

---

# JOHN: THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

*LOVE ONE ANOTHER*

---

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter  
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on June 3, 2018

## INTRODUCTION

---

God is love. Such a statement is profoundly true, and it has a marked effect on Christians. It is not unusual for people to want or to express love, but it is unusual for people in this world to experience the kind of love God defines. Like many of God's attributes, we see the fullest expression of God's love in Christ. Furthermore, Christ calls and empowers His disciples (i.e. Christians) to love like Jesus loves. In this message, we shall consider Jesus' command to 'love one another' in the context of the local church family.

## MESSAGE MADE SIMPLE

---

*"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"* (Jn. 13:34).

In poetry, music, theater, movies, novels, and history itself, any observant person can see that humans are obsessed with love. Love intrigues us, it compels us, and it befuddles us. Just as people are fascinated by love, so too people are often unable to define or explain love in any genuinely coherent way. We talk about love as though it were an irresistible feeling, a fleeting charm, and an unbreakable bond. And yet, each of these descriptions contradict the others.

Like many meaningful concepts in life, God's word speaks clearly as to the nature and expression of love. But we are often so preoccupied with fantasy that we are unable to consider the beauty and glory of reality. Jesus Himself is offered as the exemplary loving person, and He calls His disciples to love as He did and does.

Far from the romantic imagery of teenaged longings, true and genuine love is robust, textured, and panoramic. Furthermore, there is one place on the planet where God has designed Christ-like love to take its truly expansive shape. In the context of the local church, Christians display the kind of sacrificial, persevering, gracious, radical, and inspiring love that Christ both exemplifies and empowers.

## **JOHN 13:31-35 (ESV)**

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’

34 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.”

## THE POINT I’M AIMING AT TODAY

---

**True disciples of Jesus display a distinct kind of love in the world, and this is most especially visible among the local church family.**

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

---

**(1) LOVE IS A NEW COVENANT COMMAND**

**(2) LOVE IS DEFINED BY CHRIST**

**(3) LOVE IS DISTINCTIVE OF TRUE DISCIPLES**

**(4) LOVE IS DISPLAYED IN THE CHURCH**

**(5) APPLICATION: DO YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE THIS KIND OF LOVE?**

### (1) LOVE IS A NEW COVENANT COMMAND

- **Clearly Jesus gives a command to His disciples**
  - “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another**” (v34)
- **Jesus’ command here is similar to the Old Covenant command**
  - On scribe asked Jesus “**Which commandment is the most important of all?**” Jesus answered, **‘The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’**” Then Jesus went on to say, **“The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”** (Mark 12:28–31)
    - In this way, Jesus summarized the first and second table of the moral law.<sup>1</sup>
- **Jesus’ command here is distinctly given in the New Covenant context**
  - Though John does not record the institution of the **Lord’s Supper** and the language of the **New Covenant** here (as the synoptic writers do [Lk. 22:20; Mk. 14:24; Matt. 26:28]), **this is indeed that meal.**<sup>2</sup>
    - Christ the **gracious Savior** = Christ the **commanding Lord**
  - Moreover, Jesus places a special emphasis on this command as a **defining mark of His disciples** (i.e. Christians), making them **distinct from the world.**
    - **“By this all people will know that you are my disciples...”** (v35)

---

<sup>1</sup> Here is a good explanation of the first and second table of the law from the Westminster Catechism: <http://www.reformed.org/master/index.html?mainframe=/documents/fisher/q0042.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Jesus and his disciples did indeed eat a Passover meal on Thursday, the beginning of 15 Nisan. John’s Gospel, rightly interpreted, does not contradict this chronology in any of the seven verses alleged to do so (13:1, 27; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 36, 42)”

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 457). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

Summary: Jesus **commanded His disciples to love** one another.

Segue: But Jesus did not leave it up to them to **define love for themselves**.

## (2) LOVE IS DEFINED BY CHRIST

- **Jesus exemplifies Love**

- “just **as I have loved you**, you also are to love one another” (v34)
- How did Jesus love?
  - **Jesus loved the Father by obeying Him**
    - Jesus said, “**I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father**” (Jn. 14:31).
  - **Jesus loved the Church by giving Himself up for her**
    - The Bible commands, “**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**” (Eph. 5:25).
  - **Jesus loved His friends by laying down His life for them**
    - Jesus said, “**Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends**” (John 15:13).
  - **Jesus loved by persevering in that love to the end**
    - John tells us about Jesus’ love by saying, “**having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end**” (Jn. 13:1).
  - **In summary, Jesus’ love is expressed in *obedience, selflessness, and perseverance*.**

- Friends, does this not **ring true** in our own deep **desires**?!
  - How do you want your **children** to love you? Is it not by demonstrating **glad obedience** to your good commands?
  - How do you want your **spouse** to love you? Is it not by **giving up** his/her own **preferences** in order to graciously **live in harmony** with you?
  - How do you want your **friend** to love you? Is it not by **remaining faithful** through both good times and bad?
  - Look and see that **Christ exemplifies** perfect love!

Summary: This is the definition of love to which **Christ called His disciples...**

Segue: But Christ **not only commanded** His disciples to love like this... **He promised** that it would be so.

### **(3) LOVE IS DISTINCTIVE OF TRUE DISCIPLES**

- ***Jesus not only commands, He promises***
  - **“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”** (v35)
  - **Christians (i.e. disciples) come to know love in Christ**
    - **“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us...”** (1 Jn. 3:16)
  - **Christians display love out of an overflow of God’s love for them**
    - **“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”** (1 Jn. 3:16–17).

- **Christians have assurance by the presence of loving deeds**
  - “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. **By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him** [before God]...” (1 Jn. 3:18–19).
  
- **Love for other Christians is a mark of true Christians**
  - “Whoever **loves his brother** abides in the **light**, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever **hates his brother** is in the **darkness**...” (1 Jn. 2:10–11).
  - “**By this it is evident** who are the **children of God**, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who **does not love his brother**” (1 Jn. 3:10).
  - “**We know** that we have passed out of death into life, **because we love the brothers**...” (1 Jn. 3:14).

Summary: **Love is distinctive of true disciples**, and the Bible encourages us to **examine ourselves** and **each other** with regard to this characteristic...

Segue: **How, then, are we supposed to know** whether or not we truly love?

Is love a **feeling**?

Is it a **state of mind**?

Am I showing love if I am **simply tolerating someone** – not bothering them?

Is my **avoidance of someone** an expression of love?

Is love merely the **absence of anger**, or **hostility**, or **resentment**?

How in the world are any of us supposed to **SEE outward expressions of love** in ourselves and each other?!

## (4) LOVE IS EXPRESSED IN THE CHURCH

- ***This is one of those ‘one another’ NT commands***
  - “A new commandment I give to **you**, that you love **one another**” (v34)
    - “**Love one another** with brotherly affection. **Outdo one another** in showing honor” (Rom. 12:10).
    - “through love **serve one another**” (Gal. 5:13).
    - “may the Lord make you **increase** and **abound in love for one another...**” (1 Thess. 3:12).
    - “Let us consider how to **stir up one another to love** and **good works...**” (Heb. 10:24).
  - Friends, please understand this...
    - **Love is not an optional perk** of church membership.
    - Love is the **gift of God...** the **mark** on **every Christian...** and the Christ-commanded **trust** of **every church member**.
    - **Love expressed** to one another in **meaningful, substantial,** and **personal** ways is **what it means** to be a church member.
- ***The ‘one another’ commands must be expressed in the local church***
  - 5 ways Love is expressed in the Local Church (Ephesians 4)
    1. **Love unites us to one another**
      - In “**humility and gentleness, with patience**” church members are to “**bear with one another in love**” (v2) so that there is “**unity [in] the Spirit**” (v3).
        - Are you gently and patiently bearing with your fellow church members in order to preserve unity?
        - Or are you merely tolerating fellow church members a couple of hours each week?

## 2. Love inspires us grow with one another in spiritual maturity

- Each church member is part of the local and visible “**body of Christ**” (v4), which “**builds itself up in love**” (v16) until we “**grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ**” (v15).
  - Do you think of your fellow church members as having anything to do with your spiritual growth?
  - Do you know that your own spiritual growth is directly related to the spiritual growth of your fellow church members?
  - Can you think of a any place in the New Testament where spiritual growth and maturity is an individual project?

## 3. Love compels us to take responsibility for each other’s spiritual health

- Jesus gave “**shepherds** [or pastors]” (v11) to the local church in order to “**equip the saints**” for the work of “**building up the body of Christ**” (v12).
  - Who does Jesus say is responsible for making disciples in this church? In this community?
  - Do you think of yourself as responsible for your fellow church members? If not, why not?

## 4. Love shapes our relationships with one another

- Each member “**speaks the truth in love**” (v15) to the others.
  - Who do you talk with about Jesus, the Bible, the gospel, resisting sinful temptations, growing in faithfulness?
- Each member “**does honest work**” so that he/she “**may share with**” other members in need (v28)
  - Do you know your fellow church members well enough to know who might be in need?

- Each member speaks of the “good for building up” other members (v29)
  - Who do you build up with encouragement among your church family?
- Each member puts away “bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander” for the sake of other members (v31).
  - Are there any church members who have rubbed you the wrong way? Are you putting away those feelings and actions that might drive a wedge between you?
  - Or are you letting that bitterness stay and sharing those poisonous slanderous words with others?
- Each member is “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave” (v32).
  - Do you remember how much Christ has forgiven you?
  - Are you forgiving others with the same kindness that Christ has shown to you?

## 5. Love for one another is our worshipful offering to God

- Church members “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (5:1).
  - Oh, friends, whether any of us deserves such love is utterly beside the point! ...Isn't it!?
  - None of us is able to earn this love from each other!
  - We must extend this love as a gracious offering... not because your fellow church members are worthy... but because God is worthy of our everything!
  - We must walk in love with one another, because God has loved us in Christ, and we simply cannot do otherwise!

Though love for one another is a mark of all true disciples, and it should be most especially visible among the local church family, this is not always the case...

J.C. Ryle laments, “Think, for a moment, **how deplorably little love** there is upon earth! **How conspicuous** is the **absence** of true love among professing Christians! I speak not of heathen now, I speak of **professing Christians!**

What angry **tempers**, what **passions**, what **selfishness**, what **bitter tongues**--are to be found in private families! What **strife**, what **quarrels**, what **spitefulness**, what **malice**, what **revenge**, what **envy** between... fellow-church-members!

‘**Where is love?**’ we may well ask, ‘**Where is love?** Where is the **mind of Christ?**’--when we look at the **spirit which reigns in the world**. No wonder that **Christ's cause** stands still, and **infidelity** abounds--when **men's hearts know so little** of love!

**Surely**, we may well say, ‘**When the Son of man comes**, shall He find love upon earth?’”

## **(5) APPLICATION: DO YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE THIS KIND OF LOVE?**

### **1. Do you want this kind of love?**

#### a. Not everyone does!

- i. Some would rather keep their sense of anonymity and their illusions of safety.
- ii. Some prefer their sinful indulgences over spiritual growth, and these will no doubt suffer the consequences.

#### b. Do you want this kind of love?

- i. Do you want to embrace the gospel of Christ that exposes you as the sinner we already know you are?
- ii. Do you want to be free from the exhausting anxiety of superficial relationships – always guarding yourself from being known too well.

## **2. What keeps you from experiencing this kind of love?**

- a. How easy have you made it for other church members to know you?
  - i. Do you only occasionally attend services?
  - ii. Do you arrive late?
  - iii. Do you leave quickly?
  - iv. Do you sit in the exact same place all the time and only talk to those who sit near you?
  - v. Do you talk to anyone between Sundays?
  - vi. Have you introduced yourself to anyone you don't recognize at the service on a Sunday?
  - vii. Have you offered to get together with anyone new over a meal?
  - viii. Have you served in some way through the various ministry opportunities at FBC Diana (like VBS)?
- b. Have you been acting like this whole church membership thing is a personal and individual matter?

## **3. What keeps you from extending this kind of love to others?**

- a. How much effort have you put into showing love for fellow church members?
  - i. Have you been too busy to give your time and attention to any fellow church members?
  - ii. Have you made an effort to get to know anyone new in the last few months? How about in the last year?
  - iii. Have you been quick to forgive and patient with those who seem to test you?
  - iv. Have you taken responsibility to pray for and invest in a fellow church member for their spiritual good (discipling)?

**True disciples of Jesus display a distinct kind of love in the world, and this is most especially visible among the local church family**

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

---

*Membership Covenant* by FBC Diana

<http://www.fbcdiana.org/membership-covenant/>

*The Marks of the Committed Christian* by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/p23/the-marks-of-the-committed-christian>

*Loving the Church* by Jonathan Leeman

<https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2018/03/loving-the-church/>

*Christian Love* by J.C. Ryle

<https://www.monergism.com/christian-love>

*As I Have Loved You, Love One Another* by John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/as-i-have-loved-you-love-one-another>

*Seven Ways to Love People* by Leah Baugh

<https://corechristianity.com/resource-library/articles/7-ways-to-love-people>

*Gospel Affection* by Joe Thorn

<http://www.joethorn.net/blog/2014/9/14/gospel-affection>

*As I Have Loved You* by Charles Leiter

[http://resources.grantedministries.org/samples/A00017\\_14.pdf](http://resources.grantedministries.org/samples/A00017_14.pdf)