

We will... Love (John 13:34-35)

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Preacher: Jayson Turner

[0:00] Just all things dark. It's really remarkable to me. I have never seen, lived in a place that loves Halloween quite like our city. Decorations are up for Halloween. And the gal that I was speaking with, she was adorned in black.

She was off to a meet-up with some other appreciators of a genre of music, death metal. And I had mentioned to her that I had actually driven a couple people that were going to weddings on this Friday the 13th. And they chose Friday the 13th to get married just because of the day's association with death and the macabre and just dark things. And she thought that was the coolest thing ever. And so in the course then of the conversation I said I didn't have much taste for these holidays, especially as a believer. And then I said this, I said, you know, after seeing the reality and the destruction of darkness and the demonic, I've just lost interest. And I think at that moment, like the conversation got, the car got very quiet. We were in the car, I was driving and we, there was nothing more that she didn't know what to do with that. Because things got heavy very quickly. But at that moment I was thinking in my mind, like as

Christians, we are very odd in this world. We, and I was having this thought of like as things got quiet, I'm like, I don't belong. Like we actually don't belong.

We're aliens. We are a strange people and in fact, it says this, 1 Peter 2, 9, says this. There we go. I know, you don't always get music before a verse, but it's like when you do, it's pretty good. It says this, he says, but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession that you made proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. So as the followers of Jesus, we are a peculiar people, church.

We are a strange people and really the fact that we're in a series right now and we're talking about our responsibilities to one another, this is totally foreign to culture at large. And yet, this is what God says is normative for his people that indeed we are our brother's keeper. And so, collectively there are responsibilities we have to one another, which just pushes against this individualism that's in our world, it's in our culture. So we're a strange people.

[3:11] Fourth, and this morning we're going to consider our third commitment that we have to one another. It's in our charter as a church and it's this, that we will actually love one another. And so that's what we're going to talk about this morning. Now, our primary text, we are in a familiar text. This is familiar ground. We've just completed a study in the Gospel of John. And so as a result, I'm just going to focus on three verses out of actually a larger episode. So we're looking at John 13 33 to 35 this morning and see what we can take away in terms of this commitment that we have to one another, to love one another. So let's read together beginning in verse 33. Jesus here is speaking and he says, 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. And so this gives us the context of Jesus's words that follow to his man. In fact, he gives the context of actually all of chapter 13 to 17, the upper room discourse.

Right? This is a farewell address that Jesus has for his men. It's Thursday, evening. They've just completed a meal. Jesus washed the feet of the apostles.

He's identified Judas as a betrayer, a wolf amongst them. Judas has left the upper room to secure plans for Christ's arrest. And while the betrayer is betraying, Jesus is now unpacking words to help them navigate perhaps the next 50 years without him physically present. And he begins by telling as many starts with saying, hey, little children, now, if you're a guy, there's not a worse insult probably to be called a child. Men don't appreciate that. But this is actually not demeaning. This is a term of affection. It's actually the only place Jesus says this to his men. And it's interesting because he says little children, who's not present? Who's already left? Judas. Yeah, he's not there.

Because John 12 is clear. Who's a kid and who's not, right? But to all who have received him who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Right? And if we are here this morning, we've placed our faith, right, in the death burial resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, then we're his kid. We are in the family. And then Jesus, he says something that probably was very alarming to his men. He says, where I am going, you cannot come. Now, he said this to the Jews, to the Pharisees back in chapter 7. And he was saying, you're not, you're not my kids. You will not join me in heaven. But for his disciples here, it's a different statement. It's dissimilar to that because he's saying, you cannot come with me yet. But I'm sure the apostles are thinking like, what? Jesus, you're our leader. Where? Why are you leaving us? Where are you going? We're with you. We're gonna follow you. It's like that spirit of, you know, Samwise Gamgee, like chasing after Frodo. You're not leaving me. I'm with you. And so what Jesus is doing here, he's setting up the following words in this discourse, in that it's really time for them to begin to fly solo. It's time for you to do life without me physically present. You're actually ready. I've poured into you for three years, which I think is a great model of discipleship, right? You get poured into so that you can then pour into others, right? Your disciples so that you can disciple. And it's about reproduction. And we talk about that here at 4th, that we want to be a people that reproduce. We want to pour in, but we also, after we have been built up, then give that to someone else.

So Jesus is setting up. He's saying it's time for you guys to fly solo. And it's an emotional scene. It reminds me, there's our family. We know every horse movie ever made. It's our favorite genre of film in our home because my wife appreciates them. And so we do too. And we've seen Sid Biscuit many times. I'm not gonna say it's probably double digits at this point, but there is a scene in it where this jockey read his parents are about to send him off. It's the depression. They don't have the money to keep him. And he's got this gift of riding horses. And so they're like, you're gonna do better with this horse owner. And so we're sending you. We don't want to send you, but we're sending you.

[8 : 03] And they take all the books he grew up with, all the classics and put them in a pillowcase, gave them to to read and said, you need to go here. Take the pillowcase and go. And he's just there's tears. He's weeping. And I think of that scene as I hear Jesus give these words. It's like he's giving his men now this pillowcase of instruction to take with them. And that's what the upper room discourse is.

Here's the words for you guys to now live by as I am going to be going to the Father. And so our first guiding principle for this life together as God's peculiar people, we get it right here in verse 34. Let's read it together. Jesus says, 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. So Jesus here says, I have a new commandment which makes me ask the question, what's the old commandment?

And if we look in the Old Testament, we have the old commandment is in Leviticus 19 verse 18. And it says, love your neighbor as yourself. Now that was a brilliant law. I mean, we got to give God credit. That was a brilliant piece of instruction for God's ancient people. Right? It was a command that protected the weak. It protected the poor, the laborers, the marginalized, really from being exploited. Right? Treat people the way that you want to be treated. And the Jews live by this standard for 1500 years as part of the Mosaic law. It's a pretty good law. I don't want you stealing my stuff, so I'm not going to steal your stuff. And yet then Jesus comes along and says, hey, I have a new version. I have an upgraded version of that. It's a new commandment. I mean, it sounds very similar, but how is it new? Well, we see that in the second part of verse 34 because Jesus says, just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

That's how the commandment's new. Instead of you and me being the standard for love, Jesus has now become the standard. Jesus has raised the bar on love, which is typical of Jesus. He always did that. You heard it said, I say to you, don't murder.

No, no, it's about anger. It's what's in your heart. You say you fool to your brother, you're liable of the hell of fire. And so he went beyond what we would do. It's brilliant. That's how it's new. It's no longer a sliding scale on those days that I don't really think well of myself. I only have to love you as well as I think of my I'm kind of loathing myself today. So I'm allowed to load.

[10 : 52] No, Jesus is now the standard. That's how it's new. Jesus always went beyond the convention of the day. He didn't just provide a servant to wash your feet. He became the servant. He picked up the basin in towel. Ultimately, he didn't offer another goat lamb to try to deal with man's sin problem. He became the sacrifice. Church, there's not a greater example of love on

planet earth than God.

Period. Richard Dawkins is wrong as he disparages God as the most unpleasant character in all fiction. There's a lot in there, but Jesus says, hey, you look at me.

You see the father, you look at me, you know who the God of the Old Testament is. This is a radically new command to love in this sort of way church where Jesus is now the model and the standard and what we're recognizing because of who Jesus was, what he did. This is a costly love. And so let's examine this command now that we have. We have the context of how Jesus loved and the command for us and his loved one another like that. Love, agape, it's a Greek word. It's a sacrificial love. It's not sentimental love. It's not a natural love. I think in our culture and in our language, we're very sloppy when it comes to how we throw around the word love, right? We love our spouse, hopefully. That would be a good place to start husbands, wives. But we also love ice cream and we love hot wings and we love football. We love to hunt. Some people love to shop. Some people love shoes. They love to travel. Tired mothers love not to cook. I mean, you know, we just we love lots of things, but these are things that we feel and we have affection for and interest in. But loving like Jesus, it goes beyond this.

It goes beyond what we feel in the moment. This is gonna sound heretical.

But stick with me. Jesus didn't feel like laying down his life. Yeah, it's a little uncomfortable. But think about it in Matthew 26, three times he says, Father, let this cup pass from me. What was the cup? The cup of suffering. Jesus in his flesh long to avoid suffering. Self preservation, we could even say comfort.

[14 : 08] I know it's uncomfortable. But instead of going with what he was feeling, what did he do? He joyfully resolved in his spirit to glorify the Father and serve each and every one of us, right? In fact, it says that in Hebrews 12, too, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross. It was an act of his will. So Agape love transcends feelings that come and go like the wind. And if you want a definition of this love that we're talking about, it's this because this is what Jesus modeled. What is Agape love? It is the joyful resolve to serve another, regardless of how you feel in the moment. What does Agape love? It is the joyful resolve. And why do I say joyful resolve? Because it's not the grumbling resolve which some of us sometimes do, right? The chippy resolve. I'll serve, but I'm not happy and I'm going to leak out some unhappiness and some complaining in the midst of serving. No, no, it's the joyful resolve to serve another, regardless of how you feel in the moment. And God did that for us. I love how John puts it in 1st

John 4:10. It says, and 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. That's a radical love. Propitiation, it's a word we use all the time. I get it. It's probably going to happen around the dinner table tonight, right? Pasapies and carrots. Let's talk about some propitiation tonight. I mean, it's just, it's not a word we use, but what is propitiation? It's like, think of it like an umbrella and it's raining. And what does that umbrella do? It keeps you dry. It averts the water, right? And that's what Jesus did with God's wrath. He was like that umbrella, okay? Averting God's wrath, keeping us safe. And when we talk about God's wrath, I hope that we understand this is not like human volatility, like God's out of control.

No, his wrath is, it's the expected, it's the consistent extension of his holiness, which we talked about last week, towards evil. That's how holy he is. And Jesus took the full wrath, averted God's wrath from us for the sins that we committed. And he paid off our entire debt. Like today, if you're in Christ, you're forgiven. You're actually clean. There's actually no condemnation on you.

Like today's actually a good day because of what Christ accomplished on your behalf. And you're his kid. Life is pretty good. Even in the midst of trial and suffering and disappointment and discouragement, the best days for God's people are always ahead. And they're gonna be magnificent. To die for another is not a natural love, especially those that are living in rebellion. We have a hard enough time, I think, sometime resolving, joyfully resolving to serve those we love. But how about those that are just hostile towards us? And yet that's the gospel that God showed his love for us in that while we were sinners, still sinners, Christ died for us. So Agape Love Church will confront us. He will confront our feelings of self-interest every single day at some point. Every single day. We will be confronted by Agape Love doing that to another. In fact, C.S. Lewis said it this way, he says, Agape Love is a work so difficult that perhaps no fallen man has ever come within sight of doing it perfectly. Yeah. Because I want to watch the ball game. I don't want to help my child with their homework. Like I am a graduate of school and many degrees and

I'm feeling done. Do I have to? I don't recall how to do that, numbers and putting them over and like really? Or I gotta drive my child to another event?

[18:51] I'm already a new driver in my other life and now I'm bringing it home. I want to see and talk to the people I have affinity for, not for the new individual or the person that's different from me. Takes Agape Love. I want someone else to lead the Bible study so that I don't have to prepare in my personal time. We would never say that out loud. I want someone else to disciple the children at church so that I can hear the sermon. I mean not today, now. It confronts us. Yeah.

Agape Love confronts us. To love like Christ, it's supernatural and it actually requires us to die to self. It's hard. It's hard. Church, there's nothing that probably irritates me more. Spoken out of the lips of the unbeliever than when they say, man Christianity is just a crutch. You just believe in God because that's easy. The ease of God helps you cope with life and I'm just like, are you kidding me? It's not ease, right? Ease is the party. Ease is the bottle. Ease is not restraining one's sexual appetites. To die daily to self is anything but a crutch. Is apologizing easy for some people? No, because what happens is when the Lord convicts me, you know what I do? I don't apologize. I began to have a personal conference with the Lord that can take three minutes to three hours to possibly three days until he finally wins. I relent. I apologize to whomever and then joy returns. And some of you know that, right? That's not easy. Forgiving when you have been deeply wounded. Easy? No. Restraining your rage in the moment.

When your child takes the remote and puts it through your brand new television, which is a real thing. Not recently, but is that easy? No, you're just, you were so marveling at the great idol in your family room and then all of a sudden your kid helps sanctify you. They were three to their credit. They were three. Yeah, putting the needs of another in front of yours, it's not easy. Especially if you've given and you've given and then there's another opportunity to give and you're weary. It's only possible to love like this based upon what Christ accomplished on the cross for us and the promise of the indwelling power of God's spirit, which church is a very real thing. And in fact, Paul says this to the Romans in chapter five verse five. He says, you know what? God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. That's how we can love in an agape fashion because of God's actual spirit in dwelling us. It's a real thing. And actually to love like this is a byproduct or a fruit of what I believe actually may be even a more critical command for us this morning than to love one another. And I know you guys are like, Jay, you're going off the rails because we know the first, right? The greatest commandment, love God. The second is to love people, but you can't do it unless you're doing it through the power of God's spirit. And so I think the command actually in Ephesians 5.18 maybe is even more critical for us this morning instead of me just saying, love people better, love people better. No, we actually have something more critical that we have to expose and deal with and it's like, hey, are we yielded to God's spirit? That's the resource. Ephesians 5.18, don't get drunk with wine.

That's debauchery, right? That's an abandoned life, a disorderly life, but be filled with the spirit. We have to be filled with God's spirit. Do we need more Holy Spirit? No, the issue is one of control. It's an issue of influence. And we understand that from the contrast in this verse, right? Alcohol influencing behavior of an individual is pretty obvious, right? To everyone except for the person impaired. I drove a gal last night and she was completely impaired. I'm sure she was a bright individual, but in the course of the drive she's like, I am a human fortune cookie. And then it was just, and I'm just like, you're, you're a cookie. Like, I mean, I just, it was, it was, it was bad because she was with a friend in the emotions that were coming out and she's like, I just gotta tell you, right? The tears and the apologies and just the stream of just absurd assertions that leaked out, right? It's a matter of influence. We need to be influenced by God's spirit in order to love one another sacrificially. So we don't need more of God's spirit. God's spirit needs more of us. So the issue is are we surrendered, right? Are we yielded in every area of our life? And if we're yielded, we have capacity to actually love. And what do I mean by that? If we're walking in sin, you're not gonna love others very well, because you're not yielded. And what we're talking about here is really, we're talking about the trench work, like the behind the scenes work of being a people that actually abide. The walk close to the Lord as, as we're convicted, as we confess sin, we're right. We're hearing God, he's influencing our decisions. Then we have ability to love. Don't be drunk with pride or jealousy or selfish ambition, but be controlled by God's spirit. And when we're controlled, when we're abiding with the Lord, selfless living follows. Love is part of the fruit, not fruit, fruit.

Fruit of the spirit. All these different characteristics should be true of every believer. It's not as though some of us have love, some of us have patience. No, we have all of them. They're one fruit in many facets. If I preach or Scott preaches or Cole or whoever's up here preaches and we're not yielded to God's spirit, you get information you don't need. Because something else may be driving influencing. Maybe it's pride. Maybe I want you to think I'm smart, so I'm gonna use some big words or I'm a good orator, so I'm gonna say things in such a way.

[26 : 16] Paul understood this was why he told Timothy, hey, in 1st Timothy 1.5, the aim of our charge charge instruction, the aim of our instruction, it's not information.

It's love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. In our conversations with one another, if we're drunk with jealousy, insecurity, we may say something we shouldn't or not say something that God's spirit is prompting us to share. We're drunk in insecurity, then the words that come out are often fishing for I need a compliment. I need affirmation. I think social media is a whole, that's bananas on that front, right? We do things to get noticed, to get likes, to get attention. You're drunk with pride, we will self promote, it will leak out. So our guiding principle to sacrificially love and it crushes this cancerous notion that this life, it's for us, it's about us. Or this gathering is about us, it's not, it's for God's glory.

It's for the building up, it's for the edification of one another and as we sacrificially love, we die to self, then guess what happens? Unity happens. Community, it actually has a chance. We need to be yielded. Some of you have been given a prayer card, I think our first impressions team, you got this and I hope that you're using it and maybe you're like, oh man, I'm convicted again, I don't know where that card is. I'm sure talk to Melissa you can get another one, but this is a prayer that we're asking many of our servant leaders here to pray every Sunday morning. Help me be selfless in serving others. Like I've got this card, Scott's got this card, this is what we're praying as we're driving in to our gathering every Sunday, right? Give me courage to meet someone I don't already know. Allow me to be inconvenienced for your glory today Lord.

May I have joy in considering others more important than myself, like these are the prayers that we're seeking to pray as we gather together because we need to be yielded to God's spirit and I think as we grow in our love for one another, guess what? Then the community happens, then unity and we become more beautiful as a church. What's the number one killer to love happening? It's pride, right?

It's self-interest. Proud people don't love well. I think we have a perfect case study in Scripture. I mean in the New Testament, who are the proudest people? They're the Pharisees. Yeah, interesting. They were also the least loving people, right? But they had a lot going on upstairs. They were very smart, very learned, a lot of great matter. And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8, right?

[29 : 19] Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. And they became proud and very unloving. We want to be as competent as possible. I'm not down on you getting degrees and like, yeah, that's good stewardship of the minds that the Lord has entrusted to us. But competency, it's either gasoline to fuel pride or it's a resource to fuel ministry to others. And we see for Satan, it fueled pride, right? Ezekiel 28-12 says, the signative perfection. That was Satan right before he fell. Full of wisdom, perfect in beauty and he couldn't handle it. So, a warning for smart people out there, be yielded to God's spirit daily in order to grow in humility and order to love, right? And pride, it's not limited to just issue of intellect, right?

We can be proud based on a lot of different things. I'm above you, I'm better than you, due to and you can fill in the blank and put whatever you want there. It's interesting, Paul wrote to the Galatians in Galatians 3. He said it this way, familiar text to us, verse 20-70 says, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free, there's neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And this passage here, church, is not a negation of diversity, it's really a celebration of it. But what is it a negation of? It's a negation of pride. Those things don't make you better, you're actually one, right? And what it's doing is it's confronting what I will term hyphenated Christianity. I'm better than you because of something in my life. And here it was like, I'm a Jewish Christian, hence I am better than you. Or I'm a Gentile, I'm a

Greek Christian, so I'm better than you. And this can show up in churches. I'm a homeschool family Christian, a little bit better than you. Well, I'm a public school family Christian, my children are evangelists, while you're sheltering yours, we're better than you. And then you got like the the brilliant ones, well we're a private school family Christian. We have best of both worlds, right? I

mean, these are the things that we can begin to go, we're just a little bit better. And we closer off with our tribe.

I'm going there. We're politically in this camp sort of Christian. So we're better than you. We needed that this season. I'm a serving gift Christian, we do all the work, we're better than you. We lift heavy things. Well, I'm a speaking gift Christian. I talk a lot, so I'm better than you. I don't know what we have to offer, Scott.

We often joke, if this pastor thing doesn't work out, our resume is gonna be short, and no one's gonna hire us. I teach Bible. We can't even make coffee. I mean, church, our diversity is not fuel for pride, our natural gifts, our intellect, our creativity, our wit, our business sense. It's not fuel for pride, our spiritual gifts. They're not, they're not fuel for pride. I mean, here's a very simple question for all of us. What do we possess in this life that we did not receive from the Lord? I mean, what can we actually take credit for in this life other than our sin? So if you're gonna hyphenate something, hyphenate your gift and offer it back to the Lord for His use, right? My intellect, it's gonna be a gape intellect. My wit is gonna be a gape intellect. I'm gonna use humor not to push people down, to authorize, to separate. I'm gonna use it to draw people in, to make them feel comfortable. It's a wonderful gift if used correctly. My resources, they'll be a gape resources. I'm not just gonna build my kingdom and my comfort. God, how can I bless, give away? See, things like gospel work advanced.

[33 : 57] How cool someday when we're in heaven and there's people that come and they found, they've, they've trusted in Christ, you know, and they're there and it was because of some ministry that we were a participant in maybe with our resources in some way? That's the best. If we are proud, we will quickly become a very cloistered gathering because our charter is we will actually love one another. And I think as we become a cloistered gathering of other hyphenated believers that look like us, then the people in need, they will be left in the cold. Well, here's the preferred effect, church. Let's look at verse 35. If we love like this, is what the Lord says. He says, by this all people will know that you are my disciples. If you have love for one another, by this all people will know.

Church, this is a shocking, this statement that Jesus is making here and I don't know if you've thought of it in this way, but Jesus is actually giving the unbeliever permission. He's actually giving them a mandate to watch us, to evaluate us, to judge us. Like to the world, it's as if Jesus is saying, look at my people and see if there's something genuine there. Or is that the counterfeit version? Are my people loving one another in a way that you go, wow, there's something unique and different there? This is a key apologetic the Lord has given to us. He hasn't in Scripture said, hey, try to be as trendy and as cool as you can be and that's your apologetic in this time. Like, no, he's saying actually your apologetic is a way that you behave towards one another. The way that we love one another, it's the gospel scene to an unbelieving world. And if we don't love one another, in fact, what Jesus is saying, we actually don't have a witness. You can share the words, the truth of the gospel, but then as they see our behavior and there's not a gotby love present in the community, feel like, well, how does that change your life? Why should I want that? You know, the NFL went on strike in 1982 and in 1987 and they brought in replacement, they call them replacement players and they gave them real uniforms, but there was a problem. They weren't very good. They had the uniform, but they had no game. The church, when loving people is thin, it's like us wearing the uniform without game. That's what Jesus is saying. In fact, Paul says it this way in Colossians 3-14, he says, above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Put on love. It's our apologetic. When I was on the West side for about a dozen years, I was part of an apologetic ministry and we had conferences that we would put on and it was interesting because you would often have a group of people that loved apologetics, but for all intents and purposes and I know I'm judging here, but didn't seem like they had a real heart for people and they were so thrilled that they were gonna get all the information and all the arguments, but it was like they were like, we called them apologetic junkies, but it was like where was the heart for people? I think we can put on the uniform and not have skills. Our skills are loving one another, loving people well. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. It was like if you were like invited over to somebody's house for a meal and they were just cold.

You'd be like, ooh, I don't want to go back there, but I think it's like we're inviting our neighbors, we're inviting our friends to our gathering all the time.

Whenever we gather, whether it's a midweek thing, smaller groups or Sundays, larger groups, and we're being evaluated and people are watching us. Is there something real here? Is there something different about this gathering? Is God's spirit at work where people are sacrificing and I get it. A lot of this happens in the in the seams, increases of life, not often in a room where you're just sitting here looking at me. Now I'm uncomfortable. Let's kind of move beyond that. But this is what we've been commanded to do and I've actually seen it done. I think we're growing here. I've seen kindness. I've seen care for people and it's and it should overwhelm when we see it. It should be like, wow, yeah, we're doing it. God's heart, it's delighted.

We had a member, this is a couple years back, there was a need, somebody was in crisis and somebody made a phone call to one of our people, hey, could you connect with this individual? And they said, yeah, I'd be happy to do that. And then they got together with that person immediately that day. It happened to be a Thanksgiving and they're just like, yeah, somebody's hurting. I can do it. And we would think, well, that's permission not to meet with someone, right? That's a holiday. That's personal time. It was beautiful. Those things happen and God's glorified. When we first moved to Spokane, we visited a number of churches.

[40 : 20] Before I met with Scott, he says, you will attend fourth and you will like it. I'm like, yes, Scott. And so then now we're here. But I think the first church we visited, and I'm gonna brag on them, I think it's, I think the Lord delights when we celebrate other churches and this is not to say we're not doing this, just it was so remarkable to us that we found a church and it was the most hospitable church I think I'd ever experienced, West Side, Nisa, anywhere.

And I was like, wow, this is a kind, loving church. And I just share it with you because I think they're probably still hurting. They're looking for a lead pastor and but it was South Hill Bible Church. It was the kindest church. The people were remarkable. And it was like it gave me a vision and that's how we want to grow. I think we're aiming there. But it was just yes. Delights the Lord.

You know, in the second century, great persecution in the church. Tertullian said this, he said, you know what? Behold how these Christians love each other. How ready they are to die for each other. That is supernatural. That you can't manufacture that in the flesh. That grows out of you have spent time with the Lord. You're walking closely with the Lord. You're yielded to His spirit so that you're empowered to be able to do that sort of life. Our new charter is to love one another like our Savior loved us and that's worship for us. And even in the sacrifice in it, there's actually joy because we're operating as a kid of God should operate. But our fuel to do this, there has to be stuff done in the unseen. Some of you guys know, because I think I've shared it before, you've been to my office and you've seen all my Disneyland posters, but we love Disneyland. We took a number of trips as a family. I was there as a kid. It's like, I think Walt Disney is like a genius. I mean, I know Disney's kind of gone in a lot of different directions these days, but Disneyland is a remarkable place because you get there and the place is like it's not magic, but it feels like it. And it's like the cleanest amusement park you'll ever visit. And you're just like, wow, I like being here. Why?

That's because at night, there's a staff of 600 crew members that come in every single day and they clean it and they paint it. If there's chip paint, it gets painted over. You know, there's three people on staff. Their job is basically to go around and replace broken umbrellas. That three people every night at Disneyland, they go around, there's a broken umbrella, they replace it. There's four like certified divers, they go on all the water rides, they clean the trash.

If it's there, they repair things, they clean things. It's incredible. You know, they have 300 gardeners that also come in and like work on the grounds every single night. There's so much stuff that happens at that amusement park that people never see. So when you go, you're like, wow. Well, by the way, there's like about 200 feral cats. People don't know this, but... And they deal with the... You're never gonna see a road in Disneyland because of these cats. And actually, there are five feeding stations hidden in the park that people don't even know about. And they take care of these cats, they spay, they neuter them, and then they just... They let them loose every night and they do their thing. That's why it's a magical place. Why am I sharing this with you? Because it's like, it's the stuff in the unseen that makes a place attractive. And so I'm gonna go back to this command, be filled with the spirit. Be a people that abide. As we walk closely with the Lord, then we can love church. It's fruit. It's fruit. Let's pray.

[44 : 17] Father, we thank you for the fact that you left us the perfect example of what this agape love is. And Lord, we freely confess there are seasons and days when we don't abide well and then we kind of grin and bear it and we try to muster selflessness and love in our flesh. And sometimes

we can fake it.

And other times it leaks out that it's not really there. And so Lord, maybe this call to love one another well is really a call to love you well and to be an apostrophe of surrender to you, yield it to you so that when we have opportunity to be inconvenienced, it's not the flesh that reacts, but we joyfully resolve to serve another because God, that is what you have done for us. And you continue to do that over and over and over. Lord, thank you that our sins are forgiven past, present, future. Lord, we're clean and we're able actually to be of use for you.

And I pray God that in this series as we gather and in this season, Lord, we would grow in our ability, our selflessness, our agape love for one another. And Lord, I pray that maybe it would no, not maybe Lord, I pray that it would actually start at home because that's where it's hard. Lord, I want to pray for our men. I'm a man and I know that it's as I lead or not lead, it affects everyone. So I want to pray for our men, I want to pray for our families, I want to pray for our moms, children, our singles, young marries, like all of us have opportunity to joyfully resolve to be selfless to another. And Lord, it's worship to you and you delight in it. In your name we pray Jesus and all God's people said, amen.