Love delights in the truth

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Preacher: James Ross

[0:00] name. Amen. Now, we're going to read in our Bibles together from 1 Samuel chapter 20.

This is a part and the story of the life of David when he has been anointed to be the next king. King Saul has been rejected as God's choice of king, but Saul is not happy. Rather, he is angry with David. He's wanting to kill David. David is on the run. But in chapter 20, we are reminded of this wonderful friendship between David and Jonathan, who is the son of King Saul. And we see Jonathan acting in an honorable and a wonderful way in this friendship. So, we're going to read 1 Samuel 20, verses 1 to 8, and then 24 to 34. So, let's hear God's word together.
Then David fled from Nioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, what have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he's trying to kill me? Never. Jonathan replied, you're not going to die. Look, my father doesn't do anything great or small without letting me know. Why should he hide this from me? It isn't so. But David took an oath and said, your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes. And he has said to himself, Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved. Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death. Jonathan said to David, whatever you want me to do, I will do for you. So, David said, look, tomorrow is the new moon feast and I am supposed to dine with the king. But let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me at all, tell him, David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan. If he says very well, then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the Lord. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself. Why hand me over to your father? And then from verse number 24. So, David hid in the field and when the new moon feast came, the king sat down to eat. He sat in his customary place by the wall opposite Jonathan and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean. Surely he's unclean. But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal either yesterday or today?
Jonathan answered, David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, let me go because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there.
[3:00] Have I found favor in your eyes? Let me go to see my brothers. That is why he has not come to the king's table. Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, you son of a perverse and rebellious woman. Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send someone to bring him to me for he must die. Why should he be put to death? What has he done? Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him.

And Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David. Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger. On that second day of the feast, he did not eat because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David. So we'll leave our reading there and we'll reflect on it as we think about 1 Corinthians 13. Now we're going to hear another psalm sung, which of course at home you can sing. We will reflect on Psalm 119 and the section from 65 to 72.
Psalm 119 and the section from 66 to 73.
Psalm 119 and the section from 66 to 73.
Although the proud spear me with lies, I keep your decrees from the heart.
[5:23] Their hearts are unfeeling and heart. I love what your precepts impart.

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It was good that I suffered distress, so that I might learn your commands.
Your law is more precious to me than silver or gold in my hands.
Now, in just a moment, we're going to pray again. Two things that we are going to focus on in particular. Again, we're going to pray for the Reannos as we look forward to hearing from them on Wednesday.
We'll pray about their situation in Columbia. But we've also been able to ask to pray for the Free Church Youth Camp Connect program this year. They can't have physical camps, but they're doing stuff online.
[6:31] So we'll pray about that. So will you join me? Stand and we can pray together. Let's stand and call on God's name in prayer. Lord, our God, we want to say thank you to you for your precious word.

Along with the psalmist, we pray that you would help us to live by your commands.
That we would regard your word as more precious than silver or gold. That in your word we would discover that you are good and that you do what is good.
And that that would help us to know how we are to live for you. Thank you that we see your goodness and your love in the sending of your son Jesus to be our savior.
We thank you for his perfect life of love and obedience. We thank you that he has lived that life that we never could live. And he's died in our place so that right at the center of the good news of the Bible stands your seeking and saving love.
[7:50] Lord, may we never forget how precious that is. May we recognize it as life-giving so that we would want others to know your word. That you would give us a hunger and a thirst for your word.

Lord, may we recognize it as life-giving so that we don't live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. And that what we would want for the people that we care about most would be that they too would come to know you in your word.
Lord, we recognize how much as a country and how much the nations of the world need to know our creator as our redeemer and savior.
To be able to call you our father in heaven. To not have to live with a fear of death and judgment, but to know assurance of your welcome and your forgiveness in and through the Lord Jesus.
And so we pray that you would be at work in this country and in the nations of the world. That wherever today the good news of the Lord Jesus is read and proclaimed.
[9:05] That it would strengthen the faith of your people. That it would draw us to greater worship and love. And that it would draw men and women and boys and girls to put their trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior today.

Lord, we think of the Free Church Youth Camps program. We thank you for decades of teaching your word to children and young people.
Of lives that were changed through coming to faith in Jesus. Through those camps of friendships that were established. That continue of being strengthened in faith and understanding of your word.
And Lord, as we think about that rich legacy in the past, we pray that this year, while it's so very different, would still serve a vital purpose.
And we do pray for wisdom and creativity for those who are developing the online program. That you would, as they pray and as they think, that you would give them wisdom to know how best to communicate truth.
[10:12] How best to organize themselves to make sure people have a really great week. Lord, we pray for folks who'll tune in to those different sessions for the different age groups.

That it would be a place where they might be able to meet new people. To enjoy different fun activities. But also a chance where they can hear your word being taught.
And where you might draw them to faith in the Lord Jesus. Lord, we also pray for our friends Manuel and Patty in Colombia.
We think of the nation of Colombia struggling with the pandemic and struggling to cope. We think of Manuel and Patty as they look to love and serve so many hurting and suffering people.
So many who have been bereaved. We think of their counseling ministry to pastors and their wives. As they look to care for churches that are straining with all the sadness and the pressures that they have faced.

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[11:21] Lord, as they bear the burdens of others. May they know you coming alongside of them to bear them up. May they hear that invitation from Jesus.

Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Lord, may they come to know your grace that is sufficient for them. Your strength being made perfect in their weakness. Lord, we thank you that we can partner with them in their work. Thank you that we can share that call on Wednesday night with them. Lord, we pray that you would help us to persevere in our prayers.
Lord, we pray that we pray that as we want that for nations, that we would want that for our own lives.
Lord, as we shortly come to sit under your words, we pray that the spirit who inspired your word to be written would be at work in all of our hearts. Helping us to hear from you.
[12:43] Helping us to see more of Jesus. So that our lives would be changed as we spend time together in your presence. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Now, before we turn to 1 Corinthians 13, where we will be this morning, I want us to read together from another letter that Paul wrote, 2 Timothy chapter 3.
It's a letter written shortly before Paul would die for his faith in the Lord Jesus. And he writes to Timothy, his friend, and he says this in chapter 3.
But mark this. There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power, have nothing to do with such people.
Speaking there of false teachers within churches. Verse 10. You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings.
[14:20] What kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured, yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
And so we'll reflect on those words as we come to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. We've been here for the last few weeks. Today we are in verse 6, where we read, Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.
So here we are again, thinking about the most excellent way of love that Paul is encouraging this church in Corinth to stick with and to return to.
[15:46] And we've been really in the nitty-gritty, the specifics of what love looks like over the last few weeks. And this time we're going to sort of, in a sense, pan back a little, and we're going to invite ourselves to reflect, to ask the question, am I making progress in my love?

Are we making progress as a church in our love, particularly in view of Christian love, love for God, love for others? It's important that we measure progress.
I imagine, like many families, we have a height chart in our house, and the boys enjoy charting their height every so often to see if they are growing up.
And it's interesting that whenever they get one of those updates, usually a couple of days later they'll go back to the chart to see if they have grown since the last time. And we have to keep reminding them, often you don't see progress over days, sometimes not even over weeks.
You have to go back months or years to see growth and development. But measures of growth and progress and success are important, aren't they?
[16:54] They're important in our workplace and in our studies. What does success look like? Am I developing? We think about it, too, in our skills and our hobbies. Am I becoming more competent?

How am I doing better than this time last year? There's value in reflecting on that so that we can, if necessary, make changes. But what about the question, am I making progress in love?

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In some ways, that's harder to assess, isn't it? Love for God, love for others. Paul, in 1 Corinthians, has been giving, as I was saying, a list of specific measures in verses 4 and 5.
Here are ways that we can see how we are doing in terms of love. Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy. It does not boast.
It is not proud. It does not dishonor others. It's not self-seeking. It's not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. We can see how we are doing. But here in verse 6, we're zooming out, in a sense, to look at the big picture.
[17:59] What's the general pattern? What's the general direction of your life and my life? Are we making progress so that we're not delighting in evil but rejoicing with the truth?

Am I making progress in my love? Am I more like Jesus in certain aspects of my character perhaps than I was five months ago, five years ago?
To help us to reflect, a couple of questions. One about direction. What direction does my love follow? And a question about delight.
What is it that I delight in? What do I rejoice in? So let's begin with this question. Which direction does my love typically follow?
Maybe you saw a story in the news this week coming out of an auction house in Glasgow. There was a young couple from the north of England who wanted to start a new life in Scotland.
[19:08] And so they decided what they would do is they'd come to an auction house in Glasgow to bid on a property. They wanted a small flat in Glasgow. But as the bidding began and the speed picked up and the tension picked up and the accent was not one they were familiar with.

They were looking for a flat in Glasgow, but they accidentally bid on a wrecked house in Danone. And what they discovered is that a misdirected bid can not buy you a dream property, can buy you a wreck.
But far more important is the point that Paul is making. Misdirected love can wreck a life and can wreck a church.
Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. Do we see there there's a fork in the road? There are two directions we can follow. We can love the way of evil as defined by the Bible, or we can love the way of truth.
And bear in mind that the truth in the Bible isn't just what we know in our heads. It also has an impact on how we live. So truth and goodness go together.
[20:21] Now, if you've been around in the last few weeks, you'll know that the church in Corinth, they had problems in that their love was becoming misdirected. They were loving to make much of themselves.

Their spiritual gifts. They were wanting to take others to law courts to claim what they felt was theirs. And so Paul wants to correct them to redirect their love, to focus their attention on God.
What about for us? How do we stay on course? If we want to follow the way of love and truth, how do we make progress? Well, let's begin with some pointers. The first one from this verse, Christian love delights in God's truth.
Or to put it another way, Christian love stands opposed to everything in life and practice, which is evil. And so we are delighting in what is good and true.
That's why we read from 2 Timothy 3. Hopefully, as you read it, you would have seen Paul's concern. He is concerned that Timothy, living in the culture that he lives in, would come under pressure to misdirect his love.
[21:34] So it talked about not being a lover of self or being a lover of money, choosing to love what is not good, choosing to love pleasure rather than to love God.

And Paul's heart for Timothy, Paul who's about to die for the sake of Jesus, he wants Timothy to stand out, to stand up for God's love and God's truth in a culture that was seen to be self-centered. And that love and that truth was found in God's Word. That's why he directed him at the end of 2 Timothy 3, to remember God who breathed his Word out.
So that was Paul's heart for Timothy, because Christian love delights in God's truth, God's love. A second pointer, and it's related, is that Christians love to walk in God's truth.
That's our general tendency, because when we turn to trust in Jesus, we're given a new heart and we're given new desires. There's a lovely little letter that the Apostle John writes, 3 John, and in verse 4 of 3 John, he says, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

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[22:49] As he thinks of those who have come to faith in the Lord Jesus under his teaching and in his churches, his love. What gives him greatest happiness is to see them continue in the way of truth.

And do you know that's the joy of our Father in heaven too? He has joy to see his children, his church, walking in the truth, the truth that is shown in love.
Crucial to the gospel, one of the most beautiful images that we find in the Bible of our salvation is that God in love adopts us into his family.
That God the Father in love sends his son Jesus into the world. And Jesus the Son gladly dies to become the firstborn among many brothers to share the joy of heaven with his brothers and sisters, those who put their faith in him as Savior, who then call God our Father in heaven.
And God gives the spirit to come and live in our hearts, the spirit of adoption. And all of that means that we now have a new desire as Christians to please our Father in heaven.
[23:55] That's not natural to ourselves. That's a gift of God when we want to please our Father in heaven. So Christians love to walk in God's truth. And it's also important to recognize that God's truth shapes our head, our hearts, and our hands.

When God's truth and God's love comes to us, it totally changes everything. We know, don't we, that there's a world of difference between knowing about someone and knowing someone personally.
We can go to the Wikipedia entry or pick up the biography of one of our heroes, and that will give us much by way of information, but it will not give us access to their friendship.
And the wonderful thing about Jesus is Jesus is God revealing his truth to us. Jesus is God revealing his love to us and inviting us to know him and his love and his truth personally.
So the starting point for our lives following the right direction is that we must know Jesus personally as our Lord, as our Savior, as our friend.
[25:08] To have him take our sin, to recognize that when he dies on the cross, he's dying for my sin. To trust him as the Lord and Savior and King, and to enjoy his friendship.

We come to know Jesus in God's Word, and what we read and what we learn, that shapes our faith, it shapes what we believe, but then by God's Spirit, we also know that our hearts change.
So our love changes. So all of a sudden we have love towards God, and that then influences our love towards others. We find ourselves worshipping the right things rather than living for ourselves or for idols.
And as we come to know Jesus, that also shapes and transforms our actions. So that as we know more of his love and truth, it leads us towards serving others, and loving others, and forgiving others, and honoring others in the nitty-gritty of life.
So let's apply those principles to our lives for just a moment. Let's think about the big picture, the general direction that our life is taking.
[26:20] Do we love to delight in evil, or do we love to rejoice in and with God's truth? What is a Christian? A Christian is someone who has received God's love expressed to us in the sending of Jesus Christ.

It's enjoying that gift of adoption, knowing the love of God as our Father in heaven. And as we know that, we then love what God loves.
We love his truth and his goodness. And if that describes you today, then you should praise God for the gift of adoption. We should never grow tired or grow cold towards the reality that in Jesus we are sons and daughters of the living God.
And if it doesn't describe you, then you should ask him for that gift, that you would know God as your Father in heaven personally, that you would trust in Jesus and have your sin forgiven to enjoy life with him.
But then let's move from the big picture. Let's zoom in to think about the choices that we make in particular moments in our lives. Let's move from Sunday morning to Monday morning.
[27:30] Typical Monday morning, perhaps. Perhaps we find, well, it's different, but there's still break rooms. And in break rooms, we still find gossip, don't we? We still find schools, universities, workplaces, where people want to share the weekend scandal.

We move from Sunday, we move to Monday. We're living among different people. Perhaps we're speaking with non-Christian family with very different values to our own. Perhaps we're, as parents, dealing with children who don't want to go to school.

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There's all kinds of tensions there. Perhaps we're engaging with someone in an issue over social media, and it's precious to us, and it's important to them. And how do we speak? And that's crunch time as Christians, to think about in that moment, what direction is my life going to take?
Am I going to love what is evil, what is false? Or am I going to love what is true and what is good? If we are to make progress in the right direction, we need to remind ourselves daily of God's love to us.
We need to be humbled, to have that sense of wonder at the extent of God's love for us. Because as soon as we forget that, it's like we're closing off the power source that then fuels our love towards others.
[28:53] And we also need to remind ourselves regularly of how God measures love. That we need to be patient, and we need to be kind, and we need to be humble, and we can't keep a record of wrongs because that's not what love looks like.

Just like in Paul's day, where he was very aware of the challenge facing Timothy, our culture is following a different direction to Jesus Christ. Not always, but sometimes.
And so then there will be a necessity for us as Christians to stand up for what is true. We don't have to dig too deep, do we, to see that as a society, we are losing the virtue of forgiveness.
That in the realm of social media in particular, but not exclusively, there is that tendency to act as judge, jury, and executioner of another. Very quick to condemn, very slow towards grace.
We live in a day when in so many areas of life, right and wrong are being redefined, and those voices and that pressure is real, and it's easy for us to go with the flow unless we remind ourselves regularly of God's love and God's truth.
[30:14] There is the very real danger that our love might be misdirected towards what is evil as it becomes socially acceptable. And we need to recognize that what God says is evil has the capacity to wreck a life, to wreck a relationship, to wreck a church.

And so we need to pay close attention, choosing to love God, choosing to love God's truth as the general pattern of our life, and in those moments where we are tempted otherwise.
So that's the first question, which direction does my love follow? But the second reflective question we could draw from our verse here is what do I delight in?
We are nearing holiday time. As many of us as families looking forward to getting a break, hopefully we'll all get to have some kind of rest and refreshment.
But as we near holiday time, sometimes we have those questions and conversations. What is it you're looking forward to about the holidays? And what becomes apparent is that because we're all different as people, we're all looking for different things because we enjoy different things.
[31:22] So we'll choose different destinations. We'll pursue different activities. Our idea of what's a real treat and a luxury on a holiday might not match up to another.

But that will influence the decisions that we take for something like a holiday. Because as people, we are wired to pursue happiness. And we are making decisions based on what is it in this moment do I think will give me the most joy and happiness?
That will determine, in large measure, the direction our life takes. Now that becomes very relevant to this question, am I making progress in my love as a Christian?
Because we need to think about what is it that I delight in? What is it that I rejoice in in the day-to-day of life? So I want to think about two very practical aspects of life.
I want to think about conversation, the conversations that we engage in, either face-to-face or over the internet.
[32:28] And I want to think about character and conduct by which we'll think about how do I assess and consider and speak of the character of someone else, particularly in our case, another Christian.

So when it comes to conversation, do I delight in the truth or do I delight in evil? I heard it said this week that we are part of a suspicious society.
And that makes sense. We see suspicion towards our politicians, towards the police, towards almost anybody in a position of leadership and authority, and that makes its way into a church as well.
And along with that, suspicion can come a delight in cynicism and a delight in speaking badly of dishonoring those who are in positions of authority.

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Alongside that, there is, in the minds of some, the idea that there are conspiracies to be found, that there are deeper and darker truths that are being hidden, and that's all leading to mistrust and bitterness, and that often can come out in conversation.
[33:40] So there's suspicion that we need to reckon with, but there's also, within the sinful human heart, the enjoyment of scandal. We think about what makes the pages of our newspaper, what draws the attention in social media, often in our friendship circles, it can often revolve around the darker side of life.

When leaders fail, when celebrities are being exposed, or simply what the person down the street has been engaged in and found out. And there's a poison in that.
And the Bible would say, what's the antidote to that poison? It's to delight in Christ, to delight in His love, and to delight in God's truth. To borrow from another of Paul's letters, Philippians chapter 4, he calls the church to think about, to talk about, what is true, and what is noble, and what is right, and what is pure, and what is lovely, and what is admirable.
What does progress look like when it comes to our conversations, so that we're delighting in what is true? Perhaps for some of us, it will be determining to stop gossip and lies from spreading, to be truth tellers.
Perhaps it will look like being ready to walk away from those negative, harmful conversations, or to call out those jokes that are inappropriate, offensive. Maybe it's pursuing conversations that encourage thankfulness, rather than grumbling.
[35:21] They encourage the praise of God among God's people, rather than a spirit of bitterness. In general terms, that it would be speaking well of others.

As I read someone say this week, if Christians are to err, let us err on the side of love. Let's be ready to show grace in our conversations.
What about character? When we think about character, especially looking at someone else, what do we delight in? Do we delight in failures that we see, or do we delight in the faith that we see?
It's one of the things I love about Jonathan's example in the Old Testament. The pressure he was under from his father, the king, the lies he was being sold, the pressure to establish his own kingdom at the expense of his friend David.
But what Jonathan does is he chooses relentlessly to honor David, to choose the way of truth, to defend his friend's character.
[36:27] And that was profoundly costly to him, as we saw in our reading. We think about Paul and Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Now, we've already seen in the letter, and you read it, and you see it, Corinth is by no means a perfect church.

Many, many problems. Paul doesn't delight in that. What Paul delights in is the faith that he sees. That's what he headlines in chapter one.
He loves them, and he's thankful for the faith that he sees in them, for the gifts that God has given to them, for the grace, the evidence of God's grace in their lives.
Yes, he's going to correct them and discipline them, but he delights in their faith. And that's what he wants to draw attention to. That's delighting in the truth. To see brothers and sisters in Christ as the image of God, to see Christ in our brothers and sisters.
Now, we know there is a pressure to think another way, but we are called to see Christ in our brothers and sisters. That when we are hurt and when we are let down, we are to use our imagination to look forward to spending eternity with that brother and sister in Christ in a world of perfect love, when there will be no sin, no misunderstanding between us, when we will be so glad to love that person perfectly, to spend time with them, with Jesus, our Savior.
[37:59] We are to bring, in other words, the culture of heaven down to earth today in our church, in our conversation, how we look at, think about, speak of one another.

So what does progress look like? Progress will look like relentlessly thinking the best of others, our brothers and sisters in Christ, assuming Christians will act like Christians.
It will look like us learning to celebrate when we see others standing firm, growing in truth, giving evidence of grace, not focusing on failures. It will look like praying for those who hurt us, for those who offend us, thanking God for the grace that we see in their lives.
So the conversations that we enjoy and that the character that we focus on, they can prove a really helpful measure for us of how our love is doing.

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Where am I showing a lack of love? Where have I misdirected my love so I actually enjoy what's evil rather than what's good and true? As we reflect, I'm sure you, like me, will want to ask God's forgiveness.
[39:15] We'll want to ask for help, that we would be the kind of people and the kind of church that would delight in the way of God's love and love God's truth. We need to learn to measure what love looks like.

Both our boys just now in their school, they're learning about measuring volume and length and such things. It's really important when we learn how to measure to think what's the appropriate unit to use in this context.
and they're also at the same time learning to measure by comparison, which is bigger, which is smaller. We know with kids that's always really important to find out who's biggest and tallest in the class.
It was always a big deal. But when it comes to love, what unit do you and I use to measure love? Could be a slippery word, can't it?
Defined in lots of different ways. But Christian love is defined by the Bible. It's set by the God who is love. Love is defined by what we see in Jesus.
[40:19] He shows us what perfect love looks like. We know what love is in the gift of Jesus. Remember Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus has come to bring that truth that through him we can be adopted to enter into this experience of God's perfect love. So again, to help us if we want to make progress in our love, in the first place we must receive God's love for us in the Lord Jesus.
That love that deals with our sin, that deals with what separates, that brings us to him. And we must delight in that love. And we must allow it to set our direction.
Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who's come to reveal the truth of God and goodness and love to the world. And what did Jesus do? He died on the cross.
Having lived a life of perfect obedience and love towards God and towards others, he then died as our substitute, died as that sacrifice that we need for our misdirected love, for our lack of love before rising again in victory on the third day.
[41:33] And why did Jesus die? He died to show us what perfect love looks like, love that is self-giving, love that is sacrificial, love that makes us children of God.

Let me read for us 1 John 4, verses 9 and 10. This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.
This is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.
What do we receive from Jesus, the one who is love? We receive everything. We enjoy the love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit. We enjoy peace with God, knowing our sins are forgiven.
We enjoy the hope of eternal life, knowing God now with the hope of enjoying him forever. Knowing the love of Jesus changes everything.
[42:43] So the measure of love truly is the Lord Jesus himself. And we are all invited to receive that love and to enjoy it for ourselves and to keep moving towards him, the one who is love, the one who is truth.

I was conscious this week that when you're in a section like 1 Corinthians 13, it's really easy to feel bad about ourselves. Because when we're honest, we come to a section like this, we know how far short we often fall when it comes to our love.
Even today, we recognize, probably as we begin to reflect, that there are times where we choose the wrong path. We do delight in what's evil rather than what's good and true. That's what we need, and this is how we're going to close.
We need to remind ourselves of the gospel, to take our eyes off ourselves, to fix our eyes on Jesus again. Because the gospel, it speaks of three things. It speaks of grace.
You and I, we're not children of God because we are able to love well or love perfectly. We are children of God because of the perfect love of God, his grace in sending Jesus to love us and save us when we couldn't save ourselves and we couldn't love God.
[44:02] So we need to remember God's grace. The gospel also speaks of growing in love. One of the wonderful things is that when we become a Christian, we're not then left to ourselves to kind of

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figure it out and to make improvements.

No, the Spirit comes to live in us and we get a new heart and we get new desires. And so we have this promise that as the Spirit is working in us and the Spirit wants to make us more like Jesus and show us more of his glory, that we will make progress.
That as we're walking with the Spirit, we will change, that he is making us more and more like Christ. And sometimes we have to look back over the years and we have to learn to reflect to see, I can see.
I know I'm not perfect, but I am making progress. But we also need to remember when it comes to the gospel, we need to remember the promise of glory. That reality that while as much as now we feel our struggles and our failures, there is a day coming when we will measure up perfectly.
When Jesus returns in his glory and we are with him, we will see him and we will be made like him and then, then we will love perfectly.
[45:15] Then we will pursue his truth perfectly in heaven, a world of love. And we need to remember that the God who has begun a good work in us will certainly complete it all the way until the day of Christ Jesus.

Let's pray together. Lord, our God, we recognize so much that is contrary to what is good and true in our lives, in our conversation, in how we think of others or treat others.
Lord, we want to take a moment to confess that. Lord, at the same time, we are so thankful for the gospel, for that reminder of your perfect love, of your transforming love.
may you cause us to rejoice in that, to find our hope in that, to have our character, our conversation, our conduct be changed as we are directed by your truth and your love, as led by the Spirit, and we day by day delight in it.
Lord, please help us in this coming week to make progress in our love, to be thinking, to be guarding our hearts, to be dependent on you so that we might live for you.
[47:11] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now, you may have seen through social media that we're going to sing a hymn.

Well, we're not going to sing. We're going to listen to a hymn. A hymn being sung. My hymn of praise, Forever Jesus. A wonderful song written a couple of years ago that hopefully, before too much longer, we will get to sing, but for now, we can reflect on its wonderful truth.
Amen. My hymn of praise shall be forever, Jesus, my firm foundation in shifting sands, my strength and hope.
Through many fears and failures, the disappointments of the past, His constant love has held me fast.
forever, forever, Jesus. So for all my days, I will sing my praise to the King, forever, Jesus.
[48:43] Though the storms may rage, He is strong to save. He's the King, forever, forever, Jesus.

My song of joy shall be forever, Jesus, who bore the suffering, who made a way.
His life a gift, His death a precious ransom, that wipes the sinner's guilt away, and turns our night to glorious day.
So for all my days, I will sing my praise to the King, forever, Jesus.
Though the storms may rage, He is strong to save. He's the King, forever, forever, Jesus.
[50:06] Jesus My final breath Shall be forever Jesus When shadows lengthen For my eyes My Lord and friend Companion through the valley When dearest ones are left behind His hand will lead me to blindness So for all my days

I will sing my praise to the King Forever Jesus Though the storms may rage He is strong to save He's the King Forever Jesus When I meet His case I will sing my praise To the King Forever Jesus All my sorrows past I am home at last With my King Forever Jesus With my King Forever Jesus With my King Forever Jesus
We stand together to receive Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen

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