



Date: November 2nd, 2025

Text: 1 John 4:7-21 NLT

Sermon Title: More Than a Love Song

1 John 3:23 (NLT)

23 And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.

We all want to be seen, heard, known, and loved.

Love exercised well looks similar in kind to God's love and when exercised poorly looks like un-love or hate.

Storge (Store-gay) – Affection

Notes:

Phileo / Philia – Friendship

Notes:

Eros – Romantic Love

Notes:

Agape – Selfless Love – Charity

Notes:

1 John 4:7-21 (NLT)

7 Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8 But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 10 This is real love--not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 12 No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. 13 And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. 14 Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. 16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. 18 Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect

love. 19 We love each other because he loved us first. 20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21 And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters.

The Gift of Agape Love:

1. The Gift of _____

1 John 4:7

2. The Gift of the _____

1 John 4:13

3. The Gift of _____

1 John 4:17

Notes:

So how do we grow and fully accept this Agape love?

1 John 4:16-17 (NLT)

16 We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be

afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

Notes:

2 Corinthians 3:15-18 (NLT)

15 Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand. 16 But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord--who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

Notes:

So, what does it mean to abide.

Abiding is not temporary but a permanent arrangement

1. Abiding is _____ (Identity and Presence)
2. Abiding is _____ (trust fully)
3. Abiding is _____ (walk faithfully)
4. Abiding is _____ – To live and rest in His love and to respond to His love (live relationally)

Life Group Questions:

Get to Know You

Question: Movies and music often describe love as passionate, emotional, or romantic. What's a line from a movie or song about love that's always stuck with you — and why do you think it connects with people?

Digging Deeper in the Bible

John uses some form of the word *agapē* 27 times in 15 verses! Let's look at what that means and how it contrasts with other types of love.

Question: John says that "love comes from God" and "God is love." What makes *agape* love different from *storge*, *philia*, or *eros*?

How does understanding these distinctions deepen your view of how God loves you?

Read verses 9–13 again. How does John say God showed His love for us? What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping us experience and reflect that love daily?

Application: Verses 16–17 say, “All who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.” What does it look like for you personally to “abide in God” this week — to remain connected, dependent, obedient, and loving?

IMAGERY

“Image” (from Lat. *imago*, “representation,” “likeness,” or “imitation,” as in “picture,” “apparition,” “vision,” “echo,” and “figure of speech”) designates the object or mental picture produced in artificial representation. “Imagery” commonly indicates both the object produced in the act of image-making (the image or mental picture itself represented), and the particular act of representation linked to the production of the image (e.g., the art of painting, sculpture, or poetic expression). Images are frequently identified according to the sense to which they appeal—though typically visual and auditory, and also organized according to the social, cultural, and discursive formations in which they are employed—artistic, literary, religious, psychological, political, and domestic, among others.

Prior to the 18th century, image and imagery were not normally applied to literature, but to things that were by definition pictorial—paintings or sculptures. Only in the 19th century, under the influence of Samuel Coleridge and his discussion of imagination—though also of course subsequently in psychoanalytic discourse and in various philosophies of language—do we see a direct association develop between the words image and imagery and metaphors and similes. The essence of imagination resides in its ability to create something apparently distinct by means of association and modification, thus lending itself to the associative powers of metaphor and simile. By the middle of the 19th century, therefore, the words image and imagery are regularly used as comprehensive synonyms for similes and metaphors. In literature and literary criticism especially, imagery comes to refer to all language that demonstrates graphic representation of a mental picture, with a general focus upon pictorial expressions and the figurative elements of metaphor and simile used to articulate abstractions.

The critical study of imagery generally seeks to demonstrate how patterns of images express a particular concept or abstraction. In psychoanalytic examination, e.g., the analyst will seek out a singular or continuous motif among various dream images in order to uncover the disturbances buried deep down in the unconscious (Freud) or collective unconscious (Jung). Similarly, the literary critic will engage a series of images in order to unveil the theme of a given literary work, as well as describe the imaginative world through which the text is produced. For example, the desperate and clashing images of a past and present River Thames in T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*

contribute to the thematic continuity of the text whereby Eliot paints a picture of the waste and decay of human morality between the two world wars.

Images abound in the biblical literature; and certainly the study of images, including the close reading of metaphors and similes, elicits a better understanding of the various themes and perceptions of the world contained in the specific writings of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Understood according to the definition of likeness or copy, imagery manifests itself in the representation of the gods of the nations—the idol or graven image—as well as in the description of humanity created in the image of the gods. But more importantly, biblical texts witness to an abundance of images metaphorically employed to elucidate a particular understanding or perception of the divine and its relation to humanity. The messenger of the Lord appears to Moses “in a flame of fire out of a bush, ... yet the bush was not consumed” (Exod. 3:2); this image or mental picture of divine manifestation clearly portrays the power and inviolability of the Hebrew God. Ezekiel’s vision of the Lord likewise employs images that communicate divine splendor and majesty: “Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the splendor all around” (Ezek. 1:28). In the Christian Scriptures also, such images as Mark’s descending dove or the Johannine “bread from heaven” serve as metaphors to illuminate the divinely sanctioned appearance and ministry of Jesus. Studies of imagery, especially as occur in the literary-critical approaches to the Bible, have become an important part of biblical studies.

Bibliography. S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 8th rev. ed. (New York, 1965); N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957); P. N. Furbank, *Reflections on the Word “Image”* (London, 1970); C. G. Jung, *Dreams* (Princeton, 1974); F. Kermode, *The Romantic Image* (New York, 1964); Kermode and R. Alter, eds., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, 1987); M. S. Silk, *Interaction in Poetic Imagery* (London, 1974).¹

¹ Michael L. Humphries, [“Imagery,”](#) in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 632–633.