

# John: The Gospel of Love

October 20, 2024

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled, John, the Gospel of Love. Thank you to Rhonda, Glynnis, Amy, Don, and Ed for being part of the service. The scripture reading is John 3 16 to 18. Happy birthday this week to Ivy.

## Welcome, Prayer, Announcements

Good morning, everyone. Tina, who's not here today, is having a birthday. And Johnny and Jo are having an anniversary. I think it's about their 95th, but I'm not sure. It's close to it. 71 years, Johnny and Jo have been married. Which is good.

Wednesday nights, some of us gather in the library, which is over there. And we have a Bible study, and it's an excellent Bible study. This week, we're doing Psalms 23 and Mark 15. And I even had somebody from the community ask me the other day if she could come with me this Wednesday. So I think she's going to do that.

Neema and Peter. If you don't know who Neema and Peter are, Peter is Aisha and Mariam and Jonathon's uncle. And he married someone named Neema, and they are going to have a baby. And we were going to have a shower for them. But there were so many people with COVID rate at that time we canceled the shower. So they got a stroller, a car seat, and a bunting bag, which are three big essentials. And I think with a little bit of luck, we're going to watch a video from them.

Praise the Lord, everybody! We just take this opportunity to say thanks for everything you've done for us. And we really appreciate for that, me and my wife. Yeah, thank you so much. And thanks so much. Be blessed. Thank you.

And Pam's father is having some health issues, as is Pam. Dianne's neighbor, Rene, is having some health issues, but she's home from the hospital now. And Lillian Barnes passed away, and she is an aunt to Earl Clint. So those are some people to keep your thoughts and your prayers. And let us pray before we carry on with our worship.

Thank you, God, for your love and for your care. And we pray, God, that in our sadness and in our happiness and in our good health and in our bad health no matter what our circumstances, that you will use our circumstances to glorify you and that you will be glorified through us and through who we are and through who we are because of Christ living in us. And we pray that we will always be your people and give us faith. And may we always trust in and rely on and cling to you and make a difference in the world. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Communion

Good morning. It's so good to see my Beamsville church family. It's awesome. It really is. I have had the great pleasure to start studying the Bible with my granddaughter Zoë. I have learned so much by studying with her. It's been the most wonderful experience for me. And of course, that's what happens when we share our faith. And one of the things that I really wanted to focus a lot on is how much that God loves us. And because I really do believe that that, the love that he gives to

us, us embracing that love becomes part of our faith. And so this morning, knowing that we were going to talk about love, I went to another gospel, well, it's not a gospel, but a book of love. And that was 1 John 4. And I'm going to read verses seven to 19. I'm going to try and read it like a conversation or a discussion with someone.

Dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us. He has given us of his spirit. And we have seen and testify that the father has sent his son to be the savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love that God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment.

Semicolon there, or a colon there. I love this because this is how in this world because of Jesus, we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. There is no fear in love. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. We forget that sometimes, don't we? Forget that a lot of times. We often forget that. In fact, probably if we're honest, we forget that almost more than we remember it, not even almost. We forget to be loving. We forget to be like Jesus. We forget that we are dearly loved. We feel lost, alone, angry, rebellious. Verse 16a says, "And so we know and rely "on the love that God has for us."

A little Facebook, I'm always talking about Facebook up here, a little Facebook post came up and I thought, oh my word, this is exactly what we need to do when we forget, because we forget. You've got to preach the word to yourself when fear creeps in. Remember that Jesus says to fear not. When you feel like you cannot go on, remember his grace is sufficient. When you doubt his love, remember nothing, and no one can separate you from it. When you feel like you've been abandoned, remember he will never leave you or forsake you. God's love wraps around us in our first place. Forgetfulness, like wrapping us in his loving arms. All we have to do is relax into those arms. Sobbing child who relaxes into their comforting mother or father. This is what we remember as we take our communion. God loves us. Let's pray.

Dearest Lord God, truly we are so thankful that you give us this remembrance, the bread, the fruit of the vine. God, you give us two very concrete things to help remind us of how intense your love is, how filled with grace it is, how so often when we forget you that you're just waiting there to love us and to wrap us in your arms, to extend your forgiveness. God, we are so grateful that Jesus died. Without it, God, we would never have a chance of ever being happy. And with you, we know we can be happy. We can be happy in Jesus. God, we thank you so much. We pray your blessing as we remember your sacrifice and as we remember that we can rely on you. In Jesus name we pray, amen.

## Reading

### John 3:16-18

The reading this morning is taken from John 3, 16 through 18. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but shall have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only son.

## Sermon

### John: The Gospel of Love

Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for being with us. In the Gospel of John, the word love is used 57 times. It's used more often than in the three other Gospels combined. The greatest command is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The question would be why? Maybe the answer would be because God, his love for us is measurable. John also writes first, second, and third John and also the book of Revelation. So, the word love is going to be repeated and I think in today's world that's okay. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have life eternal. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him. There's so much condemnation in the world today so we need to go back and listen to the words of Jesus and John and others.

In chapter 5 and 42 Jesus said but I know you and I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts and so Jesus said you diligently study the scriptures. I try to do that. You diligently study the scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the scriptures that testify about me Jesus said, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. And then in chapter 8 Jesus said to them if God were your father you would love me for I came from God and now I am here. See they were waiting for the Messiah and he was standing right in front of them looking for the Messiah and Jesus was right there and Jesus is right here. I'll never leave you, I'll never forsake you, I am with you always. Even until the end of the world and even after that I am with you. So I love that scripture because I love scriptures but there's something beyond scripture and that's love itself, the love of Christ.

In chapter 8 and 42 of John Jesus said to them if God were your father you would love me for I came from God and now I am here and as I said they're waiting for this Messiah and he's standing right in front of them and he's standing right in front of us. A new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you and then if you love me you will obey what I command. Verse 21 whoever has my commands and obeys them he is the one who loves me. There was this argument, this wrangling all throughout the New Testament trying to understand what this is all about and Jesus comes along and demonstrates himself and John himself if you love me you will obey what I command. Verse 21 whoever has my commands and obeys them he is the one who loves me and it's true it's one thing to love and then it's another thing to actually put it into practice. 14 and 21 again John continually repeating the words of Jesus whoever has my commands and obeys them he's the one who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by the father.

And then in chapter 14 if anyone loves me he will obey my teaching my father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Have you ever thought that Jesus lives in your house because he lives in you. We don't have to search for him he's always with us. What did he say? I will never leave you, I will never forsake you. I often think of when our children were quite, quite young and go in and checking on them at night and you see them peacefully sleeping just checking in maybe sneak over and give them a little kiss. You know when we're sleeping at night our father is looking at us he's over us he's with us and I suppose if there's a spiritual kiss he's doing that too. This word love is used so often but when it really comes home it's perfect. As I've said many of us when we have our children and our children are wrestling and they can't really sleep and so forth and we hold them in our arms and then finally you can feel the peace where the baby just goes and sleep. This is not just dramatic language it's the reality of how God loves us and because he loves us he wants us to remain in his love. He said this is love. Love each other. There's self-love but there's also the love of serving others.

So in 21 and 15 it says when Jesus and his disciples had finished eating Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon son of John do you love me more than these? Yes Lord he said you know that I love you and Jesus said then feed my lambs meaning if you love me and I love you share that with others. Feed my sheep. Again Jesus said Simon son of John do you truly love me? And he answered yes Lord and he answered yes Lord you know that I love you and then the third time he says to him Simon son of John do you love me? And like us Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him for the third time do you love me and he said Lord you know all things. You know that I love you and then Jesus said and I think there was a pause. If you really love me feed my sheep. Share your love. Love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control. It's all part of God's love and the fact is that he pours out his love into our hearts. Like parents and all of us looking at a crib where the baby is asleep there's nothing better there's nothing greater. This is this attachment of love and that's how God sees us this attachment of love looking at us loving us caring for us. It's not just words but it's the reality and John makes it very, very clear when Jesus and his disciples had finished eating Jesus said to Simon Peter John do you truly love me? And he said yes Lord you know that I love you and that's repeated throughout several times in this. So he says if you do love me take care of my sheep. Take care of my lambs. Take care of people.

I tell you the truth that when you were younger you dressed yourself where you wanted to go and when you're old your hands will be stretched out. He's talking about the crucifixion of Jesus and then in the concluding book of John he says this Jesus did many other things as well and I think that when we get to heaven one of the first things I'd like to do is tell me more. Tell me more. Because he says if every one of them were written down I suppose that the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. Tell me more. Tell me more.

And then we have another book written by John. It's called appropriately First John. This is the message that we've heard from him and declare to you. God is light in him. There is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us purifies us from all sin. Don are you a sinner? Yeah I'm a sinner. Jesus is going to say I think you need to stop and think about that. Have I sinned? Oh yes. Are you a sinner? No Lord. You wrap your arms around us. You promised in us God the Father, God the Son,

God the Holy Spirit. And when we do sin there is someone who is an advocate for us as Holy Spirit encouraging us to remember to live in love.

How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called children of God and that is what we are. I remember a long, long time ago when Rhiannon and Bryan were in the bathtub and they had put all kinds of bubbles in the bathtub and bubbles flying everywhere lavished upon everywhere and we walked into the washroom and they were there they were having so much fun they were absolutely lathered in foam, lathered in soap but most importantly lathered in safety and joy and that's how God sees us. And this is His command to believe in the Son of God and to love one another as He has commanded. Those who obey His commands will live in Him and He in them and this is what we know that He lives in us by the Holy Spirit of God that is given to us.

And so in chapter 4 we love because He first loved us and whoever loves God must also love his brother and sister. Don do you love me? God says yes God loves us. Do you love Jesus? Yes then love your neighbor then love your neighbor. See your neighbors as brothers and sisters. And then in third John, dear friend I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all will get along with you even as your soul is getting along.

And then we come to the last part in John's writings of Revelation, the apocryphal book. I must admit that Revelation still is a difficulty for me in studying it. It reminds me of the Wizard of Oz, all the different pictures and stories and everything else. What's actually going on? When you read Revelation it is sometimes quite difficult but at the end everything is good. The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show His servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John who testifies to everything that he saw in Revelation. And that is the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ to Him who loves us and freed us from our sin by His blood and has made us, made us, listen to this, who has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father. Who knew that we're all priests?

And now in this short sermon, now the dwelling of God is with us. The dwelling of God is here among us. And I don't know how you're feeling. But God does. And now the dwelling of God is with us. He lives with us and He will wipe every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death, no more mourning, no more crying, no more pain for the old order of things has passed away. We'll see our loved ones again. Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you today and forevermore. Amen.

## Closing

We can talk about the love of God. It seems like an idea out there. It's hard to grasp all that is involved with that, how he loves us and cares for us. It's another matter to take this love and actually be able to live it in some positive way. I would suggest to you that we choose love whenever we are joyful and we spread that joy to other people. We choose love when we choose peace, when we decide that we're going to get along with each other and that we're going to care for each other. We choose love every time we're patient. We choose love every time we are kind. To be kind, you have to listen to people and you have to listen to what their needs are and then you have to push into their life with things that are helpful. We choose love every time we choose

goodness. We choose love every time we choose being faithful. We choose love every time we're gentle. We choose love when we have self-control.

In my life, one of the things I promised Rhonda when we were married, we wrote our own vows and I promised that I would live harmoniously with her until I die. Now you can say that I'm going to live in harmony. It's a whole different thing to actually live in harmony.

The scriptures tell us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Quick to listen, actually listening to the words, listening to the voice inflection, observing the physical way in which the person presents the ideas to you. I can suggest if I did this to Rhonda, if I said to her, [angrily] "I love you," it probably does not come across appropriately. You have to choose the voice inflection and the words and deliver them in a way that the message gets through. Quick to listen, listen to the words, listen to the words, the ideas between the words, listen to the emotion. Quick to listen, slow to speak. There's a pause between the time you intake this information and you respond to it. That pause is very important because it helps you to choose the right words and the right attitude and the right voice inflection. And then be slow to anger. You're quick to listen and slow to speak, you're more likely to say things that are appropriate, not throw gasoline on the fire and that you'll say the things that are appropriate and be under control.

So love is a very, very important concept in our lives because it creates relationships that are meaningful. For one time, talking to a student at Great Lakes, and I asked her if she was going to be returning the next year to school and she said no, my parents can't afford for me and my brother to be here next year. We weren't able to pay off our bill for the year. So I went to the office and they said, "How much is on that bill?" She told me and my wife and I decided that we would pay the bill off. Pay the bill off and I saw the student a month later and I said, "Are you coming back to Great Lakes?" And she said, "Yes, my bill has been paid. It's a miracle. I challenge you this week to participate in people's miracle because you have the love of God in your heart." Let's pray.

Our Father in Heaven, we are grateful for your love. We're grateful for the example of your love in Jesus. We're grateful for your love in creation and making it possible for us to live on this planet and have the appropriate nutrients and oxygen and all of the things that we need to live. To have this experience, to know that you are a force greater and greater and greater than we could ever imagine, but yet you care for us.

We know this because you sent your son. We know this because we heard his words. We know this because in faith we've responded and we pray, Father, that we might be vessels of love in our communities, in our families, in our relationships with each other. We pray, Father, that you might bless us this week to be people of love, not just this week, but ongoingly, that we might be transformed by the message of this morning and the challenge of loving our neighbor as ourselves and loving you. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

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