

# How are You Doing at Loving the Brethren?

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, this morning, as we begin, and I shouldn't say we begin like it's the beginning of our time together, but it is the beginning of our direct attention to the teaching of the word.

! As we begin that phase this morning, I want to ask that not only do you pray for me as I preach this morning, but I ask that you pray for me next week as I will be preaching in Chillicothe at a sister church.

Calvary Baptist Church in Chillicothe has asked me to come down and fill the pulpit, and Pastor Andrew and the board have graciously consented for me to go down there and minister in that sister church.

So, you are going to have to multitask next week praying for Pastor Andrew, which is a biblical encouragement from 2 Thessalonians, and pray for me as well.

That's a two-part challenge, and I trust you'll keep both of those focused. So, I want you to take a little quiz to begin with.

[ 1 : 23 ] Everybody look up, please. Look at me right here. This is going to be a hard sermon for me to preach apart from the enabling of the Spirit of God.

It is going to be a hard sermon for you to hear apart from the enabling of the Spirit of God. So, let's put some questions out there for you to kind of frame to understand how hard it is.

A little question that you can ask yourself, and I want you to answer it privately. I really do. Here it is. I am doing well at loving other people.

Check the box. Yes. No. No. I am willing to ask God to help me grow at being more loving.

Yes. No. I need His help. Yes.

[ 2 : 35 ] No. No. Let me read the passage. From 1 John 2, verse 7.

Beloved, I am writing to you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it's a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Let's pray. Father God, for us, prayer is not a function that we merely engage in because it is ritualized and a habit.

[ 4 : 03 ] Prayer is our confident declaration of dependence upon you who inhabit eternity and pay attention to our weakness and care about us.

And so we start out with prayer, saying, we need you to work to take the beauty of your word and infuse it in our life that we might be more like Christ and less like we naturally are.

We are thankful that you love us. And that you have gone to the length of sacrificing your own son for our salvation.

And that you are actively engaged in this business of helping us grow to be like him. And we, this morning, want to be teachable and yielded and not leave here the same way we came.

There's not a one of us here, not a single one of us, that does not need a fuller measure of your grace and love.

[ 5 : 10 ] And we're thankful that we can plead with you to do that and have confidence in both your purpose and your practical encouragement in growing.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. So let me kind of start as we pick up this passage and begin by asking the question, how is the old also new?

As you read 1 John 2, verse 7 and 8, it may be a little confusing at the outset because here is John. He's talking about, what does he say here?

I'm writing to you no new commandment. And then he turns right around after he's made that statement and he talks about a new commandment. It's not new, but it's new. And you may ask yourself, okay, what is going on?

What's the purpose of this here? In reality, what John is doing is using a literary method to kind of bring us in to think a little more carefully.

[ 6 : 20 ] We've all had those moments when we ought to have been listening and we haven't been. Am I right? How many of you have ever been on a phone call but also been watching TV at the same time?

I mean, very meaningful conversation with somebody that you deeply love, but you're nodding and giving uh-huh. And on your cell phone, every now and then, you tweak it and put the mute on because they're going blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And every now and then, you take it off and say, yeah, yeah. But then, none of you have done that. I know, but I'm saying it does happen, right? We need help kind of connecting with what is being said and true.

And so, John uses this literary device to bring it in and help us make that connection. We've probably ourselves relied on comparing two different things that are not directly related to make a point.

Illustration. You might say that getting drunk and drinking toilet water really are equal demonstrations of the wisdom of that kind of application, right? Or you could say that hitting the same finger twice with a hammer is not the best way to demonstrate pain.

[ 7 : 32 ] There are different kind of odd little statements that we use to make a connection. And here is John relying upon this, well, it's not new, but it is new, to challenge us to think very carefully.

For one, this commandment to love one another is not new in that you pick up on it, first of all, in the Old Testament. Over in Leviticus, and I'm not going to have you go there, but in Leviticus chapter 19 and 18, it talks about loving one another.

It talks about loving brothers. It appears again in verse 34. And so, that is the premise on which John makes the statement, hey, I'm writing to you a commandment that actually isn't new.

This is not brand new information to you. But on the other hand, he turns around and he repeats what Jesus had said in practical terms when he says, hey, listen, this is a new commandment.

And so, the question that I want you to kind of grip around, get your hands around is this, is how is this commandment, which is old, also new? And if you were to think with me of what Jesus said in John chapter 13, verse 34, he said this, A new commandment I give you, that you love one another just as I have loved you, and you also are to love one another.

[ 8 : 54 ] So, the practical question is, what's being said here? Jesus did not make a new command. He did make the command. He did make the command to love more significant.

He did not make a new command. It had appeared previously. But he did make the command to love one another more significant. How do we know that?

Well, if you were to kind of make a comparison, you recognize that Jesus put a greater emphasis on the reality or the importance of loving one another than the Old Testament did.

Old Testament made the statement. But if you were to compare the number of times keeping the Sabbath was explained as an important command, and you were to look at the number of times that loving the brethren was stated in the Old Testament, guess which would outweigh one another in the Old Testament?

Well, you had the Sabbath issue appear over and over and over and over again, and yet the matter of loving the brethren was not given as much ink. Now, does the fact that one command is said 21 times and the other command said two make one 21 times or whatever more important?

[ 10 : 04 ] No, they're equally important. But the emphasis in the Old Testament was not so heavily weighted on the matter of loving. And here is Jesus. He is putting emphasis on it.

And one of the illustrations of that, you'll remember that an attorney came to Jesus and asked that little question, hey, which is the most important commandment? And Jesus said, love God, love one another.

Love God, love one another. And he put an emphasis on it in that he put the great weight of loving God and loving one another as of preeminent importance.

In fact, here's what he said. He said, all the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. Secondly, when he put an emphasis on it, he also explained the extent to which this love is supposed to go. If you were to look over in Luke chapter 10, verse 25 through 27, and don't need to go there, but you'll remember that after he had been asked this question about which is the great commandment, love God, love your neighbor, the rebuttal was, well, yeah, and who is my neighbor?

[ 11 : 24 ] Remember that question? It's like, can I narrow the circle a little bit? There are people I don't like. There are people I flat out, if I want to get down to it, really don't love.

In fact, we can be a lot like Pharisees. You know what the Pharisees were like when it came to love? They loved people that loved them. They loved people that dressed the same. They loved people that had the same mannerisms.

They loved people that made their beds in the morning. They loved people that ate right, weren't sloppy, didn't drip on their beard, whatever else. They loved a certain kind of people. No, we're not that way, right?

We only love everybody. Truth of the matter is, is we can be a lot like Pharisees in that we draw pretty tight circles, and even some of the tight circles that we draw get changed from time to time because we have trouble getting along and loving each other.

And Jesus said, hey, here's what I want you to do. I want you to love each other and include everyone in the picture. Remember the guy said, who's my neighbor?

[ 12 : 23 ] Jesus said, it's a lot broader than you think. And so when we think about this issue of loving one another, we understand that Jesus made it clear that God-honoring, Christ-glorifying, gospel-modeling love takes in all the world.

Get that. Third, we see that Jesus amplified the significance of this kind of love by giving us an example.

He calls us to love each other just like he loves us. You're in 1 John. Keep your finger there because we're coming back to it. But I want you to go to John 13, verse 34, and we're going to look at that here just for a moment.

John 13, verse 34. A new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

Question. Who was Jesus talking to at this moment? He was talking to his disciples who'd spent a lot of time with each other.

[ 13 : 42 ] Do you think they were just absolutely filled with warm fuzzies for each other all of the time that they were trucking down the road and going from town to town and doing everything that happened? What do you think? If you want to know how they got along, you'll remember that after the Lord's Supper had been celebrated, as they were marching out to the Garden of Gethsemane, what were they fussing with each other about?

Does anybody remember? Who was going to have the corner office when Jesus became king? And their attitudes towards one another were kind of challenging. So here's Jesus talking to them, and he says, listen, here's something I want you to get.

I want you to love one another just as I have loved you. That's convicting. Earlier this week, I found myself kind of having one of those little arguments with myself about somebody and having an attitude.

Anybody else here kind of an attitude specialist besides me? It's like every now and then I can get wound up in an attitude. I don't know where it came from other than the devil. And it's like I'm just getting all torqued out about an attitude towards a particular person.

I'm 69. It still happens. Tim, that's not right. You ought to love this person like you love your children.

[ 15 : 08 ] And I remember kind of thinking through some of the challenges that I've had on occasion loving my children. We raise wonderful children. They're perfect, but there are times that I've struggled with loving them. And then I remembered, I thought, hold it, hold it, hold it.

Tim, that's not the right standard. You are to love this particular individual like Jesus loves you. And I got to tell you, that was very convicting to me because at the moment I realized how much of a problem I give to Jesus and how unloving I can be and what a pain I must.

I mean, if I were to love like I love my children, it's marginal. I mean, it's not perfect. But if I am committed by the Word of God and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to love other people the way Jesus loves me, that's the gold standard and that's the expectation that Jesus has for Tim Knoyer.

Third, or fourth, the emphasis that Jesus gave to the matter of love made it particularly a matter of effect.

What do we mean by that? Love is the central feature of our gospel witness. You're over there in John chapter 13, verse 34.

[16:38] He says, you are to love each other just as I have loved you, etc. And then look at verse 35. I want you to read this and underline it. Go ahead and underline it in your Bible because it's one to remember. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.

When I was younger in pastoral ministry, I remember when I would, without hesitation, when I was talking about Maranatha, say, listen, if God brings you to Maranatha, I can tell you a couple of the things that you're going to have.

You're going to be well taught. You're going to be encouraged in the matter of prayer. You're going to be encouraged in godliness. You're going to be nurtured in growing to be a person of faith.

And you're going to learn good things in the Bible. Last week, we finished on Saturday a two-week period of our hosting the Franklin County Board of Elections.

We have literally hundreds of people that come through this facility during those two weeks that, for all practical purposes, have no exposure to this congregation other than the people that walk around and serve them during those two weeks.

[17:58] Pastor David spent two hours talking with a lady. Was it Wednesday? Wednesday. Wednesday. I had numerous conversations with some of the different, it just happens.

I mean, God opens the door and we end up in conversation. And here's what I said two times last week. I said, I want you to come. You come and we will love on you.

That's what I said. Everybody smile. That's a good thing. Right? Right? I'm not feeling it right now. I just really, I'm soaking in being moody.

I'm just not real happy with some people here. And I, you know, I wish God would take them to heaven. But, you know. I said to these people, I said, you come and we'll love on you.

I'm looking at you and I'm thinking, are you going to help me with that? Huh? Well, all I'm doing, am I citing the Bible?

[19:07] Is the Bible there? Jesus said, love is the central feature of our gospel witness to the unbelieving world. Okay? I mean, would it be appropriate for you as a believer to say, I love Jesus?

Could you say that this morning? I love Jesus. And the evidence of how I love Jesus is going to show up in the way I love you. Fair enough? I love the brethren.

I'm deeply committed to them. That's what Jesus wants us to be characterized by. Now, so that we kind of get this in frame here. Show me a complaining and persistently unhappy Christian, and I will show you a Christian that has no appreciable gospel impact for Christ.

Can I say that slowly? Because it's probably worth remembering. Show me a complaining and persistently unhappy Christian, and I will show you a Christian that has no appreciable gospel impact for Christ.

That person may have attended every Sunday service. I am old enough to remember when, in a younger day, people actually got Sunday school pins for the number of attendances.

[20:28] Do you remember? How many of you are still old enough to remember Sunday school pins, right? And veterans would come in. It was a little bit like war trophies. You know, they'd hang down on, make the pockets sag down like that, really low.

You know, I've been there all the time. You know, I'm a tither. I've never missed a single Wednesday prayer meeting. I've been every time there's a work project like, oh, hey, spring tea, right?

I've been there all the time. I'm as grumpy as can be, but I'm there. You just got to put up with the baggage, but I do lift tables. You know, it's like, okay. You know, someone who is like that, they're just not going to have very much gospel impact.

Am I right? Show me someone who is soaking in the unfathomable love of Christ, and I will show you someone that is showing that same love to other people.

I love. I love. This morning I was talking with an individual on the phone, and it's one of my favorite passages.

[ 21 : 34 ] You know, you come and talk to me, I'm going to ask you to memorize Ephesians 3, verse 14 through 19. I can't help myself because it was transformative in my life. It still is having an effect on me.

Knowing how much Jesus loves me makes me different because understanding his love helps me love him, and when I love him, I'm doing a better job at loving you.

So here we see in that passage, John says, you know what? I'm writing you an old commandment. It's also new, and the emphasis is on Jesus made it supremely important. Let's look at the second thing that we want to see in this passage, and that is this, is that we need to understand how our love confirms our salvation.

Confessions of faith are not that hard to make. I know Jesus. I'm a Christian.

[ 22 : 39 ] The thing that becomes a little more tricky is, well, how do I really know that I am? If I were to ask you what confirms your relationship with Christ, you may be tempted to say things like, Well, I have a good prayer life.

I mean, I pray every morning. I pray for 32 minutes, and I have nine things that I cover every week. I've got it down. I read five chapters in the Bible except when I get to Psalm 119, and I break that up a little bit because it's long, but I'm all there.

You get it? How do you know you're saved? Well, I do A, B, C, D. Actually, what we're looking at here, John says this.

Let's look at it. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. It's kind of a check this out. The test of genuine transforming change that comes through faith in Christ is whether or not I start learning how to love unloving, lovable people.

What do you think? You like that, don't you? How am I doing at loving other people?

[ 24 : 11 ] Am I getting better at it or not? And by the way, just so you know, if you're one of his children, everybody smile because I am talking to you.

God is going to make sure that he populates your calendar with people that are hard to love. And guess what?

Even if you move from here, the next place will have hard to love people. Now, the remedy is fly in and fly out and fly often.

But it doesn't help you learn how to love the snakes and challenges that are part of life. And since he wants you to grow to be a real, genuine lover of other people, it's a whole lot better to learn where you are than keep in a perpetual motion.

And here's what we see. 1 John 2, 9. Whoever says that he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

[ 25 : 23 ] The challenge of the authenticity of my faith is not how I do at reciting certain theological truths.

I was talking with Caleb Gibbs the other day. Charity, where are you? There you are. I thought you were Kara Rice on Wednesday, but I know you're here now, so I got you.

She had her head down and turned and all that kind of stuff. But here. Caleb shared with me the other day that he had spent five hours being grilled by the Bible College and some pastors down there in Jamaica as he's preparing for his ordination council that is going to take place first week in June.

They're going to be up. He's going to be up, and we're going to have the privilege of hosting that ordination council and then ordination service following that. And I got to tell you, the test here is not how did you do at explaining the doctrine of salvation.

The test is how do you do at loving the brethren? The brethren, I would rather love neighbors that I don't know and love them only occasionally. Brethren are a challenge.

[ 26 : 35 ] Yeah. Loving others as Jesus loves them is the real test of your faith. And I know that this theme comes up repeatedly in 1 John, so I'm going to leave it there for today.

We'll come back to it another time. Let's go to a third little part in this passage that I think is worth our attention. Look at verse 11, and I want you to kind of...

Verse 10, whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

Verse 11, whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Let me begin this section by asking you to consider just what John meant when he used the word hate. That's a strong one.

And in particular in our culture, it's one that we kind of stiff arm. We don't like to say that we hate anybody. I mean, you follow that? We're not into hate.

[ 27 : 45 ] We're not into hating each other. We may not like each other. We may avoid being in the same room with each other. We may say unkind things about...

But we don't hate. We're not haters. But let's understand how this word is being used in the Scriptures because I've had to be convicted, and I'm thinking that you may need to be convicted as well, that you're struggling with a hateful attitude towards people that are right in this room, and you've been wrapping your hateful spirit with ungodly, unwholesome excuse.

The word John uses can mean dislike. How's that? Dislike. Dislike. Or it also can mean to have a really detest for a person.

How many of you have ever been riding in a car with somebody that really has bad eating habits? You're in close proximity is what I'm saying.

Hours and hours in the same vehicle. And every time you stop for something, you know, they're dribbling and they're slopping around. And, I mean, it kind of gets to the point where it's like...

You're just doing all you can to choke it down.

[ 29 : 12 ] Hmm? The word that John is using is talking about disliking someone, having an aversion. I remember a number of years ago when we used to have the same prayer leaders in the same rooms all the time.

And lo and behold, I was stunned to find out that there were some people that would never go into a room because they knew who was leading the prayer group.

I thought, really? Really? So I thought I'd fool them. We just started changing and not putting the names on the rooms. But people would poke their head in. No, I'm not praying there.

I'm not praying there either. Huh? Nope. I guess I'll sit in the lobby. You know, it's like, I'll be spiritual there. You know what? Is that the kind of attitude that Jesus wants from his disciples?

And the answer from all of God's people is, Meganuito. You know what that means? May it never be. And none of you here are guilty of that kind of attitude.

[ 30 : 19 ] Amen? Wrong. So, here's Jesus saying you have to love each other.

I remember another classic excuse I've heard is, I have to love you, but I don't have to like you. I wonder, where does that come from in relationship with what Jesus said in John 13, 35? What did he say?

I want you to love each other the way, huh? What? I love you. Imagine Jesus saying to them, I have to love you, but I don't have to like you.

I don't know about that. Well, that's not the primary point that we want to look at here. Here's what John is saying. He says, The one who loves his brother has no cause for stumbling.

So, I want you to think with me here that hateful hearts are stumbling hearts. Hateful hearts are stumbling hearts. I ran track in a previous life.

[ 31 : 26 ] Now, in case you're wondering, I don't believe in reincarnation. That refers to when I was substantially younger. Don't send me an email about that. I ran the 400.

I ran the 200. And at one point, my coach tried to talk me into running hurdles. You know, there's no reason to put a barrier in the front of a running man.

I mean, there's none. And I validated the lack of logic in that outcome because I tried. I mean, the coach said, You'd be good at this, Tim.

I ran it about four or five times. And every time I ran, one or two hurdles, I'm going to bing, bing, and then, you know. And it's like, and I thought about Samantha Bernard.

She runs hurdles, and she's pretty good at it, you know. And as good as Samantha is, you can tell her I was talking about her this morning.

[ 32 : 26 ] Where are you, Greg, Connie? Somebody out here. Wait, there you are. You can tell her I was talking about her. You know, as good as she is, she would never run it in her wedding dress. Wedding dresses are designed for careful shuffling to the front, you know.

Keep your feet down so you don't catch it, you know. Just kind of, there's a process. And here is John saying that those who don't love end up stumbling.

An unloving heart will cause you to stumble. Well, how's that? How do you stumble?

Well, let me give you a couple illustrations. Think with me here. An unloving heart spends energy imagining that the other person's motives are not good. Can I say that slowly? Because none of you have done that other than me, but I just want you to make the connection.

So you know it happens occasionally. An unloving heart spends energy imagining that the other person's motives are not good. How does that match up with 1 Corinthians 13? Love believes all things, hopes all things.

[ 33 : 32 ] No, it doesn't match. An unloving heart is easily offended at imagined offenses. I'll never forget in the first church that I pastored, there had been a family that had been coming for a number of years, and suddenly they stopped coming.

And I was just, what happened? And so I remember going to the house, and they let me come in, and I showed up unannounced, and I got to talking to the person.

And I said, so you stopped. I mean, something happened wrong. Yes, yes, absolutely. Very offended. I said, what happened?

Your wife honked at me at the stoplight because I didn't move fast enough. Now, this was back in the 80s. We're not talking about when cell phones.

Nobody starts when the light turns green. Because they're always reading the important information that somebody sent them on their phone. But I went home and said, honey, did you honk at Bubba or whatever his name was?

[ 34 : 45 ] She said, what? Well, the town only had like two stoplights. I mean, so there weren't a lot of choices. I said, well, it was, you know, it was right past the gas station or right across from the bank, and you honked at him, and he was right in front of you.

She says, he was? I was honking at Barb who was walking down the street, and I wanted to wave at her. And so we were, you know, carrying on.

Here's a guy. Do you follow me? He perceived an offense and acted on offense and kind of ramped it up to the point that it was a, I'm leaving the church, and I'm severing fellowship with other believers because pastor's wife honked at Barb on the street.

Yeah. An unloving heart is easily offended at imagined offenses. An unloving heart is also an unforgiving heart that spends a great deal of time remembering offenses from the past.

I'll never forget, actually, in a conversation probably 15, 20 years ago here, talking with a family that was in the process of leaving the church.

[ 36 : 10 ] And when I was talking with them, I said, well, what's caused this? And both the husband and the wife brought up something that had happened literally 15 years prior to my sitting in their living room to talk with them.

They had allowed that offense to fester to the point that they were willing to sever relationship with the body of Christ.

Oh, they can find another one. But they threw relationships that had been nurtured with tears and prayers under the bus because of a perceived offense that they'd been unwilling to solve.

Hateful hearts are stumbling hearts.

Well, there's another thing. Hateful hearts cause others to stumble as well. You're going to stumble if you're not loving, but you're also going to trip other people up by your sin.

[ 37 : 22 ] How often do you stumble and when you're walking in close proximity with other people, do you not end up affecting the whole pile, right? That's the way it happens.

And I have lived long enough to see how children are deeply affected by unloving, sarcastic, and critical parents. They can't say much to you.

And they can't admonish you because of where they are in the food chain, and rightfully so. But you know what? When they reach adulthood, they think, I don't have to put up with that. And they pack their bags and go somewhere else.

And then you sit there and wring your hands and say, how'd that happen? I've seen Bible lessons completely blown up by sarcastic comments.

Great Bible truths can be lost in a fog of unloving and unchrist-like behavior. You know, here's what it says about Jesus. Let's go back to that one. I mean, remember quoting Isaiah?

[ 38 : 29 ] It says that a burning wick he would not quench and a bruised reed he would not crush. Do you know what that's telling you about the character of Christ? Huh?

There was a profound sensitivity and affection for the people that he ministered to. And no one walked away from communicating with Jesus and said to themselves, well, I'll tell you what, he did

tell me the truth, but he was a real skunk about it.

Years ago, when I was an English teacher, I remember at one point reading about a reunion that took place in a very gritty part of New York City in a public school.

And as the reunion was kind of moving towards its conclusion, they ended up, a group of students, now graduates, you know, they're back for their class reunion, 25 years or whatever, and they're all sitting around and a question popped up, so which teacher had the greatest impact on you and made the greatest difference in your life?

Amazingly, there was this one woman that kept on being referenced. And the discussion leader asked the question as a follow-up, so what was it about this teacher that struck you the most?

[ 40 : 05 ] To a person, every one of those students now graduated and off to life said this one thing, we knew she loved us.

So how do I know if I'm struggling in this area? I mean, that's practical. I mean, a sermon that doesn't have teeth is probably not doing any good, right?

That's a critical question. And one better answered here than in the daily walk of life where sin can actually cause so much harm. In other words, let's work on it here so when we step out into the world, we do well and don't hurt people.

Okay. Well, here's some positive metrics. Pay attention. How often do I get caught up and swept away marveling at the love of Christ? Think about that with me.

Come on. How often do I get caught up and swept away marveling at the love of Christ? How often am I overwhelmed by the thought that Jesus loves me?

[ 41 : 29 ] How much do I think about how his love drives me to love others? Make the connection.

Remember I said earlier this week I was struggling with an attitude and I thought, well, I don't love this individual like I love my children. I thought, no, no, no, that's not good enough. I love this person like Jesus loves Tim Knoyer.

Now let's try a couple hard markers. I am struggling with loving someone when my first thought of them is not favorable and it's colored by my attitude.

I am not doing well. I'm struggling when my first thought of another person is not favorable and it is colored by my attitude.

I'm struggling with loving someone when I'm quite ready to hear negative things said about them.

Hey, surprise, I am married to Judith and Judith has been my wife for 48 years.

[ 42 : 39 ] I love her to death. I do happen to know that there are a couple idiosyncrasies in her that when she gets to heaven are going to be changed. But you don't need to tell me about them.

In fact, if you invite yourself to the conversation, I'll politely let you know it's not necessary. Right? How ready am I to listen to negative comments about other people?

I am struggling with loving someone when I am quick to misjudge their motives. It's interesting to notice. You know, you can be in the lobby and hear a parent make a comment and struggle with a child, but if you were to make the same comment, guess what happens?

Right? That's my kid. Don't do that. You see, the last thing that we need to pay attention to is this. How do I change my trajectory? How do I change being the way I naturally am? There will be no change in your life apart from genuine humility and repentance that cries out on Christ to change you.

[ 43 : 53 ] So here is a practical takeaway from this sermon that there is not a single believer here that doesn't need to hear it.

Walk out that door saying, Walk out that door saying, Lord, I need to grow in loving the brethren and I am willing to let you do whatever's necessary to change my little grayed out heart.

Not a bad thing for a pastor to preach. His third sermon from retirement.

Let's close in prayer. Not unto us, O Lord, but unto you be glory.

You have saved us in the Lord Jesus Christ. You've taken away our sin. You've made us sons of the living God.

[ 45 : 03 ] You've made us witnesses of the glory of our Redeemer. And you've put us into relationships that help us understand how much we continue to need your work.

I would pray that the word would have free course and that this day, March 29th, 2018, would be marked in our spiritual calendar as a day when we were convicted that we need to love like Jesus. And that we were willing to let you do, we pled with you to do whatever it takes to help us stop being careless with this holy responsibility.

And we give you glory in advance for what you will do in your fellowship and your people. Amen.  
John, lead us as we sing.