

This Kind of Love

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Date: 03 May 2026

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[0 : 00] Here this morning, we'll have a meditation upon that love. We'll have a meditation upon God's love for us! You remember this little book in the back of our New Testament, 1 John, is written to give us a sense of that love.

God wants us to know that we belong to him, not just now, but in the future. God wants us to have Christian assurance. He wants us to be so rooted in our faith that when we face trials, and we face midlife crises of various kinds, when we face false teaching from the outside, God wants us to be so rooted in his love for us in a way that we would not be shaken.

He doesn't want us to be shaken in our various stages of life. So, here this morning, in these three verses, the Apostle John writes these verses to us.

Let me read that once again, and let us meditate upon what God has to say. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God.

and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

[1 : 34] And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Let me pray for us. Dear God, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for speaking to us in your word. We thank you for writing these three verses long, long time ago. We pray, O God, that the same spirit who inspired those three verses would also make these verses alive to us.

Would you show us from your word the kind of love by which you have loved us. We pray and ask all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen. This morning, in these three verses, I'd like for us to look at five facets of God's love.

Five facets of God's love. The first facet is that this love by which God has loved us is a life-giving love. It gives us life. And the second facet is that it's a knowledge-creating love.

It gives us a knowledge. Third facet of this love is that it is a hope-inducing love. And the fourth facet of this love is that it's a sight-imparting love.

[2 : 46] It gives us the ability to see. And the fifth facet of this love is that it's a purity-prompting love. It's a life-giving love.

It's a knowledge-creating love. It's a hope-inducing love. It's a sight-imparting love. And lastly, it's a purity-prompting love. Because God loves us in such a way to move us from darkness into light. He loves us in such a way that he finds us impure and he makes us pure over time. Firstly, it's a life-giving love. That's how John starts this verse, right?

See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God. The Bible says that by nature we are fallen. We are born into this world with hardened hearts and no desire for God.

The Bible says that we are spiritually dead at our births because of our rebellion against God and because of Adam's rebellion against God. We have a spiritual nature that doesn't want anything to do with God.

[3 : 53] So you remember Jesus telling this leader in Israel, Nicodemus, you remember what he says in John chapter 3. He says, No one can see the kingdom of God unless one is born again.

We are all born into sin. But if we want to know God and see God and understand God, we have to be born again. born of the water and the Spirit.

This new birth that we have experienced as believers, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to cherish Jesus Christ, it is because we have been born again.

So John says in John 1 verse 12, to all who didn't receive him, who believed in his name, God gave them the right to become the children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We have been made God's children by his grace. The love by which God has loved us has given us new births so that we can see Christ and treasure Christ and love Christ.

[5 : 02] One English theologian, J.I. Packer, said this. He said, Adoption is the highest privilege of the gospel.

It is the highest privilege of the gospel. To be right with God as a judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God as the Father is even greater.

When we were in our sin, we looked at God and we saw him to be a judge. But now that we have been loved by a love that has given us new birth, we look to God not as a judge anymore.

We look to him as his child and he is our heavenly Father. The highest expression of God's love is God's adoptive love.

The love by which he makes us his children. We belong to our natural families. But if we have put our trust in Jesus Christ and if we have believed upon his name, we are actually, we have been brought into the family of God.

[6 : 12] God has given us himself as his father and now we belong to him. Human love produces human life.

God's love produces eternal life. If you are a believer, you have been loved with a life-giving love. God has given you life and he has made you his child.

And that's our first point. Our second point is that the love by which God has loved us is a knowledge-creating love. It's a knowledge-creating love. Verse 1 again says this, See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God and so we are.

The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Earlier on in chapter 2, John tells them, tells the very people that he's writing to in chapter 2 verse 21, he says this, I write to you not because you do not know the truth but because you know it and because no lie is of the truth.

He is writing to this church in Ephesus hundreds of years ago and he is writing to you who are seated in this room not because you do not know the truth but because you know it.

[7 : 38] And in verse 20, right above verse 21 in chapter 2, he says this, You have been anointed by the Holy One and you have all knowledge.

How do you know Jesus Christ? How do you trust in Jesus Christ? How do you know that he was a historical figure, that he walked our streets and he ate our food and he spoke like us?

How do you know that? A lot of historians have tried to find Jesus and find Jesus as a historical figure and Josephus, I don't know if you know about Josephus, he was a historian from 2,000 years ago and he writes about Jesus.

He says Jesus was a wise man. He did a lot of incredible deeds. He taught men. And he says Pilate condemned Jesus to the cross and on the third day, it seemed like Jesus was raised from the dead. How do you, Josephus knew of a historical Jesus. He knew Jesus as a person that truly lived. But do you know him as a savior?

[8 : 45] Do you know him more than just a, as more than just a historical figure? If you do, it is because the Holy One has given you all knowledge.

Chapter 2, verse 20. The love by which God has loved you doesn't just give you a historical Jesus. It has brought you from death to life and it has actually given you the knowledge to know that this Jesus Christ who came and lived among us is truly our savior.

The love by which God has loved you is a knowledge creating love. He wants you to know that the knowledge that you have, the salvation that you have in the Lord Jesus Christ is not a product of your own efforts.

It is God the Holy Spirit who anointed you, opened your eyes. He wants you to know yourself loved by a death conquering love, a hardness removing love, a rebellion eradicating love, a faith creating love, an individual invincible covenant love of which all of us are underserving.

He doesn't want us to take credit for the knowledge we have because the knowledge we have of the Lord Jesus Christ is actually from him. He made us his children.

[10 : 12] He has given us his knowledge. So you love Jesus Christ as the apostle Peter would say, though you have not seen Jesus Christ, you love him.

Even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and you're filled with joy, joy inexpressible. Why? Because God has loved you with the knowledge creating love, a life-giving love by which he made you a child, a knowledge creating love by which he gave you your savior.

And thirdly, a hope-inducing love. In verse 2, he gives us, he gives, he shows us that the hope that we have is a two-dimensional hope.

It's a hope for now and it's a hope for the future. It's a hope in the already, the life that we live now and it's a hope in the future, day of the resurrection.

So in verse 2, John says this, Beloved, we are God's children now. We are God's children now. Yes, we have been adopted, we have been given this knowledge to know Jesus Christ, but do you know yourself to be a child of God now?

[11 : 32] A child of God now. We were talking earlier about the various accents here in Edinburgh, right here. And Gary was telling me that if you go 20 minutes further away, you have a different accent altogether and it's hard to understand the various accents present in Edinburgh.

and you may find my accent to be difficult to understand. We have different accents and our accents are often reminders of our identity, who we are.

And sometimes you get confused about your identity, don't you? My accent is thoroughly confused. People ask me what my accent is. I tell them it's thoroughly confused because I grew up in Sri Lanka and my dad was educated in Birmingham in the 70s.

So he spoke with a, kind of like an English accent. But my first English teacher was a Polish lady. And I lived in the States for 11 years, in Michigan for seven years and in Mississippi for four years. So a northern accent and a southern accent in Mississippi. Now I'm in Edinburgh and my accent is confused. And it doesn't have to be our accents. We are all confused sometimes, right, when it comes to our identity.

[12 : 47] Do you know who you are? Our culture is going through a massive, massive identity crisis.

Am I a male? Am I a female? Who am I? Is this my country now? I walk these streets and it is not like what it was 40 years ago.

This is even my homeland. You may have that question. John wants you to know that you are God's children now. And that should be your primary identity. Regardless of what you look like, what you sound like, you are God's child now.

So you may feel like a stranger and an alien in this world. But know yourself to be a child of God now.

Because when you know yourself to be a child of God now, it gives you a steel in your spine. So you can stand up straight. And you can face your own sins and put your sins to death.

[13 : 54] You can face the false teachings that are coming at you. And you can, you can with your shoulders straight, stand up and say, I belong to God now.

It is a hope inducing love. And that hope is for now. There's also a hope for the not yet. There's also a hope for the future. Because it's a two-dimensional hope.

John wants us to know there is a future hope that we as Christians are looking forward to. Verse 2. Beloved, we are God's children now.

And what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him. Because we shall see Him as He is.

One of my aunts died a few weeks ago. She was in her 60s. She went into the hospital for a regulation check.

[14 : 54] They found blockages in her heart. And they removed those blockages. And one of her aortas dissected during the surgery.

And she died. And her funeral was a week ago. Saturday. You've lived in this life long enough. I'm sure. Some of you longer than I have. And you've seen the destruction of sin. You've seen the destruction of just life in general. You looked at pictures of yourself when you were a baby.

You've looked at pictures of yourself now. And you see your own body decaying. All of us are put under the force of death. regardless of whether we die today or not.

We live in the shadow of death all the days of our life. Here is a hope for the future. John says what we will be in the future has not yet appeared.

[16 : 01] But we know that when Jesus Christ appears we shall be like Him. We shall be like Him. What does it mean?

It means that we will be resurrected. The resurrection that happened to Jesus. Because He defeated the grave.

It was a it was an event that will have effect on all human life. Everywhere. We will be resurrected and we will have a body like Him.

A glorified body with no sickness or pain. No cancer or calluses. In fact the Apostle Paul says in Romans 8 the whole creation is waiting with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. The whole creation is waiting for our bodies to be removed and glorified. So the Apostle Paul says no in all of these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

[17 : 12] For I am sure neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things in the present or things in the future nor height or depth or anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

we shall be like Him because He redeemed you He will remake you He'll renew you He'll renew you So with the hymn writer we can say Oh Lord haste the day when my faith shall be sight the clouds be rolled back as a scroll the trump shall resound the Lord shall defend even so it is well with my soul.

so a life giving love a knowledge creating love a hope inducing love a hope for now hope for the future and fourthly a sight imparting love a sight imparting love verse 2 we know that when He appears we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is by nature we are not just spiritually dead we are spiritually blinded at birth but God gives us the vision the ability to see Jesus Christ I don't know if you remember when you were a little baby do you remember your vision scientists say that newborns when they are born they they can they can perceive light they can see basic movements and basic shapes and when they are about 6 months old their depth perception increases and they are able to see colour slowly and the vision then starts to improve significantly and throughout childhood visual clarity and coordination continues to refine they say that our vision our ability to see it reaches its climax its maturity in your early twenties early twenties

I'm in my early thirties and my vision has significantly deteriorated over time and as we age we experience gradual changes right even in our sight our lenses become less flexible and sometimes cataracts get in the way cancers get in the way degeneration of all kinds they get in the way but even as we age and lose our physical sight the saints of old have always longed to see God I don't know about you but the longer that I live in this broken world and the longer that I live in my broken body the more that I want to see Jesus Christ that's what the saints longed for you remember Moses from the Bible in Exodus 33 he says show me your glory you remember King David in Psalm 27 he had been promised the palace as a king he says one thing

I have asked of the Lord that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple or do you remember the vision of Isaiah the prophet who sees the Lord high and lifted up seated on his throne and who then falls to his knees and says I am a weak and miserable man or do you remember Job who faced so many sufferings in his life he says this he says I know that my redeemer lives and after my skin has been destroyed yet in my flesh I shall see God do you remember the story of this apostle John who went up a mountain with his friends Peter and James they go up the mountain with Jesus and for a moment you remember the story Jesus reveals himself he he removes the the veil and he shows himself to be who he is the son of God in power and

[21 : 34] John and Peter and James they fall to the ground because they see what Jesus would look like in the future all of the saints long to see God why because all of us are made to see God because of sin we cannot see God and live but we are made to see God it is the end it is the goal it is our highest delight why do you think we are so satisfied looking at things so satisfied looking at our phones our televisions even a beautiful country like this we are so satisfied by our vision because I think it is because we were created to see not creation but the creator at the resurrection the cataract of sin will be surgically removed and all the lights that get in the way the competing lights will go dark we will be near to our savior we will pop out of our graves like whiskey cokes and we will burst forth in a moment of new life and resurrection and we shall see him as he is that's what you are made for you and

I are made to see God and the love by which God has loved us yes it is a sight it's a life giving love it's a knowledge creating love it's a hope inducing love it's also a sight imparting love it gives us the ability to finally see God and fifthly the love by which God has loved us is a purity prompting love it's a purity prompting love verse three and everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is

pure here's the problem we are impure we cannot see God if we're honest we we are sometimes content we are happy just looking down and looking backwards and all of us want to go back to Egypt the good old days where we indulged our flesh and instead of walking in the light we drift into darkness and instead of longing for God's light we order our lives around the blue lights of our smartphones that's our problem but he gives us a prompting says everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure present active indicative that's the grammar structure there what that means is if you have been loved by

God and since you have been loved by God in a life-giving knowledge creating hope inducing sight imparting way that love prompts you to pursue purity it prompts you to pursue purity you are the temple of the living God therefore purify yourselves you are not your own you don't belong to yourself you've been bought with a price so give your body as a living sacrifice give your body parts as a living sacrifice the problem we cannot see God the prompting we need to purify ourselves but there's also a promise there's also a promise for wayward sinners like you and me sinners who are bipolar sometimes who on one hand long to see beauty and long to see God and on the other hand we run back to the dirt like a pig for sinners who long to see

Jesus Christ on our best times and who are content with the fleeting spectacles of this world there is a promise you know throughout the scriptures there is this line it says be holy because I am holy God says be holy because I am holy but you know that our God is a God who creates what he commands you remember he says let there be light and there was light so when he says be holy for I am holy he's not only just commanding you to be holy he's also creating you to be holy slowly but surely as you live your Christian life because the love by which God has loved you is a profound love slowly but surely he'll purify you he will purify you because you didn't start your

Christian life by your own strength you won't finish your Christian life in your own strength God will keep you by his strength and he will walk with you he will cleanse you and he who began a good work in you will bring into completion when Jesus Christ returns Martin Luther the great reformation theologian he wrote a lot of things some things that are very profound and some things that are funny maybe look up Martin Luther jokes when they go home but he said this very profound statement in the Heidelberg Catechism thesis 28 you don't need to remember this but he says this the love of man comes into being through that which is pleasing to it the love of God does not find but creates that which is pleasing to it what is the translation the translation is pretty simple human love is reactive love maybe think about the time you fell in love with your wife or your husband for me it was seeing my wife now sitting across a room at a bible study

[28 : 20] I saw her and I found her beautiful and I was moved towards her and I asked her for a date maybe you remember the time you met your loved one human love is reactive we find something beautiful and we are moved towards it but God's love is not reactive because God doesn't find us to be beautiful in our own nature God's love is not reactive it is creative it creates that which is beautiful he doesn't find us beautiful but he creates us he makes us beautiful he doesn't find us lovely he finds us unlovely and he loves us in such a way to make us lovely he finds us ugly he finds us as orphans and he gives us life he finds us without knowledge and he gives us knowledge of his son he finds us without hope in this world he gives us a hope for now and a hope for the future he finds us blind and attracted to things that will eventually evaporate but he gives us the ability to see his son he finds us to be impure because of the love by which he has loved us he makes us pure so may

God give us the strength to to grasp how wide and how long and how high and how deep the love by which he has loved us and may that love and our rootedness in that love give us Christian confidence may that be true of our lives may we find ourselves to be fully known and fully loved and fully protected today and until the day the dawn breaks and our saviour returns let us pray oh God we thank you for your words we thank you for the marvellous truths in it we cannot plumb the depths of just three verses let alone your word let alone who you are but we ask oh God that you would give us the ability to know ourselves loved in a deep way and we also pray oh God for those of us who don't know you we pray that they would come they would come to

Jesus Christ they would come to the cross and know themselves to be loved in this way we pray for our families we pray for our friends we pray for those who know you and those who don't we commit our relationships into your hands we commit our labours into your hand we commit the upcoming week into your hands pray that you would bless us and keep us we pray and ask all of these things in the name of Jesus Christ Amen Amen Thank you.