



#2 In The "All Things New" Series

THE STORY OF LOVE

Forest Park Church

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By Jason Corder

1.

Last week we opened a discussion about New Things, and especially the change God planned to bring into the world through the birth of His Son and the forgiveness that accompanies his death on the cross.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

2

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

But how do new things come? How do we become this new person? How do we walk in this Newness of Life?

Why do Christ followers often look, act, and feel the same as those who never claim to know Christ.

ARE WE MISSING SOMETHING??

Pauls advice to the Galation Christians was simple:

3

Galatians 5:16-26

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Leading a spirit led life is transformational, but with so much confusion over the work of the Holy Spirit how do we know what that looks like?

Knowing the the Galaiton believers might ask the same the Apostle Paul continues in Galations 5:

4

Gal 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Over the next 5 weeks we are going to pull apart this list to discover the transformation and new life behind each of these concepts and today we will begin with the #1 thing on the list.

5

I. Love IS.

It's unfortunate but in English we have only one word for love.

The ancient Hebrews had the same dilemma.

Ahab was the ancient Hebrew word, and all different shades of love had to be captured in that single term.

The Greeks however had far more.

- **Storge** was probably one of the most frequent uses of love that the Greeks had in their language. It referred to the love between a parent and a child, especially between a mother and a child.
- **Phileo** was the word that they used for the kind of love that two best of friends would have. Not a romantic love, but an attraction, a commonality, a compassion for the other.
- And a very strong passion of attraction was referred to as **eros**. Although they originally used it to refer to other than sexual attractions, that became the primary meaning of the word.

They had still another word in Greek. The word, interestingly, was one that they didn't use very often, and is especially infrequent in Greek literature.

- It was the Greek word **agape**, and it was in many ways quite different from the other terms for love that the Greeks used.

- It wasn't really centered in the relationship to the other person or in the attractiveness of the other person; but was more centered on the person who does the loving.

While the others are very heavy on emotion, agape was more than feeling.

- **When the Greeks used the word they talked especially about action, doing something that is for the benefit of another individual.**

All these types of love are gifts from God.

- Some people abuse them.
- Some people misunderstand them.
- But in original design and intent, every type of love was a gift that God gave for us to enjoy and for the enjoyment of others.

We often refer to love as **LOVE FEELS**, but Paul will go to great lengths to define love to the Corinthian Church and opens his description with the phrase **LOVE IS....**

6

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;[a] 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Some once compared verses 4-7 to light passing through a prism and being separated out into its various colors.

- Just as the various colors of the spectrum all work together to make white light,
- Paul describes love in its component parts, a palet of actions that all work together to make love.

Paul isn't talking about a warm feeling but rather a conscious decision to love other people no matter what.

- **Paul describes "agape" love in verses 4-7 using a series of 15 verbs.**
- Our English translations change some of the verbs to adjectives, but in the Greek they are all verbs.
- The love Paul is talking about is not primarily something you feel but something you do.

- We may not always be able to control our feelings, but we can control our actions, and our motivations.

Love Is a Choice!

An attitude you choose to live to not live, but remember God measures your entire life by it.

7

II. God is Love.

God's love changes us

8

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

It's only because of his love why we can go from sinner to saved.

- His love allows us to be redeemed from our fallen state and enables us to be clothed in his righteousness.
- We have eternal life because of his love.

Those who are his Children Should Model that love.

John's message to followers of Christ is a message echoed throughout the Bible.

Maybe the clearest response is when Jesus is questioned by a Pharisee.

9

Matthew 22:34-40

"When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test him: 'Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.'"

Jesus lets us know that the second greatest act we can do daily as Christians is love other people, while the greatest commandment is to love God.

- If we are abiding in God, as John assumes we will, then we will **not only seek to love God but will see loving others as an extension of that.**
- Interestingly, the Bible does not tell us to love ourselves, possibly because that action comes so naturally for believers and nonbelievers alike.
- We can use this awareness then to change how we view other people. Instead of maintaining a mindset of “me versus you” or “them versus us,” we can acknowledge the fact that we are all image-bearers of God (Psalm 139:13).

10 We are to:

III. Love as we have been loved.

11

1 JOHN 3:16

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Jesus laid down his life for us so that we could be free from the bondage of sin.

- He left his throne in heaven to live among people who would reject and betray him.
- This is one of the things that really separates God’s love from ours. While we do make sacrifices for the sake of love, few of us would make that kind of ultimate sacrifice for a loved one.
- But, Jesus didn’t just die for the people who loved and obeyed him. He died for the ones who hated him too.

12 1 John 4:7-21

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, **because God is love.** 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

John writes the word love, or some iteration of it, twenty-nine times in these fourteen verses.

- Anytime a biblical writer repeats a word with this type of frequency, students of the Word do well to break out their pencils and take note.
- So, what do we learn about love?

13 A: God is love

The most important observation about love in this passage comes from the declaration that God is love.

- John teaches us that God's love for us flows from His character.
- In the same way God is good and God does good, God is love and God does love.
- We are creatures that sometimes love. God never ceases to be loving.

14 B: Lovers Gonna Love

We all know haters gonna hate. But lovers or, more specifically, loved ones, gonna love too.

John, as he is given to do, makes a play on words in the Greek text.

He starts verse 7 with two very similar words that stem from the root word for *love*.

- He says “loved ones (*αγαπητοι, a-ga-pay-toi*) love (*αγαπωμεν, a-ga-pohmen*) one another.”
- He continues on his message to flesh out this truth, that those who have been loved by God must then love one another.
- He follows the pattern established throughout the Bible and previously in this letter: the indicative precedes the imperative.
- The true statement that we are loved demands then that we love others.

His logic follows like so:

- God is love,
- God loved you enough to send His Son,
- Love others,
- Loving others evidences God's love made perfect in you.

Simply, love begets love.

15 C: Love Overcomes Fear

- Since love comes from God and since our loving others evidences God's love for us, John can boldly proclaim that love casts out fear.
- After all, if you are loved by God, as his child we are welcomed in His presence?
- The love of God fills our minds with the courage we need to look forward to an uncertain future knowing we have a place at the table.

1 Conclusion:

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-25

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

The hebrew word for steadfast love is Hesed.

It refers to loyal, faithful, and covenant love.

- When you search for Bible verses about God's love, steadfast love is mentioned many times.
- God's steadfast love directly relates to his unchanging character.
- His covenant love towards you never fails or wavers.
- He promises to love you and that's exactly what he'll do.

God is known for Love and his followers should be as well.

16

John 13:34,35

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. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”