

True Love

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[0 : 00] 1 John, would you please stand with me again, reading from chapter 2, verses 7 through 11.

! Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment is the word of God that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? This letter is written by the Apostle John, who is known as the Apostle of Love because of how much he talks about love. And as we continue to go through this letter, we'll see that theme repeated over and over again. Love is love. We see that phrase everywhere, don't we? Whether it's printed on t-shirts or posters, bumper stickers, memes and hashtags on social media, love is love. Love is love is the mantra of many. Their ideologies, their political views and personal ethics are all shaped around the idea that love is love. But what is love? Depends on who you ask.

And the answer you get will vary depending upon who you ask. So let's ask God. Let's ask for the Bible's definition, God's definition, because after all, He is the creator of all things. He is the source of all truth, and He ought to know. The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language, and it uses four different words to define what love is. For example, the first kind of love is eros. It describes romance, love that desires physical intimacy. And then there's phyllos, which describes friendship, a brotherly kind of love, a linking arms with someone else, another person to pursue a common goal together. The third kind of love is storge, and that describes the affection that a person might have for a favorite pet, or a favorite food, or maybe a favorite sports team. And then finally, there is agape love, which describes love characterized by sacrifice in the pursuit of another's good. Agape love is true love.

It's active, not passive. It's selfless, not self-serving. It doesn't ask, what does this person have to offer me, but what do I have to offer this person? It's the kind of love exemplified by a person willing to lower themselves to lift up another. This is the kind of love that the Bible most celebrates, because it's the kind of love that best communicates the love of God, as exemplified in Jesus Christ, His Son.

[4 : 14] It's the kind of love that John is talking about in this passage. In this letter, later on, John will say that God is love. Now, a lot of people are familiar with that phrase, that God is love, and those who say love is love use God is love to support whatever it is they choose to love without understanding the context in which that statement was originally used in the Bible. So let's go there.

1 John 4, 7 through 12. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this, the love of God was made manifest among us that God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we first love 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 ever seen God.

If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. That's the immediate context where this phrase is located. But now if we zoom out further and look at the rest of this letter, we see that the first God is statement in 1 John is that God is light, followed by the statement, and in Him is no darkness at all. God's love is pure. It's righteous, and it's truthful.

And God has shown His love in the darkness by sending the light of His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. In John 3.16, we're all familiar with that verse, but let's read down to verse 20 as Jesus meets with Nicodemus. And He tells him, For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest His works should be exposed.

[7 : 10] You cannot truly love God and imitate His love if you love what He calls sin. To know God's love is to understand the depths to which He lowered Himself to lift you up.

And so in our passage today, John continues to test the genuineness of our profession to know Jesus Christ savingly. And based on how we obey God's command to love others, we'll determine whether or not we understand what love really is. So the main idea for this morning's sermon is that those who truly know Jesus obey God by loving others. Those who truly know Jesus obey God by loving others.

Why is this important? Well, if you're a believer this morning, love is the preeminent mark of a truly saved person. God does not ask you. He commands you to reflect and to mirror His agape love. Jesus said in Matthew 5, 46 through 48, For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

[8 : 48] To love like God is to love in a way that communicates His light, His truth, that lifts others up, that seeks to rescue sinners from their love of sin. A person who truly knows God is characterized by His agape love, not hate. Why is this important for you this morning if you're an unbeliever?

I ask you, do you truly know and love the God of the Bible? A God who loves your sin? A God who is truly of this world, no different from this world? A God who obeys you? A God who commands nothing from you? In fact, it's a God whom you command?

A God whom you're truly the God of. In 1 John 2, 15 through 17, we read, Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God abides forever. And so again, I ask you, is God someone you seek to gain the world's treasures? Or is God someone you seek because you truly treasure him? You know, false teachers confuse the Christians in the churches that John was writing to you with lies that were leading them astray from the truth. They claim to be enlightened, but their teaching was truly unloving because it was leading people further away from the truth.

And lying to people is not loving people. And so I hope to speak the truth to you in love today in the hopes that you will truly know the love of God, that you will truly know what love is.

And so there's three questions on this self-exam that John has for us this morning, questions that we're to use to examine and answer. Are we truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I one who's truly been born again? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly received? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly saved? Am I truly by calling these people his beloved, his agapatoi, a term he uses six other times in this letter to describe his attitude towards the church, these Christians. Now, the Bible says that when God saves a person, he adopts that person into his family through faith and the finished work of Jesus Christ. And they are called his beloved children. John 1, 12 through 13 says, but to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Beloved, you did not choose to be a part of this family. God chose you to be a part of it. Orphans don't pick their adopted parents. Their parents choose to adopt them. They choose to love this child as their own. And later on in this letter,

[13 : 18] John will reflect on the amazing love that we have received from God through his adopting us into his family. He says in chapter 3, beginning of verse 1, see what kind of love the

Father has given to us that we should be called children of God. And so we are. In God's eyes, the people sitting next to you in your pew, in your pew, is your brother, your sister in Christ. His adopted children whom he loved by dying to save them. Are these people your beloved? We're about to find out. So we continue on in verse 7.

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. So John says that the commandment to love others should not come as new information. Nobody who is truly a Christian should hear this commandment and think, well, that's news to me. I hadn't heard that before. And here's why it didn't come as new information because the commandment to love others is a concept communicated throughout the entire Old Testament. For example, Leviticus 19, 17 and 18, we read, you shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. So in a sense, this commandment is old in that it's been around for a long time.

It's a command that God's people have always had, and it's one that God has consistently taught to them throughout his word. And so therefore, it should come as no surprise. Have you ever been in a class in high school or college or college or maybe later on and you had a test and there were questions on the test that weren't on the study guide that you weren't prepared for? I see some heads nodding, yes. First test I ever took in seminary, our professor gave us a study guide, and I studied that study guide hard.

We get into the class, and he hands us a classroom, and he hands us the test, and come to find out about a third of the questions on the test were not on the study guide. And you could kind of hear the room as we were going along the test, the, ah, ah, angry. And after class is over, all of us students together, what is this guy doing? How could he give us questions on the test that we weren't prepared for? Is this man even saved, right? But it was his right to do that, and he thought that an A student should go above and beyond, and I guess I can't disagree with that, but anyhow, I never took another class with him again. But all this to say that as Christians, when it comes to this command to love, no Christian should say, well, wait a minute.

What's all this love stuff about? What's love got to do with it? Love these people. It's hard for me to even like some of them sometimes.

[17:03] Here's the truest sense in which John is talking about loving others as being an old commandment. In verse 7, he says, this is an old commandment that you had. You had from the beginning. Well, the beginning of what? The beginning of your life in Christ. It's the old commandment contained within the gospel message that you heard when you were saved by him. 1 John 3.16 says, By this we know love. We know it. We know that he laid down his life for us. And in knowing that, it changes us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. Those who truly know Jesus obey God by loving others because they know how much God loves them. And they know that because they receive that at the beginning of their Christian life when they heard the gospel, they were saved and they were forgiven of their sins. I want to look at Luke chapter 7, verses 36 through 47. This is a long passage, but I think it's helpful for us to understand what it looks like when someone truly knows that they've received the love of God. One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisees' house and declined at table. And this is Jesus.

And behold, a woman of the city who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisees' house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment. Now, this is really pricey, expensive ointment. This is not some cheap gift. This is the best that she had. She could have sold it and lived off the proceeds for years. And standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. Now, when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, so he's thinking this, if this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner. And Jesus being God, knowing what was going on in his mind, his thoughts, answered and said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you.

And he answered, say it, teacher. And he teaches him this parable. A certain money lender had two debtors. One owed 500 denarii and the other 50. When they could not pay, he canceled the debt of both.

Now, which one of them will love him more? Simon answered, seems like an easy answer to this question, the one, I suppose, for whom he canceled the larger debt. And Jesus said to him, you have judged rightly. Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house.

You gave me no water for my feet, which was customary back then, especially for someone who you wanted to show honor to. But she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. [20 : 25] You gave me no kiss. But from the time I came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much, but he is who is forgiven.

Little loves little. When Jesus said that the woman's sins, which were many, are forgiven, that verb is written in the Greek in the perfect tense, describing action completed in the past with continuing results in the present. This was her opportunity to show her gratitude and love to the one who had first loved her. She had received his love, and that changed her life. She knew how much she had sinned. She knew how much she needed Jesus, and she understood that he was the Savior who could forgive her. And she was willing to look foolish in the world's eyes to show how much she treasured Jesus.

Can you say the same? Have you received Christ's love and salvation? Has his love changed you? Do you treasure him? Are you willing to look foolish in the eyes of the world in how you communicate and display that love? John Piper said of this verse, chapter 2, verse 7 in 1 John, this verse is a very remarkable rebuke of typical gospel preaching and witness today.

For John, the commandment of love belongs to what people should hear from the beginning. It is not an optional stage 2 of Christian growth. The gospel contains not only the commandment to trust Jesus, but also the commandment and the power of that trust to be changed into a loving person. Have you received God's love? Are you a loving person? That was question one. Now question number two on this exam, do you reflect God's love? Do you reflect God's love? Verse 8, John says again, at the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you. Now on the surface, that sounds confusing.

[22 : 59] Didn't John just say in verse 7, I am writing you no new command. Now he says in verse 8 that this not new command is in fact a new command. It sounds like he's contradicting himself. But again, this is where the Greek helps us better understand what he's saying. The Greek word John uses for new is *kynos*. That verb was used to define something that is fresh in essence and in quality while not necessarily being chronologically new. For example, I know we have a lot of Chip and Joanna fans in the room this morning, okay, and they're subduing their amens. Anyhow, if you don't know who they are, let me inform you. They had a show on HGTV. I don't know what they're doing now, but you know, they're doing it.

But they had a show called Fixer Upper. And in that show, just like I think almost every show on HGTV, they find an old house. They help a couple find an old house, and then they fix it up. They kind of get an idea what the couple wants in the house, and then they fix it up. And at the end of the show, there's the big reveal. They have a picture of the old house, you know, on wheels, on canvas, on wheels, and the couple stands before it. They see that picture. Behind it is the new house. And then, Chip and Joanna, they pull back the old picture, and they reveal the new house.

But it's not really a new house. They didn't tear down the old house and build a new house on top of it. They restored the old house in a way where it remains still very much the old house as far as its foundation went, as far as the basic structure of the house. But it has a new essence. It has a new quality. And this is what John means by the oldness and the newness of this command to love others.

It's an old command with a new essence, a new quality. This old command can be traced all the way back to Moses in the Old Testament, but it took on a new essence. It took on a new quality in the coming of God's Son, Jesus Christ. In Christ, the command to love one another is strengthened. It's deepened. It's expanded. It's beautified. And it's given a depth of meaning and understanding experience in those who love Him and those who know Him. The newness of the command to love has been perfectly manifested in the love of Jesus Christ, which John continues on to say in verse 8, it's true in Him. It's true in Him. That's Jesus. But it's also true in you. That's you if you say you follow Jesus Christ, if you know Him savingly. John 13, Jesus had finished washing the disciples' feet.

[26 : 24] Isn't that an amazing thing? He's about to die. He's about to suffer on the cross. He's about to be forsaken of God there for our sins. And not only is Jesus the kind of God, the kind of Savior worthy of our service as demonstrated by the woman who washed His feet with her tears, but He is the kind of God. He is the kind of Savior who lowers Himself and gets on the ground on His knees to wash the feet of sinners. And not only that, what else is amazing is that Jesus washed Judas' feet, the one who would betray Him. And He didn't stop Judas from doing what He was about to do because He knew why He had come.

He was going to die on the cross in the place of sinners that He loved to save them. And after dismissing Judas, Jesus said to His 11 disciples in John 13, 34 through 35, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you.

Not just as you love yourself, but love them just as I have loved you. By this, all people will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another.

And then later in that same interaction in John 14, 15 through 17, Jesus said to them, if you love Me, you will keep My commandments, and I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper to be with you forever. Even the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

And so taking these passages together, we learn that we can love like Christ, humbly, sacrificially, truthfully, because at salvation we received His love. We received the Holy Spirit who is at work in us, helping us, helping us produce spiritual fruit, the greatest of which is love.

[28 : 39] And so Christians can and should reflect God's love because they know Jesus. And by the Holy Spirit's help, they are energized to love even when it's hard to love, even when they suffer. Romans 5, 3 through 5 says, not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Do people see Christ's love reflected in you? Do they see it reflected in our church?

Do they see it in you only when things are going the way that you want them to go? Or do they see God's love reflected in you all the time and no matter what? Because the hope that you have in Jesus can never be taken away. Our love, like Christ's love, should shine in a way that darkness is forced to retreat. As John continues in verse 8, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. The true light is Jesus Christ who has come and who has inaugurated His kingdom in His coming, in which He right now through us is already shining. Colossians 1.13 says, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness. He has transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Brother and sister, you are a torchbearer for Christ.

We reflect love by speaking the truth about sin. We tell people about its eternal consequences in hell, and we tell them that salvation in Jesus Christ is the only way that you can be saved and have eternal life. Our churches are cities of light. The love of God should be reflecting out from us to our community.

This is our Lord's desire for us. He said in Matthew 5, 14 through 16, You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they might see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. People ought to look at you. They ought to look at us. They ought to see our fellowship and the way that we interact with one another, see the shared goals that we strive alongside of each other to achieve, and see something in us that they don't see anywhere else in all of this world.

[31 : 43] We must reflect our Lord's love, not just to each other, but as we do that to each other, we will do it to a world in darkness and need of knowing the truth. So this command to love others is not new.

It's as old as God, and it's rooted in his law. It is new in experience, expression, and endurance. It is as old as the sun. It's as new as each morning when the sun arises. Do you reflect God's love? Does your love reflect the love that you've received from God when he saved you? And now the third question on this exam.

Are you residing in God's love? Got to stick with those R's. Are you residing in God's love? And here John gets really practical. Here's where he truly applies the test of genuine salvation.

Here's where we find out who is truly of us and who is not truly of us. Who is truly in Christ or not in Christ.

[33 : 10] John employs his third whoever says statement, and he does so to draw the strongest possible contrast between those who are in the light, who have received God's love and salvation, who reflect God's love in sanctification, and those who are still in the darkness.

And he says in verse 9, whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

Now what does it mean to truly hate someone?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in Matthew 5, 21 through 22, You have heard that it was said of those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire.

At the root of a murderous action, there is a hateful thought.

[34 : 23] That's where it starts. To hate someone is to desire their elimination, extermination, or execution.

And in that case, when you truly hate someone, you're incapable of loving that person. Because you desire to have no interaction with them whatsoever, and you hope to have no interaction with them ever again.

And in that way, you've murdered them in your heart. But understand, Jesus got angry. Oh, he got angry. But his anger was fueled by a love for God.

On the second time he cleansed the temple, we read in Luke that he stopped and he wept for Jerusalem for having rejected him. Yes, he was angry, but his anger was motivated by his love for God and his desire that those who were in darkness would come to the light.

And you know what? He could have annihilated all of those who made themselves his enemies. But instead, he rather directly and sternly pointed out the error of their ways.

[35 : 49] And that is what loving people do. That is what a loving person does. They see what you're doing, they see what you're saying, and they say, that's not good for you.

And that's not good for other people. And if you continue in that way, you're going to hurt yourself, you're going to hurt others, and ultimately, worst of all, you're going to be out of fellowship with God, your creator. And if you don't know him savingly, that sin that you love, you will be condemned for eternally.

You think of it this way, and I'm sure that you've heard this illustration before, but a doctor. You go to a doctor and you're in bad health. And a good doctor will examine you and he'll tell you things that you might not want to hear.

He'll weigh you and he'll say, you need to lose weight. He'll examine your body and he'll point things out about it that you're not going to be happy to hear.

And some of the things, some of the truths that he might tell you are going to be really uncomfortable for you to hear. You need to have a surgery. You have cancer.

[37 : 08] Unless we do something, you're going to die. And who in their right mind could look at that doctor and say, you hate me.

Some people might, but they'd be wrong too because all he's doing them is telling them the truth so that they'll live. So here's the bottom line.

Indifference is hatred. That would be a doctor knowing all these things about his patient and being like, eh, if you feel happy doing it, go on ahead. I don't care if you die.

Indifference is hatred too. Now here's the bottom line. When it comes to other Christians, would you rather be in fellowship with them or be completely out of fellowship with them?

when it comes to unbelievers, would you rather they be saved by God or eternally condemned by God?

[38 : 17] Let's look at verse 11. You know, in total darkness, it's hard to define anything, isn't it?

You can't see. Many people, like the false teachers that were frustrating the churches that John wrote to, claim to be enlightened. Just like people in our culture claim to be enlightened.

And what they did, they sought to redefine what God said was true. What God said was good. What God said was sin. But the truth was is that they were in darkness and they didn't even know it.

You and I, we're surrounded by people who are in darkness and they don't even know it. So what does real love, true love look like?

Well, it resides in the one who resides in Christ. In verse 10. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

[39 : 26] And so our main idea this morning is that we must reveal God's light by how you love others or reveal God's light by how you love others.

Deep down, is it your motivation to be in fellowship or out of fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ? Do you really love them or do you see them as the problem, as the enemy?

And deep down, when it comes to the unbeliever, when it comes to those who are confused by what love is, is it your hope that they'll be saved by God and forgiven by God or is it your hope that they'll be condemned eternally to judgment in hell?

The person who has received God's love, reflects God's love, resides in God's love and reveals God's love because truly they love others and when we love others like God, we tell them the truth. we tell them the truth. Final exam here. So I am going to spring another question on you like my seminary professor.

[40 : 49] Do you desire to love more than any other spiritual gift? Of all the spiritual gifts that there are, is love the one that you pray for the most, that you desire the most?

God, teach me to be a loving person like you. It ought to be. 1 Corinthians 13. I'm going to read that whole chapter and as we read it, as Paul explains to us what true love looks like, examine yourself to find out if this is what love looks like in you.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give away all that I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind.

Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful.

[42 : 14] It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, all things. Believes all things.

Hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease.

As for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I gave up the childish way. For now we see as in a mirror dimly but then when we see the Lord, when he returns, we'll see him face to face.

Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully even as I have been fully known. So now, faith, hope, and love abide.

[43 : 17] These three, and these are great, but the greatest of these is love. If you're here this morning and you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, there's nothing greater than receiving that love.

Knowing that all of your sins are forgiven in him. That he wipes the slate clean. That he gives you his righteousness, his perfection, his perfect sinless life in peace with God through his death on the cross and his resurrection on the third day as demonstration, as proof that he is the Son of God. And it's not about you being good enough. It's not about you cleaning yourself up first. It's just about you repenting and turning to him and the knowledge of your sins and your need for a Savior. And if you do that, God turns your heart to him.

You'll be saved. And you'll know a love like no other love. Amen. I hope and I pray that you know that love. And as a believer, you've received that love.

We need to strive hard to reflect that love. And the more that we do it here, the more the outside world will take notice, the more opportunity we will have for our light to shine, that people would know the truth as we speak it to them in love, that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

[45 : 04] Three application questions before I pray for you to look at today or later on this week. Question number one, what are some examples of love that you see throughout Scripture?

I just challenge you to go back and see all the other examples of what true love looks like. And then how is Jesus the perfect example of love for one another?

Question number two, read Ephesians 4, 1 through 16. What does it mean to speak the truth in love? What does that mean? And are you doing that? And then finally, I invite you to encourage you to go back to 1 Corinthians 13 and read through that slowly and prayerfully with the help of the Holy Spirit doing some self-reflection, asking yourself, do you love like this?

And if not, praying that by God's help, you will. Let's pray for his help right now. Lord, we thank you for Jesus Christ and through him revealing to us what true love looks like.

God, in your love, you've saved us. You've redeemed us. You've set us free from sin and its eternal consequences. Lord, you've placed us where we're at right now in this time in redemptive history to be your light that shines brightly into a world that is shrouded in darkness.

[46 : 40] And God, you've made it clear how best we can let our light shine for you. It's how we love one another and how we reflect your love in this church and that goes out to our community.

Lord, I pray for each of us that we would stop and do even further self-examination of whether or not we're truly loving in the kind of way that you've commanded us to love and that each of us, Lord, would determine from this day forward to be the kind of loving person that you command us to be when we see error to correct it, when we see someone straying to come alongside of them and tell them where they've gone wrong and to not be afraid but to say the truth and to do it because we truly love them.

Lord, for our brothers and sisters in Christ and for the unbelievers in this world, Lord, I pray that we would all love in the way that you've demonstrated and the way that you've commanded us and the way that you've enabled us to through the indwelling of your Holy Spirit.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.