

# WORSHIP

Sermon | 8.30.2020



## Three Reasons

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1 Corinthians 13

After 5 weeks of digging into the very important matter of love, the greatest virtue in the New Testament (no doubt), our greatest weapon, one might be asking what else is left to say. Well, quite a bit, considering that agape, God's love, the love we have been addressing for the past 5 weeks is found 116 times in 106 verses in the New Testament, not counting its variants. Biblical instruction on this matter far exceeds the instruction we find regarding sin, salvation, holiness, sanctification, forgiveness, justification, repentance, even righteousness. Church, we have only skimmed the wealth of biblical teaching on love over the past 5 weeks. Nonetheless, today we bring this series to a close. To do so we have selected this text, written by the same person who wrote John 3:16-18 the text we used to open this series, The Apostle John. Study the writings of John and you soon gather that for him true faith, genuine belief, love for God and Son was exhibited by one's love for fellow disciples. It is John that writes, "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?", 1 John 4:20. For the Apostle John, love of God thru belief in Jesus Christ is proven by one's love of fellow disciple. For John, choosing to love is not optional for the disciple of Jesus Christ. It proves the authenticity of one's declaration of love of God thru faith in Jesus Christ, His son.



**1 John 3:14** “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother abides in death.”

Church, to love is to be loved by God thru faith in his Son, Jesus Christ and it is to give that love, unconditionally to others, first and foremost to our Sisters and Brothers in Christ. Using Pen’s words from last Sunday, to love is (and I quote) “to model a different way of living”. In our text John gives us three reasons why we must love.

**Reason 1 is theological in nature and simply stated is the cross. V9-10** The foremost reason we must love and can love is the cross. If God is love and Jesus is the incarnation of that love, then the cross is the power of that love. The cross of Jesus Christ has changed everything about life for humanity. It is the cross Jesus demands we carry if we are to follow him. Anyone who desires to follow me must deny self, pick up his/her cross and follow me (Luke 9, Mark 8, Matt 10). I once only thought of the cross in terms of a call to denial of self, sacrifice and even death. I still do but I now understand it to be expressed in this way a call to love. This is what Jesus has done for us. He has loved us unto death. He laid aside everything so that we could be loved and so that we could love.

**John 15:13** “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

**John 13:34** “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

The first reason we find in the text as to why we must love is the cross. It is the only reason we can love. Are we traveling the way of the cross or the way of the world?



**Reason 2 is reciprocal in nature. We must love because God loved us. V 11** Let us acknowledge that God is the source of love and the love that scripture speaks up cannot be manufactured by us. I find it quite peculiar that John does not say, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love God”. No. Instead he communicates we ought to love one another. God isn’t the object of our reciprocity. Is John stating then, we cannot love God? No. What he is saying is this, our love of/for God is expressed, is authenticated by our love for tangible human beings. There is no possibility one loves God when he/she does not love the brother or sister he/she can actually see and touch. To see this more clearly let’s go back to **John 13:34 but add verse 35**. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

I am astounded by the fact that the context for love scripturally is exclusively within the bounds of the community of faith. You will not find scripture that commands or implores those outside of the community to love as God/Christ loves. Why is this so? Those who remain in darkness cannot possibly love like this. Thus, do not be surprised when we talk and respond in this way that the world calls us hypocrites, cowards and or sellouts all because we refuse to choose their way. To love does not mean we do nothing. It does mean we stand idly by while injustice prevails. What it means is disciples of Jesus Christ do not take their cues from the world when it comes to addressing the injustices, the hatred, etc. that reigns in our society. Only love conquers all! We must love because God loved us. This the way of Christ. Church are we traveling this way?

**Reason 3 is practical in nature. We must love because it proves the existence of an eternal God to a material world. V12-14.** I certainly believe what we need now more than protest, more than legislation, more than riots, more than the right candidate, more than Black Lives Matter, etc. , etc. is for the existence of God, the reality of Jesus Christ to be put on display to a sin sick world. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the one thing that can change everything. When we choose to love we prove that God is real, and that Jesus Christ has come as Lord and Savior



of the world. When we love we give to a lost and dying world the very thing that has the power to bring it back to life. When we love we testify to the truth of the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If this love could save us, change us, give us hearts of flesh in place of hearts of stone. It can do the same for anybody. Even those who took the lives of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery. Even the officer who shot Jacob Blake in the back 7 times. Church, anybody! What way will we choose? Will be angry, bitter, vindictive, demanding, obstinate, fearful or will we choose the way of Christ. The way mark and paved by agape. In name of the....

