

No Greater Love

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 January 2023

Preacher: Lindon Nairn

[0 : 00] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. 1 John 3, verses 11 through 24. 1 John 3, verses 11 through 24. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

[1 : 26] We should not be like Cain, who was the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. But this we know, love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

But if anyone has the world's goods, and see his brothers in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of truth, and reassure our heart before him.

[2 : 40] For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.

And whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments, and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he gives, has given us.

Thank you, Michelle. Thank you. You know, listening to Michelle read the Scripture, I almost felt that that was it, that the message has already been preached.

The Scriptures that she read, that were read, are just so very clear. There is no mistaking what the Lord requires from us.

[4 : 05] Today we are going to be preaching on the topic, No Greater Love. By God's grace, I have had the privilege of preaching God's Word on a number of occasions.

And let me say up front that every message that is preached ought to be about the gospel, or ought to point to Jesus Christ. That's it. That's fundamental.

There is no dispute there whatsoever. With that said, despite its simplicity, and often spoken about, perhaps only a few times have I felt a message that I preached having greater import to the community, community, to the church, to the life of our community, specifically, and the body of Christ generally.

This topic of love. I was talking with someone recently about a tragic event that occurred in our country.

And what was apparent to me was, from the whole matter, is that we have become self-centered as a people.

[5 : 35] We've become so ambitious and so apathetic that it almost seems like we're losing our humanity. We're not teaching our children soft skills, as it were.

We're just so busy running up and down, trying to pay bills, trying to make money, trying to impress others. We're not concerned about how we interact with one another, it would seem.

We're not emphasizing and teaching workers how to demonstrate care and service. Sadly, in the church, we have set aside what Jesus said is the greatest commandment.

We've set it aside and we have decided to pursue other things quite often. Jesus said this is the greatest commandment, the greatest commandment of all, love.

Love! And I want to really have a conversation with you today. And this is perhaps going to be a bit of an unusual kind of conversation that we will have today.

[7 : 00] But I want to talk to us about love, soft skill. Let's pray for a moment.

Father, we thank you for this time. We ask, O Lord, that you would open your word to us, make it plain, make it clear to us.

Lord, enrich our hearts so that we might live by what we hear today.

Let us not be hearers only, but let us be doers also. Let us bring about adjustment where it is necessary.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Last week, the pastor's message was about the fact that we are members one of another.

[8 : 15] One of another. That God has placed us in community and we are members one of another. And fundamentally, he was making the point that we need each other.

I need you and you need me. God, this is God's doing. He placed us together. And it doesn't matter what your role is.

Your role is, it's important. It's vital. And we ought to make sure that we are indeed carrying out our roles in the local church.

And I feel that today, this message builds on the sermon that he preached last week because it too is an important part of community.

It's vital. If we want to have the kind of community. If we want to have the kind of community, the biblical community. If we want to live it out, love has to be the thread that binds us together.

[9 : 20] As we consider the verses that were read earlier. I believe that they may be summarized this way.

Yes. Believers commanded to love have an undeniable example in Christ and in obedience receive an amazing promise.

Believers commanded to love have an undeniable example in Christ and in obedience receive an amazing promise.

I want to consider the passages under three broad headings as follows. Number one, the commandment to love.

Number two, the expressions of love. And number three, the result of love.

[10 : 33] Let's consider number one, the commandment to love. Our Savior's command to love one another is not a suggestion.

It's not a good idea, nor is it a strategy. It is a command. Jesus did not say that perhaps you ought to do this, or I want to suggest to you, or if you do this, then you're going to achieve certain things kind of thing.

It's not a strategy. It's not a good idea. It is a commandment. The commandment to love.

Indeed, this commandment that Jesus gave to his disciples and by extension to us. It bleeds through the pages of all of Scripture, either directly or implicitly.

You pick up any page in the Bible and you see the love of God coming through. You see how it is that we are, at this point, in this passage very specifically, called upon to love our brothers and sisters.

[12 : 11] To love each other in community. On this point of commandment, of our being commanded to love, I'd like the Scriptures to speak for itself very specifically.

I can't do a better job than what the Scripture has done in this regard, or in fact, in any regard. The Scriptures are just so clear with respect to how we ought to love, that we ought to love one another.

Consider 1 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 1. Listen to what Paul writes to the church at Corinth. Paul writes, If I speak with tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I have a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal.

Paul is saying to us, listen, If you've got it all, if you are as eloquent as anyone, but if you don't have love, he says, you're nothing.

And then he goes on to say, And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

[13 : 46] And verse 3 that follows, he says, If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but I have not love, I gain nothing.

And the thing about it, when you look, when you consider these three verses together, Paul doesn't say that if you have not love, it diminishes the impact of what you're doing.

He says you have nothing. Paul says love is an important and necessary ingredient. Love. In our community.

1 John chapter 3 verse 11 says, For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

John 3, John 13 verse 35. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

[14 : 56] Love characterizes us. We are distinguished from the world based on the love that we have for one another. That is what the commandment teaches us.

This commandment says to us that people on the outside will know us because of the love that we have for one another. Love. Love.

1 John 4 verse 8 says, Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love. That's as clear as day.

Anyone who does not know God, anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love.

Galatians 5 verse 22 teaches us that the fruit of the Spirit is love. If we've got the Spirit, then we've got love. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 8.

[16 : 01] Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away.

So now faith, hope, and love abide. These three. But the greatest of these is love. Love greater than faith, greater than knowledge.

Because love never ceases, the apostle tells us. And Peter goes on to tell us. In 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 8, Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

You've got an issue with the brother? Peter says love covers it. Love deals with it. 1 John 4 verse 20, If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar.

For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. This commandment we have from him.

[17 : 16] Whoever loves God, must also love his brother. The Bible teaches us. You can't say, this is plain. If this is, the Bible says, how do you say that you love God, and then you hate your brother, who you've seen.

So it can't happen. It can't work that way. If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. What does it all mean, all of these scriptures that I've read in your hearing?

I did so because there's no way to top this. There is no way for me to explain to you this commandment to love.

It bleeds through the pages of scripture. I could go on and on and on and on and read about the commandment, our commandment to love.

[18 : 31] What does it all mean? How do we interact with those and other scriptures? We see from these scriptures that we have read that love endures.

It lives forever. That love is the principal thing. It is the primary thing. That love marks the Christian's life.

that love is an act of obedience. That love glorifies God.

That love gives evidence to our faith. How can we say we hate our brothers, the Bible says, whom we see, but love God whom we have not seen.

But throughout the Bible we see evidence. We see that we are commanded to love and the Bible tells us in other places that we ought to pursue love.

[19 : 45] We ought to pursue it. You know, to go after it earnestly. we ought to grow in love.

1 Corinthians tells us to pursue it. Love is an expression of Christ in the earth.

When we love our brothers and our sisters, we are expressing, we are demonstrating Christ on the earth. Because we were first loved, we love.

Because we are loved, we love. Jesus teaches us that the Father loved him and the Father and he loved the Father and he loves us and he gave his life for us and he expects us to love and he loved us before the foundation of the world.

He loves us with an everlasting love. love. The love that we are commanded to have helps us to wear this world loosely when we love one another.

[21 : 17] The kind of love that we are commanded to have in Scripture helps us to realize that I can be there for my brother and sister because the things that I have are not the most important things in life but rather following this commandment loving my brother and my sister because how many of you know that if your love for your brother and sister is not the primary thing and that they come by and they want to inconvenience you out of something that you have and that thing is more precious to you than love you're not going to give up give it up but that's not what we're called to do we're called to love as Jesus loved love is the blood and the outshoot of community love emulates God you know when you really think about it what is life what is community without love what is it about love what is community without love what are we doing if we don't love one another but how do we express this love what is this all about what are we talking about that takes me to my second point the expressions of love can I say right up front here that the love that we are talking about is not characterized by the avoidance of conflict of course we don't want to we don't want that we don't want conflict we don't want conflict but the love that we are talking about here should reflect intentional engagement and care and interaction some people think some people believe that by staying away from someone and not getting into anything that alright

I can be ambivalent about it and that's okay well that's not what community is when we are in community we share of ourselves we engage with one another intentionally we interact with one another and it is through that interaction that we demonstrate love we can't live out the kind of love that Jesus commands us to have if we do it apart it gotta be done together and you know right now I am mashing my own toes as I'm preaching because I know that there's so much that I can do but I know that this is what we're called to do we are called to live in community we're called to be there for one another we're called to be hospitable to towards one another we can't live this commandment out apart from one another we gotta be there with and for one another the fountain from which

Jesus' commandment that we love one another springs it springs from the well of his love for us that's where this love comes from it was God's love for us while we were sinners that caused him to send his son to earth to die for us Jesus in full love gave his life for us this was a love so amazing that Paul writes of it that it passes knowledge it cannot be fully comprehended there was and is no greater love Paul says of this love that Jesus demonstrated Paul says that this love goes beyond knowledge it goes beyond understanding I'm trying to tell us now how we ought to express love because Jesus tells us he commands us to love and above this love

Paul says it is incomprehensible this is the kind of love that we ought to have for one another Jesus calls believers to emulate that love for one another of course Jesus did not mean that death is the way the only way one can demonstrate love or even that we should literally die for one another but he wanted to make clear that we ought to live sacrificially he meant that believers should subordinate their interests for others be willing to be inconvenienced be prepared to sacrifice there should be that expectation you should have that expectation of me you should expect that I am prepared to be inconvenienced on your behalf you should expect that I am prepared to sacrifice on your behalf we shouldn't play this thing we should live it out we are called to love our love must be expressed in our both in our attitude and in our actions it's not either or it's both love must be expressed both in our attitude and in our actions 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 4 tells us a lot about the kind of attitude that we should have when it comes to love

Paul writes that love is patient and love is kind love does not envy a boast it is not arrogant it is not rude it does not insist on its own way it is not irritable or resentful it does not rejoice at wrong doing but rejoices with truth love bears all things believes all things hopes all things endures all things

love that is the attitude of love patient and kind not arrogant not rude not envious not irritable not resentful doesn't rejoice when something bad happens then how do we express love how do we express love in word certainly certainly in word

[29 : 38] I love you that's great we ought to say it often but also and more importantly indeed listen to what John writes in 1 John chapter 3 verse 18 little children let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth you know I need not say to us that it's easy for us to say I love you in word but at the end of the day somebody needs your help somebody needs you to demonstrate love to them that is so much more meaningful when you can demonstrate it in any number of ways but how else might we express love and show hospitality to one another first

Peter chapter 4 verse 9 the apostle writes show hospitality to one another without grumbling as each has received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever amen we ought to show hospitality to one another without grumbling let me tell you I'm reading these passages because I want to hit home the point that these are not my words but these are God's words and what we are being told here is that we ought to open our doors to one another that we ought to serve one another that we ought to invite our brothers and sisters into our houses and cook meals and share coffee and cookies we ought to go out together after all we are a community we are brothers and sisters we ought to express love and let me tell you something we ought to be so close to one another that our brother doesn't have to tell us all the time what's going on in his life that he needs

X Y Z we ought to be able to perceive that to know that very often you know what I haven't seen John for such a long time I wonder what's happening there perhaps so and so we ought to that's what we are called to do that is how we express love in community that's what we are called to be we are called to be inconvenienced we are called to love we are called to walk this journey this pilgrimage we are called to do it together and we must be prepared to open our lives to that as brothers and sisters now I know that there are some people perhaps none present who are saying well such and such a person is so unlovable how do I express love to them how do I show love to them well let me ask you a question since you think you are so lovable did you not know that while you were yet a sinner

Christ died for you and can I tell you you in fact aren't all that anyway anyway that's the truth we all have our problems our idiosyncrasies our challenges I know I do I know I do I've got some real strange stuff happening in my life and so can I ask you to forgive me just forgive me you can still love me you know just love me the way I am please I promise to do better but you can still love me the way I am and I'm going to try to love you love me the way I am love me where I am and I'm going to get better just keep pointing it out to me and Dimitri I'll change and I'll keep getting better and better you know but that's the way it is don't expect that everybody is going to be exactly the way you expect you want them to be

I know sometimes you say boy listen my spirit just don't take to this one how many people say that don't raise your hand you know my spirit my spirit just don't take to such and such well what kind of thing is that that your spirit don't take to that's not what the Bible teaches the Bible says we ought to love one another we ought to love one another and it does not matter it does not matter we ought to love one another we ought to be there for one another after all Christ died for you he died for the ungodly he died for the unlovable died for the unlovable so let's love that person I want to I just want to stick here just a little while longer I want to tell us to really love everybody to love those people go out of your way to love those who you find that it's not easy to love and that's the truth sometimes the reality is we know that some people perhaps are easier for you to love than others for you to express your love to them because you ought to love all of everybody but it's easier for you to express love to them than others but I want to offer to all of us that we go out of our way to express love to those who we have a challenge expressing our love to can we do that no you didn't answer me so I'm assuming you don't agree with me but can we do that very good very good now Jesus goes on

[36 : 52] Jesus goes on in the passage that was read if you take a look at it Jesus says this is my commandment in verse 12 John 15 verse 12 Jesus says this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends you are my friends if you do what I command you you see that you're my friends if you

do what I command you then Jesus says no longer do I call you servants but let's go back up to verse 14 he says you are my friends if you do what I command you

I want to talk a little bit now about what Jesus speaks about a little bit in these few verses here after he gives the commandment for us to love that leads me to my third and final point the result of following this commandment the result of love Jesus said if you keep this commandment if you love if you and I love one another as he commands us he says I didn't say this this is what he says he says that if you do this if you keep this commandment you are my friend that's what he says let's read it again he says greater love has no one than this that someone should lay down his life for his friends you are my friends if you do what

I command you that's what he says so when we do what he commands us he says you are my friend how many of you know that if Jesus said that and he did not mean it or if he was just choking we can take nothing in scripture seriously he must have meant it but what did Jesus mean what did Jesus mean when Jesus said if you do what I commanded you you my friend what's the import of that what's he getting at there I believe and the scripture teaches us

Jesus means exactly what he says the first is that he lays down his life for his friends that's the first thing that it means follow the commands the commandment of of Jesus then you are his friend and you are the beneficiary of this life that he lays down the sacrificial laying down of his life lays down his life life but he pays the price for us in doing so pays the penalty of our sins reconciles us to God you are my friends what a friend we have in Jesus who lays down his life for us

Paul says that this love this laying down of his life for us goes beyond our comprehension we cannot fully grasp or understand it we can understand it in part not in soul how it is that one who is all knowing all powerful dies for those who are so ungodly John writes in 1st John chapter 4 verse 9 in this the love of God was made manifest among us that God sent his only son into the world so that we might live through him in this is love not that we have loved

[42 : 42] God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins what a friend we have in Jesus Jesus goes on to say in these verses that we have read you are my friends if you do what I command you no longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends for all that I have heard from my father I have made known to you what a friend we have in Jesus he no longer calls us servants he calls us friends because he's made known to us the mysteries of the gospel and then he goes on to say in this passage in verse 16 you did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you what a friend we have in

Jesus who chose us electing his friends for salvation violated violet does not appear in these verses that we have read we know that to be a friend of Jesus carries with it all kinds of privileges I like the way one hymn writer puts it all together mindful that Jesus is all powerful and all loving and being aware of our frailties as mortal beings the hymn writer Joseph

Scriven declares what a friend we have in Jesus all our needs and all of our griefs to bear what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer remember Jesus says you gotta tie it back you gotta follow me as we preach this message today Jesus says this is my commandment that you love one another he says no greater love there's no greater love than this that a man should lay down his life for his friends you are my friends if you do what I command you what a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear what a privilege we have to carry everything to

God in prayer the Bible teaches us that God daily bears us up Jesus invites us to bring all of our burdens to him what a friend we have in Jesus we have a friend to whom we can go knowing that he is both able and willing to help us the writer of this song goes on to say he asks this question can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share Jesus knows our every weakness take it to the Lord in prayer yes he is faithful we are his friend he is faithful to us the Bible tells us that he keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments what a friend we have in

Jesus so this morning as we close today you who are a believer how might you respond to this message well we've shared a couple things already but how would you respond I want to say perhaps this Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 1 maybe that summarizes it adequately for us Paul writes as we said pursue love pursue love and perhaps we should leave here today each one of us with this thought on our minds I'm going to pursue love I'm going to pursue love this afternoon I'm going to pursue love tomorrow and every day we wake up I'm going to pursue love why because I'm commanded to love run after it earnestly!

[48 : 30] How do I demonstrate love to the people in my community? How do I demonstrate love to Joshua? How do I demonstrate love to brother Tim?

What do I do? Earnestly pursue it be intentional about it know it is not always easy but because you were so called pursue it none of us can I tell you I want to tell you that none of us is going to love perfectly none of us is going to love perfectly we can grow in love and that's the expectation that we will grow in love and to do that we need God's help he promises to help us what a friend we have in Jesus I'd rather have Jesus as a friend than all the world's riches give give me Jesus the Bible tells us he is a friend who sticks closer than a brother he is closer to us than anyone we can imagine what a friend we have in

Jesus as a praise team prepares to come and we prepare to pray I'd like you to consider this question praise team would you come do you need a friend today but you don't have one perhaps there are those present today maybe there's someone present today perhaps someone listening to us via live train perhaps that question is for you you need a friend today but you don't have one Jesus stands ready love as he commands but you know what I gotta tell you something you can't love as he commands unless you have the enabling power of the Holy

Spirit to do so and so our prayer for you is that the Lord would open your eyes to the truth of the gospel so that you too can love as he commands let us pray father Lord as we consider your commandment to love one another we acknowledge oh Lord that we have fallen way short forgive us love Lord we have not pursued love we have not been intentional about it Lord we acknowledge that there's been times when many times when we could have expressed love but we didn't forgive us forgive us

Lord we've gone after other things we've gone after other gifts we've tried to display other gifts but we've not done so with love forgive us oh Lord help us oh Lord to be loving Lord also we pray that you would grant to us the humility to be loved for Lord we know that some of us do not wish to or find it difficult Lord to open our lives and our hearts to receive love from one another forgive us for that oh Lord Lord cause each one present to be so desirous of pleasing you that we would leave this place with our hearts on fire asking the question how can

[53 : 28] I demonstrate love how might I pursue love today Lord let us be salt and light in this earth let us represent you let us reflect you as you would wish in the name of Jesus we pray amen amen