



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor  
July 7, 2019

## JOHN 17:20-26

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Lord, we thank you that you are loving, that you are compassionate, and you care about us. We thank you that you love us even when we've done the wrong thing or we're unfaithful to you. Lord, we thank you that you love us so much that you discipline us. I know it might be hard sometimes. We know that you're growing us, you want us to be strong. We thank you for demonstrating your love that way. Of course we're grateful for your salvation that you provide to us. It's something we cherish. Thank you for loving us so much that you sent Jesus to die for us. We need to know more about what that love looks like for our own lives. Lord, I thank you for speaking to me this week, I pray that you'd clarify my thoughts now as I share, and that you'd bless us with your word this morning from your scriptures. In Jesus' name, amen.

I met my wife a long time ago. We were working in the same church in the children's program during the summer. We met there and we started working together. I liked her. This was pretty good. In fact my like started growing. So I felt like this was kind of a love thing. But I didn't want to say to my wife, "I love you," unless I knew what it meant. So I went on a pilgrimage that summer of trying to figure out what does it mean when you say "I love you" to someone. I asked my pastors, I asked Dr. Clark and his wife, Judy, who were my mentors. I asked my friends, "What does it mean to say, 'I love you,' to someone?" I got a lot of answers. But it was still one of those subjects that I didn't quite know what it meant to say, "I love you." But somehow in the midst of that summer I must have worked it out in my heart, because I started saying, "I love you," to my wife. It was two years later that we got married and I'm still learning a lot about love and what it is and growing in it in my relationship with my wife.

But I think love is one of those things that we're always growing in. Today I want to explore this idea of love a little bit more for us because I think we all need some growth in this area of not only understanding it in our heads, but understanding it in our lives and in our hearts where we feel it. We all have needs to be loved and to love. So understanding more about what that looks like is important.

I'm inspired to think about love this week and inspired to talk about it today because of our passage in John 17. We're going verse by verse through the Bible. We happen to be in the prayer of Jesus, the last part of His prayer. As He's praying this prayer, He's praying about love. He's praying for me and He's praying that I would have more love. So I was touched by that this week because I am when anybody prays for me, I'm touched by that. But this is Jesus praying for me. So I want to share with you some of the thoughts about love today from God's word. I want to start by reading the end of this prayer. So if you'd stand with me in honor of God's word, let's read John 17:20-26.

Jesus continues His prayer to the Father when He says – *“My prayer is not for them alone (referring to His disciples). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message (that’s me; I’m one of those people that believe in Jesus through their message), that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

Verse 26 says in order that *the love you have*, the Father-Son love, *may be in them*. And that *them* is *me*, according to verse 20. That the Father-Son love *would be in me and that I myself would be in them*. Stunning. It’s just a stunning prayer that Jesus prayed for me and I’m grateful.

Would you have a seat please.

We all have a need for love and it’s all a part of how God made us in our hearts. That understanding of love and that experience of love starts in a family. We’re all born into a family and we have parents. Some of those are adopted parents or foster parents or biological parents. But we have parents who come alongside and bond with us. There’s this bonding experience of love that you see between a mom and a child or a dad and a child. We start to experience trust and we start to experience that love that takes place in a family. As we grow up in a family, we learn a little bit more about what love is because Hebrews tells us that a father who loves his child disciplines him. So now we get another side of that love that we didn’t know when we were first born, but we grow in that a little bit more. So this family becomes this place where love is expanding and we get to know love on a deeper level.

I think another level on which we experience love is when we enter the adolescent years. A point at which our ideas are often different than our parents. So now we have differences, disagreements. I say to young people, “That period of time, if you have a disagreement or a difference with your parents or a challenge or a problem, that’s a very important time.” Because it’s in the midst of challenges and problems and differences that you learn three life skills. Those three like skills are you learn how to manage your emotions, you learn how to solve problems better, and you learn how to communicate reasonably. Those are life skills that you learn and they happen because of differences. So if you can use and maximize those adolescent years well, you’ll develop the life skills you’ll need to have a successful marriage, to go to work and deal with ornery people, to deal with people in your neighborhood. The family is this place where love is expanded more and you’re able to understand what love looks like. Because when you practice those three life skills, you can do it in a loving way.

We start to understand what love is and it starts to become much deeper and broader and bigger than we knew at first. Unfortunately, I know that some of you grew up in homes where your love

needs weren't met, where love wasn't practiced as well as it could have been. So you end up in pain where love could exist. You end up with ongoing challenges in your life because of love issues that you address. Some of those you try to work out in another relationship. Sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

The family, because it is made up of broken people, has holes in it. So God has created this other catch-all for every brokenhearted person. Every person who has experienced trauma in their life because of love-related issues can fall into this other place God calls His family, the church. So the church becomes another place where we're able to explore love needs, where we're able to belong and connect. I would suggest it happens to a certain extent on Sunday morning. We try to maximize your time on Sunday morning by stretching it out. We start at 9:45 and that time is just a fellowship time. We can connect with other people. Then we have worship and teaching, then we hang out afterwards a little bit and we fellowship some more. We're trying to maximize your time.

But even in the midst of that, it's often those who get involved in other aspects of the church – get involved in a small group or are part of a service team of some kind at the church – really find that they're connecting better. They're able to practice these connection needs and these love needs that God would have. Ultimately the church has imperfect people and we get hurt in the church sometimes. But ultimately, God is the one who can meet those love needs.

Three times in the passage, Jesus, notice, is exemplifying this relationship with God by calling Him Father. When Jesus taught us how to pray, He said, "Pray *our Father*." Because God knows that this Father relationship that we have is very important for understanding love. God wants us to understand that in the context of a heavenly Father because every earthly parent is flawed, every earthly family is flawed. Even the church is flawed. But God is this perfect Father, even called down here *righteous Father* in verse 25. Just this Father that we can find our love needs met in a very special way. Something we all need in our lives. We need to expand this understanding of love, what it is, and we need to have those needs met in order to be functional, in order to care for others or relate to others effectively, or even to deal with ourselves.

So I want to focus in on this love a little bit more. And I want to draw out some ideas here that I think are going to be helpful for us as we expand and work through some of the love issues that we have.

The first thing I want to suggest is that love needs to be practiced in order for it to grow deeper. As we talk about a deeper kind of love, one of the things we need to realize is that it doesn't come instantly. It comes through practice. If you were going to do a study of what love is and try to figure out what it is, whether you're going to say that to your wife or husband (as in my case) nor you're going to just understand it for yourself, you're going to end up coming to this passage in 1 Corinthians 13, which is called the love passage. Notice it says – *If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing*. So if you're pursuing faith, which is a very good thing to do and you understand more about God and you have faith to do great kinds of things, that's great. But love, don't forget that. Because love is an important part of who you are is what Paul is saying here.

Verse 3 Paul is saying – *If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.* You can work hard, you can accomplish great things for God, you can sacrifice dearly. But if love is not a part of that, you've got a problem. He's just talking about how important love is. So what is it?

We come to the next verse in verse 4. *Love is patient.* How are you going to develop that kind of love? I'll tell you how you develop it. You have an annoying brother. When you have annoying brother, you learn love in a family. That's how you learn it. If you can't find it there, come to a church. There's annoying people here. You can practice your love work here. *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor (or disrespect) others. It doesn't do that. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

When you work on love in your life, it does something to you. Let's not talk about the other people you're going to love. Let's just talk about what it does for me. When I work on love in my life, it changes me into a different kind of person. It makes me different. When I practice love, it turns me into something more godly. But I have to practice that. I like what some people do when they say instead of the word love, put your own name in there and see what it sounds like. So if I put my name in there... Scott is patient. Scott is kind. Scott does not envy. Scott does not boast. Scott is not proud. I start to say that then I realize I've got some work to do here in the love area. I need to do some practicing of love. Because in the practicing of it, that is treating other people with love, it does something for me. It changes me into a different kind of person. It helps me develop something that God designed for me to be. It is something really good that God wants to do inside of my heart.

This is really big. You have to understand that love isn't one of those things we tack on. This is the essence of the gospel.

There's a story about a man. He was an expert in the law. You know the law, you check off things in the law. I did this, I didn't do this, I did this, I did this. And so this man, this expert in the law comes to Jesus and says to Jesus, "Jesus, what is the greatest commandment? I want to know." He's an expert in the law, see, and he's asking a question about all the commands. Which one is the greatest one? Jesus responds: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and your soul and your mind.* Start there. Let's love the Lord your God. Love the Lord your God.

By the way, I'm going to give you a bonus one, He says. You asked me for the greatest command. I'm going to give you two. So Jesus says – *The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself.* All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. If we have a tendency to check off the list I did all these things, then maybe we're not actually tying into the love that God has for us. And love is the big thing that Jesus is saying here. Love God. Love people. Practice that, it changes who you are.

Now if we do this in our lives, if we start practicing love, it does something for us. When we come to those offenses that we experience. You know, those ones that make us really angry. Those ones that are really hurtful. The damaged relationships that cause division. So Peter, when

he's reflecting on this idea of loving, he talks about deep love. What we're talking today is love each other deeply, he says, because *love covers over a multitude of sins*. Wow. That's really interesting to think that love could be so big that it would enable me to deal with the hurts that I have in my life. That love could be so big that it can allow me to deal with the brokenness that other people experience in their lives. That's pretty deep love. That's why Peter is saying *love each other deeply*. Not just surface love, but go deeper in your love with others.

Of course Jesus says again to His disciples in John 14, I'm giving you a new commandment. Think in terms of this. This is your new commandment. He says – *Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.*

So now in the prayer that Jesus is praying, He wants us to grow in love, but in the prayer that He's praying, He's talking about praying for us so that we can have unity as a church fellowship. So the church itself can be united. Why is that? Because it's a demonstration to the world. The world needs love. And not the love the world thinks it needs. Because the world often defines love in a very selfish way like I love spaghetti. So if I love spaghetti, if I love a person, it's often taking advantage of that person for my needs, satisfying what I want.

But the love that we experience is different than that. It's much deeper, much more significant, and that love itself is a witness to the world. A world that is made up of individuals who grew up in broken families, who grew up in challenging places (as we all did). I'm not saying the world grew up in broken families and we didn't. We all grew up in broken families. All of us have been in families where brokenness took place. But you see when we come to our heavenly Father and we understand what love is, then there's healing that takes place and the world needs that message. So when they see the love that we experience with each other, they go, "Whoa. That is different. I need that in my life." So that's what Jesus is praying for in His prayer.

Let's go back to the prayer. He says – *May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me*. It is a testimony to the world, Jesus says in His prayer, that there is this unity that we experience with the Father and the Son. And He says about this love – *so that the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me*. The world needs to know there is a love available to them and it comes through an understanding of us growing in love. We need this. We need to grow more in our love. The first thing I think we learn here in this passage and in our teaching today is this: That love, when practiced, grows deeper. But it's going to take some practice. It's going to take practice in families it's going to take practice in a church, it's going to take practice in your life in order for that love to grow deeper in your life.

But I want to draw another idea out here because I think as soon as you start talking about love, especially in our world, we must understand another concept to come alongside of this so that we understand the roots for this love. So the second idea I think we need to understand is this: That love must be rooted in truth. When I talk about truth I'm talking about the authority of God's word, the absolute truth that we have. You see in the world, there isn't absolute truth, at least as they perceive it. It's perceived relative truth. There's situational ethics and there is a truth that draws us deeper because God has set a standard. So when we read God's word and we understand God's word as the authority in our lives then it does something for us.



We put the scriptures up here. They are authority that guide us. We don't put the scriptures down here and say, "Well that piece I don't think I need today. And that piece, well that's cultural; we'll just wipe that out of the picture here. That one, well I'm not sure about that one. And oh I'll take this one over here because that makes me feel good." We don't do that with God's word. We put scripture up here. So what God says we do, whether we understand it or not, we obey God's word because it is our authority. Truth is so important.

Now truth sometimes can appear to be intention with love. Because a child who starts being disrespectful and has a pattern for disrespect, what do you do? Just say, "Oh well. We're just going to tolerate everybody in this family and he can be disrespectful if he wants." No. A parent is going to lovingly correct that child because what the child is doing is wrong and can hinder their success in the future. So if we view love just as some surface thing where we tolerate everybody else, the way they are, we miss something very significant. Because love has roots. And that love needs to be rooted in truth. A right standard. God has told us what wrong and right is. So we help children in a home growing up. If a child has a problem with lying, we don't just tolerate that. We say, "There's something wrong about lying. It's going to hinder all other relationships if you can't be telling the truth." So we're going to be working with that child to help that child develop the ability to be honest and have integrity. Love is rooted in truth.

Maybe you've seen the bumper sticker that says "coexist." Have you seen that one of all the symbols of all the different religions? The implication there is if we would just tolerate each other and get along then everybody would be fine. The problem is if there's absolute truth, which we see in scripture, then there's a misunderstanding portrayed in that bumper sticker. That there's truth that needs to be shared. And so we share that truth.

That doesn't mean we have to attack people who disagree with us. How are going to approach them? What is the thing that's going to help them to see that there is something different over here? Well one is going to be the love that we have. We're going to love people to the gospel. That's our message and that's the methodology as we're sharing the gospel with other people. We're going to love them into the kingdom. That's God's design. But there's also a truth that's also very important. Because truth separates people.

I mean Jesus separates people from people who believe in Him and those who don't believe in Him. Truth was very important to Jesus. Not just love. When He came into the world and He was interacting on earth, He spoke very strongly against the pharisaical ideas. He called the Pharisees hypocrites, white-washed tombs. He was very strong with them because they were violating the truth. They had taken religion and turned it into a checklist of dos and don'ts and looking good on the outside instead of having something on the inside. So Jesus spoke truth solidly to them.

That wasn't just Jesus. We see it all through the New Testament. The book of Galatians is written because there was a sect within the church that kind of grew up and the sect was saying, "Well in order to be a true Christian, you really need to obey all the Judaic laws." They were called Judaizers. So the book of Galatians is challenging people who were Judaizers and saying no, we aren't going to do that. That's not why God came, why Jesus Christ came. He came with

grace. He came for us so that we don't have to be bound by legalism. That's the book of Galatians.

There's another sect that grew up in the early church called Gnosticism that believed there was a deity that was good and a deity that was bad. And that led into all kinds of problems within the church. So the apostle John in 1 John wrote a book about Gnosticism against that tendency to believe it. There's truth taught in God's word. Truth is very important.

Now some might look at the Christian faith and say, "Well what about all those denominations you guys have? We've got denominations all over the place. How do you know which one is right?" That's a great question. The assumption, though, that all the denominations disagree is false. A lot of denominations came about because of how they started.

In the Calvary Chapel we don't call ourselves a denomination. We're a fellowship of churches. But there's 1500 of them, so at some point it starts to look like a denomination. At any rate, there was one pastor who started teaching the Bible verse by verse, contemporary worship, loving people, and that became his mission and people started getting saved. More and more people got saved and churches started. So pretty soon now you have over 1500 churches in America alone that are Calvary Chapels. Does that mean we disagree with the Baptists?

I just want you to know that all the evangelical churches in our community believe the exact same thing about salvation. Pastor Emmons at GraceWay Bible Church (which is a Baptist church) believes in salvation through Jesus Christ the exact same way we do. Pastor Dan from Lifetree Church (that's an Assembly of God church) believe the exact same way we do when it comes to salvation. Pastor Josh from the 217church (which is a Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination) believe the exact same thing we believe when it comes to salvation. There's truth that binds us together. So I interact, I have meals with those guys, we get together regularly in order to enjoy fellowship. There's a sense of truth that we have.

Yes, there are some denominations that have split because of issues within the denomination. Sometimes it happens like this: The denomination wanting to serve Christ and wanting to appeal to people starts to water down the gospel a little bit so they can get more church attendance. They want to reach more people so they don't talk about Jesus so much, they talk about hope and good things and helping people to be inspired in life. So the message of the gospel starts to take a backseat. Entertainment becomes more what it looks like on the outside. So there's some within that that start asking questions and saying, "I'm not thinking this is right. The gospel needs to be proclaimed."

So what do you do in that situation when you find yourself in a church where you feel like they're drifting from scripture? I think it's a really important question that we all need to ask ourselves. If you find yourself in a church you feel like they're drifting, what do you do?

Well I really like Martin Luther's example. Because Martin Luther was a priest in the Catholic church and when he started seeing that the Catholic church had drifted to a list of dos and don'ts, a list of works-oriented salvation (do these things so that you can be saved), Martin Luther is saying to himself, "Wait a minute. I see in the Bible all this stuff about grace. You're saved by

grace.” So what did Martin Luther do? He didn’t go start another church. He tried to change the Catholic church from within. He continued to work for a long period of time until finally they excommunicated him. Then he started another church and became really one of the founders of the Protestant reformation. And we know the Lutheran churches find their founding father Martin Luther.

The point is, the truth is important. The church is built on truth, it upholds truth, and there’s doctrinal purity that is very important in the life of the church. Where do we get that doctrinal purity? We go back to God’s word. So we must be using God’s word as our authority for truth. Now when you have truth and you understand it, then it makes those roots so deep that love is deeper. That’s why in a marriage relationship when the husband and wife are talking about God’s word or reading God’s word or studying God’s word or serving together in God’s church or praying together, there’s something that happens because their relationship is centered about truth, and their relationship is much deeper, much stronger, much more able to deal with the challenges of life situations. It’s just powerful.

That’s why I want to suggest the role of truth here we must consider. Truth is an important part in order to understand love. You can’t just gloat around saying, “Let’s just all agree with each other. Let’s feel good.” Because that is a surface kind of love, which doesn’t last long because we soon find differences that we need to address in lives. So truth is a very important part of understanding a deeper kind of love.

And thirdly I want to suggest when we have this love (and this is what Jesus is praying, I’m sure), He’s praying for His disciples, “Lord, I want them to have the same kind of love you and I share. I want to give it to them.” Why are they going to need this? Because He’s about to send them into the world where many of them are going to be martyred for their faith. They’re going to go out and be persecuted and distributed around the world, the known world of that day. Christians are going to suffer for their faith and they’re going to go out with this compelling message. I have to tell people about this.

That’s what love does. Love compels us to go out. We have a message. We can’t just sit still and watch. It’s like you’re sitting on your porch and you look across the street and you see the neighbors in the dining room having a nice meal together and the garage is on fire. You don’t just sit there. You go run over because you care for your neighbors and you know some truth they don’t know, so you go over there and tell them the garage is on fire.

There’s this motivation inside of us to go out and be like God with a motivation of love to share the message of truth of Jesus Christ with other people. This love compels us to make a significant difference in our world. That’s why Christians are the ones often who will start Christian schools so they can strengthen those young people. These are the Christians who will create hospitals. It’s Christians who care for the homeless people. It’s Christians who are out there on mission trips. Why do we do that? Because we are compelled by this love that God has for us that we need to share with other people because there is a message of truth. We love people and we want to share that message with them.



This love that God has given to us, that Jesus is praying that we would have in our hearts is a compelling love. It's not something you keep quiet in Christian circles. Religion isn't something you keep quiet. It's something we talk about. We're compelled to talk about it because we love people and we know we have truth that they need. In fact, people are attracted to Jesus Christ partly because of the love that we share and partly because the truth makes a difference. The people live in broken lives and they see there's something different. It's even called a conversion experience because they're converted to the truth. People need to understand this truth and we're compelled to share this message. Some will reject it. We know that. But there are many who will accept it. Because they need this message that will deeply satisfy those love needs that have been hurt, damaged in their lives, and God wants to fill that.

This love is so deep that God gives us. Here's a couple of scriptures that use the word deep. Romans 8:39 – *Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God.* Whatever hurt you've experienced, it cannot separate you from the love of God. He wants to fill all those cracks with this beautiful love that He offers. Ephesians 3:18 says in this prayer that Paul prays for the Ephesians (this is just part of it) – *that they may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.* We need deeper love.

In two months I'll have been married forty-one years. Well thank you. And I've still got a lot to learn about love. I think the more we learn about the depth of God's love, the more it empowers us certainly in a marriage relationship and in family relationships, but it empowers us in the church, it empowers us in the world. It just does something to us because it changes who we are.

Would you stand with me? Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, the depth of your love is so amazing, it's hard for us to grasp it sometimes and understand it. We ask that you'd make it very real in the hurting places of our lives. We ask for healing in the hearts of people today that are suffering because of past challenges in their lives. Lord, we know that your love has this beauty to it that we desperately need. Do a work in us as we practice this love so that others can see it and give us the ability to share that with other people who desperately need it as well. Lord, thank you for what you're doing in our lives. We trust you as our Lord and as our Savior. In Jesus' name, amen.