

Love the Lord Your God | Pastor Trenton Cornwell's first Sermon as Senior Pastor

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to the book of Matthew and join me this morning. Would you please open your Bibles and join me in the book of Matthew? I wanted to start just like that. That moment was one I've been waiting for for some time.

To start off the service just like my pastor has faithfully for 15 years, asking you to open your Bibles and to join me. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to get to say that today, and Lord willing to say it many times throughout the years.

I look forward to getting to say it when your children get married, I look forward to saying get every opportunity that I can get to please open your Bibles and to join me. I look forward to helping you say that to other people, for you to ask people to open their Bibles and to join you in Bible study and in the Bible Institute, Sunday School Classes, and Life Groups.

This is truly the desire of my heart. Watching my pastor serve all these years, I wanted to do in following his example, and I'm just so very grateful for the opportunity, and I want to do it until the Lord returns.

I ask people to open their Bibles and to join me, and so thank you. The great pursuit of my life, which would be the pursuit of your life, is to know God more, and we're going to do that by opening our Bibles and joining each other inside of God's Word, and I want to continue in doing that.

[1 : 17] First announcement that I get to make as a pastor, and I'm so glad to get to. There's so many things I'd like to say today. I don't know how any of you voted. I made sure to check on how my wife voted, all right?

And I was cheating and watching because that mattered most to me today. I wouldn't stand here today if I didn't have my wife and her support for me. But the first thing that I wanted to do, and I'm so grateful, I have a million things I'd like to say to every one of you in here, and especially the pastor and Miss Betty.

But in November, we're going to have a Founders Sunday, and we are going to have that opportunity because I know I'm not the only one that has a whole lot they want to say, to say thank you for his investment in our lives.

This is a testimony. The smooth transition to get to become the pastor is not a testimony of my ability, but it's a testimony of the way that he has led the church and that he has trained people, and I'm so very grateful.

Almost 20 years ago, I was at Ecclesia Bautista Faith, and I'm sorry, Spanish Church, that's about the extent of my Spanish. But I did say that one pretty good, and I'm so thankful that you're in here today.

[2 : 27] Pastor Jimmy, I did not know they would be here, and I'm so thankful for your friendship. And as I wrote you last night, I think one of the most important aspects of us moving forward is the strong friendship we have, and I want to continue.

I want to be the best coworker that I can be for you because you're doing an incredible job, and God's given me a job to play besides you and to help, and I want to do it to all of my glory. I love every member of this church, everybody that attends.

But at Ecclesia Bautista Faith, 20 years ago, there was a group of students that had come in. There's always people coming in there that visit, and I was telling Pastor Gardner, missionary Brother Austin at the time, I said, you really need to preach that Jonathan message about dream, discover, and determine.

You just got to preach it. I'd listened to it on his website, World Dash Evangelism. I'd heard him preach it in person, and God just really stirred my heart by hearing that message preached.

And there was a bunch of people in that building that day, and I said, you got to preach this message. I know that it will make a difference. And he took out his outline, and he said, it isn't me that makes a difference.

[3 : 33] It's God's Word that makes a difference. And he said, you should preach it. And he let me stand up there and preach his message to those people. And it was not very pretty. I'm sure it wasn't.

No, it wasn't very long. It was probably a little less biblical than how he preached it. But God's Word worked, and I was amazed by it. And God had given me the desire of my heart to give me a spiritual father that would mentor me.

And I knew in that moment that if I would stay close to his side, that whatever God had called me to do, that God would use him. I stand here by God's grace today, but God's grace in my life was to put me into their home and into their family.

And so I'm excited in November that we're going to have an opportunity, a Sunday, a Founder Sunday, where all of us get the opportunity to express our love and appreciation for all they've done.

For over 15 years, he has put in 10 to 20 hours a week in preparing sermons. But also during that time, he has put that amount of time in preparing preachers that will preach in places that he will never go, in places in history that he will never have the opportunity to be in.

[4 : 35] And I'm grateful to be one of those preachers. Also thankful as his pastor, and I've kind of been looking forward to that. You have to let him hear the ringtone that I gave him for him when I call him to let him know that I'm the pastor.

And they announced that on Friday, he got some information on the biopsy that was taken. I praise God we didn't have to wait until the 21st that he got information yesterday.

I praise God that the doctors see a way in which he can continue the travel and to do what God has called him to do in the next stage of ministry as he gets his treatment, immunotherapy, and different things that he'll have to do.

We're not naive to believe that it will be easy, but there definitely is a plan that is in place, and I am so thankful for it. I am so relieved and grateful that that's how God has chosen to work at this time, and we rejoice with you.

All right, so I'd like for you to turn with me to Matthew chapter number 22. So I had some people said, What's going to happen today? You're already planning to preach before the vote. Well, I have two sermons here, okay?

[5 : 41] And I promise you this is much nicer than the other sermon that I had planned for today. No, I'm just kidding. I had one passage, and I thought if this was my first sermon as the pastor or if it was my last one as having been, this is certainly the place that I knew that I wanted to go, and I've known it for a couple months now that this is the passage that I would want to go to.

I'd like to give you a little bit of context before I read it with you. And I'm going to read starting at verse number 34. We're at the week of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus has already entered into the city. He's already turned over the money changers at a time near the Passover, so that his turning over of the money changers cost them a lot of money.

It was at a time where they would have been making a lot of money through the process. So he had angered the people. And so he comes back to the town. He comes to a time of questioning from the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

And this group's mad at him because he taught something that was contrary to what they were teaching. He's mad because of the influence that they had with the people and the clear ability in God's hand through all that was going on.

And so they wanted to kill him, but they knew that it would be difficult because of the following that he had. So they knew if they just killed him, there would be an uprising of the people. So here in this passage, they're going to try to bring a series of questions to him that are designed to discredit him.

[7 : 02] Matthew 22, we had seen three different parables that were given. And every one of those parables said that these people, these false teachers, these religious people that were rejecting Jesus were going to be excluded from the kingdom of God.

There's a story about a son who said he was going to obey, and he didn't. And there's a story about a tenant farmer who ran off, that they ran off people. And then when the son came to collect, they killed the son.

And then we get a story where a wedding is going to take place, and the people that were invited were refused to come. And as these stories were being told, the people, it says in Matthew 21, verse 45, And when the chief priests and the Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of them, which is convenient because he spoke of them.

And so as he gave these parables, he said they understood that he was speaking about them. And so when they get to them and they're asking questions, starting in verse 15, they start off on a question about taxes.

And they think that in the question about taxes, that they're going to be in a situation where he's going to have to say something that's either going to upset the Jewish people or the Romans. They had put him in this situation. The second question was this crazy hypothetical question about if a man was to die and that his brother was to raise a child with his wife, his widowed wife, then in the resurrection, whose wife would it be?

[8 : 22] And then the third question, this is the one that we're going to get to right now, after the question is asked and answered, it says in Mark 12, 34, And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God, and no man has durst ask him any question.

After this question is asked, they're going to be quiet for a while because his answer is so complete and so thorough, but it's so simple. And so a Pharisee, one that they would call a lawyer, an expert in the law, is going to come and ask this last question.

And I want to read with you Matthew 34 through 40 before I pray. But when the Pharisees had heard that they had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. And they should be happy.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees, though they were on opposite teams at times, they should have been happy that the Sadducees had been silenced because they were opposing of each other.

But the Pharisees weren't because they had a common enemy, which was the person of Jesus Christ. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asking him a question, tempting, which means they were testing him and saying.

[9 : 32] So here was an expert in law, expert in the first five books of the Old Testament, comes to Jesus and says, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is likened to it.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Heavenly Father, I ask that you would be with us now, Lord, in a short amount of time.

Lord, I am so very grateful for this church and this congregation. But Lord, the greatest news that could ever be announced is that your son lived a perfect life, died a perfect death in my place, and in the place of everybody in here.

And today, Lord, on the first day of the week, we have gathered to worship you, to celebrate the resurrection. And Lord, I pray that you would help me as we look at your word today, Lord, show the sincerity and the simplicity that should be found in our faith as people that love you and that love our neighbor.

[10 : 40] In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. So when this lawyer came and he asked a question, I don't know if it was something that was original to him or if it was a question that everybody had put him up to it. If you read in other parts of the Bible, you'll see that he seems to have some sincerity about him because of the way that he responds.

So maybe he is kind of inquiring about Jesus, but he also is going to take this opportunity. I'll be the one to ask him this question. I will go forward. And so where does this question come from, which is the greatest commandment?

See, they were always wanting to put Jesus against the word. They always wanted to put Jesus against Moses. Moses was the hero of them for their story. He was the one that had written the law for them.

And so they thought if they could put him in a situation where he would say something against Moses, then they would have a good case in which they could kill him because they had blasphemed against Moses.

So the man walks up and he says, what is the greatest commandment? I'm sure you've been told this before, but they had 613 different laws, 248 that were affirming, 365 that were negative.

[11 : 43] How did they come up with this 613 different laws? Some said that it was one for every letter in Exodus 20 of when the law had been given, plus 7 for completion. Others said it was one for every day of the year, plus the amount of body parts that we have.

And if you're not keeping up with this, that's okay because you're not supposed to. It's just absolutely crazy the fact that they would have these lists of laws. And they were always trying to weigh them out to see which one was greater.

Matthew 23, 34, for they, speaking of the Pharisees, bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

And so when they were talking about these laws, they talked about them concerning weight. They were talking about heavy and they were talking about light ones. And so they would spend days and hours arguing over the value of the different laws, which one was greater.

So when they come to Jesus and they ask him and he answers, and they're trying to put him at odds with Moses, Jesus quotes from Moses words in the book of Deuteronomy.

[12 : 48] And he says something they would have been very familiar with. And Deuteronomy 6, 4, it says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might.

Jesus answers them. Jesus brought an undeniable simplicity than what they tried to make hard and complicated. You know, false religions of the world are doing that.

South America, we have the Holtz here in Catholicism. They do that. In every false religion of the world, they try to take something and they try to complicate it. And they try to put themselves between you and your God.

They try to give you a list of rules to follow. And what is the reward of following all those rules? Is another list of rules to follow. Because they want to complicate something that should have been given to us simply in the love the Lord your God.

But not only is it people that teach in a false religion around the world, but you and I, we go on to complicate things in our own lives. We want to make things that are simple. We want to make them complicated.

[13 : 48] This is why this passage meant so much to me over the last month. Something I'd like to say to you personally here. That there would be no way for me to continue spinning all the plates that need to be spun in any church.

There's no way for me to do all that God has called us to do. There's no way to think about all the things that God would have us to do as a church here and around the world. But if I look at my faith and religion as a list of things to do, we will all implode.

We will all die. But it's not my job that's spin plates. It's my job to love the Lord my God with all of my heart. And as an overflow of that, I'm going to love you. And I'm going to love everybody that God allows me the opportunity to serve.

I want to encourage you today. If you think that your Christian life is heavy and it's a burden and that the yoke is not easy, it may be that you have complicated something that was made to be simple, which is you need to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul.

All your mind. It's on these two commandments that hang all the law and the prophets. So if loving Jesus will not sustain this ministry and it will not allow us to do that all that God has called us to do, then we do not need to be sustained.

[15 : 02] And we do not need to continue. That loving Jesus will create the overflow that's needed for us to do that all that God has called us to do. So what exactly is this commandment that's given in verse 37?

Thou shalt love the Lord the God with all thy heart and all thy soul and with all thy mind, first in the great commandment. It's to love the Lord. Love the Lord our God. This week at Vacation Bible School at Believers Baptist Church, some of us went there to help Brother Wayne, heard a testimony from a man.

And he was a drug dealer and he had been dealing and he found this person that he used to sell drugs to and he couldn't believe how healthy they looked and how happy they were. And he said, what's going on? And they invited him to church.

And so he said, I was just going to church because I was attracted to this girl and I wanted to know what was going on. And he said, I went in the church and he said, out of nowhere, I ran full speed into Jesus Christ, my Lord.

And he radically changed my life. And he learned that not only does God love him, but he learned that he was the Lord and he deserved the right to be worshipped. And he told me with tears in his eyes how much he loved the Lord.

[16 : 09] He loved the sovereign king of the universe who gave him the gospel that took him to the church that day. And he was never the same. You should love the Lord our God.

He has full rights to everything in this universe and he has full rights to your life from the top of your head to the bottom of your foot. And it's the most incredible thing in all of the world.

I wish everybody could have the joy and I believe that you can. Every one of you have the opportunity to have the joy of the day to know that God had ordered your steps. As I stand here today, I had the great privilege of being your next pastor.

I realized the day that every trial that I'd ever been through, every hardship that I'd ever been through, anything that had ever happened in my life, God had not wasted, but he had used it in my life to prepare me to be the shepherd of this congregation.

You know how wonderful it is to worship a God who knows and sees all, that not only sees you in this situation, but he sees down the road and what he needs. It is incredible to worship the Lord our God.

[17 : 13] He is our Lord and he deserves our allegiance and he deserves everything that we have. And I love him so very much. I love the Lord so very much.

And I want you to know that. I want you to know why that I love him. I love the Lord and he is my God and he is the Lord thy God. It's personal. I pray that it's personal for you.

It's not just a series of the lessons that we have taught you. It's not just academic knowledge, but it's love. James 2, 19, thou believest that there is one God, but thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble.

Now, six-year-old Salem would like to be baptized. And as we were talking to her, and I believe that she is born again. I believe God has done a work in her life. But as I would talk to her and she would say, I believe, I would say, okay, Salem, let's talk about why should you be baptized?

And she would say, I need to be baptized because I believe in God. And I tell her, even the devil believes that there is a God. That believing that there is a God is not belief.

[18 : 15] It is not what redeems us, it's not what saves us. What saves us is that we know him and that we love him. God wants and he deserves our loves. 1 John 4, 19, we love him because he first loved us.

And so I not only know him, belief was, it was a starting point, but I know him and I love him. I pray that every one of you in here could say that. Not only do you know him, but you love him.

And knowing him, you will love him if you allow him to be the Lord of your life. A story that I've told many times, but some of you wouldn't know it. And those that do, I want to remind you.

God gripped my heart for the country of India when Pastor Gardner and Brother John and some others, we were there on the riverbanks of the Ganges. And as we were looking at the river that was there, a young boy walks up to me and he takes me by the hand and he takes me down to the river where they were burning these bodies.

And he wanted me to come look at it. And with this full of emotion, he told me to come and see. This young man thought he had found the way that he would escape a cycle of reincarnation.

[19 : 22] This man thought he found something that was lovely. And he took me by the hand and he wanted to take me to it and explain to me how wonderful it was. I pray that every one of you in here have found that in Jesus, we have found something where we can say, come and see.

And if I could take you by the hand today and I could take you to the foot of the cross and I could show you Jesus, I would see, would you see that he is wonderful? He knows you completely and he loves you.

You're accepted and you belong in Christ Jesus. He knew you that while you were still an enemy of him, he went and he died on a cross for you. How wonderful is that?

That Jesus Christ would die in your place. And so I would invite you to come and see. And so we're not only called to know about him, but we are told that we can know him. He can be thy God.

I pray that he is of you today. 1 John 4, 8. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. If you don't love him, then you truly don't know him.

[20 : 23] You may know facts that have been passed down through you from tradition. You may have picked up some facts about him through Sunday school and life groups in our church. But if you don't love him, you do not truly know him.

And then that leads us to the question, how are we to love him? And it's said here, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, with all thy mind. We'll look at Thursday night, what it means, all thy heart, what's on the inside, that B level that we talk about so often, and B, do serve, train, the one that nobody can see, that is fully given to God, the one from our heart, that all the issues of life will come, who we truly are on the inside, and in our soul, which represents our emotion, and our feeling, and our intellect, and our will.

Matthew 26, 38. Then sayeth he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tear ye here, and watch with me, our soul that can fill that emotions. All my emotions are giving fully over to him, and all thy mind.

In Deuteronomy, it says might. This isn't that Jesus can't quote the memory verse, that he learned through Awana, and saying it wrong, is that the word might here, is synonymous here, with our mind, our whole being, our will to make decisions.

So everything that's inside of me, every part of my emotion, every decision that I am to make, is to be given to him in love, because the emphasis here is on all.

[21 : 50] All those categories, the heart, the soul, and the mind, those categories, they overlap, and they're supposed to, because it's supposed to say that nothing is left. In Mark, it adds all thy strength, which would include every fiber of my being physically.

Everything that I have, and everything that I owe, should be screaming that I love Jesus, and that he belongs, every part of it belongs to him. And that's not just true of me, but that's true of every one of you.

That's true of every one of the person on this planet, that we should worship him. Eli and I met a really, we met a guy on a basketball court the other day, at Vacation Bible School, and so I decided when we went there, that I would find the meanest, and the toughest guy, in case things went bad, I'd either know if he was on my side or not.

All right? And so I went to the man, and I said, can we talk to the guys on the court, and invite him Vacation Bible School, and I said, do you know Jesus? And this man looked at me, and he says, do I know Jesus?

I love Jesus. He said, Jesus is number one in my life, and he was speaking now, so that everybody could hear what he was saying, which made my job a lot easier, right? And he said, do I know Jesus?

[22 : 59] I love Jesus. And he said, if Jesus isn't number one in your life, he's not in your life at all, because Jesus, and he's talking to everybody now, because he says, Jesus only deserves first place in our lives.

And that is so true. But I remember as a high school student, writing out a list of ten things, that were most important in my relationship, and being so proud, that I'd put God number one upon my list.

And I remember a Bible teacher coming to me, with a marker and saying, is God not only supposed to be number one on your list, but he's supposed to be number one, on the thing that's number two on your list. And he's supposed to be number one in your family.

And he's supposed to be number one at your workplace. And that he is the number one on everything on my list, because he deserves my everything. He deserves my all. He deserves my all.

And so how do I know if that's happening in my life? How am I going to know if that's happening in this church? How do I know if we're not just maintaining what happened in the last generation, and we look good to everybody on the outside, but God is not producing through us what he wants for this world and the community?

[24 : 01] How do I know if we're truly loving God, and it's overflowing? Jesus was asked one question, but he answers more than one question, because he knows what man truly needs. How do I know if this is really happening in my life?

Here's the great value of knowing the second greatest commandment, verse 39. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Like unto it.

Not just like unto it, because they're both dealing with love, but like unto it, because they are connected one to another. John 14, 15. If you love me, keep my commandments.

Did you know that all those 613 laws, Paul says they wouldn't be needed. Romans chapter number 13, verses 8 through 10. Paul's speaking about the different laws that are given.

Romans 13, it says, O, no man anything but to love one another. For he that loveth another has fulfilled the law. For this thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill.

[24 : 59] Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet. And if there be any other commandment, if it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, because love worketh no ill to his neighbor.

Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. You know, in my home, we don't have rules about stealing. We don't have written rules about so many things.

Because what is the law in our homes? It's the law of love. What's the problem when one of the kids steals from another one? It happens. Some of you are like, I don't have a rule about stealing. Oh, we have a rule about stealing, but it's not listed upon the wall.

Because what is the rule of our home? It's love. That it should be loving. Paul says, all these rules that are being listed, they'd be fulfilled if you would love your neighbor. You don't love your neighbor when you kill your neighbor.

You don't love your neighbor when you do all the things that have been mentioned here. So the second commandment, it's the fulfilling of the first one. So that overflow of our love for the Lord is going to show itself in our love for one another.

[26 : 05] And speaking of people I love is Alex Montero. All right. Thank you so much, Alex. Another, and so we find in Luke chapter number 10, verse number 25.

I'm thankful to get to be the pastor at the church where Alex Montero got saved and baptized. I love him so much. Another lawyer asked a similar question, Luke chapter number 10, verse number 25.

I need to move on from that. I know that I do, but I can't because it was an act of love. Nobody told Alex he needed to do that, except if his wife's here, she probably did, right? She probably told him too.

But Alex just loves me. And so he didn't want to be a slobbering mess in front of everybody up here. And it was about to happen. All right. And these are some quality napkins you got right here. Felt like I ripped my nose off.

So in Luke chapter number 10, in verse number 25, another lawyer, another person who was an expert in the law, he is going to ask a question and asking that question, it's going to give us some understanding of what the second commandment should look like in our lives.

[27 : 14] And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? What a great question. Most important question to ever ask. And Jesus sends him to the most important place to ever go.

Luke 10, 26. And he said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? Now, Jesus Christ and his earthly ministry, when people ask him the most important questions, he not only gave them the answer, but he made sure that they knew that it was in the word of God.

When you truly love people, you don't just give them the answers. You make sure they know that they can go to the place that has all the answers. You make sure that they know that the answer that they're receiving is not from you, but it's from the God of heaven.

And so he answers. He says, he could have answered any way that he wanted to. And when I mean any way, he could have written it in the sky, he could have spoken, but he takes them into God's word and he shows them in God's word what is written.

And the lawyer knew the answer. Luke 10, 27. And answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.

[28 : 16] They knew it, but they ignored it. And they made it as just a list of rules to follow, but they didn't treat it as the greatest. The lawyer had a follow-up question and he wanted to make sure he was getting what was said.

He wanted to make sure he was getting it right. Because if he would follow the law of love, he wouldn't have to worry about fulfilling the second great commandment. It would naturally happen. But the tendency is, tell me what it looks like and I will make it happen.

And that's what religion knows all the time. Tell me what it looks like and I will try to replicate it in my life without love for God, without love for other people. How do I treat people? No marriage is sustained like that.

No relationship is sustained like that. And so Jesus then goes and gives them, gives him a story, gives him a parable. Because he says, you say that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor, so I really need to know who is my neighbor?

What is the proximity? What does it have to be like for a person to be my neighbor? And you know the story of the Good Samaritan. A man was going down the road and he was beaten by thieves and he said that he was half dead.

[29 : 19] And as he was there, a priest walked by him and looked at him and offered him no hope. A Levite walks by him and not only doesn't help him, goes to the other side of the road.

A little add insult to injury there, right? But then the Good Samaritan comes in and takes what he has and he takes care of the man. And so Luke 10, 29, he said unto them, thou hast answered right to this do and thou shalt live.

But he willing to justify himself said unto Jesus, who is my neighbor? And Jesus' answer in Luke 10, 36 and 37, which now these three thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves.

And he said, he that showed mercy on him then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise. He said, which one of these guys was the neighbor?

And he said, the man decided who was going to be the neighbor. Being a neighbor had nothing to do with nationality. It had nothing to do with profession or even proximity. It had everything to do with demonstrating love.

[30 : 22] If I'm going to be a person and we are going to be a church that really loves the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and mind, it is going to overflow in a love for our neighbor. And our neighbor is going to be those that we have the opportunity.

You see these people on the walls here? And I think about them that aren't here, our missionaries here today. These people aren't just pictures on the wall. These are our family. This is our family that went outside of our church building to go tell our neighbors about Jesus.

They are the people that went out and they decided there's places in this world and they don't think that they're our neighbors, but they're going to be our neighbors because we're going to send people to them and we're going to care about them.

Why? Because in loving God, we have learned how to love this world. And so we do not just love those that look like us because if we did, we'd be loving our reflection.

We do not just love those that are just far away because if that was the case, we would just deserve notoriety and a venture. We do not just love those that are close to us. That would just be lazy.

[31 : 25] But we love every person in this world and that's obedience. We love every person in this world because the type of love that God has for us that is overflowing our heart is one that does not discriminate, one that does not hold back, one that spins extravagantly to get the gospel to people.

If I could tell you all that God has done in my life, you would know that He has not reserved any good thing to me, that at all great cost, He came and He lived the perfect life and He died for me and He has given me so much.

And if you would know what God had done in your life so that you would hear the gospel, you would know that He has spent extravagantly for you, that all that He had done, like the father in the story of the prodigal son, He gave and He continues to give and He receives us as His own.

So the greatest greeting that we could ever have as a church, Ephesians chapter number 6 and 24. Ephesians 6, 24. It says, I pray that we are a church that will love the Lord in all sincerity.

I pray that we will continue to be a church that loves the Lord in all sincerity. And as a result of that, our love will overflow to everybody in this community, everybody in your family that doesn't know yet Christ, every part of this world.

[32 : 48] We can and should be known for many things. But if it's not true that we love the Lord with all of our heart, we will never fulfill any of the commands that He gave us. We will never fulfill that great commission He's given if we don't first love the Lord with all of our heart and love our neighbors as ourselves.

If you're an unbeliever in here today, and I want you to know that it's common for you not to love the Lord, that man in his natural state does not love the Lord with all of his heart, with all of his soul and all of his mind.

You may have respect for Him. You may have some interest in Him. You may like what He's done to bring some order into your life. But if you have not put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and love Him as the Lord of your life, I would encourage you today.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter number 16, verse 22, If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatham. If you do not love the Lord, then you will be accursed from Him.

You will be separated for all eternity. He calls on you to believe in Him and to love Him. And I would ask every one of you. I'm also in here, I'm burdened for the experts of the law.

[33 : 54] It says, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. You see, believing is one step short of what? Of loving. This man believed many things about Jesus, but he did not love Him.

It's not enough. It's not enough to be in a church that says, Would you please open your Bible and join me? It's not enough just to know the things of the Bible. Do you love Him with your whole heart and your whole mind and everything that is inside of you?

I'm also burdened in here today for those of you that have complicated your faith and in the process you have lost your first love. If you're looking for 613 rules to follow, you're looking for some type of order that will make you feel like you belong.

We most certainly will need teachers in our church and we need volunteers in so many different ministries. But above all, we need believers who love God with everything that is in them and that they love their neighbors as their self.

And so I want to keep things simple and I want to keep things sincere. And I believe, as pastors told me, that if we will continue to be faithful to His Word and if we will continue to love the Lord, our God, with everything that is in Him, that is in us, then the overflow of that love is going to allow us to see more things in the generations to come.

[35 : 08] More people reach with the gospel. More missionaries sent to Taiwan and then sent right back to Taiwan. We're going to send them right back as soon as we can and there's more coming, all right? Because Taiwan, you're our neighbor.

You may not know this, but we have a message for you. And there's people in this community that do not know what it means to be loved by God, that the love that you have for God is going to overflow and it's going to change their lives.

And just like that man walked into a church that one day and he encountered something that he never thought he would encounter again, I pray that God will send many people to encounter the love of God that is overflowing from our lives.

And I want to ask you today, do you love Him with everything that is in you? But if you don't, I want to show you. I want to open my Bible and I want to show you because He is so wonderful and He is so loving and there's nothing in all this world that would compare to Him.

We're going to pray here in a second. I'm going to ask you to make a decision. It was quite humbling to know a moment ago that my brothers and sisters were making a decision. As you took out a card and you made a decision that would affect my future and the snow cone industry that I thought I might be headed into today if you didn't vote for me to be the next pastor.

[36 : 18] And I'm so grateful that you felt that's what God would have you to do and you vote your conscience. But I'm asking for a decision that is far more important today. I'm asking not only will we be a church, but will we be a church that loves the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and mind.

And I'm going to ask Stephanie to meet me at the altar and I'm going to pray because when all the things that come on that want to pull me away from what is the simple and sincere faith of loving God and loving my neighbor, I need friends and brothers and sisters that bring us back to the greatest commandment and the second which is unlike it.

And I'm asking you to embrace the simple and sincerity and say, God, I want to renew my commitment to loving you and letting that being seen in our love for the neighbors here and around the world.

I ask that you come to the altar and pray with me. But if not, I would ask that you make an altar there in your seat by bowing your head and praying. But every one of us, when you encounter Jesus, there's only one decision you can make.

To make him the Lord of your life and love him with everything or to walk away and reject him. And it was said of the man that was an expert of the law, he almost came. He almost came. Don't be there today.

[37 : 23] I'm going to first of all give you an opportunity. If you're like that man and you've been around this thing but you say my heart is not in this, then let your heart be in it. Throw your heart and everything else behind it because he is so worthy of it.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I pray to you today as the Lord and my God and I love you with all that is in me. And Lord, I'm so thankful to be part of a church where there's people that feel the same way.

But Lord, I come today and I'm asking you if that there's anybody in here today, Lord, that is, they may even consider themselves an expert of the law. They know your word, but their heart is not fully given to you.

Today would be the day of their salvation. They would put their faith and trust in you. With every head bowed and every eye closed and Kristen plays the piano. You know, the greatest challenge in a decision like that is that you would recognize your lostness.

You would recognize that even though you've been around church and religion, that you have never put your faith and trust in Jesus. So the first thing that you're going to have to decide today is to be honest before the God of heaven.

[38 : 26] And so I'd like to ask you to do that. If you're in here today and you've never put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, would you take the first step, which is to be honest? And if you were to be honest, I would give you some steps of how you could find somebody in another room that would give you the Bible.

Is there anybody in here today that says, I've never put my faith and trust, I've never loved the Lord with all my heart and soul and mind? If that's you in here today, would you raise your hand and express your honesty before the Lord?

If you're in here today and you can say, as I have said, that I am a follower of Jesus Christ and I love him, would I ask you to make a decision, not only for yourself and for your family, but for this church, that you will renew your commitment to love the Lord with all your heart and all your soul and love your neighbor as yourself.

As you're praying there in your seats and some have come to pray here at the altar, would you make that prayer today? And then after you're done praying, we'll stand and we'll sing together.