee Year, changing lives, sharing our stories, and impacting the stories of others.