

# Love of the Brethren (Part 1)

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[ 0 : 00 ] A pastor's encouragement.

Your pastor's encouragement.! Beloved, let us love one another.!

For love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Now, I said that was your pastor's encouragement, but actually it's a quote from Scripture, and you knew that, didn't you? And so if you would, take your Bibles this morning and open them to 1 John chapter 4.

1 John chapter 4 and verse 7. As you're looking for the passage, let me relate a little bit of history or at least a story that is told about the Apostle John, the beloved Apostle.

[ 1 : 22 ] Some have called the Apostle of love. Paul being the Apostle of faith. John being the Apostle of love, though, of course, you know Scripture, and Paul wrote a great deal about love too, didn't he?

But Jerome, the early church father, wrote a story about the aged Apostle John.

And it seems it goes like this, that when John was very, very old, he was not able to walk very well and not able to attend the assembly of God's people, the church.

And so his students, friends, would literally carry him to the worship services. And at the close of the service, they would ask John, they would bring John to the front and let him speak a word to the people.

Can you imagine that? Having the Apostle John as a member of your church. And so they would carry him to the front and he would speak these words, according to Jerome.

[ 2 : 32 ] He would say, little children, let us love one another. And every Sunday, as the story goes, week after week, they would bring the aged Apostle to the front and he would speak the same words over and over and over again.

Little children, let us love one another. Well, as people are, they got a little bit impatient about that repeated message over and over again.

And really, we're wanting more. And so they inquired of the Apostle John, why do you keep giving us the same message over and over and over again?

Day after day, week after week. To which John responded, because it is the Lord's command. And if this only is done, it is enough.

Now, let me read what he wrote in our text for this morning, starting with verse seven. Beloved, speaking as a pastor, this is very pastoral.

[ 3 : 47 ] And that's why I've chosen this text for this morning. Beloved, let us love one another. For love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The one who does not love does not know God. For God is love. By this, the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent his only begotten son into the world so that we might live through him.

In this is love. Not that we loved God. But that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved.

If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us.

And his love is perfected in us. A tremendous text. And it goes on from there. And I've just chosen this particular portion of the chapter.

[ 4 : 56 ] And I'm going to spend this morning preaching out of this text. Really just the first two verses of the text. And then next Sunday we will revisit this text. And I'll give you the rest of it.

It's all about the love of God being manifested in his children and expressed toward one another within the body of Christ.

The love of the brethren. Or mutual love. That we're to have for one another. Mutual, reciprocating, loving of one another is the subject of the text.

Now let me give you a little bit of the context. You know when preachers get up behind the pulpit and they preach. They're focusing on one particular text. And unless that pastor is preaching through a book of the Bible.

It's difficult to get a hold on the context. And I don't want you to think that I'm taking this passage out of its context. And preaching it in a way that it was not intended to mean.

[ 6 : 06 ] And so let's just consider how this fits in the letter. And to do that let's just back up to chapter 3 and look at verse 21.

In verse 21. And I'll just go right ahead. Because it won't take you long to find it. Just the previous chapter. Verse 21.

John writes this. Beloved if our heart does not condemn us. We have confidence before God. And whatever we ask we receive from him. Because we keep his commandments.

Now notice this. Because we keep his commandments. And do the things that are pleasing in his sight. And just in case you don't know what those commandments are.

He says in verse 23. This is his commandment. By the way I'd have you note that it's in the singular. Not plural. This is the commandment to you.

[ 7 : 07 ] And then he's going to name two things. The commandment is singular. But it's a two-fold commandment. Okay. And what is it? Here's John summing it all up.

And John knows what the Lord said. He walked with him. He sat with him. He was taught by him. He had fellowship with him. He knew Jesus intimately.

And this is what he says. This is his commandment. That we first believe in the name of the Son Jesus Christ. His Son Jesus Christ.

And two. Love one another just as he commanded us. There's the two-fold command of the Lord Jesus Christ. As related or summed up by the Apostle John.

Now where did Jesus command such a thing? Well a number of places. In fact we read the passage just a moment ago together. John chapter 13 and verse 34.

[ 8 : 09 ] Jesus said. A new commandment I give to you. That you love one another. Even as I have loved you. That you also love one another.

By this all men shall know that you are my disciples. That you have love one for another. And we could turn over just a few chapters.

And you don't need to turn there. But let me go ahead and read them to you. John chapter 15 and verse 12. Where Jesus again is speaking. And he says. This I command you.

That you love one another. Now is there any doubt in anybody's mind here this morning. That the clear command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To his disciples. To his followers. To his people. His children. Is to love one another. This is the commandment. And so John over here in our text.

[ 9 : 05 ] In 1st John chapter 4. Is putting that in. In a nutshell. He is summing it up. And he says. This is the commandment. That you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And love one another. Just as Jesus commanded you. Then when he begins. In chapter 4. He is. Spelling it out for us. These two things. In the first few verses. Verses 1 through 6. The subject is. That first part of the commandment.

About believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then when he gets to. Verse 7. Now he is going to flesh out. This whole idea. Of loving one another. This is the context.

The outline of the sermon. By the way. I don't always preach this way. Hopefully I can. Preach a sermon. And you can pick out the outline. Okay. I just want to approach it this way.

[ 10 : 06 ] So that we. So that we can focus in. On this text. And know. What the apostle is saying. And. And what it means to us. And so the outline. Of the text. Is based upon.

The repetition. Of the phrase. Love one another. It appears three times. In the text. And so. The framework. Of my sermon.

Hangs on those three. Times that. That phrase appears. Love. One. Another. And so let me go ahead. If you're taking notes. Let me go ahead.

And give you. The three points. Of my sermon. Actually. Only one of these. We'll be looking at. This morning. The other two. Will come next Sunday morning. But you can go ahead. And jot it down.

And you can go ahead. And study the text yourself. And then next week. When we come together. And I preach. From this text again. Then after the service is over. You can come up to me. And say. Well preacher. I think you've got that wrong.

[11:04] You know. Hopefully you'll come to me. And say. You know. You're right. About that. Let me give it to you. Just three points. First.

Love one another. Or loving one another. Is a reality. Of the greatness. Of God. See the focus. This morning. In fact. Throughout the text. Is going to be the greatness. Of God. And this. One feature. Or characteristic.

Of God. That he is. Love. So. Point number one. The reality. Or loving one another. Is a reality. Of the greatness. Of God.

Secondly. Loving one another. Is a response. To the grace. Of God. As we consider. Our great salvation.

[12:02] We have. In Jesus Christ. Christ. Our natural response. Or rather. Supernatural response. Is to love one another.

Based upon the great. Love. That has been lavished. Upon us. Through Christ. Thirdly.

Loving one another. Is a. Reflection. Of the glory. Of God. John says.

No one. Has ever seen God. But our loving. One another. Reflects. Who God is. To the world.

It's a reflection. Of his glory. All right. So that's where. We're headed. This morning. And next.

Sunday morning. And so. If you have plans. For next Sunday.

[12:56] You need to break them. And be here. So that you can get. The entire message. Okay. Now. Here's what I propose. Every sermon.

Needs a proposition. See I'm preaching. In this way. And approaching it. This way. So that you'll know. This is. How Don Coleman. Your pastor. Approaches.

The task of preaching. I look for the context. And. And then. Look for an outline. And. And how. The meaning of the text. Is expressed.

And then. I propose something. Not Don Coleman. But the text. Proposes. To you. A truth. That God wants you to know. And here's what I propose.

Based upon the clear command. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mutual love. Within the body of Christ. This body.

[13:53] Highland Park Baptist Church. Mutual love. Reciprocating love. Loving one another. Is not an optional virtue.

It is what defines us. We define by a number of things. We are certainly defined by. Doctrine. Aren't we? We are defined by. We are defined by. We are defined by. But even. More than. Being defined by. Orthodoxy. We are defined by love.

You see we can. We can. As. The body of Christ. We can believe all the right things. And it's important to believe the right things. I'll be the first one. To stand before you.

And say that. Correct. Doctrine. Biblical. Orthodoxy. Is. Important. Extremely important. You can believe all the right things.

[14:56] And not be in God's will. If. We do not love one another. It is not an optional virtue. For any of us here this morning.

Not for today. Not throughout this week. Not through the month. Not this year. Not next year. It's not an optional virtue. For as long as we.

Live on this planet together. In fact. It is something that will continue on from here. Beloved. Let us love one another.

John tells us. Why. That's not an option. John tells us why. Love ought to define us. And must define us. As.

A body. The body of Christ. And the first. One is. And I've already given it to you. But here it is again. Loving one another.

[15:53] Is. A reality. Of the greatness of God. Let's read. Verses seven and eight again. Beloved.

Let us love one another. For love is from God. And everyone who loves. Is born of God. And knows God. The one who does not love. Does not know God.

For God. Is love. Now I want to. Stop right there. With the last phrase. Of verse eight. God is love. You know.

John. Is writing. In a pastoral way. Certainly. He's speaking to. His little flock. Or the little flock. And he says. Beloved. So he.

Is being very pastoral. Here. But. In a literary sense. He's being very poetic. Poetic. And what he. Writes here. Especially in these first two verses.

[16:48] Seven and eight. Is written in a poetic style. And so he gets to the foundational truth. In the end. But. You and I. Don't think. Necessarily.

In a poetic. Way. We think analytically. And so. We would begin. If we were relating the truth. That John. Is. Has related to us here.

We would begin. With the last thing. He said. God is love. Therefore. We ought to love one another. That's. An analytical approach.

And since I'm an analytical. Kind of guy. Let's. Begin there. And so. I'm going to take the text. In reverse order. And that's all right. We have freedom. To do that. We're not changing.

The meaning of it. But I think. We need to start. With. This phrase. God is love. And so. Here is the first. Of my two points. Sermon. This morning. Love is what God is.

[17:46] The very foundational. Truth. That John. Is giving us here. Upon which. The rest. Of what he wants us.

To get. The application. Of that truth. Upon which. That is founded. Or built upon. Is this truth. That God is love. This truth. About the nature.

Of God. The very. Inner. Essence. Of who God is. God. Is. Love. Now.

You know. That God is. A lot of things. Isn't he? Ever considered. All the things. The Bible tells us. That God is. I jotted down. A few here.

Actually. I typed them. On my computer. Okay. We don't jot things. Down anymore. Do we? Much. When I do. I lose the note. But it's always. In the computer.

[18:39] So here. Here are just a few things. To consider about. What God is. Or what the Bible. Says he is. In the first place. We know that God. Is eternal. Isn't he?

He's eternal. No beginning. And no end. In fact. At the burning bush. When Moses met with. Yahweh. God. The great I am. The eternal God.

The self-existent one. That's how God. Revealed himself. To Moses. I am. That I am. That is. I've always been. And am. And always will be.

And the Bible says. And Moses prayed. Lord. Thou has been. Our dwelling place. In all generations. Before the mountains. Were brought forth. Or ever thou hast. Formed the earth. And the world.

From everlasting. To everlasting. Thou art God. God is. Eternal. Now. That is. A tremendous truth. About God.

[19:34] And. And. Yet. It's not difficult. To. Get our brains. Around that reality. Now. I don't think. That any of us. Are able to think. In terms of eternity.

But. It's not difficult. For me. To grasp. And get a hold. Of the truth. That God is eternal. And the Bible. Clearly says. That he is. God. Also.

Is. Intelligent. Isn't he? He's. Intelligent. He told. Isaiah. For my thoughts. Are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways. My ways. Sayeth the Lord. For as. The heavens. Are higher. Than the earth. So are my ways. Higher than your ways. And my thoughts. Than your thoughts.

God is intelligent. God's not learning anything. God knows everything. Doesn't he? Is it difficult for you.

[20:33] To get a hold of that? To believe that? I'm not saying. That we can understand. The depths of that. Because his thoughts. Are higher. As the heavens.

Are higher than the earth. That. God. Is intelligent. God. Is wise. According to scripture.

Paul. As he was writing. His letter. To the Romans. And. There in the 11th chapter. He kind of broke out. Into a doxology. And.

John wrote. Oh. The depth. Of the riches. Both of the wisdom. And knowledge. Of God. How. Unsearchable. Untraceable.

Literally. Are his judgments. And his ways. Past finding out. God is. Wise. Beyond.

[21:27] Comprehension. And yet. I can. Comprehend. Or I can. Accept the fact. And get a hold. Of the fact. That God. Is. Eternal. He's intelligent.

He's wise. And. I don't have any problem. Accepting that. Do you? God. Is holy.

You know. I'm not. Naming all. Of the things. God is. But. These are some. That just stand out to me. And. And what about this one. God. Is holy.

Holy. God. Is. Holy. He is. The high. And. Holy. One. The Bible.

Says. God. Is. Holy. In all. His. His. Works. According. To scripture. In.  
[ 22 : 23 ] Isaiah. Chapter 6. Verse 3. The seraphim. As. Isaiah. Was there. In. The. Temple. And.  
The seraphim. Were there. And. They were singing. And. What. Were they singing?

Holy. Holy. Holy. Is. The Lord. Of hosts. And. We go. All the way. To the book. Of. Revelation. In.  
Revelation. Chapter 4.

Verse 8. And. The four. Beasts. Around. The throne. And. They were crying. Or singing. Literally. I  
believe. Day. And night. And night. And day. And day. And night.

Over. And over. And over. Holy. Holy. Holy. Is. The Lord. God. Almighty. Who. Was.

And is. And is. To come. I mean. God. Is. Holy. It's awfully. Difficult. For a preacher. Not to just.

[ 23 : 16 ] Break out. Into a whole sermon. On the holiness. Of God. God. Is. Good. Isn't he? And  
as.

Kind of. The. Response. Is. God. Is. Good. All. The time. And.

All. The time. He is. Good. God. Is. Good. In fact. David. Invited. His readers. To. To. Taste. And.  
See. That.

The. Lord. Is. Good. Have. You. Tasted. That. Lately. Paul. Speaks. Of. The. Richest. Richness. Or.  
The. Riches. Of. His. Goodness. God. Is. Good. God. Is. Merciful. Understand. All. Of.

[ 24 : 09 ] These. Things. That. I. Am. Mentioning. About. God. The. Nature. Of. God. The.  
Character. Of. God. The. Express. God. How. God. Expresses. Himself. All. These. Are. Are.

Clearly. Taught. In. Scripture. And. They're. Not. Really. Hard. For. Us. To. Embrace. Not. Really.  
God. God. God. Is. Mercy. God. Is. Mercy. Mercy.

Mercy. Is. Mercy. Mercy. Is. Great. Above. The. Heaven. God. Is. Mercy. Mercy. I. Could.

Go. On. And. On. I. Suppose. God. Is. Just. God. Is. Omniscient. Already. Talked. About. The.  
Wisdom. And. Intelligence. Of. God. God.

Is. Omnipresent. That is. He. Is. Everywhere. Present. And. Nowhere. Absent. Can. You. Get.  
Ahold. Of. That. I. I. Can. I.

[ 25 : 01 ] I. Don't. Understand. It. But. I. I. I. Can. Believe. That. God. Is. Everywhere. At. The.  
Same. Time. Everywhere. Present. Nowhere. Absent. God. Is. Omnipotent.

Got. Any. Problem. With. That. God. Is. All. Powerful. A couple. Guys. Were. Looking. Up. Into.  
The. Heavens. One. Night. And. Just. Talking. About. The. Universe. And. How. Vast. It. Is. And.  
How. Big. It. Is. And. All. The. Solar. Systems. And. The. Galaxies. And. And.

The. Distance. Out. There. That. It's. Unfathomable. How. Large. Our. Universe. Is. And. And. Just.  
Commenting. On. The. The. Reality. That. Most. Of. It.

A. Greater. Part. Of. It. We've. Not. Even. Seen. Yet. Or. Discovered. Yet. And. One. Man. Said. To.  
The. Man. He said. You know. I. Wonder. Why. Did. God. Go. To. All. That. Trouble. To.

[ 25 : 57 ] Which. The. Other. One. Responded. What. Trouble. God. I.

Don't. Have. A. Problem. With. That. I. Can. Embrace. It. I. Can. Believe. That. I. Love. To. Hear.  
That. And. Talk. About. That. In fact. If. I. Don't. Stop. Will. Not.

Have. Time. To. Get. To. The. Rest. Of. It. Here. This. Morning. This. Some. Of. The. Things. That.  
God. Is. And. John. Has. Already. Though. We've. Not. Looked. At. It.

Has. Already. Mentioned. That. God. Is. Light. And. He. Has. Also. Informed. Us. In. This. Little.  
Letter. Here. At. The. End. Of. The. New. Testament. That. God.

Is. Spirit. And. We. Could. Go. On. And. On. But. Here. In. This. This. Chapter. John.

[ 26 : 52 ] Informs. Us. About. That. Is. Really. Hard. To. Believe. That.

God. Is. Love. Someone. Has. Said. That. The. Doctrine. That. God. Is. Love. Is.

The. Hardest. Thing. To. Believe. About. Him. And. Why. Would. That. Be. Because. Why. Would.  
God. Love. Me. I.

Can. Understand. That. He. Created. All. Things. That. I. I. Can. Ascribe. That. To. God. Without.  
Any. Problem. Without. Any. Qualms. Without. Any. Doubts. I. Really. Can. And.

I. Can. I. Can. A. Hold. Of. Fact. God. Is. All. Knowing. In. Fact. It. Is. The. Reality. that. God.  
Knows. All. Things.

[ 27 : 48 ] that. Makes. Difficult. me to believe that he loves me, that God is love based upon what  
he knows about me. You see, this is the foundation for what John is trying to teach us here.

The foundation is that this thing of love, it is what God is. God is love.

Perhaps the hardest truth to believe. In fact, someone has suggested that if you can believe that God is love, then you can believe all the other things God is.

This is the bedrock foundation. God is love. Love is what God is. See, it's what he is.

Not just that he loves as good as that is. But that he is love. You're not going to, you and I are not going to understand what John says before this until we understand that God is love.

[ 29 : 07 ] That's the basis, the foundation, the foundational truth. Secondly, as we move backward in the text. Love is what God gives.

And God can give it because love is what he is. That's why we have to start there. Love is what God gives.

What kind of love is it? Look at verse 7 again. Beloved, let us love. One another.

What kind of love is that? Now, I'm sure that most of you have been in church long enough and heard enough preachers speak on the word love, the Greek word love, to understand or to remember that there are at least three words in the Greek language that we would translate in English.

We would translate love. It isn't that sad about the English language that we have just one word, just one, and God has at least three.

[ 30 : 12 ] Two of them are very prominent in scripture. Phileo, brotherly love. Love. And the one that's here in our text.

What is it, do you think? What's that? Agape. You already know, don't you? And yet you couldn't tell that from the English.

But the English is a translation of the Greek text. And in the Greek text, it's agape. Agape. Agape love. Isn't it sad? In our language and in our culture, that it's very difficult to distinguish what a person means when they say, I love something.

For example, tell me the difference between these two statements. I love you. And I do, by the way. Or how about this one? I love cherry cheesecake.

And I do, by the way. Now, you know two things about your pastor. The first one, I hope you've heard from the search team.

[ 31 : 21 ] I hate tuna fish. I made that very clear on my trial sermon when they traveled not far from here to hear me preach live.

And I made that very clear. And I hope they have not forgotten about it. And I hope now that you all know about it. I hate tuna fish. I hate it. But I love cherry cheesecake. But listen.

What's the difference? When a person says, I love you. And I love cherry cheesecake. Or I love country and western music.

Or I love a certain Hollywood actor. Or actress. I mean, it's barely distinguishable in our language. And so we have to bring into play other aspects of that. And body language is one. And even voice inflection. Sometimes we'll make the difference that way.

[ 32 : 23 ] I love you. I love cherry cheesecake. You can tell the difference just in the way I have spoken. And yet, other than that, it's difficult to know the difference.

And not only that, in our culture, we love a lot of things. And there's such a misapplication of the word. That it's difficult then, when scripture teaches us this great truth about loving one another. It's difficult for us to see the difference between loving one another and loving baseball. There's a huge difference.

There is a divine difference. Because agape is uniquely Christian. Uniquely. In fact, as John goes on to tell us, the very proof that you are a child of God is that you love your brother and sister within the body of Christ.

We don't love to be saved. But because we're saved, we then have that divine nature in us so that we can express God's kind of love to one another.

[ 33 : 35 ] There's a huge difference. It's agape love. That's what kind of love he's talking about here. It's the love, by the way, of which Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

And we don't have time this morning because the clock is broken. I don't really know how much time we have. I'm sorry. I do have a watch.

I'm sorry to look there. We don't have time to look in to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. But you know the love chapter. And just listen to how Paul wrote it.

He said, love is patient. Love is kind. Whatever happened to just good old-fashioned kindness within the body of Christ.

It's kind. Those are two positive things and a few negative things. It is not jealous. Love does not brag. And is not arrogant. Does not act unbecomingly.

[ 34 : 42 ] It does not seek its own. It is not provoked. Does not take into account a wrong suffered. Does not rejoice in unrighteousness.

But rejoices with the truth. Bears all things. Believes all things. Hopes all things. Endures all things. Love never fails.

This is agape love. This is divine love. This is self-sacrificial love. In fact, someone has defined it this way. That agape love is to have a consuming passion for the well-being of others.

That is a God kind of love. We need more of that within the body of Christ. The church today. Is suffering from a lack of love. We have turned our love inward. Even in most churches, worship.

[ 35 : 54 ] Our so-called worship reflects that. Our love has turned inward. And so we have a passion for our own well-being.

Period. But agape love, as exemplified by the cross, clearly. And we'll get to that next Sunday. Is to have a consuming passion for the well-being of others.

What a day it will be. When God's people, all of God's people. Express that within the body of Christ.

To not look upon our own needs, but on the needs of others. To have a passion for the well-being of others. That's what kind of love this is.

Now, the other question that I might have for you. Is, who are we to love? Well, really, I don't have to spend much time on this. Because it's very clear from the text.

[ 37 : 02 ] That John is writing to the church. Okay? Now, that does not exclude the commandment to love the world. After all, God loves the world.

And we're to love the world in the name of Jesus Christ. With this motivation to bring them to Christ. To glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

By proclaiming the good news of His kingdom to this world. But we're to love others. But the subject here. And this admonition to love one another.

Is for those within the body of Christ. We're to love one another. But I want to expand that a little bit. And have you consider that we ought to consider who God loves.

I mean, because God is love. And God expresses His love in some manifold ways. And someone has kind of put that together. In fact, his name is D.A. Carson.

[ 38 : 04 ] In a book that he wrote a number of years ago. Entitled, The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God. I've already talked about how difficult it is, really. And he identified five expressions of love coming from God.

Springing from God. Number one, God's peculiar love for His Son. That is, He loves His Son, Jesus. And His Son, the Lord Jesus, loves the Father.

The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. John 3.35. And so, there's point number one. In the five expressions of God's love. His peculiar love for His Son.

Number two, God's providential love for His creation. The things He has created. That not even, the Bible tells us, not even a sparrow would fall.

And to escape God's knowledge. And God's care. He knows even if a sparrow falls from a tree. Keeps track of that. He has a providential love for His creation.

[ 39 : 12 ] The very hairs of our head are numbered. God keeps count. For some of us, it's not all that hard to do. But, sorry about that.

Couldn't resist. God's providential love. Number three, God's preventing love. Toward His world.

The world of man. God's preventing love. The Bible says in John 3.16 that God so loved the world. That He gave His only begotten Son. God intervened.

I tell you, the whole world was eclipsed by wickedness. And God expressed. He took a salvific stance before the world of man.

He loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And the good news, we get to be a part of that. In that we are sent out around the world to proclaim the love of God to the world.

[ 40 : 12 ] God's preventing love. He could just simply let the world of man go. Just go. Go on headlong into wickedness.

God also, or there is also God's particular love for His elect.

God's effective, selecting love for His elect.

And then finally, God's provisional love. In the sense of conditional. His provisional, conditional love for His own people.

That is, God, Exodus 20, verse 6 says, God shows His love to a thousand generations of those who love me.

[ 41 : 13 ] And keep my commandments, He says. That doesn't mean that God's love is conditional in that sense. But God's relational love, fellowship love with you, is dependent upon you obeying Him.

His provisional love. Don't find yourself outside of that through disobedience. God will chasten you. With the desire to bring you back to Himself. But His expressing of love, communion love with you, is provisional.

It's conditional. These are the five ways that God loves. And I would suggest to you that we can express, because His divine nature is in us through regeneration, God in us, we can express these same love for others as well.

His peculiar love for the Son. It's not so peculiar. In the sense of unique, though, we love the Lord Jesus Christ. And we're able to love Him, because God is in us.

[ 42 : 24 ] And God is love. Do you see the connection here? How important that foundational truth is, that God is love. Then I have God living in me, and that divine love operating in my life.

And I can express that to the Son. To the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. I love Him. I love Him.

I love Jesus. Also, the providential love, in a sense. I don't think we all ought to become radical environmentalists, but we ought to have a care for this planet.

We can't know when a sparrow falls, but we don't have to shoot it out of the tree, either, with a BB gun, like I did once when I was a kid.

Just for no good reason. Love and care and take care and be good stewards of what God has given to us to enjoy. It's part of His grace.

[ 43 : 22 ] And God has a love for, a providential love, and we can express that as well, or be a part of that. God's preventing love. It's a good part. God has sent His Son into the world.

God gave His Son, that all those who believe, will not perish, but have everlasting life. And how can we be a part of that love? Well, it's simple, isn't it?

We can go to the ends of the world, and proclaim the love of Jesus. To proclaim the gospel to the four corners of this world.

We've been commanded to do that. And then also, God's provisional love, and probably it's harder to find a connection there.

But in a sense, as the body of Christ, our love for one another, in the sense of communion and fellowship, is somewhat dependent upon obedience.

[ 44 : 26 ] That is at the heart of church discipline, by the way. We don't cease to love a sinning brother or a sinning sister. We seek to bring them to repentance and reconciliation with God.

And if there is refusal, then there must be broken fellowship. See, what kind of love is it? It is divine love. It is God love.

It's agape love. And who are we to love? We're to love God's people. Love one another. From where does this love come?

It comes from God. That's what the text says there in verse 7. The love of God for love is from. It's the preposition.

Ek. From. Out of. God. It springs out of God. Because God is love. And when you are born of God, then the divine nature of God lives in you.

[ 45 : 33 ] And it is that wellspring of love that we draw upon. We love one another from the love that God has given to us. It's in us. And expressed through us.

And then one last question, and I'm nearly done. How does this love come to us? And really this brings us to the burning question.

Do you have this love? Do you have it? This divine love?

As you look at your life and evaluate your life and how you relate to God's people. Does this kind of love define it?

This love, this consuming passion for the well-being of others? That really is the burning question. And John.

[ 46 : 41 ] Says some pretty tough things here. Answers the question. How does this love come to us? Well.

Comes through the new birth. Comes through regeneration. Comes as a result of a genuine salvation experience with Jesus Christ.

In fact, this kind of love. Bears testimony to the reality. Of your new birth experience. That's exactly what John said.

This love. Is from God. And everyone who loves. In this way. That's what John is saying.

Not just love in general. But everyone who loves. In this kind of love. Is born of God. The implication being.

[ 47 : 45 ] If. You're not born again. And you cannot love this way. You can love. And certainly lost people.

Express. A love that looks very much like Christian love. I mean there are a lot of loving people outside the church. In fact, there are some people outside the church. That put.

God's people to shame. When it comes to love. In the sense of expressing. Active. Self-sacrificing love. But. Though we cannot see it. It's not perfect.

Divine love. Unless a person has been born of God. That is. Unless a person. Has been birthed. From above. And it's through the new birth.

That Jesus. Through the person of the Holy Spirit. Comes to indwell. Take up residence. Pitch a tent. In the life. Of the believer. And so it is the divine nature.

[ 48 : 42 ] Of God. In us. That allows us to express. This kind of love. This agape love. It is evidence. Of the new birth. It's not a way.

To be saved. We're not. Saved. Through loving. We're saved. And because of it. We can express. That kind of love.

Self-sacrificing. Divine. Love. Born. Of. God. And knows. God. And so. Not only is. Regeneration. Or love. Rather. The evidence. The proof. Really. Of. Regeneration. But also. It is a proof.

Of. A vital. Fellowship. We have with God. He says. That you know God. Not just know about him.

[ 49 : 39 ] Or know some things about him. But to know him intimately. And so. Regeneration. And. Communion. As a matter of fact. Regeneration. In the text.

Is in the perfect tense. It means it's something that happened back here somewhere. And the effects of it are continuing on. And the evidence of that. Is that you love.

Your brother. And your sister. With a. Self-giving. Divine love. And then the word. Know. Or knows God.

God. Is a present tense. Verb. And that means. It is. Active. It is. Continual. And it speaks to the fact that.

As a born again. Child of God. I am. Know. I know God. And I know him more. And I am knowing him more. And I. And as I live throughout.

[ 50 : 34 ] And journey throughout this life. On this earth. I become. I come to know him. More. And more. And better. And better. And the implication is. That I am able to love.

My brother. And my sister. In a. More perfect way. It is the evidence. It is what defines us.

Dear people. Even more than orthodoxy. Defines us. Even more than faith. Defines us.

You say. Now wait a minute. I thought faith. In Christ. Is what defines us. Well it does. But not more than love. Defines us. Isn't that what.

Paul. Teaches us. In first Corinthians 13. If you. If I were to know all things. Not have love. I am nothing.

[ 51 : 32 ] You say. If I have. A mountain moving. Kind of faith. My kind of faith. Can move. Pike's Peak. But if I have. Have not love. Then it is worthless.

What defines us. Dear people. Love. One. For another. By this. Shall all men know. That we are followers. Of the Lord.

Jesus Christ. That we have love. One. For another. That we love. One. Another. And that's what John says. Beloved. Let us love. One another. For love is from God.

Everyone who loves. In that way. Is born of God. And knows God. Those. He ends with a negative. One who does not love. Does not know God. God. Here is perhaps. The hardest part.

[ 52 : 30 ] Of the whole message. And it's the last part. The closing part. And that is this. According to. God's word.

If you don't love your brother. If you don't love your sister. If you. Do not recognize.

As a pattern of your life. A self-sacrificing love. For God's people. Then you. Have no warrant.

