

## Love One Another - 1 John 4:7-11

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It is my joy to be with you this morning. Truly it is. And we had a beautiful drive up here this morning as well. It's about just shy of two hours coming up from Ardmore and maybe shamefully, I went to Oklahoma state university. I know y'all aren't maybe as close to that as the other, as we would say, the other university down the road.

But it reminded me of, of coming up to Oklahoma state, all those years that I was there more than four driving back and forth. So it was a good drive this morning and it's good to be with you. I bring a greetings from Providence fellowship church. We meet in a little town called Azle, which is just North of Fort Worth.

So if you're ever down that way, please join us. And we have our services in the afternoon because we also rent a facility and there's another church that meets there in the morning. So if you'll remember brother Jason Attaway, he'll be preaching to our congregation soon. There and I have been a I've been with him and we planted the church back in 2018 and last December I was ordained as a co elder with him there as well.

And so that's, that's been a joy and a new, new experience at the church there. So all that to say I feel blessed from God to be here with you all this morning. Our text today is found in first John chapter four. And in just a moment, we will read verses seven through eleven. And the title of the sermon is Loving One Another.

And so the theme or the focus of the message this morning is going to be on love. Our love for one another. So let me read the text and then we will pray. Beloved, let us love one another. For love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love, does not know God for God is love by this.

The love of God was manifested in us that God has sent his only begotten son into the world so that we might live through him in this is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

The word of the Lord. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we bow before you and we want to humble our hearts before you that we might learn from you and learn from your word. What it truly means to love one another. And why we are to love one another and what it looks like to love one another. We know that this is an area, no matter how well anyone may be in it, it's an area in which we can always increase all the more.

So please help us, please open our hearts and our ears to hear from you. This is your word. Inspired and inerrant, and we come to sit at your feet. We do it in Jesus name, and we trust that your spirit will work in our hearts. Amen.

I grew up in the church, so I have heard the preaching of the love of God time and time again. And I know when that's the case, if it's the case with any of you, Hearing about the love of God might seem old. It might seem something you already know everything about. It might be, Oh, we're going to get a sermon we've heard many times before in our past.

So before we dive in to help us, I think, I want us to sit back a moment and see how exalted love is. In the scriptures, I want us to see and reflect on and ponder the high esteem that God gives to love in his word. And so I am going to read a selection of passages and just parts of passages. And this isn't a Bible drill, so I don't want you to be turning, flipping through your pages.

And I'm not even going to say most of the references. I just want you to hear these, hopefully in a fresh way.

Let's think about God's love. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love edifies. Love is the perfect bond of unity. The scriptures instruct us to speak the truth in love. To walk in love. In fact, Paul says, let all that you do be done in love. And this is right after he's told men to act like men.

The Apostle Paul told us that the goal of his instruction was love. There's an entire chapter in the Bible devoted to love. We hear it in weddings all the time. Love is patient, love is kind, and so forth. Love never fails. That chapter ends by saying, But now faith, hope, love abide these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Interestingly enough, that chapter begins by Paul saying, If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. Isn't that amazing? Love isn't just outward action. We'll talk about that in the sermon. The scriptures teach us that love is supernatural. In our passage we will read that God is love and that love comes from God.

In love, Ephesians chapter 1 tells us, God the Father predestined us. The fruit of the Spirit is love we love because he first loved us Twice the Apostle Paul describes the wicked as unloving Romans chapter 1 in 2nd Timothy chapter 3 Paul says love is the fulfillment of the law and that all the commandments are summed up in this you shall love your neighbor as Yourself In the law of Moses, we're taught to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourself.

And Jesus said that these were the two greatest commandments and that the whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments. But then, in the night of his betrayal, he said this, A new commandment I give to you. That you love one another, even as I have loved you. And just like that, love and this new commandment shifts from loving our neighbors, loving all people generally, to loving our brothers and sisters in Christ, loving one another.

And from loving all people generally like we love ourselves to loving our brethren even as Jesus loved us. Now of course, loving our neighbors as ourselves did not go away. But impactful here. When he said to love one another even as I have loved you. And that's going to be the focus of the text. This morning, we're going to look at loving our brothers and sisters in Christ, like Jesus loved us.

So let's jump in. The first thing I want you to notice is the structure of the passage of those verses that I read, verses seven through 11, how John begins and ends this little section with the command to love one another. So verse seven, Beloved, let us love one another. And then verse 11, beloved, we also ought to love one another.

So there's the command and he repeats it. Love one another. Now what we have in the middle are two big things that we're going to look at today. First, the reasons. Why are we to love one another? And then second, the characteristics of this love. What, what kind of love is it that we are to have for one another?

What is it like? So let's begin with the reasons. And I love this about the word of God. You know, sometimes those of you who are parents, we tell our children to do something. And the reason is because I'm your daddy or because I'm your mother. That's why. And that's a good enough reason. And sometimes that's the reason in the word of God, because I am the Lord.

Amen. Amen. But many times the scriptures go on to explain why it is. God gives us an argument, a reason, something that we can ground on. Our faith isn't blind in that sense. And here, John gives us what I'm going to, to lay out as two main reasons of why we are to love one another. And the first one is this because of who God is because of who God is.

Or, another way to say it, because of God's nature. Because of what God is like. We see it in verses 7 and 8, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And then he goes on, everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. So there's the reason, because God is love, and because love is from God.

In other words, the argument is like this, it's basically a child will be like his father. A child will act like his father. And so, he says in verse seven, everyone who loves is born of God. Why? Because God is love. So the child of God loves like God loves. Now Jesus made a similar argument with the Jews in John chapter 8.

So I want you to turn there and let's look at that. John chapter 8. We're going to read verses 39 through 44. Jesus made a similar argument in, in this, that he argued that a child acts like his father. A child does the deeds of his father. Here are these words, you'll know them. Verse 39, they answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, if you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

But as it is, you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. This Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father. They said to him, we were not born of fornication. We have one father, God. Jesus said to them, if God were your father, you would love me. For I proceeded forth and have come from God.

For I have not even come on my own initiative, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear my word. You are of your father, the devil,

and you want to do the desires of your father. A child not only does the deeds of his father, but he wants to do the deeds of his father.

Haven't you seen that in your own children? Jesus uses this reasoning to tell the Jews, you are of the devil. You do not belong to God. You are persecuting me and I have come from God. John uses this for us to be motivated to love like he loved us. You are children of God. You belong to the Father, therefore love like the Father loved.

So there's the first reason, because of who God is and who we are in Him. The second reason is this, because of what God has done. Now sometimes we preachers have to get words that match so you can remember them a little better. So. The first point was God's nature. So here I'm going to use God's gesture.

Okay. And the reason I'm using that word is because it's basically an action that we do that shows our heart. It shows our intentions. We talk about that was a good gesture. And so reason number two for why we are to love one another is because of what God has done. Now, John makes this connection in verse 11.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. So this begs the question, how did God love us? Verses 9 and 10 give us the answer. God has sent his only begotten son into the world. And verse 10, God sent his son. This is how he loved us. He sent his son, his only begotten son, into the world for what purpose?

Verse 9, so that we might live through him. And verse 10, to be the propitiation for our sins. Now we can think about what love is. What is love? We just saw it there, but let me read it first from a couple of definitions given in a couple of systematic theologies. The first one is Louis Burkhoff, a very long standing, important, reformed, systematic theology. He describes it this way. The love of God is this.

When the goodness of God is exercised towards his rational creatures, It assumes the higher character of love. So love is the goodness of God being exercised toward us. Now, Wayne Grudem, more popular, and says it in a little easier words perhaps for us to understand. Wayne Grudem describes God's love like this.

It is self giving for the benefit of others. He says it is part of God's nature to give of himself for In order to bring about blessing or good for others. So it's not just that God gave his son, but that he gave his son for our good. He gave his son so that we might live. He gave his son to be the propitiation, which your Bible translation may say the atoning sacrifice.

He turned away God's wrath against us. God went from. Wrath against us because of our sin to now inseparable love. Nothing will separate us from the love of God because of Christ. He stands in the middle. So reason number two of why we are to love one another is because of what God has done for us in sending his son for our good.

To take away our sin and to grant us eternal life. Now, let's think about the character of this love. What is this love like? And there's at least four things that I see here that I want to bring out. Number one, loving one another, are you ready? Is an obligation. It's an obligation. It's not optional. I was thinking on the way up here of, of college because of the drive, you know, I I studied engineering in college.

And man, for engineering, your classes were laid out for almost the full four years. It wasn't until the last year of my college degree that I was actually able to choose an elective. Whatever class that I wanted to take. And by God's grace, that's how I ended up in Christian ministry because I, I took an elective that was a class on the apostle Paul and then a class on Jesus the next semester and said, man, I want to go teach the Bible.

I don't want to do engineering anymore. Loving one another is not an elective. It's a core class. You have to do it. It is an obligation and I'm not a betting man, but I would be willing to bet that no matter what translation. Of the English bible you're using this morning. You have the word ought there in verse 11 and Who would have guessed the reason you have the word ought in verse 11 is because that's what the Greek says You ought to love one another Man There is a parable that Jesus tells that drives home what it means to be obligated And I want us to see that this morning Luke chapter 17 turn with me there Luke chapter 17.

Perhaps you're familiar with this parable, but I'll just read it. It's short, verses 7 through 10. Here's what Jesus says. Which of you having a slave plowing or tending sheep will say to him when he has come in from the field, come immediately and sit down to eat. But will he not say to him, prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you may eat and drink?

He does not think the slave, because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, We are unworthy slaves. We have done only that which we are commanded. To have done So listen brothers and sisters when we when we love one another in the church when we do a great sacrifice of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ God forbid That we should pat ourselves on the back that we should take pride and think look at me and look what I've done Look what I've sacrificed compared to some of those other people God says you've only done what you ought to have done.

Loving one another is an obligation. Man, I have more to say there. This isn't the first time John said it. In chapter 3, 1 John chapter 3, John says this, beginning in verse 16. We'll just read verse 16. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

So notice there, the obligation comes both from the actions of the father in sending his son, and from the actions of the son in willingly laying down his life. Because of both persons of the Trinity and what they have done, we ought to love one another. Last verse we'll look at with this point is that John is only repeating what his master had already taught during his earthly ministry.

This obligation around loving one another. Look with me at Matthew 18. Matthew 18 in a parable that he, that Jesus tells there. We won't read the whole parable. Though I would love to, I'm sure you're familiar with it. If not, I encourage you to read it on your own later, but you'll remember the scene.

This is coming off of Jesus's instruction about church discipline beginning in verse 15. And then Peter asks this question in verse 21, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me? And I forgive him. Up to seven times? You know, that probably looked pretty good. Like, you know, they may forgive him once or twice, but I'll forgive him up to seven times.

And Jesus said, I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Innumerable times. And then he tells this parable to illustrate his point. And, oh, this parable strikes us in the heart because it is so unjust. It's so unloving. We can all read this parable and see how wrong this slave is, who was forgiven an insurmountable debt, and then went out and beat his fellow slave because he wouldn't pay him back a fraction.

The end. Of what he had just been forgiven. None of us read that parable inside on the part of the slave who went out and beat his fellow slave. But sometimes we can act like that, can't we? And when the master calls that slave to account because the other slaves are so taken aback by it, they report it to the master and the master brings him in.

Verse 32, summoning him, his Lord said to him, you wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Not because you deserved it, not because you earned it, but because you asked. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave in the same way that I had mercy on you? Part of the reason we don't love one another is because we take our eyes off of what God has forgiven us. When was the last time we took a real evaluation of our own sin before?

Almighty God, holy God, and then we're going to hold this or that against that brother or sister I mean, I want to say give me a break, but I'm guilty of it too, right? God help us. Let me read the last two verses of this parable because it will put us into our next point. And his Lord moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart. And this is our next point. This love is characterized by coming from the heart. It's not merely outward action. Now, I was born in 1982. And maybe some of you can come back with me to the late 80s and early 90s.

And there was this Christian music band. A mixture of a little bit of rap, a little bit of, of rock. And they were called, D. C.? Alright, does anybody remember those guys? I used to have their little cassette tapes and play those all the time. One of their songs was, Love is a Verb. Love is a Verb. Oh, I printed off the lyrics.

I won't rap it for you. I'll spare you of that. But maybe this will bring back some memories. Pulling out my big black book, Because when I need a word to find, that's where I look. So I moved to the L's quick, fast, in a hurry, Threw on my specs, thought my vision was blurry. I looked again, but to my dismay, It was black and white with no room for gray.

You see a big V stood beyond my word, And yo, that's when it hit me, That love is a verb. Love is a verb. Love is a verb. I'm sure in the early 90s we needed that reminder. Because what, what does everybody mistake love for? Just, just feeling, right? I'm in love with you now. I'm out of love with you. And it's just emotion.

And we need the reminder that love is action. In fact, that's what John has just told us. God loved us by doing something. By sending his son. But he didn't do it without heart. The action shows the intention and the heart. Now, I don't know about your translation. You can check again. Mine didn't say anything in there about heart.

I didn't see the word heart pop up. So why am I saying this? Why is our next characteristic that love comes from the heart? Well, I want you to think for a moment about this, about God sending His Son. What does it say? It says that He sent His only begotten Son. And it wasn't just His only begotten Son.

Remember Jesus baptism and the Mount of Transfiguration? What did God say there? to Jesus. This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. God didn't just send anyone. He sent his son, his only son, the son he loves. Sometimes that doesn't hit with us because we're talking about God, right? That's God, you know?

That's not me. But listen to these words, you'll remember them. Now it came about after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham. And he said, here I am. He said, take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering. On one of the mountains of which I tell you Now nobody even unbelievers don't read that passage and feel the sacrifice of love in Abraham offering up his only son to god When we read that god sent his only begotten son.

This is coming from the heart of God. It is not merely outward action Which means when we love one another like God intends us to it must come from the heart Look, let me illustrate this for you right quick again in chapter 3 We just read a minute ago verse 16 back. We're still in first John chapter 3 verse 16 We know love by this that he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Now, how does he illustrate this love? Verse 17. But whoever has the world's goods and sees his brother in need and doesn't provide what his brother needs. Is that what it says? It says, and closes his heart against him. Or if anybody's an old King James man, you shut up his bowels of compassion. You see, John isn't just dealing with show your love to one another by meeting one another's needs. He says, open your heart to one another because that's what God did for us. Father and son.

Characteristic number three. Oh man, hold on before we go to number three. We know this is the case. I mean, again, so many of my illustrations come from parenting because that's what I'm dealing with right now. Our oldest is 13. Have you ever given your child a command and he obeys it, but he does it through grumbling and complaining.

He's done what you said, but is he loving you? Is he honoring you in that moment? You know, think of the parable of the prodigal son. When he returns home repentant, the father and the servants are all celebrating. And what's the older son doing? He's out moping in the field. He doesn't even want to come in at all.

And how does he, how does he describe his, his history to his father? I haven't neglected a command of yours. Well, big whoop. A whole lot of good that did, because your heart is not with me, son. So love must come from the heart. Characteristic number three. Loving one another starts with you. There's initiative.

Okay, we see that in verse ten. And this is love, not that we loved God. But that he loved us and sent his son Down in verse 19. He says it again We love because he first loved us The Apostle Paul taught the same thing Romans 5, 8 and 10. I'll just read them to you But God demonstrates his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Verse 10, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son. God acted first. Now, what does that mean for our love for one another? Because it's so easy to say That person hasn't done anything for me in a while So if I'm going to you know Put myself out a little bit here and exercise some love.

I'm gonna do it toward that Loving person over there I'm gonna reciprocate love. That's that's how we often think about it I mean how many times have you held a door open for someone men and there was no Acknowledgement or no. Thanks and maybe in the back of your mind you think Shouldn't held the door open for that person This is worldly this is wrong Our love isn't isn't to to get some kind of praise and acclaim In fact when we do Jesus says there's your reward right there.

That's the end of it Love those who cannot return it So love must start with us. We initiate the love. We don't wait for the other person to start loving I mean imagine how this will revolutionize our marriages much less our churches If we love one another like this, it begins with us. One commentator said this, to see what love means, we must see ourselves as sinners, and thus as the objects of God's wrath, and yet as those for whom Christ died.

Fourth and final characteristic. There's maybe different ways you could put it, Loving one another requires that you know God and have been born of him. No doubt this love is supernatural. It cannot be faked. It cannot be pretended. It will always be found out if it is not real. John said it in verse seven.

Everyone who loves is born of God. Or has been born of God. Remember that first reason, because a child acts like his father. So this love comes from the children of God. And in that



sense, then it becomes natural and yet still commanded. This is how we are to be. This is how we should act. And this is who we are.

If we belong to Christ. Peter, the apostle Peter agrees. He said this in first Peter, since you have an obedience to the truth, purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren. Here's the command fervently love one another from the heart. For you have been born again. Not of seed, which is perishable, but imperishable.

That is through the living and enduring word of God. So if this kind of love isn't characterizing your life, then, then, then we've got to start with repentance. We've got to start with asking God. Remember that that master forgave simply because the servant pleaded. He asked. So ask. Jesus, Jesus said, if, if you ask my father for the Holy Spirit, is he gonna, is he gonna not give him to you?

Jesus said, all who come to me, I'm not going to cast them out. Go to him, ask, and he will give you this kind of love for one another. I want to say two things in conclusion. First, is that Jesus said, all who come to me, I'm not going to cast them out. I want to say two things in conclusion. First, is that Jesus said, all who come to me, I'm not going to cast them out.

This kind of love for one another. I mean, those of you who have been believers and walking with the Lord for a while, and have been through difficult things, you know that this kind of love is not easy. When you're being wronged, especially by other people in the church, how can you love in return? The Apostle Paul makes us plainly aware of that in Colossians chapter three, where he says this.

So as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. bearing with one another and forgiving each other. Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you. So also should you beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity, and if you're doing well in this area and, and some of you are, I'm sure.

God is working through you by his grace to pour out amazing amounts of sacrificial love Keep going Don't stop. Do you remember what the Apostle said in first Thessalonians chapter? 4 Now as to the love of the brethren you have no need for anyone to write to you For you yourselves are taught by God to love one another For indeed you do practice it You Toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia.

But I urge you brethren to excel still more. Let's pause and pray and ask God to excel us in loving one another from the heart, just as he loved us. Let's pray.

Lord, what an amazing thing that we should be called children of God. Sinners, people who break your law, not only in ways that other people can see and identify, but even in our own hearts where no one sees but you, and yet you are so merciful. I think of the tax collector who would not even look to heaven, but just said, God, be merciful to me, the sinner.

And just like that slave who, who asked you are so willing and so ready and so quick to forgive us, Lord God, thank you for that forgiveness. And you don't just forgive us. You make us your child. And Jesus is our older brother. And you put in our hearts this kind of love. That we should love one another sacrificially.

Just like our Lord who laid down his own life willingly, no greater love. He said, then that a man should lay down his life for his friends, help us to love one another and, and not just the one and others that are somewhere out there in the world, but the one and others that are right here sitting with us in this church.

That we would love each other. That this congregation would love each other. That my congregation back home would love one another like this. Because when we do, the world looks in and says, these people belong to God. And God truly has sent His Son into the world. Amen.