

Love Your Brothers - Pastor Mark Williams

Unlocked Men's Conference

Theme

The sermon emphasizes that true discipleship requires active, sacrificial love (agapao) expressed through practical deeds and genuine community engagement, leading to spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Takeaways

1. Jesus as the standard for God
2. Difference between agapao and phileo love
3. 1 John discussion on unconditional love and righteousness
4. Pitfalls of conditional love and materialism
5. Active love demonstrated through deeds
6. Brotherhood as a gateway to destiny (Jonathan and David analogy)

Highlights

- "Jesus is the standard for God."-- 《John 3:16 reference in lecture introduction》
- "Just as a coach galvanizes his team, so does God steady us in the midst of our adversity."-- 《Sports analogy segment within the lecture》
- "We must agapao our brothers, love them in deed and in truth, even laying down our lives for one another."-- 《1 John 3:10-19 discussion》
- "Don't just have good feelings for your brother, love them with agapao—a love that lays down one's life."-- 《Discussion on differences between agapao and phileo love》
- "If the love of God abides in you, naturally you will share your resources with your brothers."-- 《1 John 3:17 discussion》
- "Without the revelation of God's unconditional love, our ability to love truly remains locked within us."-- 《Pitfalls discussion in the latter part of the lecture》

- "And that should be a picture to you that the way I can love you in spite of what you could have done wrong to me is the way he loves me in spite of what I've done and continue to do wrong to him."
- "When you need, here I am with a solution. When you need a resource, I've got a resource. I am actively loving you."
- "If you will just come into the light, you can be set free and you can be secure and you can walk without stumbling."
- "Your connection will sometimes be the door to the next part of your destiny."-- 《1 Samuel 18:1-4》

Chapters & Topics

1. Introduction and Call for Reflection

The speaker opens with a candid admission of unexpected emotion, sharing his initial excitement and vulnerability, particularly after witnessing people receive prayer and commit to purity. He references John 3:16 to establish the foundation of God's love, emphasizing Jesus as the standard, and encourages the audience to confidently declare 'agapao'. This moment, set within a men's conference, sets the tone for reflective introspection on living a life modeled after divine love.

2. Sports Analogy for Spiritual Encouragement

The speaker, noting the absence of a sports analogy at the men's conference, uses an NBA Finals game seven setting with the Warriors, illustrating a scenario where a coach's timely intervention unites and galvanizes a team down by 20 points against formidable opponents like LeBron James and Kyrie Irving. This serves as a metaphor for how divine guidance, represented by Coach Anderson's knowledge of schematics and strategy, can rally believers during challenging times and provides a vivid, relatable framework for understanding spiritual strategy.

- Imagines the Warriors in game seven, down 20 points, facing star players like LeBron James and Kyrie Irving.
- The coach represents the role of spiritual guidance, projecting confidence through knowledge of schematics and strategy.
- The analogy emphasizes the power of strategic intervention and confidence in achieving goals despite overwhelming odds.

3. Exposition of 1 John 3:10-19 and the Call to Love

The lecture expounds 1 John 3:10-19, highlighting the distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil based on the practice of

righteousness and the love for one's brother. The speaker explains that John wrote to galvanize Christians amidst a new theology preached by "antichrists" denying Christ's identity, which caused confusion. John, acting like a coach, provides three measures for security: measuring God's love towards us, testing the love of others, and measuring our own love towards brothers against God's love. He warns against mimicking the behavior of Cain as a marker of false faith.

- Definition of righteousness and separation of God's children from the world, based on 1 John 3:10-19.
- The necessity of loving one's brother as a proof of genuine faith, contrasting with Cain's actions as a cautionary example against lacking sacrificial love.
- John's writing is an effort to galvanize Christians against a new theology denying Christ's identity, leading to confusion.
- Introduces John's three measures for security: measuring God's love, testing others' love, and measuring one's own love against God's.

4. The Depth of Agapao Love vs Phileo Love

The speaker differentiates between phileo (affectionate, brotherly love, emphasizing feelings like being fond of or having affection for) and agapao (sacrificial, unconditional love). Agapao is defined as the highest form of love, meaning to welcome, entertain, be fond of, love dearly, be full of goodwill, exhibit the same, have a preference for (sacrificing one's own desires for another's), wish well, and regard the welfare of. He urges believers to not settle for mere fondness but to embrace this higher, selfless love that mirrors God's love for His Son Jesus and for humanity, and which God conveys as His will for His children's attitudes toward one another. This distinction is crucial in understanding the depth of commitment required in a true Christian life.

- Phileo love is described as friendly affection based on positive feelings, emphasizing how one feels.
- Agapao love is defined as the highest, sacrificial, unconditional love, meaning to welcome, entertain, be fond of, love dearly, be full of goodwill, exhibit the same, have a preference for (sacrificing one's own desires for another's), wish well, and regard the welfare of.
- Emphasis on adopting agapao as the model of love in all interpersonal relationships, as it is the love God uses to describe His attitude towards Jesus and the human race, and how He wants His children to love each other.

5. Practical Implications: Sharing Resources and Walking in the Light

Loving one's brother extends beyond feelings; it involves actively sharing resources such as money, service, time, relationships, openness, mentorship,

and encouragement. This practical application of agapao is commanded by God (1 John 4:20-21), ensures that believers remain in the light, avoiding spiritual stumbling (1 John 2:9-11), and establishes a clear distinction between God's children and Satan's children (1 John 3:10).

- Practical directive to share worldly goods and resources with those in need, including money, service, time, relationships, openness, mentorship, and encouragement.
- Explains that loving brothers is commanded by God (1 John 4:20-21), causes believers to live in the light and removes stumbling blocks (1 John 2:9-11), and creates a distinct separation between God's children and Satan's children (1 John 3:10).
- Maintaining fellowship sets believers apart and prevents stumbling in their spiritual journey.

6. Pitfalls and Warning: The Danger of Conditional Love and Isolation

The lecture warns against the pitfalls of conditional love and the tendency to substitute genuine, community-based relationships with superficial, fake interactions, citing examples like preferring fake food, superficial "swipe" relationships, and even falling in love with AI chatbots. It emphasizes that without encountering salvation or truly understanding God's unconditional love, one may remain spiritually in darkness, leading to isolation and a misdirected focus on worldly, artificial substitutes, believing they must earn or maintain God's love through actions.

- Conditional love limits the true expression of God's love in our lives, often stemming from a **lack of revelation of His unconditional love or not encountering salvation.**
- A reliance on superficial alternatives, such as fake food, "swipe" relationships, or AI chatbots, detracts from real community and accountability.
- Not encountering God's unconditional love can keep one locked in darkness, impeding personal and spiritual growth, as it leads to a conditional approach to love.

7. Revelation of God's Love Through Brotherhood

The lecture explains that the revelation of God's love comes not only from the Bible but also through actively loving and supporting our brothers in their struggles. This reciprocal process deepens our understanding of His unconditional love, as shown by the analogy of loving despite wrongs and shortcomings. The speaker advises to "get into the river anyways and start practicing it" even without full understanding, trusting that revelation will follow and empower further love.

- Revelation of God's love is experienced through both scripture and the active practice of loving one's brother.
- The process involves growing through active participation, even when the full understanding is not present, as loving brothers provides revelation, and revelation empowers loving brothers.
- The illustration of forgiving and loving despite past wrongs mirrors God's constant love.

8. Pitfalls of Prioritizing Worldly Things Over Brotherhood

The lecture identifies a significant pitfall: when materialistic desires such as money, promotions, cars, houses, and vacations take priority, they block the capacity to love one's brothers. This is contrasted with the biblical teaching from Matthew 6:24 that one cannot serve both God and mammon (wealth), and that part of serving God is loving one's brothers.

- Excessive focus on wealth and worldly possessions prevents one from fully loving others.
- Decisions such as choosing a work commitment or extra job over brotherly connection exemplify these pitfalls.
- Scriptural reference: Matthew 6:24 emphasizes the impossibility of serving both wealth and God.

9. Active Love: Demonstrating Love Through Deeds

The speaker stresses that love should be expressed through deeds and truth rather than just words, contrasting agapao (active, sacrificial love) with phileo (feeling-based love). This active form of love is marked by practical actions such as offering help, resources, and solutions when needed, rather than merely verbal expressions of affection. Practical steps include: quitting excuses (even for introversion), carving out dedicated time to be with brothers, and allowing oneself to be disciplined by being seen and vulnerable. This involves joining or leading small groups, being ready to support others, and being honest when needing support, as encouraged by James 5:16 to confess sins for healing.

- Difference between phileo (feeling-based love) and agapao (active, sacrificial love).
- Practical steps include: quitting excuses (e.g., introversion), carving out time to be with brothers, and allowing oneself to be disciplined.
- Discipleship involves being open and visible, risking embarrassment for healing, joining small groups, leading small groups, supporting others, and confessing sins (James 5:16).

- True love is demonstrated by being present and offering tangible help in times of need.

10. The Importance of Discipleship and Coming Into the Light

The lecture emphasizes that personal growth and healing come from being disciplined and willingly stepping into the light. The speaker highlights that loving your brother is the way to get out of darkness and into the light, leading to security and avoiding stumbling. Allowing oneself to be seen, even in vulnerability, leads to healing and deeper connection, mirroring the biblical call to confess sins and support one another (James 5:16). Staying in darkness (secrecy) prevents the necessary process of healing and proper guidance, leading to constant stumbling.

- Discipleship involves being open and visible, which may include risking embarrassment for the sake of healing.
- Staying in darkness (secrecy) prevents the necessary process of healing and proper guidance, leading to constant stumbling.
- Loving your brother is presented as the solution to get out of darkness and walk in the light, leading to freedom from anger, lust, and addictions.
- Joining small groups or taking up leadership roles can further integrate one into the community and foster genuine growth.

11. Brotherhood as a Gateway to Destiny

Using the example of Jonathan and David from 1 Samuel 18:1-4, the lecture illustrates that deep, “knit” relationships among brothers can open doors to significant change and destiny. Jonathan’s act of giving David his robe and armor symbolizes the passing on of destiny and readiness for future challenges. This connection provides not only support but also a pathway to embrace a higher calling, teaching David “how to walk like the son of a king” and “how to govern.”

- Jonathan and David’s covenant is a prime example of how deep brotherhood can lead to transformation and new opportunities.
- The physical symbol of Jonathan giving David his robe and armor signifies the passing on of destiny and readiness for future challenges.
- Personal connections are presented as crucial for understanding how to live and operate as part of God’s kingdom, teaching one how to “walk like the son of a king” and “govern.”

Suggestions

- Take a moment to reflect on the meaning of agapao in your personal life.

- Consider how spiritual guidance can serve as your coach in times of personal or communal adversity.
- Reflect on your relationships and ensure that your acts of love are sacrificial and genuine.
- Challenge yourself to move beyond simple affection and strive to practice sacrificial love in everyday interactions.
- Evaluate the resources you possess and consider ways to share them selflessly with those who need assistance.
- Seek a deeper encounter with God's unconditional love to unlock your capacity to love others without conditions.
- Engage in loving your brothers actively, even if you don't fully understand how to do it.
- Start practicing love despite imperfections, trusting that revelation will follow.
- Reevaluate priorities to remove obstacles that favor material gains over relationships with brothers.
- Quit making excuses and actively engage in helping your brothers.