11/8/2026 – 1 John 4:7–11 — Walking in the Love of God

Text: 1 John 4:7–21 (focus on vv. 7–11)

Big idea: The point of the text is to love one another. Last week: God's love assures us of salvation and removes the fear of judgment. This week: our love for others confirms that assurance.

Introduction

1. Series recap: six weeks in Hosea (God's relentless love), now weekly passes through 1 John 4.
2. The question: God loves us — so what?
3. How do I know God loves me? Through the work of Jesus, and because I am loving others as He loved me.

I. Love Defined

1. "Love" is used loosely (pizza vs. a spouse); C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*:
    - Storge: family affection (not in Scripture)
    - Philia: side-by-side friendship, brotherly love
    - Eros: face-to-face romantic love
    - Agape: God's selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love
2. 1 John 4 is filled with agape, so agape is the expectation for our love.
3. The broader biblical picture:
    - 1 Corinthians 13:4–7
    - Matthew 22:37–39 (the greatest commandment)
    - John 13:34–35 (love marks us as disciples)
    - Ephesians 5:1–2
    - 1 John 3:16, 18, then reread 1 John 4:7–11
4. Can we speak of biblical love without sacrifice? John points to Jesus' life and death as the definition of how we love.

II. Love Developed

1. Context: some had left the church, teaching that belief need not shape behavior.
2. Key to growth: consider the life and work of Jesus all the more.
3. Illustration: Stradivari's "elbow learners" learned by sitting beside the master, not from a book.
4. John 13: Jesus washes feet — "I have given you an example."
5. Become an elbow learner of Jesus:
    - Read the Gospels regularly
    - Spend time with someone further along in loving like Jesus
    - Read biographies of agape lives
    - Pray: "God, make me more loving — selfless, sacrificial, unconditional"

III. Love Deployed

1. The bottom line: actively love others as Christ loved us.

2. Examples: veterans (Veterans Day) trained to put others first; Gary and Cindy Koerth's café and church in an underserved neighborhood.
3. Where are you deployed? Marriage, relationships, neighborhood, workplace, strangers at Walmart.
4. Start by asking God for eyes to see needs, then go out of your way to meet them.
5. After the election: channel the joy or anger into loving others sacrificially; that can change the world regardless of who holds office.

Conclusion

1. A big ask: live as Jesus did — selfless, sacrificial, unconditional.
2. Jesus invites us to be elbow learners; He shows, empowers, lifts us up, and walks with us.
3. He deploys us with that same power.