

Real-Life Love — Delivery Transcript

Hebrews 13:1–6 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, May 18, 2025 • Faith IRL

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All right, well let's show our team a little love for leading us this morning. That was a tremendous time of worship. And I say it I probably say it not enough, although I probably say it too much at the same time. It's not enough because we really are blessed with some fantastic musicians and worship leaders and even to be able to make those old classic hymns sound so good. That's like the best of both worlds in my life because I grew up on those things and I really love weaving them into our times of worship.

And it sets the table for what we're about to do now, which is worship through the reading and preaching of God's word. And so if you have your Bibles, we're going to be in Hebrews chapter 13. And as you're turning there was a book written by a guy named Charles Duhigg in 2012, super big bestseller in the business world. The name of the book was called the Power of habit. Has anybody read the book? Familiar with the book? Anyway, it was popular, trust me, just not in this room. But the basic thesis of the book is that there are certain habits that you can build in your life that once built have this cascading positive effect on a lot of other domains in your life.

And the reason that he called them keystone Habits is because a keystone in an archway is the very last stone that gets put in and then through its installation it kind of creates pressure. And in a similar way he says there's habits you can build into your life that function in that way. That that same he gives examples like making the bed. When you make the bed, it's an easy early win and people who make the bed end up having a cascading effect in terms of productivity in their life in a lot of other areas.

He says the same thing about family dinners, families that have dinner at the dinner table on the regular end up that has a cascading effect yell in their children, for example. They generally have better communication skills, they generally have more confidence in life. Conflict resolution is usually more characteristic of families that eat at the dinner table and on and on he could go. Another example is exercising. If you've ever been an exerciser, you

know the kind of cascading that effect can have in your life. It's people who exercise generally speaking, better at time management, better eaters.

Better sleepers, on and on it could go. It just has a cascading effect. And such is the case of keystone Habits. What's true of behaviors, I think, is also true of beliefs. And just like there are keystone behaviors, there can also be keystone convictions. I would determine a keystone conviction, I would define a keystone conviction as a centralizing belief that stands above any opposition. Now the reason I say that is the word conviction comes from two Latin little roots. Con means with. Most people know that. But victori is a word that means to conquer.

It was where we get the word victory. And it's this idea that there are certain beliefs that once you bring them into your life, they are of such a sort that they have the ability to dominate any opposing beliefs that come up against them. And these can be good or bad beliefs. It reminds me of the Pixar movie Inside Out 2. I know y'all seen Inside Out 2, right? Anybody seen Inside Out too? I usually don't like Disney movies because they brainwash my children. But for that one I was like, this one's actually pretty good.

Because these emotions are personified in Riley's head. Got anger and apathy and anxiety is in Inside Out too. That's the new character. But anyway. The way that Riley's sense of self is built is that she has all of these experiences, and through these experiences she has these memories, and certain memories form what are called core memories, and core memories are memories that that kind of coalesce together to build a sense of self. I would treat these like core convictions because the way that Riley articulates those core memories is through a statement, an internal dialogue like I'm a good person, which is wrong.

She's not, but we'll sit there for another day. Or teamwork makes the dream work. Actually don't think that's in the movie, but you know, that's an example. Or I'm cool and accepted. And positive core convictions have a way of building up the sense of self in a positive way. Negative core convictions have a way of destroying the sense of self. That's what keystone convictions do. They have a coalesce they have a cascading effect on many other beliefs in your life and those beliefs are what drive your behaviors. And this is true in a biblical sense as well.

What we've seen in the book of Hebrews is the author of Hebrews writing to a group of Christians to commit themselves to certain habits. Keystone habits in the Christian life like attending the worship services on the regular, involving themselves in Christian community, getting connected relationally, reading their Bibles, growing in the faith, and all of these keystone convictions were built upon certain keystone I'm sorry, all of those keystone habits were built upon certain keystone convictions. I heard John Piper likened the book of Hebrews to mountain peaks and valley lows, as Skylar was mentioning in his prayer pretty often this morning.

Mountain peaks are like the commands of the Christian life in the book of Hebrews, do this, don't do that. But those mountain peaks are built upon certain foundational Valleys that are deeply rooted convictions. And in our text today, we're going to get both. We're going to get the keystone Conviction that is I'm sorry, the keystone habit that is motivated by a keystone conviction. And the reason you need both is because keystone habits, as important as they are, they're not easy to maintain when the going gets rough in your life. Can I get an amen?

Like when you're exercising on the regular, you get a little stress in your life, it's hard to show up at the gym the next morning. Or if you're trying to parent a certain kind of way, it becomes really challenging when stressors in your life push up against that. And so just like that's true in a in a in a habit when it comes to certain habits in our life. It's also true spiritually. Good habits need strong convictions to persevere when things get tough, and that's what we're going to see in the book of Hebrews in chapter 13, verses 1 to 6.

So let's read it together. Starting in chapter 13, this is the end of the sermon. He's he's throwing out these final commands and exhortations Based on a final key truth. He says in verse 1, let brotherly love continue. That's a Greek word, philadelphia. It's where we get the city of brotherly love. Let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without even knowing it. Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.

Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he God, for God Himself has said, I will never leave you or abandon you. Therefore we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Now on the surface, the reason I put all of these on one screen is because on the surface they f seem pretty disconnected and unrelated.

You're talking about marriage, and you're talking about money, and then you're talking about hospitality. They seem like totally foreign, disconnected commands, and some people read them that way. And they just kind of think I need to do this and I need to do this and I need to do this. But really, the author of Hebrews is much too intentional to do something like that. Everything in this book has been masterfully put together. And I don't think these are disjointed commands. I think they're all unified commands under one singular umbrella. And that singular umbrella is the idea of love.

If you go back to that text, you can actually see the word love. This word is the word philadelphia, philato love is a Greek word for love. Actually distinct from the more popular word for love when Christians talk about it, which is agape love, but is phileo love here, Phili Philadelphia, philoxenia, which is love of the stranger, hospitality. Remembering the suffering, love in marriage, right here, love for the sufferer, love for the stranger, love for

marriage and then love of money. Basically don't have love of money, have love of God above love of money.

But you see the idea of love apply to these four different domains. And so my big idea from this morning's text is that love is the keystone habit for the Christian life, which is not rocket science, right? Jesus himself said in John 13, 35 love one another as I've loved you. By this, everyone is going to know that you're my disciples. If you what? If you love one another. What's interesting is Jesus uses the word agape, the author of Hebrews uses the word phileo, which is different. C. S. Lewis wrote a book called the Four Loves.

Really good book. He distinguishes the difference between agape, phileo, eros, and storge. Storge is stable love, family love eros is selective love, sexual love. Agape is what it would we would call sacrificial love. What that means is agape love comes from the lover irrespective of how they feel, irrespective of whether the person is worthy of it or not. It is a committed, sacrificial, dutiful love. That's why it's applied to God's love for humanity. We were enemies of God, and yet He loved us with agape. He poured out His love even when we were undeserving.

Phileo is the opposite of that agape is unconditional, it's detached from emotion. Phileo love is conditional, and it is drenched in emotion phileo love is friendship love. It is love that comes from shared activity. It's love that is warm and affectionate and that's the kind of love you have when you have a best friend. You see there's companionship, there's shared activity, there's this mutual enjoyment of everything in life. Good marriages don't just have eros love, they don't just have committed love, they should also have phileo love, and that there's this warm, affectionate bond.

But the author of Hebrews is saying, I don't just want it in marriage, I want it in the local church. I want Christians to like each other. I want them to have shared bonds of warm affection and friendship. I want them to be emotionally invested in the lives of each other and that is the defining mark of what Christianity looks like on the streets. It is love Namely, love that's applied when it's difficult to the stranger and the sufferer, and how you engage in sexuality with regard to your marriage bed and the way you think about your stuff.

Love is the keystone habit, but every keystone habit needs a keystone conviction, right? It needs something to keep the love going when the going gets tough. And that keystone conviction is at the end of verse 5. I will never leave you or abandon you. Therefore we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Here's how I'm going to say it in your notes. The power for abiding love is the abiding presence of God. When you believe with true conviction that God is present in every moment, in every arena of my life, Your awareness and convictions about the presence of God are what energize and keep me keep persevering the kind of phileo love we're called to give.

Now it'd be one thing if this was just mentioned at the end of verse 5 when it talks about money. You know we should handle our money. Lovingly because God is always with us. But he doesn't just talk about the presence of God in verse 5. He talks about it every single day under every single umbrella. Go back to verse 2 when he talks about love for the stranger. Why does he say love the stranger? Because some of you have welcomed angels as guests without even knowing it. What's he saying?

He's saying when you show love for people you don't know. These traveling Christians who are coming into your town and they can't stay at the hotel because of their faith in Jesus. And you open up your home and you welcome them in. When you show love in that way, you're actually bringing God into your dinner table the presence of God is being made manifest in that living room because you're entertaining angels and you don't even know it. Now it could be literal angels. Abraham entertained literal angels, Gideon. Samson's parents, a couple of examples of that in the Old Testament.

But I think the bigger idea is that through the demonstration of love, you're experiencing the presence of God, and your awareness of the presence of God is what motivates the giving of love. Same idea with those who are suffering. Remember those in prison. Remember those afflicted. Why? As though you were, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily. The CSB translates it as though you were suffering bodily, kind of like this idea of, hey, put yourself in their shoes. How would you feel if you were in prison? How would you feel if you were mistreated?

And it is that, it includes that, but it's actually even bigger than that. The Greek literally can be translated since you yourselves are in the body. And so he's he is saying, imagine as if you're in their shoes, but he's also saying, remember you're in one body He's appealing to this theological concept that Christians are the body of Christ. That we are in Christ. Christ is in us. We are in his body, and therefore we are members of each other. That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, when one part suffers, we all suffer.

When one part prospers, we all prosper Jesus said, rejoice with those that rejoice, weep with those that weep. Why? Because we're one body in Christ. Christians are brothers and sisters in that we are members of one another. And because we are in the body of Christ, that means Christ is always present among us. So the awareness that God is always present, Christ is always present through union with his body. We are called to love one another in that way, particularly when people are mistreated or suffering. So the presence of God informs our love for the sufferer, the presence of God informs our love for the stranger.

What about marriage? Well, if you go back to that verse, he says to honor marriage, keep the marriage bed undefiled. Why? Because God is present to judge. You could also say God is present in that we are the body of Christ. You would not want Christian marriages in a local church to be characterized by adultery because through that adultery the body of Christ is

being one flesh with a prostitute. You're defiling the body of Christ through unholy sex in marriage. You could say that, but you could also say God is there, he is present to judge you when you exercise sexual immorality or adultery.

So that your awareness of God's presence to judge those behaviors ought to keep you loving. Loving the marriage more than you love your selfish appetites. And then finally, as it supplied the money, God is with you always. I'll never leave you or forsake you. So do you see the theme? The abiding presence of God is the power for abiding love. When you become aware of God's presence, you'll be unleashed to love in this way. One of our core values at Broadview. Is to foster environments where people can experience the presence of God.

When we have Sunday morning worship. It's in my thinking, you know, I've been to a lot of churches and it was a great sermon and it was a good experience, but it did not seem as though God manifested his presence. In a in a kind of tangible way. And what we want you to experience on Sunday mornings is that God would manifest his presence in that in that way so that you are You cannot avoid it. You cannot not sense him in the room. Why? Because that awareness of God's presence, I believe, is what motivates everything else in the Christian life.

It's the power for worship. Ascribing God what he is worth, properly worshiping God, and it requires you to properly see him. For you to properly see him, you must see him where he is, and he is always with you. I'll never leave you or forsake you. And so the power for Christian love, the power for abiding love is the abiding presence of God. Why is the presence of God so necessary for Christian love, if you'll go to what you just left, because it goes to war against the chief threat of abiding love.

The chief threat of abiding love is inward self-obsession. This I think is obvious. Love is fundamentally outwardly oriented. It is for others, not for the self. If you're a parent and you love your child, you know that it requires you to give of yourself, not to focus on yourself. Bad parents are parents that focus on themselves at the expense of their children. Well that's true in a general sense as it think as you think about Christian love. For the stranger, for the sufferer. When you become totally inwardly focused, you become incapable of loving people like this text is recommending.

Some examples. Think about hospitality. The Bible says you should practice hospitality. Practice love for the stranger. The way that an inward self-obsession might work in that regard is I'd love to practice hospitality, but my house is a mess. I would be glad to have people over for dinner if I didn't have children, you know, that ruin my house every time I clean it up. Or if my house was a little bigger, if my house was a little nicer, if I could just, you know, present myself in such a way that people didn't think this way or that way about me, what are you doing?

You're throwing out excuses, and I'm not saying they're not valid, but the focus on the self is actually blinding you to the need of the other person. In that case, a person who had nowhere else to go other than that house, or in our case, someone who is lonely, detached from Christian community, in need of a sense of belonging and being loved and we're so focused on the self that we neglect their genuine needs. And you could apply it to all the other things too, love of the sufferer. I don't want to deal with suffering people.

I mean I got my own problems to worry about. Every time I minister to a needy person, they just wear me out. I'm just too tired why would I focus on their marriage when I'm not even married? I need a girlfriend. I don't need to honor their marriage. I need a boyfriend. I would love to honor my marriage if my spouse would meet my needs. Not saying your needs aren't being met. I'm just saying that orientation though very natural, is dangerous when it comes to loving people because when you're inwardly oriented, you can't be outwardly oriented, and to love you must be outwardly oriented.

To be for others and not for the self. And so what do you need? You need the presence of God. You need to know God is for me. God is with me. And because God is for me, I can be for other people. I don't have to be self-protective and self-invested and self-obsessed because God has filled my cup to overflowing and now I can be poured out without any cost whatsoever. I can be a helper because God is my helper. I can be their strength because God is my strength. I can help other people because God is helping me.

Do you see the. The mental shift that happens when you become aware of the presence of God. The illustration I think that's helpful is like a imagine a little kid going into a big dark cave. I don't care how str how brave you are as a little kid. When you go into a big dark cave, it's a big dark cave. It's very, very scary. And most kids we'll not go very far into the cave because there's too many threats, it's too intimidating, I'm not strong enough that's a self-obsession. But imagine if that kid is holding the hands of his father, a big burly he-man with a 30-06 at his side and 45 auto on the other side are on his hip and the k little kid is holding daddy's hand and all of a sudden I'm not as scared as I was I'm actually kind of excited to see what dies today.

You know this is going to be this is going to be cool. I'm not worried about the hidden threats because nothing can hurt my dad that's what the awareness of God's presence does for you and me. These are the shepherd who walks with me through the valley of the shadow of death. So I don't have to be afraid. What can man do to me? What can they do to me? I'm in the presence of my Heavenly Father, and so I can pour myself out in love. I can spend myself for others because God has spent Himself for me.

He has poured Himself into me, and that is how you address the threat. So the habit is love. The power for love is the presence of God, and the threat to love is the obsession with self. So that's the big idea of the text. The keystone habit of the Christian life is to love people. With

abiding love, love that doesn't stop. And the way we do that is through an acute ongoing awareness of the presence of God that turns us away from ourselves and outward towards other people. And Christians who live in that way are radically different.

They are attractive. They are world-changing. This is this is what it looks like. God's presence is the power, our selfish obsession is the drain and then we are to throw this love outward into these four domains. Now I've wondered why does he use those four domains? Why marriage? Why money why the stranger, why why the sufferer? And here's what I think it is. It's not because our love is restricted to those domains any more than our love is restricted to other Christians. We should definitely love other Christians first. We should practice this love in the household of faith.

But we should spend it out everywhere, not just these four things. These four things are mentioned, I believe, because love is most challenging in these four areas. Love is most challenging when you have to love someone you don't know especially if they're weird. Love is most challenging when you're dealing with people who hurt, especially when they complain a lot. And wear you down. Love is most challenging when your hormones are raging. And you're not thinking about your marriage bed, you're thinking about gratifying a sexual urge because you're 18 years old.

Or satisfying an urge because your spouse has neglected your needs. That's when love is challenging. It's challenging when you live in a world that runs on money. And when you got money, you can have happiness, and when you don't, you won't. And so I don't I want to spend the rest of the time thinking about love applied in those in those arenas. The proof. The proof of the pudding is in the tasting. The proof of your conviction that God is with you is demonstrated in whether or not you continue to love.

When confronted with these difficulties. First, the stranger. The again, when I think of hospitality, I think connect table, Miss Brittany, homemade cookies, door greeters. It's not a bad idea to think about, right? Hospitality is really important. That's why you should be a part of our hospitality team. Amen, Brittany. Go talk to Brittany back there. She needs some volunteers. She's always needing more volunteers because people come into our church. And the very first experience people have with our church are with the people on that hospitality team. And we want people to think that we are normal, not weird.

Warm, friendly, affectionate, kind, compassionate, spirit-filled. We should show hospitality. But that's not what the word meant in this context. In this context, hospitality was literally love of stranger Christian missionaries, Christian evangelists would travel from town to town to town, preach the gospel. And because they were Christians, they were persecuted. They were hated by a lot of Jewish people and the temple apparatus and then also from Roman people who were committed to Caesar worship and so if you were a Christian evangelist you

were marked for hostilities and what was required is that Christians would open up their homes to house those people.

It's kind of like an underground railroad for Christianity back in the day. Now if you opened your home, what were you doing? You were opening yourself up to risk socially, financially, maybe even physically. You got your snoopy little Jewish neighbor over there. He has a gentile in his house. I think they had bacon for breakfast. I could smell the bacon. And she's telling the rabbi about the bacon breakfast you cooked for your Gentile Christian traveling evangelist and now all of a sudden your persona non grata at the town square it has cost you to show hospitality.

That's why you didn't do it. It's like, well, he can stay with somebody else. How does that look like today? Well today I think it looks like us intentionally investing ourselves emotionally in other people, especially Christians, who are weird. Who are not like weird, not in weird in a universal sense. They're made in the image of God. They think you're weird. You think they're weird. What's weird? But they're weird in that they're not like you. They don't think like you, talk like you, dress like you, they're not old like you, they don't do their hair like you.

They are they're different. And I think investing in that, is it going to cost you socially? Very well may. Is it going to cost you in terms of your comfort level? Very well might. It's a good thing, and you'll experience the presence of God when you have those people over. When you pursue them in the hallways, when you chase them down, hey, say, hey, come to my group. Everyone's going to wig out when you come in. I can't wait to see the expressions on their faces, but it's good for us.

Because we're Christian people and there's no prejudices at the foot of the cross, and I want to display that through the way that we love you. It starts in the hospitality connect table. It fleshes itself out in your relationships with people who aren't like you. Pursue the stranger. The sufferer. Why the sufferer? I think it's interesting. He says, remember the sufferer. Receive the stranger. Remember the sufferer. Why remember? Why not visit? Visit the prisoner. Visit the person in the hospital. You should visit people that are suffering, right? But he doesn't say visit.

He says remember. Why? I think he says, remember, because that's what's actually difficult. It's easy to go visit somebody in the hospital and it's easy to go visit somebody in prison once or twice. What's harder is to remember them. Why? You know the old saying, out of sight, what? Out of mind. And people who are suffering are not in front of you because they're suffering. They are in prison. They are being persecuted. They're on the outside. This is why things like our home ministry, I think, are really important in our church.

Because they're afflicted to the degree that they can't be in the physical gathering. And the thing that they wake up to every single morning is the fact that they are at home, alone, isolated, and in pain. And they never forget. So what they need is someone else in our church to also never forget, to remember them. To think about them when they pray, to send them a message, hey, I'm thinking about you today. You have no idea the power that you remembering a suffering person can have. In their life. This is true when people are grieving, the death of a loved one.

Everybody's present right after the loved one dies, but they're glaringly absent. Ten months, ten weeks down the road, and they just want someone to remember, I'm hurting. I'm not okay today. They wake up and remember it every single morning. What love looks like is you remembering it because you remember yourself we're one body. They're hurting, I'm hurting. So remember the sufferer. The third one is restricting sex for marriage. I thought about talking about this without talking about sex. Because who likes to listen to a preacher talk about sex? I know I don't.

And I would do that, but the text explicitly hones in on sex. He doesn't say philosophically honor marriage in a general sense because it's great. He says honor marriage. Everybody honor marriage. How? Paul. How whoever wrote Hebrews? By keeping the marriage bed undefiled. By keeping it in your pants, by restricting who with whom you entertain any kind of sexual activity. This is true for single people, whether you're 18 or 80. Or twenty eight or however whenever that stops being a thing. Maybe eighty if you're on the medicines, I don't know.

But irrespective married, single, eighteen, or eighty. Honor the marriage bed by keeping it undefiled. Meaning not only am I going to engage in sexual activity with someone that is not my spouse, I am going to work with everything that is in me to make sure someone else in our local church doesn't entertain the same. I'm going to honor marriage in the way that I treat other people and the way that I fight to keep their marriage bed pure. That's what it looks like. And single people can do that and married people can do that and any person at any age can do that.

Why is that the thing? Why does he focus on sex? The reason I think two reasons. Number one, why marriage? Marriage is the thing because marriage was chosen by God to be the mirror of the gospel. He could have chosen a lot of human institutions to display the love of Jesus for his church, but he chose marriage because through marriage, God portrays the mystery of the gospel love that Jesus has for his bride. God reserved sex for marriage because sex is one of the most greatest gifts that God has given, but also one of the most powerful.

It has the power to heal and restore. And strengthen it also has the power to burn down and destroy and ruin when you enjoy God's good gift in the design in marriage it's a wonderful

thing. When it is outside that, it is a terrible thing that ruins people's lives. And the first thing to go in an adulterous affair in the local church is both people stop coming to church. One person says I can't go there. I'm totally ashamed of what I've done or what you did. I'll never show my face to those people again.

And the other person says, I want you to be able to go to church, so I'm going to go somewhere else. So really neither person goes to church. If they do go to church, they go to completely different churches where no one knows their situation, no one knows their story, no one comes alongside of them and says, hey, let's try to work through this and keep believing and keep loving and arrive at God's design all of that is checked out because the sex was wrongly applied. And it's like that at I could show you that at every level.

It's such a powerful gift, that's why it's the center of suffering, the stranger, and your sexuality. It's the top three. And then finally, money. Resist the snare of money. Keep your life free from the love of money. Some people say money is the root of all evil. It isn't. Money is not good or evil. Money is amoral. It's neither good or bad. It's the love of money. What is the love of money? Well the love of money doesn't really Depend on how much money you have. You can love money as a rich person and you can love money as a poor person.

The way you know you have love of money is that all you think about is money. Either I don't have enough money and that's all I think about all the time, or I've got a lot of money, but I need some more money, and so that's all I think about all the time, and you're always looking for more and more and more. That is a thing that will turn you inward on the self. And the reason it's so highlighted, I think, just like sex is a good gift that is destructive when wrongly applied, money is a good gift from God that is destructive when wrongly enjoyed.

When you make money on God, it's a great gift. It's a terrible God. Why is it so terrible? Because money, it's not what money represents, it's what money can buy you security, money can buy you friends, money can buy you influence, money can buy you pleasure, money can buy you almost anything that you can dream of. And that worldly pleasure, security, success, and influence becomes a counterfeit for God in your life. Well, I don't need to rest in God's I don't need to be secure in the Lord. I can be secure in my bank account.

I don't need to enjoy the Lord. I can enjoy the pleasures of this world to excess and beyond. So what money does for you becomes a false God in your life. It becomes an idol. And through the worship of that idol, it keeps you from loving people because you're no longer resting in the presence of God in your life and pouring your life out on other people. You're pouring your life out to serve the real God of your life, which is money, and you neglect your family, you neglect your friends, you neglect your responsibilities, and don't let phileo love continue because you've instead become a worshiper of money.

Now the beautiful thing is the answer to this is not becoming poor. Amen. It's not a question of how much money or how little money. The question is, is your money good enough? Is what you have good enough for you? It's a question of contentment. And you can be content with a lot, and you can be content with a little. That's what Paul said. I've had a lot, I've had a little, I've learned in every circumstance. To be content, because I can do all things through Jesus Christ, who gives me strength.

And the mountain low or the mountain high or the valley low resist the snare of money. It is a snare. What is a snare? A snare is something a hunter puts out it looks attractive it looks promising it's got the bait everything's going to be wonderful that's what money does it says if you have it everything will be solved. And even in the moment you can enjoy the food, the snare deceived you, but then eventually it pulls down, it enslaves you. It's a terrible God, it's a terrible master, and you end up incapable of pouring yourself out in love for others because it's become the slave master in your life.

And so those are the four areas where love is hardest. Which is why you need the presence of God to be at the forefront of your minds in each of these four domains. Now how do we do that? Why are why can we say with conviction that God is present? Everywhere I am. Why can we say, as verse 6 says, the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? This is actually a quotation of Psalms 118:6. Psalm 118 is a key psalm. You may want to bookmark it, turn there if you want.

It's a messianic psalm. It's the last psalm before the big psalm 119. And Christians understood it to be applied to the Messiah. I'm sorry, Jewish people understood it to be applied to the Messiah. Christians applied it to Jesus because Psalm 118, 26 is where the Jewish people shouted, Hosanna, when Jesus came into Jerusalem. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. That's Matthew 21, 9. It's a quotation of Psalm 118. 26. Here comes the Messiah, here comes the deliverance, here comes the solution to all of our problems.

What's so crazy about Psalm 118 is that the means of that deliverance is described as a cornerstone that the builders rejected. In other words, God's solution to our problems come from someone that nobody accepted, everybody thought was rejected, and that is the one through whom salvation comes. That of course represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus himself in Matthew 21, 41, said, I am the cornerstone that the builders rejected He told a parable about the vineyard owner, and they killed the one person that came to save them from their misery, and that's Jesus Christ.

Psalm 118. 22, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. What a fitting image. Jesus is the keystone and the cornerstone. The keystone is the last stone that holds everything together. The cornerstone is the first stone in the building project. It is the foundation stone. It's what sets the trajectory. Of all the other stones. It's the firm foundation on which everything else will rest. And Jesus is the same thing for the Christian life when it

comes to loving people. He is both the source and the example. He is that which holds everything together, and he is the wellspring from which true love is born.

Because we're able to love other people. We're able to know God is present and always loving us because of the love he demonstrated through the person and work of Jesus Christ. If you go back to Psalm 118, with this, we'll close. He quotes the Lord's discipline, which Jesus, I think, applies to himself in the New Testament. Through the cross, the Lord disciplined me severely. But he did not give me over to death. Why three days later God raised Jesus from the grave? He is now the gate of righteousness. Open the gates of righteousness for me, I will enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the Lord's gate, the righteous will enter through it. I will give thanks to you because you have answered me and become my salvation. What can man do to me? The Lord is my helper. This is the same thing Paul had in his mind, the famous quote. If God is for us, who can be against us? If he who did not spare his own son but graciously gave him up for us all, how will he not also with us graciously give us all things? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

And so the promise of abiding love is through Jesus Christ our cornerstone. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. The answer to the question, what can man do to me, is actually they can kill you. That's not fine, right? They can torture you, they can rob you, they can deplatform you, they can persecute you. The one thing they cannot do to you is they cannot separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And because God is always with you can always pour yourself out in love for other people.

I'm persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers, things present nor things to come, height, depth, no created thing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. And that's what we celebrate in the Lord's table. And so as we take the Lord's Supper this morning, here's what I want to challenge you to do. Ask yourself the question: is brotherly love abiding in my heart? Or has something thrown up a roadblock that is keeping me from loving people in these domains? The stranger, the sufferer.

Your sexuality or the way you handle your stuff. And one of the ways we can take the Lord's Supper this morning in a worthy manner is to be through it to be reminded that nothing can separate us, nothing has separated us from the love of God through Christ. That when we were a stranger, he pursued us and welcomed us home. When we were in suffering through sin and bondage to sin, he came, he remembered us, and he rescued us from that bondage. That he kept himself pure as our groom. So that he could save his bride and wash her with the water of the word.

And that instead of taking the pleasures of this world that he could have rightly had as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he laid that life down. And made an atoning sacrifice for sin so

that you and I could be partakers of his salvation. And so he is the example and the source through his death on the cross. If you don't know him personally, if you haven't given your life to Jesus this morning, you can indicate your desire to do that on your connect card. And then those of you who are followers of Jesus, the implication this morning is that we would love people.

Continually and that those things that are blocking it you would repent of today remove them from your life before we take the Lord's Supper. And so I'm going to invite you to do that and ask our ushers to come down to the front as we pass out the elements. And as they do that, you can respond to the Lord right there where you're seated. Father, we thank you for your word and we pray now as we enter into this time of response that you would give us wisdom and discernment to know what love looks like in our particular domains, in our particular lives, with our particular challenges.

And Holy Spirit, we need your wisdom. Bring conviction where it is most necessary. Give us courage and faith to respond with hearts full of the love of God. Demonstrated to us through Christ and His cross. As we eat the bread and as we drink the cup. Would we do so with lives that are fully surrendered to you and willing to be poured out for you in love and service to those around us? And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.