

Colossians 3:12-14

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[0:00] We're going to be in Colossians chapter 3, as was just read by Daisy, verse 12 to 14. And I've actually entitled this message, The Splendor of Jesus Christ in the Loving Church.

It's a pretty ambitious title. Here's why it's an ambitious title. Every single church that has any sort of category for what a church should be is going to affirm that they want to be a loving church.

But simply saying, we want to be a loving church, or even more ambitiously, we are a loving church, is not a matter of mere words. In order to be a loving church, there's actually a lot that has to go into the ethos of the church, the people of the church.

And here's what we're going to learn today. That experienced love leads to manifested love.

Experienced love leads to manifested love.

Because what we're going to see is Paul, in these very short three verses, is going to take all that we've learned thus far in Colossians, and he's going to condense it down to this.

[1:18] Church, brothers and sisters, love one another. Put on compassionate hearts.

Be kind. Be meek. Be humble. Be forgiving. Love one another. It's the plea of a pastor who is desperate for his children to live in that identity.

As ones who know the love of Christ and pour the love of Christ right back out to others. And so I'm excited for this morning because my prayer is this would be an encouragement to us.

These words are so encouraging, these three verses. And my prayer is that as we see the need to love one another, that it would not become just duty. That when we show up on Sunday morning, or we show up to our community group midweek, or we spend time with a brother or sister at a coffee shop, or we serve a brother or sister a meal, or whatever it may be, that when we do these things, it would not just be upon us as duty.

That I have to love my brother or sister. But instead, it would be a natural outflow of the very love that we have received. Which is why our main point today, experienced love leads to manifested love.

[2:33] So let's jump right in. I'm going to read verse 12, and then we'll stop and kind of do 13 and then 14. So let's read verse 12 again. Here's what Paul says. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if one is a complaint against another, forgiving each other.

As the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. We'll just read 14 because it's short. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Now, if you were here last week, we learned about the difference between an indicative, a statement of what is true, and an imperative, a statement of what we're to do.

And the reason why that's important is in Paul's sort of pastoral logic, as he writes all of these epistles that we see in the New Testament, he uses these paradigms mightily.

Truth statements, and then what to do statements, or mission statements, if you will. And they go hand in hand. But in verse 12, I want you guys to notice, what do we see? This verse gives us both an imperative, what to do, and an indicative, what is true.

And essentially what Paul says right at the get-go in verse 12 is that we cannot rightly do our duty until we rightly understand our identity. Same thing we learned last week. So what is the call to action?

[3:54] Let's talk about that real quick. Well, here's the call to action. I put on then, and then skip over to, compassionate hearts. Paul says to the Colossians, I want you, here's my command to you in the Lord, to put on compassionate hearts.

But in order to understand that calling and that duty, we have to understand the indicative, the identity statement behind it. So what is our statement of truth? As God's chosen ones, holy and

beloved.

In other words, again we see the pattern. Who we are determines what we do, not the other way around.

And we are so quick as, I think every Christian is a recovering legalist, right? We lived under the law and it led to death. Duty as a means to salvation, which never ever would lead to that salvation. And then Christ comes and he frees us from that. And he gives us new life. He restores us. He redeems us. We come to him through repentance and faith. And then with that restored, redeemed heart that he gives us, we are now free to follow.

[5 : 04] So here's the identity statement for Paul. This is a spectacular identity statement that I encourage everyone in here to take at face value. Here's the first thing he says. As chosen ones.

And here's what that means. Ones who have been delightfully drawn unto God. Delightfully drawn unto God. Why do I say that? Because hidden in this word, chosen ones, literally, the word behind this is election.

He elected us. The image here is a God who before all of the creation of everything we know, for the foundations of the world itself existed perfectly in perfect harmony with himself.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit. They existed. Period. And in that state of eternal existence, this is what Paul is hidden in this term, chosen ones, God decides, God decides, I would like my children.

And I'm going to draw them unto myself. And out of that delight, God creates all things, men and women, in his image.

[6 : 18] And even before the foundations of the world, God decided to choose you, brother or sister, as his children. That is what's hidden in the term, chosen ones.

It's such a rich term. In other words, ones who have been delightfully drawn unto God. He is delighted to take you, redeem you, and draw him to himself. But then, Paul says this, he also gives an identity statement with holy and beloved.

And these two go together. And what he's doing with these statements is he's further grounding our identity so that we know who we are. And here's what the first one is, holy. Holy means ones who have been made righteous.

We've already gone through this in the first section of Colossians, but if you're not familiar, the word saint is used a lot of times by Paul. The word saint means a holy person or a holy being.

And you and I know, holiness is very far from us, is it not? In our body of sin and death. But so how could we be holy? How could we possibly be called a saint? Well, it's through what Jesus has done.

[7 : 23] Through his righteousness that we receive in the gospel, we are considered righteous by God. It's a miraculous statement. But then thirdly, and I want us to camp here.

Here's what Paul says. Beloved. Literally, beloved means ones who have been loved. Here's who we are.

We've been delighted. We've been delightfully chosen. We've been made righteous. And if that wasn't enough, we've been loved.

All three of these identity statements highlight that you and I, brothers and sisters, are a redeemed people. And what Paul is doing with this identity statement is he's suggesting this, that we cannot love like Christ until we grasp how we have been loved by Christ.

Let me say that one more time. We cannot love like Christ until we grasp how we have been loved by Christ. That's what Paul's doing here. Before you even, before you even get to the whole compassionate hearts, put them on section and the love one another section, which he's going to do in two verses, he says this, you are beloved by God.

[8 : 47] Our identity is an integral to the mission that we carry out. And the reality of the gospel is that we are a collective of deeply loved sinners, sought out, pursued, and elected by God unto himself for salvation.

Why? Why would God do that? Here's what Paul says, because he loves you. That's how radical the love of God is, that he would do all of that out of a pure, holy affection for who you are, even in our sin.

Remember the thesis of the book back in chapter 2, verse 6 and 7. Paul said this, therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. In other words, from our identity, as ones who are loved by God, we are given the command to love, to put on compassionate hearts.

So first and foremost, today, we need to recognize this truth, because it guides all that we do as a church. You are loved so deeply by God.

How did Jesus love us? The reason this is an important question to ask into answer is because the ways in which we understand Jesus loving us are the very ways that we will love others.

[10:12] Here's how Jesus loved us, brothers and sisters. First, he met us where we were at. He didn't come to us and embrace us with loving arms only after we picked ourselves up and proved our worthiness.

Jesus showered us with his immaculate grace by virtue of nothing more than setting his affection on us from eternity past. How did Jesus love us?

He met us where we were at. Two, he gave all of himself. Jesus loved us so radically that it cost him everything. And we learn from Jesus himself that sacrifice is the true cost of friendship, the true reveal of love.

Jesus gave up his place in heaven and his life on earth that you and I might experience unhindered fellowship with God the Father. How did Jesus love us?

He met us where we're at. He gave all of himself and then thirdly, he forgave us and befriended us. Our offenses against the Holy God were counted and were rectified by the cross.

[11:24] Jesus offered to us perfect freedom through complete forgiveness that only he could offer as God himself. And in so doing, he invited us into an eternal fellowship, no longer his enemies, but now called the very friends of God.

That is love. When somebody meets you where you're at, gives all of themselves, and then forgives you, befriends you, and makes you a beloved friend.

That's what Jesus did. He loved us in these ways. And so here's the reality for us before we get into the commands from this text, which Paul's going to give a lot of imperatives.

We're about to go through them quickly. We have to first remember that experienced love leads to manifested love. And I want to just put a really quick warning out here. We're about to jump right into the put on then application statements of what we're to do in loving one another as a church. But here's the warning statement. If you or I try to follow any of the commands that are about to come without first experiencing the love of Jesus, we will go nowhere.

[12:35] Our love will be self-centered. It will lack affection. It will be fabricated. Or it will lead to no love at all. No even attempt at love.

So my first encouragement before we even get into the what are we to do is to rest in and embrace the love of Jesus in your life. How do I do that?

For me personally, one of the big ways that I try and do this is to remember and recapitulate the redemptive story of God's plan. That Jesus came as a baby.

We call it Christmas. That's our advent. He came as a child into a world that he knew was going to reject him in order that he could initiate the plan of salvation to come as a man to free man from himself because he's also God.

Full holiness, power, and splendor. And as coming as a man, he lives a perfect life, loving every person he came into contact with. After he does that, he goes to the cross willingly and dies in a horrible, horrible way.

[13:50] Fully accepting the punishment that is due the sinners, you and I, of God's wrath. But not only that, through his resurrection he becomes victorious over all power of sin and death and then ascends to the Father forevermore to intercede in our behalf and to call us to himself one day when he returns.

Recapitulate that story to yourself. If you're ever feeling as though the love of God isn't present in my life or I've forgotten how sweet the love of God is or I need a refresher, just simply work through the story of Jesus.

Maybe a practical application would be to read one of the Gospels. And I'm not even going to suggest one of them. I'm not going to do that. Read John, read Luke, because just pick a Gospel and read it because here's what's important.

Interacting with Christ. Pick a Gospel, read it, and see your love re-inflamed with Jesus' radical, compassionate love for us.

So now let's jump right in. A loving, excuse me, experienced love leads to manifested love. So now Paul's going to jump to the manifested love part. What does it look like for a church to be a loving church?

[15:04] So here's what Paul's going to say. Put on then, and here's the subject of this command. Compassionate hearts. Remember last week that Paul used the image of clothing to remind us of

our new identity.

We saw in verse 10, go ahead and look with me actually real quickly at verse 10. Here's what he said in verse 10. And have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. We're putting on a new person.

But then you look at verse 9, he said this, see that you have put off the old self of its practices. And the image here is of clothing. That somebody takes the clothing that they're wearing and they take it off and they put new clothing on.

In other words, through the gospel we have stripped ourselves of the body of death through the power of Christ. We no longer live in sin. And instead, Jesus, through his miraculous gift of salvation, has given us a new redeemed wardrobe.

What is that redeemed wardrobe? Paul says, put it on. The new self. Put it on. We have received this new self by which we dress ourselves daily.

[16:11] And here's the point for Paul in compassionate hearts. The centerpiece of that new wardrobe is the eye-catcher of the outfit. For Paul, here's what it is.

It is the redeemed heart. That is the magnum opus of the new creation. It's what God has done in our hearts.

And the reality is that the Bible teaches that the heart is the guide and director of all we do in life. Our thoughts, our thinking, our actions, our words, they all flow from the heart.

That's what Jesus talked about. Things coming out of the heart. So here's the reality for Paul. Compassionate hearts is what I want you to take and put on because that's what Jesus redeemed. Live in your identity is another way to put it. So let's work through this list. We're going to go through each one of these items. I'm excited to do this. But again, remember, the love of Christ and his examples is what empowers each and every one of these virtues.

[17:09] So let's first talk about compassion. Paul says, have compassionate hearts. And at the heart of compassion, what Paul's getting at here is mercy. Psalm 145, 8-9 says this, The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all and his mercy is over all that he has made. This word compassion implies that we are being merciful to one another.

But here's the truth. In order to be merciful with one another, we must have empathy. Mercy without empathy is not mercy at all. And in order to shower mercy on a brother or sister in the church to one another, empathy requires that we view one another as worthy of being loved.

And that goes beyond even an offense that you may have with a brother or sister in the church. It goes beyond what they have done. It goes beyond what we think their value is through our own flawed estimation.

Compassion requires that I see my brother or sister in the same light that Jesus saw them when he first drew them unto himself as worthy of love.

[18:40] So here's what Paul says. I want you to put on compassionate, merciful hearts to one another. And what this looks like for us is again to commit to seeing one another as God sees us.

Listen. Learn. Watch one another's lives with care. And as we do so, we will extend what Paul calls a compassionate heart to one another.

Now if you're anything like me, you're an American that uses platitudes that rob, I believe, a compassionate heart if we're not careful.

What do I mean by that? How many times throughout my week, especially working in all these coffee shops, going around, doing a lot of things with people, how many times, I was scared to count it because I was nervous about how high it would be.

How many times do I use the phrase, how you doing? How are you? And the person that, and this is our American culture, right? What do they respond with? Oh, I'm good. How are you? Oh, I'm great.

[19:45] Anyway, let's now get to what we really want to talk about. Are you with me on that? Okay, just the other day, I call Whit, and I'm like, hey, Whit, what's going on, man? He's like, hey, and we had something to talk about. We both know we had something to talk about.

It was an urgent thing. We got to talk about this. I'll call you later. Got it. I get on the phone and I say the platitude and I'm like, come on, just give me the thing. I'm good. Okay, great. Get to what we need to talk.

I don't know if you remember that, okay? And I was literally on the phone going, gosh, just ask me how I'm doing. Okay, thank you. I'm good. You know what I'm talking about? Okay. The reason I highlight that is yes, it's a platitude.

It's something that is almost a cultural custom. But here's where I think the danger can lie is with the spirit of that that I was expressing. I really didn't care how Whit was doing when I called him on the phone. Sorry, Whit.

Okay? But here's the reality. The spirit of that can take over to where it's no longer a compassionate interaction or a merciful interaction. And I think this can creep into our social church fellowship interactions if we're not careful.

[20 : 49] And I am guilty just as much as any of you. Hey, how are you doing? How's life? Oh, that's great. Oh, I'm really sorry about that. Yeah, it's too bad.

Well, hey, have a great Sunday. It's good to see you. Tone sounded good. The word sounded right. Did I show compassion? No.

Compassion says, I want to hear you and I genuinely see you as somebody who's worthy of love and whom God has redeemed.

I want to encourage us in this church. I think this is an area that I can grow in and that we can grow in. To have redemptive, compassionate conversations on Sunday morning in our community groups.

Every interaction. Commit to becoming friends with your church family. That's what a compassionate heart does. Which leads us right into number two.

[21 : 51] Kindness. Back to the wardrobe we go. We look at our redeemed clothing that Paul gives us and here's what he says. Kindness is something he wants us to put on. And here's what kindness is.

Kindness is, I'm going to term it as God-like goodness. That's what kindness is. That term. It's loaded there. God-like goodness. Demonstrated to others.

God-like goodness can look as simple as baking a meal for a family in need, praying earnestly for somebody, committing to prayer for somebody over an extended amount of time.

Hey, I hear this prayer request. I see you. I'm so sorry that that's true in your life. I'm going to pray for you for a month. That means so much more to me personally than when someone says, oh, I'm going to pray for you.

That's great. How many times have I done that in my life? I want to give goodness to this person. I want to show God's goodness and kindness to them. And I drop the platitude again, right? Platitude is the enemy of true loving church in my opinion.

[22 : 46] So here's what Paul says with kindness. God-like goodness is something that you are doing. You're enacting the goodness that you see in God towards someone else. And again, that could be providing a meal.

That could be committing to praying for someone for a determined amount of time. It can be as simple as a kind word to somebody and as dramatic as rebuilding a house of a church member whose house burnt down.

Now, has that happened in our church yet? No. But in some ways, I pray not for the church burning down, but I pray that, or the house burning down, but I pray that we would respond in such a dramatic fashion that we see the kindness of God and we say, this family needs a house.

Let's go do it. You see this in church communities. I've seen this picture happen. That's what kindness is. Here's the question for us. How do you see the goodness of God in your life?

And then secondly, after you've identified the goodness of God in your life, how can you harness that to love others? Third, humility. Back to the wardrobe we go. Now, this piece of clothing is called humility.

[23 : 48] Now, this virtue highlights a self-sacrificing element that we are called to in the loving church. What ultimately humility is is a dying to self, a laying down of self so that someone else can be raised up.

It's self-sacrificing. And how do we know that this is what humility is? Well, let's recount what Paul says of true humility embodied by the true humble servant, Jesus Christ, Philippians 2, 3-5, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others as more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but to the interest of others. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. what is the call here, brothers and sisters?

Sacrifice to love others. Dive into your own heart and answer the question, where have I been selfish? It's a painful, painful question that I've been trying to answer this week.

Where have I been selfish? And then secondly, what is God asking me to sacrifice that I can love my brother or sister? Money, possessions, time, energy are all exhaustible resources that can be expended to bless others amongst many others.

[25 : 06] Let's go to number four, meekness. Back to the wardrobe we go, now we see a new piece of clothing called meekness. And this is a, I would argue, a virtue in the church and in Christianity that is largely misunderstood.

And the reason it's largely misunderstood is meekness can also be translated as gentleness. Oh, here we go. Okay, back to the American idea of gentleness.

Maybe it sounds like I'm ripping on America. I love America, okay? But I think we need to be careful with the way in which our culture teaches us truth according to what, in opposition to what the Bible teaches.

So here's meekness. Gentleness is no way can be translated. But if you look around, one thing you'll notice is that in media, movies, shows, political discourse, the general societal public, meekness is not a cultural value of the day.

To be meek and gentle is to be wrongly, this is what they interpret it as, weak and passive in the world.

[26 : 10] But according to the Bible, first of all, we're told that Jesus was meek. So right off the bat, we have to acknowledge amongst ourselves in the church that meekness is a virtue that's worth sacrificing everything to obtain because Jesus himself embodied it.

But then secondly, here's what the Bible teaches about meekness. Meekness is a state of heart and mind that is unimpressed with oneself. Not to an effacing level, but it's unimpressed with oneself to a productive level, meaning this.

The heart that is not impressed with itself becomes naturally gentle and others focused. Jesus was meek and he showed that his self-esteem being the perfect son of God was rooted in selflessness, serving others because that's who God is.

So imagine a church of meek people that embody this virtue. The image that we should get if we think of a meek church is not a weak church, but instead and others focused self-forgetful people to borrow a line from the late Tim Keller.

And if you want to read more on meekness, which is essentially what this book is about, there's a book called The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness. It's really short by Tim Keller. It's great. It's going to go into humility and meekness a ton.

[27 : 34] But now let's move on to number five, patience. Back to the wardrobe we go. And here's what patience is. Quite simply, it's the extending of grace to another person. Why would I define patience as extending grace to someone else?

Because if you struggle to be patient with others in the church, remember that you have been demonstrated immense patience. Immense patience by a great God.

And if you're like me, I think back on my life, I think about the ways in which I've failed, the ways in which I have so radically fallen from truth and holiness and walked in sin.

And I think back to those moments and I say, Lord, you were so patient with me in those moments as we should. But I don't think we're thinking big enough. Because here's the truth of the matter. Every single day, no, every single hour, no, every single minute, God is patient with our wayward hearts.

To the end that God extends grace and applies it through the work of Jesus every second of our existence. We are covered by a perpetual grace.

[28 : 50] And what's grace? It is unmerited favor. And here's the truth of the church. All of us are on a path of growth that is completely dependent on that grace. You are dependent on that grace.

I am dependent on that grace. And here's what Paul is calling the Colossians to, to be patient. He wants us to extend the same grace to one another. To come alongside and to wait with and for each other as we pursue holiness together.

And I want to make a practical application here. Be careful with the expectations you put on people. I think expectations can be good. But lofty expectations suffocate.

And the reason this is important is if we hold each other to standards that are biblical, we're going to help each other grow to that standard by being patient with one another.

But if we hold one another to standards that are far and beyond the grace of God, we will suffer.

[29 : 57] This is a call to be gracious with your brother and sister when they don't walk in the way that maybe you think they should be. Because guess what? There are people in your life that are doing the same to you. This is one of the reasons that we have a membership covenant.

It outlines clearly the expectations that we are to hold one another in graciously. I love the fact that as a church we get to agree to live the same way as God commands.

But then next, let's go to bearing with one another. Back to the wardrobe we go. Now it's this term bearing with one another which is quite literally putting up with others. You're like, oh that can't possibly, that is the actual definition.

So you could imagine Paul saying, this is literally what he was saying to the Colossians. He gets to this point, he gets to verse 13 and he says this, put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, put up with one another.

And if anyone has a complaint, forgive one another. I love that. So here's what putting up with one another means. You might say, I get it, I understand what that means already because we all live in families and in churches and in societies and groups of people where this is an absolute essential if you're going to actually stay in the group, right?

[31 : 09] But here's what's so amazing. I'm going to read what one commentator wrote about this because he summarized it better than I could ever. He said this about bearing with one another. Therefore, bearing with one another is important in the church.

While not requiring the greatest display of Christian kindness and patience, bearing with one another is nevertheless a first and necessary step in establishing any community. The demand of bearing with one another acknowledges that every Christian fellowship is made up of all kinds of people, that we will accordingly sometimes find ourselves in close fellowship with people who are very different from us.

For the sake of maintaining community, we will sometimes, oftentimes, have to put up with people with whom we would not normally choose to associate. But now through the gospel, it is a requirement for all fellowship.

In other words, it's what he's saying. What makes the church different from other social groups? I don't know about you guys. I'm a big Dodger fan. I love baseball. I just watched game one two nights ago that one of the greatest moments in baseball history where one of my favorite players hit a grand slam walk-off home run and I was by myself.

My girls were all down in Colfax for a wedding. I'm in my house late at night. I watched on delay. It's 1230 in the morning. I'm depressed because the final out is going to go. We're going to lose game one and then Freddie Freeman hits this grand slam and I jumped out of my chair and I'm screaming up and down.

[32 : 39] And then I looked around and saw how stupid I looked. watching this game by myself with no one around and I turned the game out and said, I'm going to bed. What am I doing? Okay.

In that moment, I thought, I joined the chorus of Dodger fans that were cheering about that home run but then I realized I was four hours too late. That the cheering happened four hours earlier. And then I realized even more triviality that I'm cheering about something that's going to happen one time with a bunch of people who all we have in common is that we like a random sports team from Los Angeles.

And then it dawned on me as I was preparing this sermon. Oh my word. Not to, not to absolutely take any sort of meaning away from the groups that we form on earth that are not the church. but how silly are the groups that we think are united? How silly are our formulations of community and social groupings when compared to the church?

[33 : 46] So here's what I want to encourage us to resist sorting ourselves in the church. Resist taking what God has made one and bifurcating it out to multiple.

We are not simply based in our social group on mutual interest alone but a mutual Savior who is so real.

And if we sort ourselves in the church we do not bear with one another. For Paul says regardless of how the person what they may like what they may be like they're your brother and sister so bear

with them.

We cannot sort in the church because we are already sorted by God. Us saints in the beloved church have been sorted as sheep from goats wheat from tares friends from enemies saints from sinners no additional sorting is needed in the church period.

So the next forgiveness and this is the big one we'll finish here. Forgiveness forgiveness forgiveness is grace embodied undeserved favor offered to somebody that has wronged you.

[35 : 00] Forgiveness is the ultimate test of our understanding of the gospel. The main idea from this morning experienced love leads to manifested love. How in the world am I supposed to manifest forgiveness to that person that did that thing from to me?

If you're like me that's been a very hard question to answer especially the deeper the hurt. And here's what Paul says one of the greatest lines ever written on the formation of church loving community.

Look with me in verse 13. Forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive.

There's a parable that Jesus tells of an unforgiving servant and it goes like this a man goes to is drawn by the person who he owes money to and the debt is 10,000 talents which equates to roughly this is Jesus' purpose 3.5 billion dollars.

Here's what Jesus is saying with 10,000 he's not giving an exact number per se he's saying the amount is so great that you could never possibly repay it and the man goes to the person who he owes money and he says I'm going to let you go I'm going to let you free I'm going to absolve you of this debt because you're asking me and begging me for it and then he goes and immediately runs into somebody who owes him money and here's what Jesus says the amount of money that he's owed is 100 denarii which is like a couple months worth of salary and what does the man do?

[36 : 31] I'm going to throw you in jail if you don't pay me up now and this is a sobering parable but here's what Jesus is saying here the one who has been forgiven much will forgive readily easily compassionately and the warning is even for Paul here is if we walk away and do not forgive one another we withhold forgiveness from one another we are actually weaponizing any sort of shame or guilt over that person and denying the very gospel forgiveness is the heart and soul of a loving church it tests our collective fellowship by pressing into the hardest circumstances we will ever encounter which is hurt from someone you love dearly so often in our hurt and our bitterness we wield that unforgiveness as a tool of power over those who have offended us to make ourselves feel better but here's what Jesus says forgive one another just as I have forgiven you

Paul reiterates this concept here in Colossians forgiveness is the foundation of any covenantal community that I will forgive you as you forgive me as we inevitably will fail one another and if we can forgive one another with the grace of the gospel we can get through anything church have we noticed anything about all of these virtues each and every single one of them ties back to somebody and it's Jesus let's read verse 14 the final thought and above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony perfect harmony binding perfectly literally the sentence could be read this way put on love which binds perfectly in other words love is the perfect binder love is the supreme virtue of every christian and in every church it is the supreme reality of all existence and elsewhere in 1 corinthians 13 what does paul say about love love the greatest of these is love so what's with the elevation of love if all of the previous virtues are individual articles of redeemed clothing from our spiritual wardrobe that are important good that we practical ways in which we should love one another in the church here's what paul is saying love is the great winter cloak that encompasses them all in other words if you put on love everything else is contained within it the meekness the patience the humility the bearing of the forgiveness all of that is enveloped in love so here's what paul says put on love and watch the church absolutely flourish in the love of christ this is why jesus says my greatest commandment that you love one another as i have loved you love is so perfect that if it was our only category for living a godly life then we would be sufficiently equipped church it summarizes the entire law of god i tell you the greatest commandment love god love others that's how perfect love is and what love is is an absolute reckless abandon for the self for the betterment of others that's what love is so here's what i want us to do as a church i pray that we would do this as a church that we would experience the love of the gospel and watch as it transforms our love for one another embrace the love of jesus retread the story of redemption read a gospel worship pray to him and see his love inflamed in your heart observe the love of jesus by watching the way in which he loves other people specifically read the

gospels my big encouragement from this morning but then finally embody the love of christ help others see him serve selflessly and commit to compassionate hearts together as we do so we will discover that the church in which we exist in and make up will become a loving church that sprouts from a loving savior because that's the proper order of things lord we pray this morning that you would help us with this lord we recognize that it's not as simple as saying love one another and it will be done that lord each and every one of us has to take these truths to heart has to allow these wonderful christ-like

virtues to soak in that we might be convicted lord to truly live for you and love other people so god i pray that this church would be known as a loving church that we would be known by one another and to one another as deeply loved individuals help us with the compassionate heart that paul calls us to put on and more more than anything lord i pray that you would tutor us as students of love by watching jesus christ so thank you for the love that we've received from the gospel and we pray that we would live in that this very day and this very week amen so thank you