

The Upper Room

Sermon #2: The Jesus Brand

John 13:30-35

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- March 12, 2023

Well, if you brought a Bible today or have your Bible app on your phone, John chapter 13 is what we're going to look at today. It is the deep and brilliant waters that we'll be swimming in for the next several weeks. But chapter 13, today, is deep and brilliant because Jesus is going to tell us the purpose of life.

The purpose of the life of Jesus is the same as our purpose in life. What is the purpose? What do we do with all the choices that we're making that we're trying to make count forever? There's that saying that every breath wounds, and the last one kills. What do we do with all those breaths?

What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

---Westminster Shorter Catechism

Well, the answer, actually, has been given to us around 1650 in what's called the Westminster Confession, and particularly, the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The very first question—if you understand the catechism, you understand what you believe—and the first question is this: What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. That's the purpose. That's what our choices are supposed to be leading towards.

And Jesus is going to exemplify that today as He begins this final few hours of His life. We're going to see that Jesus is glorifying God, and He's going to enjoy Him forever.

We're in a series called "The Upper Room," and it's in John chapters 13 through 17. And those are five chapters of Jesus' most profound teachings to His most intimate followers. So, we're going to spend some time reading that.

Today especially, things change, rather dramatically. Because in chapter 13, verse 30, where we'll start, the dominoes begin to fall. And the first domino falls because it has been nudged by, ironically, Satan himself, who's now been released in the soul of Judas. And Judas is now going to leave as he earns his money and his place in salvation history. It's going to happen after Jesus gives him that cue that it's okay to leave now.

John 13:30-32

And so after receiving the morsel Judas went out immediately; and it was night.³¹ When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;³² if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in himself, and will glorify Him immediately."

Look at verse 30. Look for two key words. One of them will be pretty easy to see. Here it is: "And so after receiving the morsel Judas went out immediately; and it was night." So, he's gone. "When therefore he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in himself, and will glorify Him immediately.'"

NOW is the Son of Man glorified ...

Well, one of those words is pretty obvious. And the other one is the word "now." Now it all starts. In John's writing, he'll be referring to "the hour has come." And "the hour" is this epic climax in the life of Jesus Christ. And if we had a stopwatch, when the door closes behind Judas, click. It's all believers in the room. He's going to institute the Lord's Supper, He's going to take Passover and add new meaning to that. And here we go. The glorification begins.

Glorify: Two Meanings

Glorify is used, what, five times in two sentences here? So, let's find out what that word means. It has two applications or definitions.

The first one is that in a secular way the word is used to prove something good or to validate or to vindicate to witnesses of a particular event; to show something, to display something. So, in the older Testament, God's presence was validated or vindicated or shown or displayed in brilliance—in blinding brilliance. So much so, that it's referred to as *shekinah* glory—that's the phrase that's used.

And when Moses had an experience with *shekinah* glory, his hair was bleached white, and his face was radiating. That's what happened. That's how he was experiencing the glory of God—that blazing presence.

In the newer Testament, the word is used—this God revealing His blazing presence—in John's description it will be at the cross. Because that's when Jesus will be high and lifted up and everybody will be looking up at Him. And in that the purpose of God is revealed. And righteousness is vindicated in that event because in the death of Jesus Christ, God proves himself to be both just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus Christ. So, Jesus is proving that to be a fact, and He's also showing or displaying or revealing that He is, in fact, the Word of God, which is how John starts his gospel. That's how Jesus is glorified in the context of revealing or vindication.

The second word that could be used to describe the word “glorified” is “worship.” It's to give praise. The Greek word is similar to the word from which we get the word “doxology.” And that's why we sang The Doxology. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Praise, praise, praise, praise. Glorify means to exalt, to worship.

And the cross becomes this climax event in the life of Jesus in the context of glorification, because it is the complete expression of His obedience to the Father. The full expression of obeying the will of the Father is culminated at the cross. After that, the resurrection part comes easy, but that's where He's showing himself. So, individually it's in the cross itself; it's His death. But collectively, the next three days, He'll be glorified. He's showing himself to be glorified because it's the vindication of the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is the proof of the

claims of Jesus being more than just a prophet, but being the Savior, God himself. And it's a display of His obedience to the completion all the way to the end for all of creation to see the visible and the invisible. And that's why we praise Christ from whom all glory is being revealed,

When we say we want to become like Christ in all of life, which is somewhat of our motto here at Grace, because that's the definition of holiness—becoming like Christ in all of life—we want to become like Christ in the way He glorifies God. And how do we do that? We reveal the wonders of God in our life, in our obedience, in our expression of obedience. And we praise God in the way we give and serve and care for other people. It's revealing and it's praising.

John 13:33

Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, "Where I am going, you cannot come."

Jesus states that to be true. The glorification hour has begun. And now He's going to tell His disciples that's—well—shocking. Verse 33 says, "Little children" ---this is Jesus—"Little children, I am with you just a little longer. You shall seek me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'"

Jesus starts this with the phrase "little children." It's the only time He's going to call His own disciples "little children." And this is a very affectionate term, as you can imagine, from a father to his toddlers. *Okay, little kids, I'm going to tell you something.* And why does He use this affectionate term? Look what happens after that. He says, "Where I am going, you cannot follow." He's saying He's leaving. And they can't find Him.

Look, we say sometimes, hyperbolically, *That's my worst nightmare.* This is literally their worst nightmare. Picture them as young children. There's no mother in this story, so there's only daddy, and daddy says, *My little children, Daddy's leaving and you can't come with him.* And they're stunned. And if you could in your imagination—it's been helpful for me this week—picture these eleven men as little toddlers, and Jesus comes in and says, *Hey, little buddies, I'm leaving. And where I'm going you can't follow.*

Now if you had a room full of pre-K boys and you told them that as their daddy, what happens? In unison, like a choir? They all start wailing and crying because this is their worst nightmare. And if you doubt me, look at Peter's response in verses 37 and 38. *Stop crying, little buddy—I don't think we heard Him right. Okay, Lord, where are You going? Because where You're going I can follow You. I will follow You even to death.*

That's how shocked he is. That's the natural response from a toddler. And Jesus says, *No you won't even follow me to death, Peter.* But anyway, the point is—think about it—for three and a half years Jesus is the sun that's been circled by these eleven planets. Their whole world, their lives, have been centered around Jesus--and not just any leader with disciples. Can you imagine their experience of being with Jesus himself, but not only that—the miracles that have been taking place all around them. And then they're doing miracles in the name of Jesus. And then He says He's leaving.

And they say, *Look, there's two choices, Jesus. One, You're not going to leave. Two, You can leave, but we can follow. Do you know what's not available? You leaving us and we don't follow.*

And Jesus said, *No, I'm leaving.*

And as you would imagine, they're feeling like orphans. Now Jesus will acknowledge that. I know some of you have read ahead. He says, *I won't leave you like orphans.*

Let's be in this moment. Right now, they have one daddy, no mom, and He said He's gone, and they're afraid. They are feeling helpless and alone in an increasingly hostile world that's coming towards them. And they know the hostility is going to increase.

Love One Another

John 13:34

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

So, after announcing that He's leaving and they can't follow, He answers that first set of fears of being helpless and alone with *You won't be alone.* And so, the next sentence says,

“Look, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” He’s saying, *Look, you won’t be alone, because now you guys can love each other. For three and a half years I’ve been showing you how I love. You’re supposed to have been practicing that. And now you get to love like I’ve been loving you.*

So instead of it being one way where Jesus is loving these eleven guys, Jesus says, *You’re not going to feel like you’re completely alone because now you get to love ten other people in the same way I loved you.* The men are looking around at those other ten men, thinking, *Yeah, okay ... but no.*

John 13:34-34

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

And this love that they have for another is not just for their own support in their feeling of aloneness. Look what the next verses say: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. But this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

We’re talking about glory again. Remember one of the first ways “glory” is defined? It’s when there’s a revelation or vindication of something that you’re trying to prove, especially towards people who don’t believe it. He says, *Look, you’re going to glorify God by how you love one another. You’re going to glorify God by loving people the way I loved you, in a different way. It’s going to be like the brand that distinguishes you from other people.*

And so, real quick, in summary, Jesus says, *I’m leaving. You can’t follow.*

They’re saying, *We’re going to be alone.*

He says, *No, no, you’re going to love one another in the same way I’ve loved you. You won’t be alone. You’re going to have a new kind of family, a deeper kind of love. And not only that, but the world will be puzzled by it. People will either be drawn by that kind of love or they will reject it out of hand. But it’s going to distinguish you from other people.*

Again, this is like the Jesus brand. This is a different look. It’s the defining characteristic. If you looked at the disciples of a Greek philosopher and asked what distinguishes them, you’d

listen to them, and it would be their knowledge, their intellect, their world view, their figures of speech—*Sure, yeah, that person's a disciple of Socrates or Plato. Plato had a disciple, Aristotle, and he sounded like he was a disciple of Plato.*

Jesus says, *No, no, no—people are going to know you're my disciples because they're going to see my love in you facing outward. That's what's going to make the difference. That's the brand.*

So, it's to keep them from feeling alone and it's to give God glory in its display. That's why we love one another this way.

What is new about this “new” commandment?

Let's look at it a little closer, though, because He says something that's a little bit odd. You might have picked it up. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.” What's so new about that? I mean, it's in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. That's in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. It's etched in glass back here: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might, and love your neighbor as yourself.” What's so new about that?

Well, let's look at that. I'm going to give you three ways that this is kind of a new command for a new kind of love.

1. We have a new VIEW of love

The first one is that it's a new view of love. The word for love He'll be using here is *agape* love. And I know that's a pretty common word if you go to church or you read your Bibles. I don't think we can appreciate the power of Jesus making *agape* love a prominent word. There are five, really four, popular Greek words for love, and *agape* love was one that was shunned and almost ignored in Greek literature outside of the Bible. The other loves were more popular. They're more emotional; they're more sentimental.

Agape love is volitional. It's just a choice. It's choosing to sacrifice, it's choosing to give, it's choosing to serve, it's choosing to commit. There's not so much sentiment in it.

The Greek word *eros* is popularly used because it's passionate for sure. It's physical love and sometime even erotic love. That's where we get the word “erotic.”

There's *philia*: that's brotherly love. Philadelphia is the city of (well, it's not the city of brotherly love)—it's the opposite. But anyway, it means “deep friendships.”

And then there's the word *storge* which means "family love." It's this loyal commitment to one another.

This word *agape*—I just want to restate that it's almost unique to Bible writing. It's very popular now and it's on bumper stickers, but it's all but unique to the Bible in the Greek language.

And one of the factors of *agape* love is that it's in contrast to the other ones that are more sentimental and emotional, in that you don't fall in and out of *agape* love. And when you hear people say, *Oh, I fell in love with someone*, then they can fall out of love with them if they fell into love with them. But from a marriage standpoint, biblically, that's not the love in the Bible in marriage.

In Ephesians chapter 5 it describes and tells what love ought to look like between a husband and wife. And it says, "Husbands love your wives." And that love is *agape* love. It is the choice to give and to serve and to sacrifice and to enjoy and to listen. It's an act of the will. *Agape* love is like the finest attributes of the other three plus this unconditional commitment.

As a matter of fact, let me give you three qualities of *agape* love. It's a different view of love—three qualities of *agape* love.

One of them is that it's unconditional. And you look at the way Jesus loved—"as I loved you"—there was no condition attached. There was no one that Jesus wouldn't love. He loved Roman soldiers, He loved Jewish tax collectors for the Roman Empire, He loved prostitutes and religious teachers and zealots, He loved the rich and He loved the poor. He loved everyone. No qualifications. And even the people who rejected His love, who left Him—He wept for them. No conditions.

Agape love is unconditional. It's also unselfish. And one way of looking at that description is that it's like a one-way love. You're not giving love so that you'll get love. It's easier to give love when you receive love. But this is love with no expectations, because the person you're choosing to love is either unable or unwilling to reciprocate.

It's unconditional and it's unselfish and it's unlimited. And it's unlimited because you're charged or energized by the giving of *agape* love. Joy comes when you just give it out. It's so unselfish and unconditional, it's so godlike, that just expressing it is all a person needs. That's what *agape*—this new view of love—is. "I give you this new commandment"—that's what He referring to.

2. We have a new EXAMPLE of love

This other part of the attribute of this new kind of commandment is a new example of love. “A new commandment I’ve given you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.” And in the context of where they are right then and there, the immediate context, there are two blinding attributes of what that means. How is Jesus loving these disciples? How are they experiencing that love?

The first kind of love that they can see right in front of them is love that’s shown in obedience. We’ll see this a lot more in chapters 14 and 15, so I’m saving that description and explanation for then. But it goes like this. *If you love me, you’ll keep my commandments. If you love me, you’ll obey me. And I’m obeying the Father because I love the Father, and that’s what it looks like. If you obey me, you love; if you love me, you’ll obey me.* So, they’re interconnected. We’ll explain that more. But that’s what they’re experiencing right then and there.

The second attribute of the love Jesus is showing in an example is the sacrificial, humiliating love that we looked at last week when He was washing the disciples’ feet. I mean, the towel is still wet when He’s saying, *You need to love one another as I just have loved you.*

So, *Love one another. This is a new commandment.* You receive this love from Jesus and you give this love.

I’d love to take a quick pause, and before we move on, stop and ponder this kind of love. I hope most all of you have received this. I want us to just have a moment of silence and reflection—I’m trying to be a little mystical here—and ponder that kind of love. Let’s do this, if you would. Close your eyes, maybe even bow your head. Maybe, if you want, turn your palms up. And could we just meditate quickly on adjectives, descriptions maybe that you have in your mind if you’ve read through the story of Jesus and the way that He’s cared for and loved the people around Him. And then, as you’re thinking of those stories, those attributes, those descriptions, could you receive that love, so that you could give that love? Let’s think about the way Jesus loves for just a second.

[Prayer]

Lord, we just enjoy the constant predictability of Your unconditional love, that it is caring, it nurtures—even though love is demanding and challenging at times. Your love is forgiving. You have forgiven me and I receive that from Your Spirit, that I might give that same kind of unconditional, unselfish, unlimited love to my brothers and sisters; that I might know and experience that I am not alone in a hostile world and You didn't leave me as an orphan. You left me with family. We praise You and glorify You because of that. And everybody said, Amen.

We have a new commandment with a new experience of love because we have a new view of love and a new example of love.

We have a new IMPACT because of love

And then lastly, I want to show You that there's a whole new impact of love. This is the Jesus brand that I'm referring to. And I'm not saying that because it's a new way of explaining some sort of marketing technique. I'll show you a third-century quote later on, but this has been the thing that defines the Christian life. It's how we distinguish ourselves as follower of Yahweh.

I mean, think about it—if you were a deeply dedicated follower of Jesus Christ in the older Testament, what would that look like? Well, that would mean that you were either raised Jewish or you were already Jewish or you converted to Judaism and you became part of that covenant community. That was the point. And so, you had a different diet. More than likely, you certainly dressed differently. There's always that circumcision thing that was required. The sacrificial system that you were involved in made it look different. And you were standing aside, I hope, in ethics; surrendering to the ethical nature of Yahweh would push over here to say, *Yeah, I'm not like the rest of the culture.*

But in the newer Testament, what does it say? This unconquerable love is going to be that single element that's going to say, "They're not like anything else anywhere else." And when the Christian faith, when the Church, in general and then individually—the local expressions—when they do that, it sweeps through a civilization.

In the New Testament and through the first couple of centuries, this is what happens. Because they took this for what it was. This is a command. It's not a suggestion. Jesus says, "I'm

giving you a new command.” He’s not saying, *Hey, give this your best try and if it doesn’t work out, I can understand.* No—*You do this. You love like I love.* We wear stickers or bracelets that says “What Would Jesus Do?” “How would Jesus love?” is the question. We should love that same way.

And when we do that we glorify God because we reveal to all of creation the nature of God himself. We praise God by indicating the way that Jesus loves. And if you’re wondering if this is true in your life, when your friends or your neighbors or your family—people outside—see the way you love your husband or your wife or your children or fellow Christians, do they understand or are they pondering where that comes from?

And how do you do that? Some are drawn towards that and some are repulsed by it. But the point is that it’s different. And it’s supposed to show up in our everyday lives. That’s how we put it on display. When outsiders step in and have an observation about the local church, they’re supposed to be enamored with the oddness of this new view and new example and new branding of what this love looks like.

It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us! “See,” they say, “how they love one another ... see how they are ready even to die for one another.”

---Tertullian

Tertullian wrote in the third century—this is why I keep saying “branding”—“It is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to brand us as Christians. ‘See,’ they say, ‘how they love one another ... see how they are ready even to die for one another.’”

In the early church their commitment to this unconditional, unrelenting, unselfish love is what transformed the culture. And in that system back then it was radical to have that kind of unconditional love, because the Roman system was almost like a caste system—not too different from today—where it was utilitarian. In other words, if people had value, they would befriend each other and show some friendship love towards one another. But if you were a baby or real old, if you couldn’t be used in some context of labor or employment, if you were female ... if you didn’t deserve the love, you didn’t get the love. And they had a lot of reasons why you didn’t deserve it in that culture.

And then in comes the Church, and the Church didn't care about your ethnicity or your income or your ability to give back, your utilitarian value. You just had a community of people who had almost nothing in common, except this one thing in common, and trying to love each other like the Savior loved them. That is what changed the world. The people understood that they were not helpless (more on that later—the power of the Holy Spirit), and they were not alone. Because they had a family that wasn't blood; it was spirit. And people were drawn to that. Or they were repulsed by it. But they took note of it.

Here's what Felix, a lawyer in the second century, said: "They love each other, even without being acquainted with one another."

And then a person hostile to the church, Julian, the Apostate—doesn't that sound like an evil title?—said this: "Their teacher has implanted the belief in them that they are somehow all related to one another."

A church has to be known for its love. If it's anything but that, we're missing it. It's easy to be known as a church with great vision. But without love it doesn't matter. Or a church might be known for its teaching and the people in it are so knowledgeable about the Bible. If that's it, if that's the primary reason that church is known, they're missing the point. You can be known for miracles and miraculous healings, but if that's the primary reason, it's not love. It's wrong. Even generosity. I'll do anything and give anything. But not in love? That's not following Jesus. That's not the glory that He was referring to.

It is such a primary description of the Church in general, but even of the local expression, that Paul writes this: "If I speak to you with the tongues of men and angels and don't have love, I become like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all the mysteries and all knowledge, and have all kinds of faith to remove mountains, but I don't have love, I am nothing. If I give all my possessions to the poor and I deliver my body to be burned, but I don't have love, it profits us nothing."

See? The singular primary attribute of the Church and of a follower of Christ is this *agape* love, the love that we received from Jesus. And is it any wonder that our youth are all over on mission trips. Some are leaving today and some are right now in Asia. And what do we pray for? We pray that they would love each other in ways that only Christians can, because that kind of love transcends culture and language. Wherever they are, they won't need to know what language is spoken and what the backgrounds are if they're loving one another. Or if they're not

... And if they're not, we need not listen, because we can go places like a gym and find people that are like us or some social engagement where we can just be around people that we enjoy. But this kind of love is different.

I've been thinking all week about this kind of love that glorifies God, that vindicates His truth and His love, one that shines a light brightly from His Church to a people, and how it transforms. There are two parts—remember? It transforms or interests the people outside of the Church, that other people will know they are Christians by their love for one another.

And I thought of the many people in our flock here and the videos that we have in our bank, and I just thought, *You know what? Let me just tell you about my story.*

I said it wrong. It's not my story. It's the way this church has treated me over thirty-something years here. And I want you to hear two things: one, not my story, it's the church's story, and how other people outside of my circle have been perplexed by the love that I've received. I just want you to see that it's not unique. It's one of the better parts of when we say "Every believer's a minister here." Sometimes people look at ministers up here, and by constantly telling people "Every believer's a minister," we bring everybody to a level playing field. And one of the attributes of our pastoral staff is that you guys don't look up to us and you don't look down at us. We're all just equal. And so, everything I'm telling you about my reception of love from this congregation is like many other stories. This one I just happen to know pretty well because I was there.

Thirty years ago when we came here—more than thirty—we didn't have children, and the previous pastors didn't have children. And we didn't know how to raise children. And this church loved us in that context. The volunteers that worked in the children's ministry and taught our kids some things that we couldn't teach them, and the mentoring we received—my wife in the mother-of-preschoolers program and the guys who were assigned to my life to make sure I could be a good husband and a good dad—that love was given to me because I just got involved.

When our kids were in the teenage years and we had to do the giant handoff where we realized they weren't listening to us anymore and we didn't have influence, we were able to turn them over to the volunteers in our student ministry. In junior high and high school we would just say, "Well, go call them and whatever they tell you to do, just do that." We could trust that that would be godly, sacrificial, loving advice. And we were mentored in the teen years as well. The church loved us like Christ loved us—the people in the church.

When my mother was sick, I had only been here a couple of years. And my mother was sick unto death. They gave me all the time off I wanted, especially in the last year, so I could run to San Antonio and see her as much as I wanted. And what was especially provocative, especially to my friends, was that at my mom's funeral, it was as if the whole office took off and a lot of people from Grace drove to San Antonio. And when the funeral was over—it was relatively small—the front of row of family stood up and turned around and looked to see who was there, and there were so many people from our church that my family didn't understand. *Who are these people? And why are they here?* And I said, *They're people who are trying to love me the way that Christ loved the Church.*

Three times I have absolutely spent myself. I do that and I do it well—emotionally, physically, and spiritually—just wring myself out and then become, like, crazy, irrational. And all three times people who loved me sat me down and said, *Hey, we've got to get you right. We don't love you because you work at the church. We pay you because you work at the church. We love you because you're a challenge to love and we love a good challenge. And so, we just like seeing what would happen if it happened.* And each time, they said, *We've got to get you well and put you back together.* And they loved me. And they do that for people who are involved here, people who are connected.

When my older brother died rather suddenly about ten years ago, I tell you, I did not cry alone. There were so many people who came around. And we couldn't find a church in San Antonio to host it, so people said, Well, why don't we host it? And then people from the church came out to my house and did all the things I'd been working on for ten years so I could host people coming over. People lent me cars. They brought over food. And since my brother and I were just one year apart in school, the people coming to this from around the country were not just the Cassidys from Connecticut and New England, but people from high school and college who overlapped with my brother and myself when I was a pirate. Those were not the great years in my life. And that group of people, those old friends and my immediate family—I ran out of words. I couldn't talk anymore about the choices I'd made about following Christ. They weren't going to understand it. I couldn't explain it. Let's just move on with our lives, right? And then we provided this service, and my friends from high school and college and my immediate family watched all of this love, this humbling, serving love, and they said, *What is this place?* And I said, *It's Grace. It's the way we named it. This is what you get in a church like this.*

And I'll say this again: it wasn't because of me, that I work here or anything else. We almost had a funeral yesterday for a sister that I've never met who had lost her husband. And her church is not too far—in the Lakeway area. They didn't have a building big enough. Her husband was a very popular man. And they were looking, and some guy at the gym called me and said, "I've heard about your church. I know about you guys. Could you host this funeral for this woman?"

"You bet. And our church will love her, a sister we've never met, because she's lost a husband that loved her dearly for thirty-three years. What can we do?"

Because this church is known for its love. And I just want to thank you for that. I've been on the receiving end of that and I want you to be on the receiving end of it as well. I want you to figure out a way to get involved and get connected, because if you do, people will love you here. They'll fulfill the last and newest commandment, and that is to love one another the way that Christ loved. You'll get a chance to love other people the way Christ has loved you. And this love that we're receiving from the power of the Holy Spirit, the love of Jesus Christ, and we get to give it to people, and we get to receive it from people—it changes your lives. It will change your life. Do what you need to do to get connected in a church that's known for its love. And this church is known for its love.

I wanted to thank you for that. And I wanted to tell you, *Let's keep that going*. That's how you define what's glorifying to God. You can glorify God in this way.

Jesus said this: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you are to love one another." And there's more. "And by this all people will know that you are my disciples, by the way you love one another. And when you do that, you will glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

Why don't you join me in prayer?

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, a friend can help him up." I pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up.

Lord, we are so grateful for the love that we have received from You, that You glorify the Father in Your obedience, and You glorified and vindicated and validated the love of the Father by being obedient to the point of the cross. The resurrection validated and vindicated that You

are God in flesh, and Your promises are true, and Your love is transcendent. And that's the transcendent love that we have. It's unconditional and unrelenting and unilateral.

Lord, help us be that type of lover. We have a cancer in us. It's in our souls. It's pride, and it keeps us from enjoying and receiving Your love, and giving Your love. I'd ask that You would help cure that with Your grace.

Let us continually be known as a church who loves well. And we'd ask that You would bless us and bless us indeed. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. Amen.