



## JOHN: Jesus The Lover

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### John 13: 31-35

Today we'll be reading out of John chapter 13 versus 31 through 35. When he had gone out, Jesus said, now is the son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once. Little children yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me and as I just said to the Jews, so now I also say to you. Where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Well, good afternoon, everyone. Lord Jesus, I'm thankful for another opportunity to come before my friends and some of my family. And I'm honored for the opportunity to open your word. Lord God, I do pray again for a hedge of protection around the pulpit. Lord, God, we know that your word is so powerful and potent, but Lord, there are forces that do not like your word preached. And so we pray against the enemy and his allies and his works and all of his effects, Lord God. And as we preach on something like love, something so seemingly important, but also could be mundane if you've heard it so many times, Lord, I pray for open minds and receptive hearts. We love you. In his name, amen.

All right. So last week as we've been walking through John, we spent time walking out Jesus' betrayal by a guy named Judas. You maybe remember that story. It's really important. So this week we get Jesus' first words directly following Judas' exit. So Judas walks out the door and immediately what happens—we're about to see what's going to go down. So Judas' exit to Jesus is a signal. It's an important beacon going off in the air. Because up until this point, in theory, it

was possible that Jesus wouldn't be executed. But Judas' exit, as he goes out to get the officials and to bring them back to where Jesus location is, essentially is a signal to Jesus. It's essentially a terminal diagnosis. He's received his death sentence. He understands what's about to happen. So what follows is essentially Jesus' last will and Testament to his disciples. That's what's going to happen here.

Now, put yourself in that moment for a second. Let's say you were to receive and maybe you have, and I'm really sorry if this is true, a terminal diagnosis. You're receiving your terminal diagnosis. What would be at the top of the list of all of the things you're going to tell those closest to you? What would be at the top of the list? Now I don't know about you, but I have sat across from someone giving that information. It's very difficult information to give. But whatever you would say at the top of the list would be what's most very important, right?

Now what are Jesus' words? You heard them read. Jesus sees Judas exit, going off to have him killed, looks back at the room with his 11 disciples. And he says, I want you to love one another as I've loved you. Remember the love I gave you. Just remember to love one another. Now he could have said anything. He could have said a lot of things. He could have said, read your Bible. He could have said pray a lot. He could have said worship music. He could have said a number of things. He says love of one another. He could have chosen to express whatever he wanted. So Jesus believes what's most important and what's most final is to love one another.

So we've got to unpack this, right? But we're going to have to hold on for a second because I think there will be, and maybe you're already doing this, a temptation to do one of two things when you hear the premise for love one another-check out, or roll your eyes. You might think, well, that's not fair. You might be thinking you're going to check out because maybe you've heard a sermon on the love of Jesus. Maybe you've been to a number of sermons where you've heard yeah, I'm supposed to love like Jesus loves. Amen. Praise God. And then you kind of walk out, right?

Or maybe you're going to roll your eyes because you're like, oh, not this again. Love of Jesus again? Like, oh, here we go again, the two most basic things. I want the meat and potatoes of the gospel. Well, you're getting them. You're getting them. It's love. You may have heard love and maybe you know it, right? Maybe if you were a kid and you heard that song "Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so." So you know that Jesus loves you. Yeah. But do you feel the love of Jesus? Right? Do you feel it? I'll tell you what, the environment you grow up in absolutely affects your idea and definition of love.

Over the last few weeks you've heard me share some of my stories. Some of them maybe have been a little bit harder than you're used to. Some of you, you're like, yup, that's my story. That's great. You know that by hearing my story, I was affected by that. And so whether you were loved as a kid or not loved as a kid or kind of loved as a kid, it affects your definition of what love means. Absolutely does. I'll give you an example. So as Donald said, I guess I do a lot of pushups these days. And I played football. I played football in college, not too far from here, five hours from here. And I remember my senior year getting ready for that season. I'm getting

ready for the season. I'm training really hard. There's a lot of excitement and buzz around that. And getting into training camp I immediately, a couple practices in, the last thing that you want to happen in this season is not to play bad, it's to get injured. It's the last thing you want. I got tackled in a weird way and fell down directly on my shoulder, heard something pop, very scary. Couldn't move my arm at all. Barely could move my shoulder. Some of you've heard this story. Couldn't move my shoulder. So I kind of rush into the training room. They take a look at me and if you've ever been injured in an orthopedic way, the person looking at you, they don't say anything but you can just read their face. You know what I'm talking about? And he puts his fingers and does his little thing, whatever he was doing, and then he kind of turns his head and winces when he touches it. And so we order the MRI and that's that. So I order the MRI. I come out of that meeting. It's about seven o'clock at night. Me and my girlfriend at the time, who's now my wife, she played volleyball in the same college and so we would oftentimes go hang out, like outside in front of the dorms, talk for a little bit and then go back off to our dorms for camp.

So I came out and I got the sling on and I'm telling her what's going on. I'm really discouraged. And normally I'm a little more confident. And she said, well, what happened? And I tell her the story. And I'm just looking down and sad. I'm like, I can't believe this happened to me. This would happen to me. I've got all the negative talk, right? And then she says, well, have you prayed about it? And I said, no, I didn't pray about it. I go, you know how annoying that is, you know, that you would say that? And so she's like, no, you actually have to pray about this. And I was like listen, after some prodding I get down to it, and I say, listen I know I believe in God, and I'm a new Christian at the time, but God's busy. Like, isn't he in Africa getting rid of AIDS or stopping some genocide somewhere. He's not worried about my shoulder. And she says that's also really annoying. That's so crazy that you would say that- that's not true. God loves you right now in this very moment. And I was like, he's probably with Rick Warren in Africa, healing AIDS, like he's doing something better, bigger. She said we're going to pray for you. So she puts her arm on my shoulder. She prays for my shoulder and then I go off to my room. Most uncomfortable night's sleep I've ever had. It's terrible.

Now I don't know what you think about miracles. I can tell you what I think about miracles. I don't know if it was a miracle. All I know is I woke up and my shoulder was fine. No pain. I forgot about it actually. You can clap. I mean, half the room's like, no, don't clap! So I go back into the training room and they took a look at my shoulder. And the trainer who was getting ready for my MRI, looks at it, calls the doctor and he looks at it and he goes, looks like your joints in place. We thought there was a torn ligament in there. Feels like it's fine. I was like, yeah, maybe I just needed a good night's sleep. I don't know. Okay. Or maybe Jesus radically healed me. I don't know what to tell you. I'm 20 years old at the time.

God loved me in that moment. There's a lot of things that could have happened. I believe the Lord, Jesus. I believe he healed me. I don't know what happened. But what I do know is that I brought the way I felt about God's love into the way I saw him in that moment. I took the love that I received from my father, which is that I'll have you, so you're my kid but I'm too busy for you, into my relationship with Jesus. We often do the same thing. So as we go into a sermon

about the love of God, assume you misunderstand something about love. Assume you don't see something about love. Because the call today for Jesus is going to tell us to love one another. You're going to miss something. And I'll tell you what, as you heard in my story, it's hard to love others when we don't understand how we've been loved by Jesus.

It's hard to receive the love of God. And so if we haven't received the love of God how do we love people? So let's examine our love that we're going to have to give out, okay? Three things, the source of the love, the recipient of the love, and then the result of the love, okay? The source, the recipient, the result.

First, the source. So if our goal is to discover how to love well and to love as Jesus tells us to, we have to consider where our love comes from. Now love is often, I don't know what you think about love, it's often thought of like this intrinsically generated source of emotional stuff that you get when someone you like talks to you, right? Maybe that's what we think love is. Whatever we think love is love is, love often is often something that can be transferred. We just know that for a fact. So it's maybe not something intrinsic, but it's something you receive and something you can give out. Good examples a mom, right? If a mom has a child and loves that child well, they're more capable of love, affection and joy, the rest of their life. Do you believe that's true? It might not happen, but they're capable of it. Aren't they? Conversely, if a kid has a mom and the mother doesn't love the child are they as capable of love as the other one. Maybe not. There's going to have to be some other people helping them and loving them in order for that to happen, okay? So if we want this sort of transcendent, compassionate love to give out to other people, we're going to have to receive it from somebody. So that's where we get to verse 31, okay?

Look at verse 31 with me. When he had gone out, Jesus said, now is the son of man glorified. And God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once. Now, when he had gone out, who is he? It's Judas, right? Judas just betrayed Jesus and he left. We just talked about that, going to get the authorities to bring them to Jesus' location. And then Jesus says, now that he's gone, I'm glorified in that. Well, how does that work? How are you glorified in being betrayed? The reason why is it's because that the betrayal that Judas gives Jesus leads to the ultimate act of love that God would give us. See Jesus' death on the cross results from the betrayal of Judas. So therefore God is glorified in what's taking place because he's about to love us unconditionally in a moment.

So the source of our love is this. We can love deeply because we are first loved by Jesus. We can love deeply because we are first loved by Jesus. What better way to demonstrate that you love someone than to die for him. Can you think of a better way? Like buy them something? What are you going to buy them? How about dying for them? Giving them your life? Right? I mean the flagship verse of Christianity-for God, so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever would believe in him would not perish, but have eternal life. I'm going to die for you. I'm going to give my life for you if you believe in me. We're going to get to this passage in a couple weeks. But John chapter 15 verse 13 says this, greater love has no one than this that he lay his life down for his friends, okay?

So the creator of the universe says the greatest love you can give is to die for somebody. Seems like he's going to do that. Right? That tells us something about Jesus' love- that it's sacrificial, right? It's sacrificial. Real love costs you something. Real love costs you something. Question, what have you given up to love the person in your life that you love the most? What have you given up to love that person? Don't be shy. You give up a lot. At the very least, if you're married, you gave up all the other options. Now you might not think you had many options. You're probably right. But there was a couple. There were some. You gave up that opportunity, right? If you have kids, you're giving up something. A lot of you're giving up sleep, right? You're giving up time. You're giving up energy. Probably you're taking years off your life, to be honest, like cleaning up after them. You're giving up a lot. If you choose a college by nature, you've eliminated the other colleges, right?

You're sacrificing because love must cost something. Love that costs you nothing is not love. Love that costs you nothing is not love. It's like. Like I'm not dying for something I like. I might die for something I love, but I'm not going to die for, you know, my PS5. It's not going to happen. I just like it. I don't have one. I wish. If you've got a hookup, let me know. We'll talk later. This is what makes the love of a mother so strong, right? It's the countless ways that she sacrificed for us. She's given herself over us to care for us and to forge us, right? I call this love by a thousand cuts. Love by a thousand cuts because it's sometimes not the big way she loves you, it's the small ways that she continues and loves you over and over and over again. Jesus though doesn't give us love by a thousand cuts, although he does, the big thing he gives us though, is his literal beating heart. He dies. This is what he gives us. Jesus sacrifices his heart to die for our brokenness so that we can now be in a loving relationship with him. That's a pretty good way to die. That's a pretty good way to receive the death of a loved one.

Jesus is amazing. It's unbelievable. He says, I love no matter what it costs. I don't care what it costs. I don't care who agrees with the love. I'm going to do it anyway. I'm willing to die for what I love. The culture, the sort of love that we talk about, we listen to in marketing campaigns today, it is not the same sort of love. It's the sort of love that changes the color of a logo depending on the month or the day in order to demonstrate love, or to preach about tolerance and diversity and inclusion trainings at work. But is that love or is that tolerance and acceptance? Jesus is like, I don't just tolerate! In fact, tolerance and acceptance are not even the best ways to love someone. You know what it is? It's violate-when you could violate someone's will for the betterment of themselves, that's what we're talking about here.

Jesus is like, I know the life you're living isn't that great. I've got something better for you. And I know it's against what you kind of think about the situation, but it's going to save your life. He violates it and it's not always happy and it's not always good. The purest form love is not often tolerance or acceptance it's violation. It's the will to go against what everyone is saying and what everyone else is saying is loving, to cut into what is actually loving. So that's the source of our love-Jesus. He violates us. He gives us his love.

But what about the recipient? Who are we supposed to love? Right? Look at verse 34, "A new commandment I give to you that you love one another, just as I have loved you, you are also to

love one another." So, said it five times. Who are we supposed to love? One another. Correct. Now Jesus here, there's a lot of conversation about who he's talking about in this, Jesus is referencing though, a powerful love that flows out of his heart, into the believer, the person that is a follower of his and that can be mutually given across a church family. So Jesus here is specifically talking about the love in between people of the church. So if you're in here and you say I'm a Christian, I call myself a Christian, I worship Jesus, he's talking to you. Love one another, okay? That is the call. So we should love our brothers and sisters in Christ as Jesus loved us. This is the recipients of our love. Now another legitimate way to translate this is to give love out of your heart as you draw out of the well of Jesus' love, bring it into you, and then pour it out on other people. Isn't that beautiful. It's like a hallmark heart. It's wonderful. It's a beautiful love. Doesn't that sound nice? Wouldn't you like that if someone loved you that way? Sort of? No? Very cold. No, no one wants it. It is nice, right? We would love to see it happen.

Question though, do we always love our brothers and sisters in Christ Well? No we don't. Why? Why don't we? Well, one of the reasons you might not love your brothers and sisters in Christ, if you are a Christian, is that you might not ever have known you were supposed to do that. Did you know you were supposed to love your brothers and sisters in Christ? Oh, you did? Oh, okay. Did you know you're supposed to do that, after all it is a commandment. He says a new commandment I give to you. But if that's the only reason you love people is because it's a commandment, then that sort of misses the heart of what Jesus is getting at, right? If you aren't loving one another, not only are you not sort of following Jesus the way he's asking you to, but you're also missing out on perhaps the biggest benefit of being a part of a church family. You're actually missing out.

Did you know that before sin ever entered the world, God talked to man, Adam in his apex creation, looked at him with no sin, in perfect relationship with his God and said, you know what, it's not good for you to be alone. Do you know he does that? Do you know he says it's not good to be alone before sin comes. So that means human beings in their perfect state are not good being alone. They need others. So if that's humanity in its perfect state, what does that look like for us in sinful states? Kind of need love from one another, right? We absolutely do. We all need support. We all have stresses in our lives. It's just absolutely true.

Do me a favor just real quick. In case you've fallen asleep on a sermon on love. Just take a quick peek to your left over here. And just take a quick peek. Look at somebody. They're looking to the left. Look to the right. Yeah. There's someone you saw. Just make eye contact with somebody. Yeah. Those people need you. Those people need you. Did you know that? They need you. You might not like them super much, but they need you. We're all dealing and hurting in ways that you can't even imagine. Part of one of the sad things about being a pastor, and one of the good things about being a pastor is that you hear the stories of how people are struggling. They need someone to talk to. People are addicted, they're anxious, they're frustrated. People need support and there are things that they can't share with people that they know, and their families are at work. They're asking the question, where do I go with the deepest needs of my heart? How do I solve these?

By the way, people don't just need to solve hard things. They also want to celebrate. They get promotions at work-success! New baby on the way-success! We want to celebrate. I want to celebrate with some people as well.

Did you know that loving people is an immersive part of the Christian walk? I think you've gotten the point that it's very necessary, but it's an immersive part. The Christian walk, if you are a Christian, actually requires the integration of the love of God and the love of people, both things. It's actually required. It's a thing that overflows out of a changed heart. Love for God. Love for people. Pete Scazzero, he says this, "the first test of our relationship with God is not that we are morally tougher, but that we are mercifully softer."

Look, we all have great need. And maybe you're feeling that, but maybe you're also feeling like, you know what, something's coming on. There's a light bulb going. I do feel like I'm not doing a great job at loving people. I want to love people more. How do I do that? Well, I could fill an entire five hours with trying to help people love other people, but I can give you a couple things that might be helpful, okay?

So here's the first thing. I'll give you a list of five things that will help you sort of love the people better in your church community. First thing is authenticity. If you're not bringing your real self to the table in conversations with people, they're not going to bring their real self to the table. So if you're going to be the initiator show up. Actually tell them how much you love them, how much you care about them. Tell them your junk. This is what I've been dealing with this week. This is what's been hard for me. I'm sad. I'm lonely. I'm frustrated. I'm angry. I'm glad. I'm happy. I'm relieved. Be authentic. It's really easy to not be authentic today because we have these devices where we can sort of paint a vivid picture of our gold self. And everyone can just see that all we do is go to farmer's markets and perfectly pick out fruits or stand by oceans or eat at really fancy restaurants. That's what we post on our Instagram or whatever. But actually showing up with your junk can really make some good headway with somebody.

Second thing, show up. This is about bringing your physical presence to somebody. Again, another drawback of the device and convenience of it in certain circumstances, but the drawback is that we no longer feel like our physical presence is necessary to engage somebody. I would totally disagree with you. I totally disagree. The physical presence matters so much. I'll tell you what if I just told my wife hey listen, I'm moving to Arizona. It's hot there. It's sunny. But hey, I'll follow you on Instagram. We're good. I'll text. I'll send selfies. Hey, you know, I'm at a cool church. It's new. It's great. It's hot out. Woo. Hope it's not too rainy in Seattle. If I did that to her, it's not much of a relationship. We show up. Also show up to every place that you can. When you're not here, we notice. Not because you're being judged. It's because we like you. We like being around you. When you're not here it makes me sad. It makes people upset. We like your presence. When you're not at your MC everyone notices and wishes you were there. We like you. We like being in your physical presence. If you get nothing else out of this entire message, make it your point for the rest of 2022 to show up with your physical presence. Wherever you go, bring your real self.

Third thing-listen. There's the old adage, I know you can hear, but you're not listening. What are people saying to you? Are you getting in touch with their story? Do you know them? Are they talking to you and you're not listening?

Fourth thing-be unconditional. This is essentially saying, hey, listen, I want to have a conversation with you. I want to be a friend of yours. And I just want to tell you up front. I don't need anything from you. Think of the best friendships and relationships you have in your life. How unconditional are they? Go up to them and say, I don't need anything from you. My genuine desire is to embrace who you are and I'm excited to help God. I'm excited to play my part in helping God get you to where you want to be. I don't need anything from you.

And then lastly, ask the question-what do you need? What do you need? And how can I help? Basic question that I've asked a million times. I don't want to call it a million, but there have been times in counseling where I've sat with people and I've asked the question, what do you need? And the tears flow because people just don't get asked the question. And this is harder for guys, especially younger guys. Twenty-year-old guys, it can be very hard for you to look at your twenty-year-old bud in college and go, yo, hey man, what do you need? It's going to be hard, especially over Qdoba with queso all over your face. But honestly, young men, they have huge needs, horrible daddy issues. I'm one of them. We need each other. We need our friends, and we need the church family to love one another, okay? If we do that we get the result. So we talked about the source. We talked about the recipient. That's one another. And then we get the result.

Our love, if we love properly, will have an effect. A love that is so powerful that it flows from Jesus will have an effect. There's not a question of whether or not it will. It will have an effect. Look at verse 34 again. A new commandment I give to you, Jesus says, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. You also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples. Let's read that again. By this all people will know that you're my disciples if you have loved one another.

So it turns out that Jesus says the way people will know whether or not you are his follower is not that you know a lot about Jesus. It turns out the way people will know you're a follower of Jesus is not that you listen to Christian music when they're in the car. And it certainly turns out that just because you eat at Chick-fil-A doesn't make you a Christian. It doesn't. None of that makes you a Christian. It even doesn't matter if you pray or fast a lot. It doesn't matter if you take the sacraments regularly. That's not what he's saying. The way that you know if you're a Christian, is that you what? Love one another. Those are the Messiah's words, not mine.

So your primary marker is love, not your knowledge. Primary marker. Now that means that if people are going to tell that you're a disciple by seeing you love someone, it means that your love has to be visible too. That means I have to see your love. So it can't just be, oh you know what, you're right, I do love everybody. And you don't talk to anyone. You don't do anything. You don't show up. It's not what we're talking about. We've got to see your love. It is visible, visible, visible.



Have you ever wondered what made Christianity so explosive when it arrived on scene? You ever thought about that? We're talking eleven disciples, right? Eleven disciples, minus Judas. So twelve minus Judas-eleven disciples, and some guys in the upper room. And then it explodes. Like how did it go from like a hundred and something to billions and billions of people over 2000 years. You ever thought about that? Pretty crazy stuff. Have you ever read Acts chapter two? It says they were doing some pretty gnarly stuff for the day. Okay. They were. They were living amongst one another. They were attending temple together. They shared resources together. The Bible even says that they lived so synchronous that no one in their church family had a need.

Imagine in here, just not even the people that go to Doxa that aren't here today, just in here...if no one in this room had a need, what would that be like? Like I'm talking, you need someone to take your kid to preschool? Done. You need to pay off your mortgage? Done. You need to make rent? Done. You need a meal today because you had a baby? Done. You had a baby, you need weeks of meals? Done. All of it. Oh your tire goes flat and you need to take an Uber? Who needs Uber? I've got a church family. What do I need to take an Uber for? I'll just call one of my friends. Easy, right? Wouldn't that be great?

That's what we're supposed to be doing. Wouldn't that be a witness to the world? It's like, oh I know these like 500 people, none of them need a single thing because they all bonded together and share their resources. That's crazy. Imagine if that were to happen. So this happened in Acts chapter two and by the way, all these different people started coming together. So there's people from different tribes, tongues, and nations coming together for leadership. I'm talking north Africans, Europeans, Middle- Easterners, all coming together, praising the same God. Unbelievable. Different culture, different language, different dialects, all together. Women, all of a sudden have a voice in the church. Never before done. What's going on? The whole culture is looking around going, okay, what do we call them? Because they're not just Jews and they're not just Greeks and it's not just men or women. What do we call them? Let's just call them by who they worship. Let's call them Christians. That's how the church gets its name. Why? They were named after the God they loved because their love for one another was so strong.

I'll tell you what, the result of our love for one another can change the world for Christ. That's the result. That's the result. Now I know certain theological lanes would say, it's not really about loving people as much as it is about proclamation, right? I mean we've got to preach the word. I mean, Timothy says in First Timothy 4, preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Rebuke, reproof and exhort. Yeah, that's true. And I'm preaching now so I agree. But it's not everything. There's also more we're supposed to do here. There's also more. It's great to talk the talk, but do you walk the walk? Right? I feel like you've got to show us, show one another, that you actually believe what you say. That's important, right? You tell me to go to college? Okay. Maybe. Do you have a good job? Did you pass? Did you enjoy your time there? Are you intelligent? Okay. Do you want to lose weight? You should lose weight with a ketogenic diet. Okay. Are you in shape? Are you healthy? Body fat percentage? Cholesterol? You want to tell me how to manage my money? Oh, you've got to go with this. You've got to put it in stocks. Okay. Well do you have a savings account? Do you have a lot of debt? How's your stocks

looking? What was your return this year? I want to know. Doesn't that make sense? You might disagree. Maybe you say listen, the message is primary. Yes. The message is primary. And Jesus says, this is how they will know if you're my disciples that you love one another. Period.

I'll close with this story. In college, a lot of stories from college today, in college I had a roommate who was not a Christian. I had two roommates that weren't a Christian. This one, we would get in a lot of fights. Because when I became a Christian, I started bringing this thing around (Bible). I'll tell you what. I was a weapon. I was a weapon in the hands of the Lord. I'd pull it out. They something, I go, Nope, it says it right here. You're wrong. And I'm just hammering people with the Bible. Wielding scripture as a sword. I'm wielding it rightly. I'm hammering him with it.

And my roommate, he hated this. He hated it. He would argue because he's so smart. He hated it. He'd get mad at me all the time. And so I started dating Sarah and we started going to church together every Sunday morning and we're bringing along friends and I'd always ask him, hey man, you want to come to church? You want to go? He'd be like, no, I don't want to go to church and we'd come home and argue about something. That's how it would go. We'd argue about the Bible all night. One time some Mormons came over and they came in the room and I invited them in and I argued with them. And then he got mad that I was arguing with them. He thought that was unloving. Probably it was, you know. And every morning, every morning on Sunday, I'd ask him, you want to go to church? And he would say, no, I don't want to go to church. I don't want to go to church.

Well, he started dating this girl and they always had a lot of fights. And every Saturday night they started sleeping in the same room together and they had mainly a physical relationship. It wasn't a good relationship. Well, one Sunday, me and Sarah come home from church. It's maybe 11:30 or 12 o'clock. We come home. We see the gal sitting at the table really uncomfortable. He's sitting on the couch, looking at the TV. Uncomfortable silence. So we come in, he'd declined church in the morning. That's fine. We go, we see her and I look over and I say, hey, I mean it's 12 O'clock it's been awkward, hey, do you want some lunch? You want to eat? And she's like, yeah, actually I think that would be great. That would be awesome.

So we cook her some food. We sit down at the table with her. He declines and he's sitting over there looking very upset and I say, hey, I just got to know what's going on? Is everything okay? She's like, well, yeah, we've been getting in fights lately, and I actually don't have my phone because I lost it at the bar and I was drinking. And so I don't have a way home. I'm just sitting here. I said, well, why don't you get a ride. She said well, we're just not on speaking terms. And I don't know what to do because I don't know how to get home from here. And I have no one to call. I was like, oh, that's really sad. Well after we finish eating, we just said, hey, we'll give you a ride. So we grabbed her. We talked to her on the way. We talked to her about Jesus-grew up Catholic, great girl. Dropped her off at her house. Didn't think anything of it.

Next Sunday we get in our car. Sarah comes over, we get in our car. We start to leave. My roommate comes running out of the door, opens the door in the backseat and gets in. Doesn't

say anything. And I was like, okay. You remember this? Yeah? That's my wife. And we just drive to church. It was really an uncomfortable car ride. Got to the church, picked up some other friends. Did the whole thing. Went out to lunch after. We're sitting across from one another, and I said, hey man, I got to ask, like what made you get in the car? Like I didn't say anything. I didn't ask. What happened? He said, well, I was thinking a lot about last Sunday and I was really mad and in a bad spot. And when you and Sarah came over, you treated that girl with respect. You gave her a meal and you brought her home. And I thought, I need to figure out a way in my life to be a better person so I can care for other people. So I'm here. Crazy. Not to brag on myself at all. I literally, as you heard, did nothing but harm the situation. God worked on him.

Couple years later, 2012, my friend is here to train, to play some football. We're sitting in that balcony, watching the preacher preach. Preacher says we're going to do baptisms today, now. I feel like someone needs to be baptized. Songs play. He gets up. Walks in. Gets baptized right in that Tank. Unprompted. Because Jesus worked in his life, he happened to see one small act of love and it spurred on something in his heart. Unbelievable. No one's going to believe you that Jesus is good if you don't love well.

But if Jesus' love does change your life, if God's love does provide an inexhaustible well of resources where in any danger or any stress or any harm you can go to him for, then all of a sudden people might say, you know what, maybe that Jesus is worth something. Maybe I should try it. Oh, and by the way, if God is working in your heart right now, and you're like, you know what? I identified with the guy in the story, and I feel like God's doing something in me and I felt the love. You're not here by accident. In fact, we're doing baptisms in that tub in about four weeks on Easter. So you can make a proclamation of faith to Jesus today. You can talk to me, talk to an elder. They'll be up here to pray with you after. Talk to someone in the back, we'll sign you up and we will baptize you in there as a proclamation of your faith. So you can go love people too. How does that sound? Let's pray.

Jesus, you're good. We love you. We praise you. You tell us to love one another. Let's do it and let's do it hard. Lord, you loved us hard and we love you. What more can be said other than to love one another as we've received the wonderful love that you've given us. We love you. In his name, Amen.

