

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Family Matters
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Love

Matthew 22:34-40

“³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ ³⁷ Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

How are we doing Church? (Cheers from the crowd.) Awesome! It is great to be with you guys! It is so good to be with you guys this morning. Just a quick update on our family, we moved. Anybody love moving? Anyone? Great...so we all agree. It is terrible. Terrible process, and we got movers. So, it was not like, I am out there doing all the heavy lifting and getting exhausted, but even finding movers is a challenge. Because you go on Google Maps or Google and google movers in Waco – all the things - and how do I know who is good?! I am looking through reviews, and so I get these three estimates and I am looking at them. At first, I want to go with the cheapest. But I am also trying to figure out, “Lord, how do I make this decision?” One of them is clearly a Christian company – if you will – it is like ‘We Move the Stone Movers’. Like John 3:16. Alright there we go, we will go with them. That is not really their name by the way.

And so, we enter into this process where the day comes; we are going to move; and I have got a lot of grace for that job – because it is a hard job. So, they gave me an estimate of how long it would take, and they got there at 9 a.m. Well at 9 p.m., we are still putting boxes on the truck. And I actually have to drive to Houston this particular night because I am speaking there the next day. So, I am thinking, “Oh no! This is going to go all night.” But it was all good because they said, “If we don’t finish today, we will come back and finish in the morning.” Great.

So, we show up at the new place – the new guys in the neighborhood – with the two diesel trucks that drive down the street at 10 p.m. I am thinking that this is not good. So, I am there in the street and I am talking to the lead person, and I say, “Hey, I know this has taken longer than you thought. That is okay, but you have to come back tomorrow.” And he says, “Well I cannot come back tomorrow because I have already booked these trucks out tomorrow, and so we have to go

through the night.” And I say, “What do you mean through the night?” He says, “Probably 6 a.m.” I said, “No man, I have to go to Houston. I cannot leave my wife. You have got to come back tomorrow – that is what you said.” And he says, “Yeah, I know but I can’t”. And I said, “But you do not understand. You have to because that is what you said.” So, we are in this weird stand-off, I am not going to lie, it was a little awkward. We were there in the middle of the street. And he goes, “I thought you were a Christian?” Because Monica had made the mistake of sharing the Gospel earlier that day – it is just what she does. And so, I am there, and I am caught off guard by that. I’m like, “I thought you were a Christian?” And he says, “I am. Look at my truck.”

Which begs the question, how do you identify someone as a Christian. Right? Is it the ichthus on the car? The Hebrew word that nobody really knows what it means on the back of your neck or on your wrist – the tattoo you got. It might be the mark of the beast and you do not realize it – I am just saying. Is it the THM or the MDiv, the degree? Where you went to college? You grew up in church, the family name, the family origin? What is the thing that you point to if you are trying to prove you are a Christian? “I am a Christian.” And so, what is the thing that you look at? The thing you say, “Hey, look at that! Look at the degree on the wall. Look at the neighborhood I grew up in. Look at the tattoo. Look – I am a Christian!” How does someone identify a Christian?

We are in a little series called Family Matters. We are spending just a few weeks talking about things that matter to this church family. Last week we talked about this idea of discipleship that we cannot let this mission that Jesus has given us die. A disciple is someone who makes disciples. A disciple is a follower of Jesus. And another word that we use for that is Christian. A Christian just means a follower of Christ – it has His name in the title! That is the label that we claim. But what makes someone a Christian? That is what I want to talk about with you guys today. How does someone identify a Christian? And the Bible is so clear, it is so kind to us. Clarity is kindness. God is like, “Hey you do not have to wonder. I will tell you explicitly. I will tell you so clearly.”

He gives us John 13:34-35 – **“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”** He says let me give you the answer to the trivia question. The thing that you should point to in that circumstance, to say I am a follower of Jesus, is love. And this verse, it says it so clearly, is really repeated all throughout the teachings of Jesus. But here is the problem. We throw that word around like it is “the” because we love chocolate, and we love coffee, and we love Baylor, and we love momma, and we love apple pie. We love all of the things. Jesus, when He says they will know you by the way you love, He is not saying that they are going to know you by the way you feel. He is talking about something that you do. The way that you live your life. The way that your belief in Him infiltrates all of the decisions that you make. And I know, I know, that this is like Christianity 101 – so basic. But it is crazy how far we have gone. How far we have moved from this reality. We do not realize it anymore.

I want to be abundantly clear on something out of the gates. You are saved. Saved to God, saved from Hell – you are going to be in heaven because of what you believe. That is the Gospel. Jesus

Christ has died for your sins on the cross, and the power of God and His Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead on the third day. And if you believe that He died for your sins, then you do not have to pay for your sins in Hell. You do not have to suffer for your sins. It is binary – you either believe that or you don't. You are either saved or you are not. You are not kind of Christian, sort of Christian, moving toward Christian, becoming a Christian – you are one or you are not one.

If this seems like the basics, I have been running this lifelong experiment – an adult life-long experiment. Why I ask somebody every day “How certain are you that you are a Christian? Between 1 and 10, 10 being certain and 1 being not so sure if you died today, how certain are you that you would go to heaven?” And in Waco, the answers that I get are 5, 6, 7, 4, 8, 9. And the second question that I ask is, “If you stood before God and He asked you, “Why should I let you in?” What would you say?” And in Waco, the answers that I get to that question are because I have been good; because I have loved Him; because I went to church, because I have something on my truck. They will point to something that they have done almost every day. SO how has this simple message of Christianity been diluted? Because if you have trusted in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection for the forgiveness for your sins, you are going to be with God forever. And it all comes down to what you believe. What you believe will impact the way you behave – always. Let me say it again. You are saved by what you believe, but what you believe – if you really believe it – will impact the way that you behave. It is very simple to say, “I believe”. We can identify as anything – especially in 2021, we are seeing this. I can identify as a different gender, different sex, different age. I can identify as all kinds of things different from the reality of what I am, and the world is embracing this reality. It has never been a greater grievance to God than when someone says, “I identify as a follower of Jesus, but I don't follow Jesus.” I just want you to know that in title and in name, I am a Christian. Nothing in my life is impacted by that label, but I will use it because I am American. Raised in the Bible belt. This is where I am.

So how do you know if someone is a Christian, what identifies them? Jesus said it is love, repeatedly that was the thing. So last week we talked about the Great Commission. This week, we are going to talk about the Great Commandment and a value that I want to heap for our family. The idea that Christians are marked by love for God, marked by love for others, and then before you leave here this morning what is the dress code of a Christian. We hinted on that last week – what is the dress code of a Christian.

So, let me set-up this text. I am going to be in Matthew 22, that is where you find the Great Commandment. And this scene is amazing! So even if you are like, “Oh yeah, I know the Great Commandment” I am not so sure you understand the context of what is happening. This is an awesome scene! Jesus is there, He is teaching, and there are these two religious groups. There are the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees are like your really strict Jewish sect of people. Okay? That is the Pharisees - the guys with the funny hats. The Pharisees believe in miracles, the Sadducees do not. They are the OG sensationalist, if you understand that word. The Sadducees do not believe in the miracles of God. They do not believe in the resurrection. You can remember this - because the Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection they are therefore “Sad - You - See”. That is free.

So they are there and Jesus is teaching, and it just turns into this weird showdown. You have seen this, the debate where the profs raise up say, “No, let me tell you that verse does not mean that. This is what is true about God.” And they are just going back and forth. And the Pharisees start it. They come up to Jesus like, “Alright! Yeah, I know you talk about honoring people and stuff right. What about taxes? Who are we supposed to pay taxes to?” And Jesus is like, “Really? This is the best you got? I do not know...let me see a Denari. Whose face is on it?” They are like, “Caesar’s.” “Cool. Well give to Caesar what is Caesar’s.” #burn! Then the Sadducees are like, “Woah. Ok, ok, ok, So this guy believes in the resurrection. He has talked about that. Ah Jesus, I know that Moses said that if a man dies that his brother should care for his widow. So what if there is a man who has a wife and seven brothers. And then he dies and his other brother marries her and he dies and this other brother marries her and he dies and this other brother marries her and he dies”...and they go all the way down to seven brothers. “In the resurrection, when she dies, whose wife is she?” Jesus says, “That is the best you got? Who said that anyone was married in heaven?” Then the Pharisees are excited and so they raise up, and that is where we are at right now.

Verse 34, **“Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law,...”** They get their best right now; “Come here, Mike, come over here and tell him.” **“tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”** Jesus replied: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”** Now, you know this, but I do not think you understand how brilliant of a move that was, because quite literally the Pharisees followed 613 commands. Jesus summarizes those 613 commands with two commands which are really one command. Okay? Love God, Love People. The one command is love; and if you do this, all the dos and all the don’ts will take care of themselves. Does that make sense?

If you change your perspective to how much can I love God and love others in this circumstance, all the 613 decisions, or rules, that you have to follow will fall in line. “Well can we watch rated R movies?” Love God and love people and do whatever you want. “Well can I listen to Travis Scott?” Love God and love people and do whatever you want. I got one Travis Scott fan in the crowd - that is fine. Whatever. That was for you.

1. Followers of Jesus are marked by love for God.

Now if I was just going to camp here, which I will at some point but I can’t this morning, we would talk about what it means by heart, soul, and mind like He says here in Matthew. Mark 12 and Luke 10 add strength. **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.”** We know because we have the full picture of what Jesus said in all of the Gospel; that He would have said those four words. So what does it mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart? What does it mean to love Him with all of your mind and your soul and your strength? That is where we would camp. However, this morning I am going to summarize that as “with your whole being” in everything that you do. But we are not talking about a feeling.

I don't know if you guys have ever heard this song, we just kind of break out into it every now and then in the car. It was kind of big a couple of years ago. It goes, *I love God. You don't love God? What is wrong with you?* (No reaction from the crowd.) Alright, just me. I was going to try that this morning - did not go well- we will strike that for the next one. But we will just sing that song in the car, right. It is a great video - YouTube it later. It is really fun! But what about when you don't love God? What about when you are not feeling it? You are looking at something in your life that is really hard and you are like, "You did this."

A dear friend of mine, I am not just name dropping, this is someone that I have done life with for a number of years, just released an album this week and so we went and celebrated that. The album was really born out of the death of her father two years ago. That sent her to a deep spiral of depression and major OCD, where she had to get professional help. She would tell you that she was really, really scared. She had none of the feelings. None of the love for God, but she just started writing songs. But these songs are not happy songs. These songs are filled with, "Who else do I have to blame but You?" That is one of the lyrics. They are just cries out to God. They are laments of the heart.

So, I called her and I said, "Hey. What about when someone does not feel love towards God? That is where you have been, and I can see the product of your work. What would you say?" She said a lot of things, but I would summarize our longer conversation to say that she said, "But you can still obey Him and just remember that He is the God of your emotions. So, if you do not feel something that you want to feel towards Him, ask Him to change that." And she said, "Stay away from these accusations of yourself like - I should feel _____. Why don't I feel _____? Those are just spirals into the pit." And agree with her. You do not need to say, "Well why don't I feel that way?"

So let's just take her advice because the first thing that she said is absolutely Biblical. What does it look like to love God? "God, if you really loved us, you would have answered that clearly in the Bible." 1 John 5:3 - **"In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,"** So, when He says "love God" and we use the Bible to help us understand what that command means, He comes back and says, "And here is what I mean by that - to love me is to obey me. It is to know what I have asked of you and to do what I have asked of you." Right? I love that she says that He is the God of your emotions. The most joyful person that I know, the most joyful person that I know today, and I benefit from their joy tremendously, had a really difficult upbringing. Her father took his life when she was a child, which really began a difficult journey of trying to find a place in this world. She was extremely bitter, mean, and lacked joy. She said, "I just started praying, God, would you give me joy?" Everyday, God would you give me joy? God would you give me joy? God would you give me joy? And now, I see the benefits of those prayers that she prayed throughout her life, and I am telling you that she holds the title of the most joyful person that I know.

So we are talking about love, and we are saying that love looks like obedience to God and that with that obedience comes the emotion of joy. Can I show you in the Scripture? John 15:9 - **"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love,"** Okay, so this is repeated. Love for God looks like

obeying His commands. **“just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”** So, we see this idea of love, obedience, joy. Love, obedience, joy. Love, obedience, joy. You lack joy - the outpouring of joy, the symptom of joy - let us back track. Have you been obedient? Does obedience mark your life and has your motive been love? Is that the lens with which you see the world? Or have you turned towards selfishness? You have gotten so focused on yourself; so focused on your own happiness that you start searching for your own happiness and you never find joy. Because joy is born out of a life of service to others, losing your life to serving God and serving others.

He went first. The next verse in this passage, **“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”** I think that you and I are so worried about getting ripped off. “Yeah, I will love somebody, but what if they take advantage of me?” We take advantage of God all the time; He gave His son for you. He went first. Greater love has no one than this, right? **“But God demonstrated His love in this that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”** - Romans 5:8 But God demonstrated His love - God went first. He gave the greatest thing so that you can give. We can follow that. We love because He first loved us, Scripture says.

If you are at this place where you don’t feel love for God, will you just make sure that you know what you do that makes you love God more? Are you tracking with me? What is it that you do that makes you love God more? I will ask people this often and they will give me answers like, “Read the Bible. Go to Church.” I am like “Man that is cool. Good for you. That is not me.” Reading the Bible when I wake up in the morning does not make me love God more. Sometimes it feels like a homework assignment. I really do not like to read much of anything. But man, sitting with friends who love him; talking theology, that moves my heart towards Him. Really talented people - that I know He has created and has fine-tuned some skill in them to do something that others would be tempted to worship them, but they can point that worship to Him. There is something in that. When I see a really gifted person, I have a strong emotional response - I am weird like that. I know that is probably not you, but that is me. That makes me love God more! A walk in nature when the sun is cracking through the trees and the breeze. I am able to feel all of the things of Creation, and I can hear the birds and the insects. The leaves are crumbling underneath my feet. There is just something about that moment that just moves my heart towards God. And a bubble bath - I am just being real. Keeping it real. There is something about having to sit still, away from technology, where I can let all of my thoughts bleed out and just begin to focus on God. That moved my heart towards Him. That is what it is for me. It is probably not the same for you. You need to know the answer for yourself. “What makes you love God more? And then, do a whole lot of that!

He says, “Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. The second one is like it - the greatest commandment – is two commandments wrapped up in one.

2. *Followers of Jesus are marked by love for others.*

He says, **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** Which is, to put others interests first. There are people in your life right now that are really hard to love. It could be a neighbor whose dog never stops barking. Maybe you are the neighbor whose dogs never stop barking and they are always on you. You are like, “Why don’t you love Fluffy like I love Fluffy?” There is something...maybe it is family, maybe it is someone in your life and your personalities just grate each other. You don’t enjoy being around them. There is someone in your life that is difficult to love and then there is someone in your life that is easy to love. That you enjoy them - you just click. When you are together, you go deeper or you stay shallow, but it just seems like exactly what you need at the time. You would do anything for them. They are kind. So when He says, “Love your neighbor as yourself...” who is your neighbor? Jesus answers this question by putting someone in the story that His listeners would have hated. They would have had a prejudice against the person that He puts in this story and says that this is your neighbor.

Jesus is saying - when He says love your neighbor as yourself - He is saying love those who are really difficult to love in the same way that you care for yourself. But He is not talking about an emotion. I think we have read this for so long and think, “Oh, I am supposed to feel some emotion towards them.” Jesus is talking about an action. In the same way that you would provide and meet the needs of yourself, you do this for those who you do not want to.

So let’s define love here so we can have a definition for the rest of the morning before we wrap up. Inconveniencing yourself for the good of someone else; let’s define it like that. Love is inconveniencing yourself for the good of someone else. To do something kind. To do something good for someone else at the inconvenience of yourself.

You probably have heard that there are multiple words for love in the Scriptures. In the Greek we have philoi, which is the friendship love. You love a friend, philoi. You have eros which is the romantic kind of love, it is where we get the word erotic - eros kind of love. And you probably have heard the word that defines how Christians love - agape. If you have been in church long, you have heard that word - agape. We agape each other. The love that we have is agape. But here is what you may not know, that I find so interesting and rarely hear this taught anywhere. That word agape, it did not exist. It started in the verb form, Agapeo. Agapeo was the way that you would describe what a mother would do for her child. You have seen this in the way that a mom can go without sleep and food and does anything to care for this little human being that can do nothing in return and does not sleep. That is agapeo. That is that kind of love.

Everyone knew that kind of love; it was sacrificial. Where you give something and you expect nothing in return - agapeo, that is what that was. Well when they are translating the Hebrew Bible, they get to this place where they are trying to describe how Christians love each other. And they take this verb word - agapeo - and the first time we see it is in the Septuagint (the Greek Bible) this word agape. It did not exist, but they are like, “How do we describe how a Christian loves everyone? Well, it is kind of like the way that a mom loves a baby. That is kind of how they treat everyone.” They were not called Christians then - they were just called The Way - they followed Jesus. They were the followers of The Way. They were like, “How do we describe the way The Way loves? It is a crazy sacrificial giving of self; expecting nothing in return, kind of love. Agape.” And that word was born, and what an apologetic faith. That until

that moment no one had ever loved like that except in the context of close family. And they were like, “But this is how they love everybody!” Have we lost that? Have we lost that somewhere along the way?

It seems to me that we have. I think that our issue is that we do not know how to love. We love out of our own conveniences and biases. I was on a call with the mayor two days ago. Hard situation here in Waco. Hospitals are full. Morgues are full. They are renting refrigerated trucks to put bodies of those who have died in Covid. I had no idea! I did not know. I felt so naive on the phone call. No elective surgery right now. When I say elective, I am not talking about plastic surgery, I am talking about someone who tore their ACL - sorry. You will be walking with a limp for a little while. We have nothing we can do. If you have a heart attack right now in Waco, they are going to send you somewhere else. What!? I didn't even know! I did not know. We are on this call, and we are trying to figure out how to navigate this and so we are talking about vaccines.

Now listen, let me tell you something. I believe that the Holy Spirit can convict one Christian that they should get the vaccine. And I believe that the same Holy Spirit can convict another Christian that they should not. I believe that is in the realm of possibilities. That the Holy Spirit, God, could do that because of some unique situation that we do not know. I don't know why He would do that, I just believe that it is possible that He would do that. And so what we do, is we have these really strong opinions that we project on others which is fine. It is fine if you campaign your cause. Like, this is your field of expertise and you have studied about the harms and the dangers and you are trying to tell the world. BUT when you villainize the person on the other side of the fence, you have moved away from love. Do not do that under the banner of love - it is not love! When your heart has turned toward them, you are no longer fulfilling this commandment. Does that make sense?

So Harris Creek - friends, followers of Jesus - let's make sure that in this really difficult time where people are doing the best they can that the way that we communicate pushes people closer to Jesus and not further from Him. Does that make sense? If we can help you, we want to. We have a panel of experts here that would love to talk to you. They won't try to convince you to get a vaccine or try to convince you not to; but really just give you information that would educate you. If that is something you are interested in e-mail us - hello@harris creek.org. Because really, we want this church to be known in this community as one that processes through the lens of how we can love people the most we possibly can. Does that make sense?

I know that is really uncomfortable for some of you. Really distracting for some of you. You are now asking, “Well I wonder where he stands and what his view is?” Ask me. I will be right up here afterwards. I will be happy to talk with you, I have nothing to hide. But do not let that distract you from God's Word. Okay? That is what I am giving to you right now - the Word of God - love your neighbor as yourself.

I don't know if you are aware of this, but God has used global pandemics in the past to explode Christianity. Did you know that? I have read this to you a couple of times, but it is interesting

because I have not put it in front of you since the Pandemic we are in. But in the second and third century there were about 5,000 people dying in the Roman Empire a day. 5,000 people! Bodies are piled up in the streets. Bodies are piled up in the streets, and this is documented coming from Rodney Stark - ironically a Baylor prof now.

In his book, *The Rise of Christianity*, this is what he says. “At a time when all other faiths were called to question, the whole Christian community became a virtual army of nurses providing for the basic needs of the suffering community.” Then he quotes Dionysius, a second century Bishop. So these are not the words of some journalist today. These are words of an observer - an eyewitness - then. This is what he says: “Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy;...” Do you see the joy? If you’re missing joy, do you see where it comes from? “...for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains.”

Cheerfully, Cheerfully! Accepting their pain, they are coming up to people and saying, “Hey what do you have to give me in exchange for care for you? Oh just a disease that is going to kill me? Deal, I’ll take that trade with joy.” And that seems so crazy to us. We’re like that is so far from where we are at, but in a global pandemic when the values of Christianity were hot... Right... What happened in the midst of that pandemic is people moved closer to Jesus.

Are people moving closer to Jesus because of how you are living in the midst of a global pandemic, is that happening in your life right now? Or are you so wrapped up in you? Here is why that is a bad idea. It’s going to bring deep depression, misery, anxiety, OCD, narcissism. That’s what is going to come your way, I’ve seen it, I’ve done pastoral ministry too long.

“I don’t know man I don’t know what’s going on, I just can’t sleep, I can’t sleep”

You.... you think about you all the time. They were just following the way of their leader, Jesus, who said - **John 13:34-35** “**A new command I give you; Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another**” and here we see the dress code of Christianity, this is what I want you to wear.

That is my third and final point,

3. *Love is the Christian’s uniform.*

So that is what we’re talking about today. Love is distinctive, it’s how you are distinguished, it’s how you are identified, love is the Christian’s uniform. It is what we wear, this is how we’re seen. Lime trees produce lime fruit. Banana trees produce banana fruit. Christian trees produce the Fruit of the Spirit which starts with what? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Love! I don’t think it’s an accident that it comes first because from love comes joy. Love is patience, love is kind, it keeps no records of wrongs, it

does not boast, it is not envious, not self-seeking. Right? It is not an accident that the Fruit of the Spirit that's named first is love. Christian trees bring forth love.

I was raised on a farm, country, 4H and FFA. So when I was a young boy, about seven, six or seven years old, we would go to the Houston Livestock Show. That was a good time you know, because they have carnival rides, and food that is bad for you, and all the things. So, I really loved going to the Houston Livestock Show, and on this particular excursion, like I said I'm about seven years old, I'm walking with my family. We're all together walking through the midway in the carnival, and there is the ferris wheel and all the lights and it's night time. And there is the Zipper, this ride that was terrifying to me, and all the bells and all the ringing and all the crowds. There's like 7 trillion people there, and I'm there with my family. We're having such a great time, and as a six- or seven-year-old, I look up and they were nowhere to be found. At first, I panic. I run forward and around the corner trying to find them. I don't see them. So then I run back to where I was thinking maybe if I just stay here, and then it takes about 17 seconds for utter despair to sink in. I'm like, "I'm never going to see them, like I'm now, I'm going to live in an orphanage the rest of my life, and that was real... mom and dad thank you". That's just how you think when you are a kid. I remember backing up, vivid, I mean it's still traumatizing, backing up against this brick wall looking at all of these people going by and thinking, alright which one of you guys wants to be my new mom and dad. And then I remember my dad told me once upon a time if you get lost find a police officer. Find, find.. look for the badge, look for the uniform. And so, In the midst of all of these people that are all wearing different things, I tried to find the one that was wearing something that stood out from the rest who I knew could help me, and so I did.

I went up to them and in the midst of the tears and the midst of the panic I just got out the two words "I'm lost", and they were like "Okay" and it was their assignment to get me where I could find my parents. What I'm trying to tell you is there are people all around you who are lost, and they are looking for someone who can help them find the way. Whether they know it or not, maybe they moved to this place of despair in their hearts where "I'll never find the way" but you get to show them. If you are identified, they're trying to find someone who they can identify that would show them the way and they are not looking for a Hebrew tattoo and Icthus, an MDiv, or THM... you tracking?

So, in summary, followers of Jesus are marked by:

1. Love for God, which is obedience to him.
2. Love for others, which is inconveniencing ourselves for their good.
3. Love is our uniform.

We're renting a house, right now, the way that this came about, when we moved to Waco we purchased a lot. The plan was to build on this lot, we began to enter into that process, building costs skyrocketed. We've been since trying to figure out if we can move forward or not on that. In the midst of that, someone put a contract on our house which enabled, like freed us up, to be able to make those decisions. So, we moved into a rental, a Harris Creek family said "Hey, we

have to move away for a year, you can rent our house for a year”, and so that is what we are doing. As we’re in their home, they’re taking down all of their things and I’m like “Hey, don’t do that, we are just going to be here for a year. Like, leave your stuff up, like, you’re going to be back here in a year”. Specifically they had this photo wall, all of these pictures, and they started taking them down. And I’m like “Hey, you don’t have to take them down.” She’s like “Are you sure?” I said “Yeah, your going to be back in a year.” She’s like “It’s going to be weird you are looking at our family.” I’m like “No, it will just remind us to pray for you and thank God for you that you lent your house to us, you know it’s going to be awesome.” They’re like, “ok...” and their moving too, like, they are in the craziness of moving, you know, they are trying to get all of their stuff to college station.

And so... all of the craziness of moving comes in, and we start taking boxes to our rent house. We’re walking through it and my daughter Presley says “Hey! That’s us!” I’m like “What do you mean?” And I start looking in all of these frames. They went and printed pictures of us off my Instagram account. Professionally printed pictures and filled all the frames in the house with our pictures in the midst of them moving. And I know that probably seems so small to you, it literally in the midst of the chaos took my breath away. I stood in the living room, I couldn't breathe, I’m so moved by that act of kindness, I cannot believe they did that in the midst of their move. When did they have the time?

I’m just asking when is the last time you inconvenienced yourselves for the good of others. And by inconvenienced yourselves I mean in a way that does not come natural to you. Because some of you it’s natural to lend, some of you it’s natural to send a note, it’s natural to do these.. in ways that are hard. That’s your assignment this week, as we sing this song, think of someone that you are going to inconvenience yourselves for their good in the name of Jesus and let it just be a step in the direction that you're going to continue to walk. Because the one that you follow inconvenienced himself in the most heinous of ways for your good.

Let me pray:

Father, we do love you. Thankful for Your Word. For your example and your son. For all the things that you have done for us. God I just confess this word love that has become benign to me. Just seen it too much, I’ve heard sermons like this too much, I’ve read books on the topics too much. And I really see a problem in our church, and not just Harris Creek, Lord, but the church in America. Just seems like we’ve forgotten how to do this. We’ve defined it in different ways. It’s.... We just need help to walk that line of being a place that speaks the truth, that stands on God's word, but is the most inviting place that we could ever imagine. And that is going to take a miracle, God. I believe in my heart we will not be able to do that without a sovereign act of your Holy Spirit, Your kindness. You are love, so let us love one another because you are love. Amen.