

One Loving One Another

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: 21 November 1982

Preacher: Dave Warren

[0:00] Be Thou a Red, let us love one another, for love is of God.

Who reigns upon, beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and God is love.

Hear this what manifested the love of God toward us, because there was it His only begotten Son into the world.

Let We Thou live, Let We Thou live, Let We Thou live through Him.

Be Loved, let us love one another, for love is of God, who reigns upon.

[1:52] Be Loved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and God is love.

For love is of God, and God is love. For love is of God, and God is love.

For love is of God, and God is love. For love is of God, and God is love. I am continuously amazed at the balance that there is in this congregation.

A little bit of formality in the world.

I am continuously amazed at the balance that there is in this congregation. A little bit of formality in the mornings, and a lot of informality at night, and I think that's nice.

[3:24] Also, it's interesting to me, another kind of balance that they give the speaker in the morning the raspberries, and then for lunch they send them to the cauliflowers.

I appreciate that, and I appreciate the hospitality that was shown to me this afternoon at that fine home.

You have probably heard the little expressions, the human race I love. It's people that I can't stand. Or perhaps this one, to live above with saints in love, that will be glory.

But to live below with the saints I know, that's another story. Now, of course, that could not be true here at the Maranatha Baptist Church, I presume.

[4:27] But in all too many places in the Lord's work, that kind of spirit is true. I have found in the six years or so that the Lord has allowed me to be in the teaching ministry and then out into various churches and various places, that one of the greatest needs in pastorless churches, that is a church without a visible leader right there, one of the greatest needs, one of the most teachable moments for it, is on this whole concept of loving one another.

It seems as though when the pastor is gone, that it is during that time that the little petty differences, which he may have been able to weld together or work around or in some way keep together or keep under at least the surface, it seems as though that while the pastor is gone or during that interim time, those little differences and problems, which otherwise may have been set aside, begin to crop up.

They begin to come to the surface. And it is too easy for a church group to begin to become unglued, just simply because they do not realize the value, the importance of loving one another. Before you go to sleep, catch this one thought from the Word of God and from this message. Love is the glue that will bind your church into a working unit.

That's how important it is that we love one another. Now whenever I stand behind a pulpit and talk about the matter of believers loving one another, I always feel a little bit defensive.

[6:50] Because I know that in the experience of some believers, there is this essential thought. To speak about love is to be a liberal.

Liberals talk about love. And perhaps you have been saved out of liberalism. Perhaps you have had it up to there with this matter of loving one another.

Perhaps you are saying in your heart, wait a minute, every time I went to that liberal church, that's the only thing I heard. Love your neighbor, love this guy, love that fella. Kind of a pacifistic kind of a love that we just get sick of it.

And therefore, when you hear someone stand up in a fundamental church and say something about the love of the brethren, immediately little red flags, you know, go up in our minds and the lights start banging.

You say, uh-oh, we got a liberal sneaking in here through the side door. If that is the case with you, then I would quickly remind you and warn you of the peril of the pendulum.

[8:02] A pendulum has a problem in that it gets over on one side, and then when it's finally released from that side, it swings all the way to the other extreme.

So if you have been in that one part which says, oh, we just hear about love and we just talk about love, and that's all we ever hear, and then all of a sudden you are saved and you come out of that thing, the tendency is to swing to the other extreme and say, oh, I never want to hear anybody talk about love again.

Beware of that. There is a New Testament balance between truth and love.

And you cannot read through the New Testament, the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, even the Book of the Revelation. You cannot read through the New Testament without coming out with the notion, hey, we got to love one another.

We who know Christ really do need to love one another. Sometimes to speak of love has the idea, it seems, of lowering the standards, lowering the requirements.

[9:14] You know, we're not going to keep our high standards up. Now we're going to begin to get soft and lower things. Come with me for just a moment to Romans chapter 13.

Paul gives us a thought about love, which frankly is just the opposite of that. When I speak tonight of loving one another, I am not talking about lowering our spiritual standards in any way.

Notice how Paul approaches the subject and the emphasis to which that he gives to it. Romans 13 and verse 8 says, Oh, no man anything but to love one another.

For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. You have not lowered the law. You have not changed the standard. He says if you love one another, that really is the fulfillment of the law. And then he explains that. Verse 9, for this. And he gives us the law. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal.

[10:29] Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet. And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended or summarized in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Boiled down to its simplest statement, Paul is simply saying this. If I love you, I'm not going to lie about you.

If I love you, men, I am not going to steal your wife. If I love you, I am not going to be upset and covetous over your house or your car or your gain.

If I love you, I'm not going to lower the standards. As a matter of fact, love is the fulfilling of the law and causes me to relate with you on an even higher scale than what the law demanded.

[11:47] So do not think that because we're talking about love tonight, somehow we are trying to bring in through the back door some kind of liberalism.

And do not think that because we speak of love, we are talking about lowering standards. I am not. Rather, we must take an objective look together at this whole matter of what the New Testament means when it says we must love one another.

Now the home plate text tonight is found in John 13. John 13, verses 34 and 35.

Somehow I have a notion that you are already familiar with these verses. You can tell that this is one of the Savior's final words to his men before he leaves them.

Notice what he says to them. John 13, 34. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.

[13:05] As I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Now I do not really believe that we can come to serious grips with those words until we remind ourselves of the emotional setting.

The emotional tone, the entire evening on which they were spoken. I think we tend to miss in Bible study something of the emotional tone of the words.

We get so academic in our Bible study. We get so intellectual in it, cutting the words apart and analyzing this meaning and that grammatical relationship, that somehow we don't seem to value or

understand or appreciate the emotional content, the emotional tone around the words of Scripture. And yet I think there is so much to be learned from that. These words were spoken, as you know, on the final night of Christ's earthly life.

[14:26] And they were spoken at that final meeting and that final meal that he had arranged.

Regardless of what day of the week you think our Savior was crucified, this particular meal took place on the final night before his crucifixion.

And my understanding of the Gospel accounts is that the Lord Jesus Christ rather carefully planned this night.

It was Passover. And it seemed as though they were never going to get ready for the Passover until two disciples said, Lord, where are you going to have us prepare this Passover meal?

And he said to them, as you know, I want you too to go into the city of Jerusalem. And you will see a man bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him.

[15:25] And when he gets to this particular house, you say to the master of the house, where is the upper room where we may prepare for the master? And that was precisely what they did.

Now that may not seem too significant to you until you realize that normally it was women who carried the water, not men. And that our Savior was trying to keep this place of meeting a secret from Judas.

Judas was looking for that opportune moment to nab him, to turn him over to the authorities. And so he sends these two disciples on ahead. They didn't know where they were going.

They walk into the city and there's a man bearing a water pot and they follow him and he comes to a house. And they ask the question as they are instructed. And so they go and prepare.

Jesus and the other ten of his disciples are out away from the city. Judas and the others did not know where they were preparing. Until later, under the cover of darkness, they made their way into that city and to that upper room for the final meal.

[16:43] Our Savior said to his men that night, It is with a great desire that I have desired to eat this meal with you. In other words, I have looked forward to it and I have laid the foundation for it.

And I have some very important things I want to share with you. I think we need to remember something else. Not only was this an essentially private meeting that our Savior had carved out and planned for.

We need also to remember that the city of Jerusalem was alive with tension. After a three year public ministry, his name had gone all over the countryside and there was a quiet whispering all over the land of Palestine.

Could this be the Messiah? Do you really think this is the prophet that was predicted in Deuteronomy? And the rumors were flying and there was kind of an undertow all through that society.

And of course the religious leaders were getting more and more adamant, more and more hostile. Until when you come to this Passover meal, this Passover celebration, with all of those Jewish pilgrims glutted in that city, they make the essential decree, we don't want to hear you mention that name.

[18:07] And if we hear you talking about him, you're out of the synagogue. We're going to excommunicate you. You've had it. And so the city was filled with tension. Will he come?

Do you think he'll perform some miracles? It was into that tension-filled city, under the cover of darkness, that the Savior and his men had their final meeting.

That tells us something. Our Savior really wanted to communicate this to these men. He wanted to have them in an uninterrupted, undisturbed place, where he could build into their thoughts in a final kind of way, some very crucial final words.

Normally, final words of anybody are very important, aren't they? And so if we will remember something of that setting, it will help us to pick up not only the tenderness of that scene, but also the importance of these final instructions for them and for us.

I invite you to look at those disciples with me tonight. We have to ask the question, to whom did Jesus give this command?

[19:52] To whom was he speaking? And the answer comes back automatically, almost without thinking, why? To his men. Judas had departed by now to do his dirty work, and so was the Savior and his eleven true believers, those true men who loved him.

It was to those men that he said, you must love one another. And that may not seem too significant to you, but look at them again.

Among those eleven men were some very real differences. On the one hand, you had Peter, a leader.

Peter, who never had an unexpressed thought. Some have said, and perhaps a little too callously, he had hoof and mouth disease. The time he opened his mouth, he stuck his hoof in it.

Something along that line. We would label Peter, and I think rightly so, an extrovert. He was a man who, when he had a thought, he had an opinion, he had a feeling, he said it.

[21:00] Everybody knew where Peter stood. But in that same group, on another side of that table, sat a Nathaniel. And about all we ever know or see of Nathaniel was that we see him sitting under a tree reading a book.

Kind of a quiet, intellectual type. I guess we could call him an introvert. There were very real personality differences in that little band of men.

There was the extrovert on the one hand and the introvert on the other. And sometimes those personality types tend to rub each other the wrong way.

The introvert can say, oh, you know, he's always got an opinion. He's always talking. I get so tired of hearing his opinions. And the extrovert can turn right around and say, you know, I wish he'd say something.

I'd like to know if he has an opinion. Instead of being a spineless weakling, why not say something? It was to that kind of a group, a group composed of personality differences, that the Savior said, you must love one another.

[22:25] I look again at those men sitting around that table. Perhaps I should say more accurately reclining around that table because that's what they did. And I see that there were some very real social differences.

Some of those men owned their own business. John's family was apparently a very well-to-do family, not only a partnership in a fishing business, but also a home up in the northern part of the country.

And when we get later into the Gospels, we find that John and his family have their own home in Jerusalem. They own their own business and have two homes.

Obviously, not all of those disciples had that kind of wealth. Is it not interesting that the Savior turned to a group in which there were social differences?

There were the haves and the have-nots. Those who had all kinds of money and stocks and bonds and wealth and had never to worry about money. And those who had very little. And he said, now listen, that thing which will overcome those social, cultural differences between you is love.

[23:39] I look again at those disciples and I realize there were sectional or geographical differences between them. You cannot read through the Gospels and understand them until you begin to realize that there was a group of Jews up in the north, the Galilean Jews, who cooperated with the Romans.

The Roman army was stationed there and their headquarters were there. And those Jews cooperated and made money off of those Romans. Whereas down in the south, around Jerusalem, there were those who couldn't stand the Romans, who didn't have and had nothing to do with the Galilean Jews.

The Judean Jews were the Orthodox. That's where the Pharisee, that's where those who clung tenaciously to the law, they had nothing to do. They had no use for those folks in the north.

It was as though there was a spiritual Mason-Dixon line. There were the northerners. And there were the southerners. The Lord Jesus said to that kind of a group, it's love that will help you to cross that border.

I look again at that group. And although I didn't read it tonight, we know from Luke 22, that they just plainly had a problem with carnality.

[25:15] For on this very night, the night that our Savior had planned out and He was just ready to share some important truths with them, do you know what was going on among that group?

There was an undercurrent going on between them, a little running argument. It had started way back in the early days of their association with each other, and somehow they had never quite resolved it.

Luke 22 tells us that they were vying to see which of them could be the greatest. Who was going to have the crown? Who was going to be the leader?

Who would have the limelight? On the very night that the Savior was about to be betrayed. Carnality. A desire for glory. A desire for prominence. A carnal struggling to be in people's view and to be appreciated for all that you are or think you are.

[26 : 25] It was to that carnal group the Lord Jesus said, Now look, that element which will glue and bind you together is love.

You must love one another. Sometimes we look at those disciples and we think of them as some kind of super saint, superhuman men who had no flaws, they had no weaknesses, they had nothing like we do.

And so we write off our own excuses, you know, and say, well, it doesn't really matter, they were way up there and we'll never attain. No, no. Our Savior saw in that group all of the seeds of division. And my beloved friends, there is in every one of our churches that same kind of seed bed.

That same kind of potential. Those personality differences, those cultural differences, and all of the other things that I've mentioned, they are in every one of our churches.

[27 : 45] And apart from the glue of a common love, Jesus speaking.

And in the final analysis, we have to say, He was speaking to us. He was speaking to us.

The second question, which may seem to be a little easier, I hope so. What did He say? Or, what did He mean?

Now, if I read the verses again, He says, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. And at the end of verse 35, by this all men shall know you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

You can say, well, He was saying that we ought to love one another. That's what He said, and that's what He meant. We ought to love one another. And you're right. But what does that mean?

[28 : 51] What does it mean to love one another? That's a very difficult word to define.

Now, if you're in junior high school, seventh grade, eighth grade or so, you already know what love is.

The parents and other adults have forgotten. But you know. To the junior high school person, and perhaps to many others, love is an ishy, guishy, ooey, gooey feeling that overtakes you.

Essentially all emotional gush. Now, they would never admit that. There comes a time in life where the young man comes to his dad and says, Daddy, how do you tie a tie?

And is my hair straight? And my shoes need to be polished. And his dad says, Uh-oh. Did the right boy come home?

[30 : 12] Et cetera. And that junior high boy slicks himself up and he just looks like the cat's meow, and he comes to church. And out of the corner of his eye, he watches the door.

Now, he would never want you to know that he's watching the door. It is a very sophisticated, sly look. Just a little, furtive little glance over there.

And the door swings open and somebody walks in. It's not the right person. And another family comes in, you know. And he's just very nonchalant about the whole thing. And then all of a sudden, in she walks.

And right here. Right there. And his heart kind of goes, And he skips a beat and he takes a hard swallow.

I must be in love. Do not misunderstand me. I think there is a time for that kind of love.

[31 : 19] There is a time to be ishy, guishy, and ooey gooey. But that is not what the Savior is referring to here. To love one another boiled down to its simplest definition.

A definition that did not originate with me, therefore I can say it's a good one, is this. To love one another simply means to deliberately seek the highest good of the other person.

To seek deliberately the highest good of the other person. Now that's what the Savior referred to when he said, You are to love one another just as I have loved you.

How did he love me? He sought my highest good. Not because of my beauty or what he saw in me. Not because of some potential service that he might get out of me.

Not because of anything he might get back. But he sought my highest good. Period. And he did it at great personal cost.

[32 : 47] We spoke of that love this morning. In the same way, after that same pattern, you and I are to love one another. We are to seek the highest good of other persons.

Even at great personal cost to ourselves. Our Savior laid aside his rights. He laid aside his prerogatives.

He laid aside his own wishes. And at great pain and at great cost, with a deliberateness to it all, He sought my and your highest good.

you turn right around and you love like that. That's what he meant. Now it does help me to understand that with a couple of illustrations.

We are told to love the Lord. We are told that the husband is to love his wife. We are told in the Bible that we are to love one another.

[33 : 59] We are told that we are to love our neighbor. And we are told that we are to love our enemies. I noticed on your church paper, love your enemies. Five different objects of that love.

But all the same word in the original text. Love God, etc. Even our enemies. Seek their highest good. So I'm going to draw an illustration from one of those five areas because we are talking about the same kind of love.

The husband and his wife. we are to love our wives seeking their highest good as Christ loved us. You have a good imagination. Pretend with me. This is not a church auditorium now and it's not Sunday. It is Monday night.

It is five to nine. The National Football League strike is over.

[35 : 13] And the husband who has waited for weeks for this thing to get back going again is fine tuning his TV.

The color is just right. The sound is just right. The children are in bed. He has a glass of coke on one side and he has got his potato chips over here.

The chair is just perfectly positioned, you know, and his heart is kind of going... I can hardly wait to hear Cosell's voice again. Some other such thing.

And the nine o'clock strikes, you know, and there's that familiar music. And you see the guy kick the football and all this introduction business, you know. And they're introducing the teams and you can hear the crowd and see them at 80, 90,000 people anxiously waiting for that kickoff.

And just about the time they're all ready to go. In walks his wife. And she says, Honey, I was in the middle of making brownies.

[36 : 29] And I realize that I'm out of margarine. Would you run up to the store at the corner and get some margarine?

And the husband says, Well, I run up to the corner to get margarine at this moment. Now you say, that's an extreme example.

No life in her right mind would ever do that. Or some such response. But the question is not, what should that husband do?

The question is, what would love do? You say, that's a pretty big personal cost. I might miss five minutes.

But we are to seek her highest good at great personal cost. Or a similar thing in the same area.

[37 : 39] What do you do, men, when your wife comes to you late in the afternoon or early evening and she says to you, Honey, let's go shopping.

You say to her, Shopping! Alright, let's go shopping! Is that what you do? I'll get the car. I'll get my coat. You get the kids, you know. I'll back it up. Be ready. We're gonna go shopping.

Don't forget the checkbook, etc. Is that your response when she says, let's go shopping? Mine neither.

Shopping. Where are you gonna go shopping? Oh, we're gonna go to the mall. Funny thing about shopping at the mall. I walk in the door. And I'm tired.

Instantly tired. My legs, my knees, lower back. I kind of go around like this, you know. Oh, how long? How many more stores are there? Best part about shopping at the mall are those benches in the middle.

[38 : 47] Those are for the men. All shopping. I don't say this in a careless way. I don't say this to fault anyone.

But I do believe it is true. I believe that women shop differently than men. I think they do. And I'm not gonna say which one is right or wrong, but maybe there's a happy balance somewhere.

There's a difference between the way I shop and the way my wife shops. She can go into a store, look at all the little knick-knacks and things, and look at them and check the price and all the color.

Wouldn't Aunt Susie really like that? That would make a wonderful gift. And after whether there are five or ten minutes of looking and thinking and evaluating all of the wonderful things about that article, she can set it down and walk away and say, Aren't you gonna get...

No, I had no intention of getting it. When I shop, I pull up to the store, get out of my car, shut the door, walk into the store and say, Where is it?

[39:54] I go, I get it, I take it to the cash register, how much is it? I pay for it, I put it in the bag, I walk out, I go to my car, I shut the door, and I have shopped. And that's it.

You say, you're nuts, you're crazy, you're a nutty man, etc. I may be. But here's the point of all this. There is a point. If I love my wife, there will be times when I lay aside my own desires, and I do what she wants.

And if we love one another, there will be times when we lay aside in a deliberate fashion what we want, our preferences, for the good of the group, for the good of one another.

That's what Jesus meant. Why? Why did Jesus say this? Why select love?

Out of all the character traits and all of the possible things He could have said, why love? He answers that in verse 35.

[41:22] Incidentally, and this is really an incidentally, you check out the commands of the New Testament, and more times than not, they are given with some kind of a rationale.

Some kind of a reason. Not just a blind command given that we are just simply mindlessly to obey. But there is a reason given. There's a reason here.

Why, Lord? Why are you making such a big thing of this? Verse 35. By this shall all men know that you're my disciples, if you have love one to another.

By this character trait, by this quality in your group, here is the badge of true Christianity. Here is that identifying mark by which the average person on the street can walk into this church and sense these people really are disciples of Christ.

Regardless of the tag, the denominational tag on the door or on the church sign or wherever it may be. By this. By this. And in the honesty of my heart I ask, why?

[42:44] Why love? Why didn't the Lord say clothing? By the way you dress. Oh, you dress one way or the other, brightly or plainly, longly or shortly.

Why not some kind of an external clothing standard? By this shall all men know. Why didn't he say doctrine? Why didn't he say doctrine? Get all of your theological T's just right and your I's dotted just so.

Get that statement or standard of belief, get it just right. By this shall all men know. Why didn't he say that? Isn't doctrine important?

Obviously it is. But he cut through any external and any intellectual thing and he got right down literally to the heart of the matter and he said, hey, here's the thing that will set you apart in this world.

Love one another. It's that testimony. It's the way the folks in Columbus, it's the way the people on your streets who know of the Maranatha Baptist Church, it is that, that will be the clinching argument for all of your doctrine and all of your practice.

[44:10] By this they'll know. Let's remember too, it's a cold, mean world out there. You go out into the shops and into the offices and you find people like dogs, dog eating dog, climbing and clambering over one another to make the top, not caring who they hurt.

But it should not be so in the local church. Because people as they come into your services can sense these people are really Christ's.

I guess the little song says it pretty well. They will know we are Christians by our love.

God help us to love one another. Father, we thank you for your word. May this principle of love become as important in our minds as it was in the mind of our Savior, as he gave it on that occasion.

And may there be in this group a heartfelt affection for one another.

[45:43] We thank you for the challenge of your word. May we rise to that ideal. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. Hymn number 328. I was interested in the song leader's comment about trying to find songs in the hymnal that talk about love between brethren.

And that is true. It's very difficult to find that kind of a song. But I think you will agree with me that hymn 328 comes close. It's a familiar hymn.

It gives us a high ideal. I hope these words are true between you. We're going to sing all four short verses and then we shall be dismissed.

Make them a verse of challenge and prayer that your lives will live up to and match the ideal given us here. Let's stand please.

[46 : 51] Watch those words now singing all four verses. A