

By Our Love We Are Known pt 2

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Good to see all these smiling faces.! Okay, now we're on board.

! Approximately a month ago, we started looking at love and breaking love down.

! As it says in 1 Corinthians 13, verses 4 through 8, love is patient, love is kind, and that list goes on.

And I realize that, you know, oftentimes we'll read a portion of Scripture without really thinking about what it is saying. What does that mean?

What does that word mean? You know, and so, God laid it on my heart. Of course, one of my favorite subjects, if not the subject I enjoy greatly, is that of love.

[1 : 12] God's love saved me where I was at. You know, sometimes we read the Scriptures, and people will think that it says, take us, take us thyself home, and we'll see you in the Bible.

He says, He says, and we'll see you in the Bible. casteth away thy cigarettes, get a haircut, put on a suit, and come, and I'll make you fishers of men.

But we all know that's not what the Scriptures say, do they? He says, come. We come as we are.

And when we place our faith in Christ, he begins a work in us to make us. We're a new creature in him, but now we become, are becoming a new creature before the world around us where they can see the differences that Christ made.

So before we get into it this morning, let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Father, we invite you in today.

[2 : 29] Lord, we ask you to speak to our hearts. Every one of us have gone through different things in our lives. Some of us have never experienced true love.

Other ones have, the only love they may have is that where they use people. But Christ, you sacrificed. You taught us that true love is sacrificial.

And so, Father, as we look into your word this morning, I would pray that you would encourage each and every one of us that we not second guess what something means, but that we might really look at it and pray over it and say, Lord, how would you like to make me different?

It's not about me. It's about what you want in my life to change me. May we each have that attitude within ourselves.

And so, Father, now as we have seen so many times in Scripture and so many different examples of love that has been demonstrated, not only by the individuals within the stories and everything that you have shared with us, but also in your life, Jesus Christ, how you have demonstrated to us what true love is.

[4 : 04] And so, God, we want to commit this time your loving hands and ask your anointing upon it. Speak to our hearts and we give you all the honor and the glory for it.

For it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. We consider love. Some of us want to know how to love, but we might not know how to get a grip on it.

And before we continue on with what we had covered February 9th, I'd like to share a simple story with you.

How love can change the human heart. People don't care what our doctrine is or anything else until they find out how much you care.

And then they'll listen to the rest that you want to share with them. We have a mailman that I tried to reach out to.

[5 : 26] And I would go out and try to meet him before I could hear him coming up the street. And I'd go out and try to connect with him. And it just wasn't happening.

He'd put the mail in the box and I'd say, good afternoon or something and try to break the ice and he'd just nod his head and go on. And then I thought about, you know, there are warm days during

the summer, aren't there?

And there are cold days during the winter and that seems normal. But I started taking out bottles of water and waiting for him. Give him a nice cold bottle of water.

And all of a sudden that, in a sense, that resistance started to break down. And then I started taking them out a little candy. You know those smarties?

They work on all of us, don't they? But at any rate, he has slowed down now and he's stopped and talked many times.

[6 : 40] And the other day, I had my arms full of stuff when he pulled up and I dropped some of it and he says, here, I can get out of my truck and pick that up for you.

And it was a difference between day and night. And what did I do? I gave away a 17-cent bottle of water. Just a little thing.

You give away candy to the kids or other things that might be more healthier. I had to learn too.

But anyhow, the little things that we do in life, talking to the girl or guy that's behind the register in the store or the gas station and going in and happily greet them.

And you know, we don't always have good days, do we? But we can always have good attitude.

And when you start doing, as I was talking with Cheryl a little bit ago, when you're feeling at your worst, for whatever reason, there's days when I'm in an awful lot of pain and it's those days especially that I want to go out and I want to find somebody to do something good for.

[8 : 19] Show them some act of kindness. For one, it gives me, it gives God glory. For two, it gets my mind off my pain. And it encourages whoever I've done that good act for.

So beloved, every one of us, whether we're an introvert or an extrovert or what other other kind of vert you might be, there's opportunities for every single one of us to show kindness.

Well, we ended last time on, we were going to start today with love is not puffed up.

Love is not puffed up. which means that it does not inflate itself with pride or try to make itself out to be more than it is.

Just think of the great example of the Lord Jesus Christ for us and the way he treated us. Continues to treat us. Think of what happened.

[9 : 43] The one that created the heavens and the earth bowed down and washed his disciples' feet. Now, you might not think much of that.

But remember, they wore moccasins or the like. and as they traveled those dirt roads, their feet got pretty crusty.

And here he is, the Lord of Heaven, and he humbles himself and washes his disciples' feet.

Think also when he was in the boat and he was tired. In fact, he was so tired that these great waves were coming and smashing against the boat.

His disciples were fearing for their life and these are men that spent their life on the water. They had battled many a storm. And where do we find the Lord?

[10 : 59] He's sleeping. Why? Because he's exhausted. And they said, Lord, don't you care?

He got up and he rebuked the wind and the waves and the lake became calm. Oh, but they don't have any right disturbing me in the middle of my nap.

That's how some of us might view it. but the point in this is that he sacrificed day in and day out leaving us an example to follow.

And if we look at, go through the gospels and look at it all, we might be literally amazed at how great that love is.

in Philippians 2, 5 to 11, the apostle Paul writes this. He said, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men and being found in the appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even the death of the cross.

[12 : 44] Let that sink in. How great a love is that? that the creator humbles himself to his creation.

Far from parading himself or inflating himself in pride, our savior, the son of God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the king of glory, he went to the lowest possible level in humbling himself for us and that's how we should love one another.

When the Lord led me to start this church close to 50 years ago, don't remember the date exactly but when he led us in that direction, my goal was to stay true to the word of God and to teach people to love as Jesus loved and he commands us to love one another just as I have loved you.

That elevates the standard, doesn't it? Just as he did, so are we to do. True agape love does not behave rudely.

Sometimes we think that the more familiar we are with others in our love for them, the more careless we can be in our conduct around them.

[14 : 36] That's something we need to keep a check on. Paul says that true love does not behave in a way that is unbecoming or is ill-mannered.

I don't think, of course, that this means we have to be overly concerned with the rules of adequate, but just that when you are sharing with somebody and they feel more encouraged and lifted up after your conversation with them than if you said something that could possibly be painful.

For some people, weight is something that can cause them pain if you talk to them about their weight.

For other people, it's the fact that their head is turning into a landing strip for UFOs. You know, the hair is getting mighty thin.

You comb it, and every time you comb it, you say, there's another three weeks worth of hair that's gone, and it won't be long until I can start polishing my head.

[16 : 05] But there's so many different things that can be offensive to people, and as you get to know them, and that's why it's so important that as a body here, we get to know each other.

When we greet one another, every Sunday, find a face that you haven't greeted before, or maybe in a long time.

let them know it's good to see them. Let them know you care about them. Ask them if there's anything you can pray about on their behalf.

There's a lot of different ways to show it. Just not behave rudely. though, you know, there are cases, I guess you'd say, when rigid rules can themselves be rather unloving, depending upon what those words are.

Instead, I believe this means that when we are truly loving other people as we should, we are courteous to them and are thoughtful in our conduct towards them.

[17 : 33] It means that we behave with sanctified good manners toward other people because to do so is to be loving them.

It simply means that we behave in a way that is consistent, consistent with true love and true respect.

You know, I've watched a number of movies over the years of ones that had been hurt by other people and stuff and some of them were one commit suicide because they can't take the bully in in high school or at work or wherever it may be and everybody is looking to be loved but not loved for your body but for your personhood who you are loving them reaching out the hand like when Peter was drowning Lord could have said well you got yourself into that mess get yourself back out but instead he lent a hand and Peter survived that fall into the sea the

Bible tells us that our Lord walked upon this earth and in Luke 2 52 it states that he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men he grew when he took on human flesh he had to learn some things even though he was was and is God there were some maybe some practical things that he needed to grip as he grew up in a godly home but he grew in wisdom Proverbs is full of wisdom and he grew in stature and he grew in favor with

God and men we can grow in favor with men without growing in favor with God can't we just be Joe nice guy but that doesn't touch the heart we got to first and foremost look to grow in our favor with God and by doing so our favor from men will come because the closer we get to God the farther we are in a sense away from sin and practicing the things that maybe we would normally do and the closer we go to God the more we understand of his love I spent hours and hours and hours thinking about the love of

[21 : 36] God towards me and I'm overwhelmed as I look back over my life and see in how many ways God has directed the steps everything from being in the service and making that a courier to getting injured spending months in the hospital and then being discharged from the service for not being qualified anymore you can't fulfill your duties and you know frustration sets in and you kind of wind to that cosmic Santa Claus that you have up there in the Milky Way!

that's how a lot of people treat them you know we take them out of the closet God you do this for me you get me out of this situation and I won't swear for two weeks God doesn't bargain and soon we forget about what we had said why because it didn't mean anything to us to begin with we just

wound out of where we were and I didn't see it then but then shortly thereafter I came to know Christ and I experienced his love and then I didn't quite understand why it had to go in that avenue if you will or that way to get me saved but

I did understand a little bit a little bit about God and I said he's sitting on the throne sometime back as we move forward in life we find people like Dave's wife with cancer and Jim Potter Jim Loney John Kretz other ones here that are going through some pretty tough times because of different illnesses and I called up I've talked with Steve Saint a few times and I called him up and I was asking him how his ministry was going and for those of you that don't know it he was the son of Nate Saint who was along with Jim what's that Jim Elliott and others that went down to the Aka Indians in Ecuador and they were savage and they came out to kill him and one of the guys or at least through what I saw in the movie I don't I never ask Steve if that was the case but they went to raise their guns and they were told no well anyhow right after they were all executed Jim Elliott's wife Elizabeth she went back into the same tribe and today they have a marvelous Christian church down there but when I was talking with Steve Steve said so what's going on with you and I told him some of my aches and pains if you will I said what's the best advice you can give me he said let God write your story and that after we conversed for a while I hung up the phone and I kept thinking if God is sitting on the throne God is dictating my story to his son his son is the pen and I'm the ink and as long as I yield to the pen the story is going to come out right and so it is with your lives!

[26 : 40] we yield to the pen of God and let him write our story so no matter what befalls us no matter what we're going through no matter what we have gone through God didn't make evil happen to you if indeed it did but what God does do is he takes what has been done to you or against you and he turns it into something beautiful imagine if the things that we sometimes complain about if we gave God the glory imagine how that could impact other people that say well how can you be so happy if you've got this wrong or that wrong with you well it's pretty easy I'm not the one writing my story and if

I tried I know it would be really messed up because I messed up before good not that you have to ask anybody here but you know in all of that it's love Jesus said they will know you are my disciples if those two little letters are huge if you have love one for another love love love does not seek its own the Bible commands us let no one seek his own but each one the other's well being first Corinthians 10 24 and then in Philippians 2 3 and 4

Paul wrote let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself let each of you look out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others it is the opposite of agape love to place our own interests above other peoples and showing love toward us the Lord did not seek that which was his own but he freely gave up his all for us and we're told to love each other just as he did it tells us for in second Corinthians eight nine for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that you through his poverty might become rich agape love also isn't provoked I remember some years ago my niece was four years old and her husband or not her husband she was four but her mother and father Carrie was in the air force working down in the amazon jungle putting in an airstrip and Lynn was at a base in

Topeka Kansas and they came up for a visit for a few days and this little four year old I was teasing her like I sometimes am forced to do and she says mom uncle Jackie is provoking me and I'm going provoking what dictionary do you have and I had a vague idea but I wasn't that intellectually with it and a little better later on I was goofing on doing something else and she said oh you're so ostentatious now that word I'd never heard before so I had to get a dictionary but when they left she said uncle

[31 : 46] Jackie I still love you even if you provoke me sometimes to getting mad and even if you're ostentatious and she rolls her eyes and she says I still love you I hadn't given it much thought at the time though I thought it was kind of funny now I look back and I think how many other people push your buttons how many of them provoke you and they might not even realize it how many of them act in a way that you don't approve of can you say like my four year old niece I still love you even if you provoke me to getting mad I still love you love is not provoked the word that

Paul uses here basically means to be made sharp or swift towards someone the NIV has it that love is not easily angered how long is your fuse I read the story of a man that was being greatly irritated or provoked if you will by someone and one of the other people said asked him say why don't you

respond to him and set him straight now they were both Christians both in the same church he said you can't anger a man that is dead I chose to die we die daily to our own self centeredness to our own selfish desires we die daily love thinks no evil toward the one being loved!

I don't need to keep accurate up-to-date accountings of the wrongs that you may have done to me but every time somebody does something to me if I forgive them it's no longer in the books is it it's no longer in the books it doesn't exist when I forgive them I'm free and if I hold on to that then I'm a slave to my emotions and eventually those emotions will start to control your life in a negative way Peter asked Jesus how many times should I forgive my brother he said 70 times 7 that doesn't mean you add them up because if you forgive them you never get past one it doesn't mean that you suffer amnesia okay

I still remember pain but I choose not to focus on it I still remember pain but I have forgiven the person so I will never bring it up again and throw it in their face or gossip about it to other people John says in 1st John 1:9 if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness and love does not rejoice in iniquity but it rejoices in truth love rejoices!

in the truth we stand on the truth of God's word if we're not in God's word how do we know what the truth is it becomes sure it becomes a relative thing but if the Bible tells us that we are to love one another and you say well I can't love my brother sister in the church you don't know how they hurt me then I'd say well that's fine if you can't love them as a brother or sister love them as an enemy but you gotta love them and love will overcome anything it's the strongest if I can use the word power in the world love will overcome and that's how the world especially in these last days when everything is shaken up and all the problems are going on all around us and people are becoming less tolerant that's what's going to conquer is the love of people like you and me love and love bears all things and it believes all things this actually speak bears all things actually speaks of the idea of covering something up and of keeping to ourselves that which is not necessary for others to know about one another you know when we've gone through different things and like some time back when somebody left the church and people were saying why it's not for you to know because [38:53] I can destroy somebody with what I know about them that's not my position as a Christian and you don't need to know all the details there's times when you just have to trust just as a child has to learn to trust their parents you don't need to know why mom and dad are doing this or that you just need to understand that they have our best in their heart whether we understand how or why or any other such thing and love hopes all things we may not be much to look at right now we're all aging and it shows up in many different ways and we've gone through different battles we've gone through different battles but true agape love doesn't droop its shoulders in despair over one another's faults and imperfections but rather there is hope in there there is a confident expectation that if

I love you you will change and imagine if every one of us loved each other to the best of our God given ability one little light out in the middle of an ocean can be seen for miles and miles on a calm night you're that light in a world full of darkness can people see it or is a switch turned off or are you just kind of making some progress and the lights dim but still on don't lose hope keep on keeping on or as the marine slogan would go semper parati always faithful we have a commander a king a lord and he issues the commands and we as the under studies or whatever you want to call us we don't question that we just obey that's the way it is with love oh but god you don't know how much they hurt me

Jesus said it seems that I remember that well for you for you I understand your pain do you understand mine absolutely pure absolutely holy and out of my pure love I gave my life up for you what more can I do to show you how much I love you let me close with this this morning it endures all things it never fails and why doesn't it fail and why does it endure because we have that hope and we know that one of these upcoming days we're going to stand before the Lord and it's my hope and prayer that

I would hear well done good and faithful because when I look in the mirror I don't see the man that God sees and I want to hear welcome home how many of you remember the 2005 Olympics and who won it in the long distance running the guy's name was from Kenya and the runner's name was Abdul Mutai and he was just a few feet from the finish line but became confused by the signage and he stopped thinking he had completed the race a

Spanish runner Ivan Ferrandez was right behind him and realizing that what was happening he started shouting at the Kenyan to continue running but Mutai didn't know Spanish and didn't understand he didn't understand Kenyan so he couldn't speak to him in the language that Mutai would have understood so what he did was he went up behind Mutai and he literally pushed him over the finish line so that he took the goal he won the goal because someone else was behind him encouraging him pushing him pushing on to victory afterwards a journalist asked

[45 : 20] Ivan Brandes why did you do that I mean think about it you train for four years you train and train and try to get in the best shape you can and there's your chance just go around him but instead he stopped and pushed him over the finish line first and Mutai he got the gold and Ferrandez he got the silver and a reporter asked him why did you do that and Ivan replied my dream is that someday we can have a kind of community where a community life where we push each other and help each other to win consider his sacrifice and really that comes back to love doesn't it how many of us would have made that choice you know

I believe we have a very loving church and I don't say that in any way boasting but out of gratefulness and and and yet as much as we're doing like Paul said you're excelling you're doing great but you can do more I'd encourage you to get alone with God for a few minutes or a few hours or whatever it takes and talk to God about how you can love them love somebody better might be a bottle of water might be some smarties might be buying groceries for somebody that you know they're kind of hard up or like Dave's wife who's got cancer and some of us have been taking meals over to them so that she doesn't have to worry about it and by the way

Trisha wherever you are out there in video land when you watch this later on she's got cancer I don't know if I mentioned that or not but she's got cancer and she's been battling and Trisha Dave said to say hi to you and he loves you how hard was that how hard is a phone call how hard is it to reach out to someone and give them a hand in whatever area they may need it that's alright Jim I'm glad it's not mine this week so I want to encourage you to continue loving as you have been but to excel still more let us each and every one of us in whatever days number of days we have left to honor our Lord and Savior by seeking to love just as he has loved us let's pray our

Holy Father we are grateful grateful Lord that we have your word that we can look and try to understand and Lord you'll open our mind's eye and help us to grasp the depth and the width of your great love help us Lord to reach out to our neighbor that's here to show them the love that you have shown us and we give you all the honor all the glory for it's in Christ's name we pray amen