



MARCH 22, 2026 | Dr. Jimmy Stewart

Jesus Changes Everything

Hate → Love

Scripture: 1 John 2:9–11; 1 John 4:7–11; John 13:34–35

Spotlight: God's love in Christ **overcomes** and **replaces** the hatred sin produces.

Summary: Hatred is not a minor flaw but a spiritual condition that keeps a person walking in darkness and out of step with God. In contrast, true unconditional love does not begin with us but with God, who demonstrated His love by sending His one and only Son to save sinners through His sacrifice on the cross. Because we have been loved so deeply by Christ, we are now called to love others in ways that reflect His grace and truth and love for us. Jesus made it clear that **love is the visible identifiable mark of His disciples**, so a life changed by Him will be changed from hatred, bitterness, and resentment toward mercy, forgiveness, and Christlike love.

I. Hatred Reveals Spiritual Darkness

1 John 2:9-11

9 If anyone claims, "I am living in the light," but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness. 10 Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness.

John makes it plain that hatred is not a small attitude problem; it is *evidence of spiritual darkness*. A person may claim to know God, speak religious words,

and come across as spiritual, yet still be walking in darkness if hatred rules their heart. Hatred clouds judgment, distorts relationships, feeds resentment, bitterness and manipulation. Hatred in any person keeps the church from the unity the Jesus prayed for in John 17 and the Spirit from empowering the witness to the lost world!

- Hatred reveals something broken in fellowship with God.

- Hatred keeps wounds open, keeps pride alive, and keeps the soul in the dark.

II. Love Begins with God and is Revealed in Jesus

1 John 4:7-10

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.

Love does not begin in us. It begins in God. We do not manufacture true unconditional love by trying harder; we receive it from the God whose very nature is love. The clearest proof of that love is not sentiment but sacrifice: God sent His Son so that sinners might live through Him. The cross is where God's love conquers human hate.

We love not because people deserve it, but because God has shown undeserved love to us in Christ Jesus.

The answer to a hateful heart is not self-improvement but gospel transformation. When we stand at the foot of the cross, pride is humbled, bitterness is exposed, and grace begins to reshape us. When we die with Christ, hatred dies with us. When we rise with Christ, our hearts are filled with His love! (Galatians 2:20)

Colossians 2:20

20 You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.

You cannot give Christlike love until you have received God's love in Christ.

III. Love Proves You Belong to Jesus

John 13:34–35

34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

1 John 4:11

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.

Jesus did not say the world would know His disciples by their politics, preferences, knowledge, or personalities. *He said they would be known by their love.* Christian love is not shallow niceness; it is a cross-shaped commitment to treat others with the grace, truth, patience, forgiveness and sacrifice that Christ has shown us.

- Love is not optional for believers; it is the visible mark of authentic discipleship.
- A church may be sound in doctrine, active in ministry, and strong in convictions, but if love is absent, the witness is weakened. Love gives credibility to our confession of Christ.

Next Steps:

Let God replace hate and bitterness with His love—start today at the foot of the cross.

Life Application:

1. According to 1 John 2:9–11, why is hatred more serious than an emotional struggle or personality issue? How does John connect hatred to spiritual darkness, and what are some ways bitterness can quietly shape a person's thinking, worship, and relationships without being obvious at first?
2. What is the difference between worldly love and the kind of love described in 1 John 4:7–10? How does the cross redefine love as more than a feeling, and why is it important that biblical love begins with God rather than with our own efforts or preferences?
3. Why is it impossible to consistently love others in a Christlike way apart from first receiving the love of God in Christ? Consider how insecurity, pride, guilt, or unresolved hurt can hinder love, and how the gospel addresses each of those barriers.
4. Jesus says love is the mark of His disciples in John 13:34–35. What does that mean for a local church? How can a church be biblically faithful in doctrine and yet still fail in its witness if love is absent or weak in its culture?
5. How should a believer respond when the person they are called to love is someone who has deeply hurt, betrayed, or offended them? What are differences between biblical love, personal reconciliation, forgiveness, and enabling sinful behavior? How can grace and accountability both be practiced?
6. What are some modern forms of hatred that may not look like hatred on the surface?
Discuss how contempt, gossip, resentment, division, prejudice, passive aggression, cold indifference, or delight in someone's downfall can all reveal a heart that is not walking fully in the light. How has social media provided a platform for hate to manifest in the lives of believers?
7. If God's love in Christ truly overcomes the hatred sin produces, what would practical repentance look like this week for someone struggling with bitterness?
How might confession, prayer, remembering the cross, speaking truth, seeking forgiveness, and intentionally serving others help believers avoid the worldly trap of hatred and maintain a loving heart for all people?

NOTE: A professional version of ChatGPT was used in part to refine aspects of this Sermon Guide including the Summary and Life Application, the week of March 15-19. Developed and Edited by Dr. James M. Stewart for First Baptist Church Gulfport, Mississippi.