

Good morning. LOVE HOLDS IT ALTOGETHER. (I am going to say) Everybody say out loud: IT'S LOVE - that holds it all together. What a joy it is to open up God's Word with you this morning. We are very near to the close of this 52-week overview of the Bible and this morning, on Week 5 of what we've titled "All Things New" we're going to dive into an incredible passage of scripture from the book of 1 John.

Just to give you a little context for this book of the Bible:

- ***Though the author is unnamed***, it has been understood since the beginning of the church that the Apostle John who wrote Gospel of John, 2, 3rd John and Revelation.
- Remember that this is the JOHN who described himself in the Gospel of John as "the one whom Jesus loved". John was one of Jesus' inner circle of Peter, James, and John that Jesus would often invite into even deeper intimate moments like the Mount of Transfiguration. This isn't just any guy: this brother was an eyewitness to the life of Jesus, and he reminds us in **1 John 1:3 "what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also"**.
- ***John wanted the Church to experience true fellowship with God and with God's people.*** But he knew that would not happen until the Christians set aside their own selfish desires in favor of the pursuits God had for them.
- ***The aging apostle hoped to ignite the zeal of these believers*** so that they might follow the Lord more closely and stand firm against those who meant to sow discord among the churches. In doing so, they would

solidify their relationship with God and gain confidence in His work in their lives.

You know, the word love can be confusing. All of us have had different experiences with love. **Maybe some of us were deprived** of the love we needed so what do we do? We try to find it in other places. **Some of us are scared to love** for fear of being taken advantage of, disappointed, or hurt. And let's be honest: We usually do this because we've been burned. Maybe you've tried relationships, pleasure, or achievements and found yourself falling short of scratching that itch – you just didn't find the fulfillment you were hoping to find. In 1 John, the Apostle really hits every bit of this.

IT'S LOVE. As we get started, let me point something out to you: ***No other religion or worldview teaches God's love for you in this way.*** The way that Jesus teaches God's love for you is foreign to most worldviews. If you think of it, the fact that God has opened our hearts to this truth is HUGE – the way that He is wooing you and I to receive His Son. Guys, listen: **THE FATHER IS PASSIONATELY IN LOVE WITH YOU!!!**

Y'all, IT'S LOVE. And God **IS** love. That's His nature. That's Who He is - it's the essence of His person. That's one of His attributes, His characteristics. When you are in God and God is in you, then the same life in God pours out through you. You're like a string on His instrument, a photograph from His camera, an app on His iPhone. (GRIN) GOD'S love flows out through you and **IN THAT WAY** the love of God is revealed.

Go ahead and turn in your bibles, or set your phone to 1 John 4:7-21. As we dive into this passage today the Apostle John will remind us how our identity as a child of God frees us from endless self-striving, self-elevating, and self-preserving, so that, instead, we can be self-giving people . . . just as God is a self-giving God. (LET'S PRAY)

Hey, let's take some notes because this will be helpful and I'm going to give you some application at the end to do tomorrow morning. Here's the 1st POINT I want you to see:

This LOVE comes from God.

We're going to do something that we don't normally do: we're going to read this whole passage - all 14 verses - in its entirety before I break it down. Normally we don't do this, we prefer to read a little, preach a little. But there's a reason: as we read I want you to count how many times John repeats the word "love" and "God". So everytime you hear "love" or "God" I want you to count it. YOU READY?

7 Dear friends, let us **love** one another, for **love** comes from **God**. Everyone who **loves** has been born of **God** and knows **God**. **8** Whoever does not **love** does not know **God**, because **God** is **love**. **9** This is how **God** showed his **love** among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10** This is **love**: not that we **loved** **God**, but that he **loved** us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. **11** Dear friends, since **God** so **loved** us, we also ought to **love** one another. **12** No one has ever seen **God**; but if we

love one another, **God** lives in us and his **love** is made complete in us. **13** This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of **God**, **God** lives in them and they in **God**. **16** And so we know and rely on the **love** **God** has for us. **God** is **love**. Whoever lives in **love** lives in **God**, and **God** in them. **17** This is how **love** is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. **18** There is no fear in **love**. But perfect **love** drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in **love**. **19** We **love** because he first **loved** us. **20** Whoever claims to **love** **God** yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not **love** their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot **love** **God**, whom they have not seen. **21** And he has given us this command: Anyone who **loves** **God** must also **love** their brother and sister.

What did you come up with? Yeah, I counted 43. But regardless, can we agree that there is DEFINITELY a theme going on here?!? (IT'S LOVE)

And John gives us a visual of what this love looks like **9** This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. Everytime we see an interpretation of JESUS' bloody body on that cross may you and Inbe reminded: THIS is what love looks like.

And he also reminds us in v. **9** that He did this so "that we might live through him." And John points out something that

just always amazes me; **10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**” He didn’t do this because YOU loved Him, but because you are LOVED! It reminds me of *Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Somebody say, (IT’S LOVE)

And **This LOVE comes from God.** Here’s the second thing I want you to understand about this love:

This LOVE is supernatural. We’re talking about a supernaturally empowered love. On our own, we are completely unable to manifest this kind of love. But God hasn’t left us on our own. When we trusted Christ, God gave us the HOLY SPIRIT to indwell us and empower us. LET’S READ IT:

13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. The Holy Spirit enlightens our minds to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ; He also opens our hearts and empowers our wills to accept it. . . . But the Spirit doesn’t stop there.

15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. SO, The permanent presence of the Holy Spirit, who unites us to the life of God, continues to enable us to confess Jesus as the Son of God. And because of this, here’s what happens: **16 And so we know and (we) rely on the love God has for us.** (What are we knowing and relying on? Next sentence) **God is love. (IT’S LOVE) Whoever**

lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This same Spirit who unites us to **the life of God** also unites us **to the love of God**, so that **we’re not only recipients** of His love but also **conduits** of His love. Let me tell you what that means: God wants to use YOU and I to remind others of His unconditional love. There are so many people THINK GOD DOESN’T LOVE THEM. Maybe you’re one of those who struggles with the concept of God’s unconditional love for you. Guys, God sent Jesus to die **BECAUSE He loves them.** I said this earlier but it might not have clicked: THE FATHER IS PASSIONATELY IN LOVE WITH YOU!!! **IT’S LOVE Y’ALL.**

Now here’s the thing, back to our point: **This LOVE is supernatural.** God is calling us to RECEIVE this truth on the DAILY, that He has given us the Holy Spirit, Who is teaching, convicting, encouraging, and teaching us all day everyday (if we let him - hello?) I think it’s important that BELIEVERS recognize that God wants to manifest His love IN us and THRU our lives. IT’S LOVE, Y’ALL.

So the thing we’re learning about this love is 1. **This LOVE comes from God.** and 2. **This LOVE is supernatural.** And the 3rd thing I want you to write down is that

This LOVE is perfected. It truly is. This isn’t just ANY love. This isn’t “hey, love ya man.” that we half-heartedly throw around. We’re going to look at v. 17-21, and as we read this verse, pay attention to the way John shows us the difference between **perfect love and imperfect love.** Let me show you 3

ways Perfect love affects us - look at v. **17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.**

So here's the 1st way Perfect love IMPACTS our life: **We will have confidence on Judgement Day.** Now I realize some of y'all might be like, "WHOA!! That sounds scary..." Well, I think that Judgement day is something that should hold a deep respect in us spiritually. A lot of you might not know a lot about that day. I just want to remind you, every one of us will stand before him. Some will do so MADLY, some SADLY, and some GLADLY. MADLY: You didn't believe INTO a personal relationship with God, You would not surrender to His Son, You think being a good person is what's going to get you to heaven. If this is your mindset, you risk standing before Him MADLY. SADLY: You might have trusted God but have allowed LIFE to choke out the things of the spirit. You are not living your life on mission for JESUS, and if you aren't careful you will be sad because you realize that you have not SPENT YOUR LIFE well, and You are sad. You're sad because, as you stand in the presence of Holiness, you now recognize that HE IS WORTHY of inconveniencing your life for. MADLY, SADLY, and FINALLY, GLADLY: You REJOICE in the presence of a Savior that you have spent your life with, face to face with the one you have served and helped others to meet. WHICH ONE will you be?

Remember it says, "**In this world we are (to be) like Jesus.**" We should be striving to be MORE surrendered, so that day-by-day, we are hopefully becoming MORE like Jesus. We don't have to fear divine shaming on the day of judgment—as

Paul reassures, "**There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus**" (Romans 8:1). Jesus can care for us far better than we can care for ourselves! Knowing this truth frees us to love others. So we're looking at the difference between perfect and imperfect love.

here's the 2nd way Perfect love IMPACTS our life: **We will rebuke FEAR.** I don't know about you, but fear has been an unwelcomed accomplice in my spiritual life. v. **18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.** I've shared this so many times, but I will never forget the 1st time I came across 2 Tim 1:7 which says, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and a sound mind." I read that and I sensed the Holy Spirit say, "YOU NEED TO MEMORIZE THAT." And I did IMMEDIATELY. Because my whole life I have been hindered by fear; fear of talking, fear of speaking up, fear of asking the question, fear of taking chances, fear of bold steps. Those of you who know me might rebuke me: "none of those things describe you!" And you may be right, but the reason is because God encouraged me to make 2 Tim 1:7 a life verse. Perfect love CASTS out fear – HALLELUJAH!!

Here's the 3rd way Perfect Love IMPACTS our life: **We will love like JESUS loves** HAHA! I LOVE THIS – look at v. **19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar...** STRONG WORDS! You say you love God yet you hate a bro/sis (in

Christ) - **in Robco we would say, “you a lie”**. This is such an incredible picture of imperfect love. Let’s look at the whole verse: **19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.**

People in the church have grown accustomed to strife and division in the church and God is NOT OKAY with it! How can you say you love a God, whom you’ve never seen, and hate a flesh and blood, spirit-filled, brother/sister in the body of Christ who you HAVE seen?!? You are damaging the body of Christ, You are creating disunity in His Church, and You are putting bricks DAILY in your relationship with God. **21 And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. See, perfect love says this: If you really love God you gotta keep His command: love your brother and sister in Christ.** “Pastor Mike, you don’t know what they did to me!” I don’t care what they’ve done to you (actually, I do) – but we gotta work through it – I didn’t write the book. God did. And Jesus tells us John 13:35 “they will know you are my disciples by your LOVE for one another.” Friends, I get it, I know it’s hard. But we are striving for a supernatural, holy spirit driven love - Only JESUS can help you to love like JESUS.

When the message of the cross finally comes through, you realize you are not important— Christ is. Then love just flows freely. Love doesn’t flow freely when we’re self-important. Pastor Chuck Swindoll said, “Self-importance brings the spirit of entitlement, **“I deserve this. I’ve earned this. This is mine. It’s only right.”** But at the foot of the cross, we say, “I see Jesus

who died and paid the supreme price for my sins. I’m reduced to nothing. May I love others as He loved me.” —Chuck Swindoll

So what do we do with this? Everybody say, “SO WHAT?”

We all go through ups and downs in our Christian faith. Whatever the struggle—whether outside of us or inside—we often feel ourselves blown around by the winds of emotion or circumstances. **Yet God calls us to lives of increasing consistency, with the evidence of our inner transformation becoming more and more apparent as the months and years pass by.** How would you characterize your relationship with God—consistent and fruitful or sporadic and parched?

Can I remind you of something real important: **2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!** (Worship Cue)

Here's one thing I'm for sure of: GOD IS LOVE. He made it clear how many times? God is Love and He is in you. If God is love, and He's in you, YOU are LOVE too.

Let me share a couple of things that you can do tomorrow to apply and grow in this:

- **Number One: First, let’s consider our DAILY RELATIONSHIP habits. What’s one thing you can do better in your love for others in your home and daily routine?**

- **Second, what is a FEARFUL situation that the Holy Spirit can help in?** think of those times when you feel most crippled by fear instead of confidence.

- **Last, what needs to be RECONCILED in your life in regard to this teaching?**

- Is there anything that isn't right in you? A relationship? Ongoing purposeful sin? Maybe your relationship to God. For some it could be this, you don't love Him as much as you once did. And it is truly time that you make your way home to a heavenly Father who has been watching for you daily.
- Maybe you have never established a personal relationship with God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you truly received His love? Has there ever been a time in your life that you truly surrendered your life to God and said, "I give up - I surrender - I'm tired of trying to do this my own way!" IT'S LOVE Y'ALL. And the love of God is making HIMSELF evident to you in this moment - His love is real, and He is passionate about you.
- If you would like to receive Him this is how: I'm going to lead you in a prayer - you pray this wholeheartedly - with a spirit of surrender - and we will see God move in that supernatural way that we spoke about earlier:
- "God, thank You for meeting me here, for calling out to me, for speaking directly to my heart. I know that I want you and I want You to know that I NEED YOU. Jesus, thank You for dying for me. In this moment, I surrender to You; I thank You for your grace, your mercy. Please forgive me of all of my sin, and I ask You to teach me how to live for You from this day forward. Thank You for saving me. It's in Your Name I ask this. Amen."