

September 24, 2017
 SOMA: Love One Another
 John 13:34-35

0:00:14 S1: Good. Can you believe it? It's fall now. It's the fall season. September. Next week is gonna be October 1st. October's a good month because famous people were born in the month of October. How many of you were born in the month of October? Raise your hand. Yes. Famous. See, look. Famous people... Including me... Was born in October. Now that has nothing to do with anything, I just wanna throw that out there. Alright, today we're doing... Continuing our series on the church, and it's largely because of two audacious things that Jesus said about the church. You see it in John 17 and John 13. You read them, this is probably review. If you're visiting with us for the first time, this is new to you, but this is a review for us. Here's what it says. "Jesus says, I am them," meaning referring to the church or his people, and you and me, "so that they may be brought to complete unity." Okay, so we're all one in, so what's the outcome? "Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

0:01:10 S1: And what Jesus is saying, "Hey, if the church gets its act together and are united and this diverse group of people come together, the world will see it and say wow, what is happening? How do diverse people come together and treat each other in such a powerful way and this is the message the world really needs because they are not doing very well, getting together and being united. We're becoming a very polarized culture. Jesus said something even more, though. He said this. Your love for one another will prove, not only will people become the faith through our unity as we, as the diverse people are united together, but your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. And now we always wanna try to create proofs for who Jesus is and we create all these rational proofs and Jesus says, "It's not a rational proof that will bring people to me, it is your love for each other."

0:02:09 S1: What's interesting is, what will reach the world is not what we say according to these passages. We think it's... We share the gospel and we do, but there's a prelude to sharing the gospel. In order for people to hear the gospel and grasp the gospel, they need to first see the gospel. In these passages, Jesus says, it's not what you say that will bring the world to him. It is what we do as a body of believers. It's how we treat each other so we've been looking at the qualities of the kind of community of faith that Jesus wants us [0:02:44] to each other so that we reflect God's love, so that we reflect a unity to the world that shows them the reality of Jesus. The difference that Jesus makes in people's lives and they will come to faith. And he even says that you will even win over the most ardent critic because if you prove something to the world, you're proving it to people that want proof. And what the proof will be is, how we treat one another, the quality of our fellowship together, which is why we're focusing on it at this time. Working on the quality of our life together, so we are both the best evangelical tool and best polemic to the world. Where we convince people through what they see and this fits with the spiritual reality of the world.

0:03:26 S1: Jesus says hey, here's what you need to know about the world. It is blind and it's dead. Okay, here's what it says in Second Corinthians 4:4, "The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel." And that was true of all. Before we come to know Jesus, we probably had no consciousness of a spiritual reality. That was very true of me. I had no consciousness of God. I thought Christianity was bunk. No consciousness of it, until

Jesus came into my life and then I had an awakening, I was opened up to the spiritual reality. The spiritual world, which is very real, the reality of God came pouring into my life and it changed me, and it changed you as well. It also says, not only are we already blind and we cannot see, meaning we can't grasp the gospel, the light that it sheds. But you were dead because of your sins. Then God made you alive, with Christ, for He forgave all our sins.

0:04:17 S1: So we are not only blind, but also spiritually dead, meaning the juice to the spirit world, spiritual realities to God's reality, the switch is off. There's no wire running to it, there's no juice. How do we get the juice there? People need to see. God's answer was this, "the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory." So Jesus, the word, became flesh so the world could see now. Though they can't grasp, but now they can see it in tangible ways and as the body of Christ, Christ 2.0, we had the same calling. To make the gospel tangible so people can see the reality of God and the difference He makes so they can believe in the reality of God and the difference that He makes, which is why we're focusing on it. The whole end, God's end game is this. After this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude with no one could count, which is good news, it means we're gonna reach the world. From every nation, tribe, people, and language worshipping God. What's the end? God wants to bring us all together.

0:05:24 S1: God wants to bring the world together and this world needs to be brought together, and it's gonna happen through Christ. I always say that the gospel is a third way. It is not liberal. It is not conservative. It critiques both. It is a third way that brings everyone together. It is a third way. And if we allow it to shape us, it shapes us in incredibly beautiful ways. The gospel itself is beautiful and when the gospel gets inside of a person, it creates incredibly beautiful people. And stated another way, in Ephesians, Paul says that Jesus' purpose was to create in himself one new humanity. What does that humanity look like? That's what we're looking at.

0:06:07 S1: And today we're taking on the quality of love, because that's the very thing that motivated the word to become flesh, so that we may see his glory, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." And it's the one quality Jesus highlighted that will win even the most ardent critic and member. Those who are ardent critics and cynics are those who have been wounded the greatest. And they're not gullible. They don't wanna to be gullible. They don't want to be taken. They want something real, and they're desperate to believe, but they need to see it because they've been hurt by the world. So they don't trust. They need to see the message has credibility in order to believe it because they've been wounded so badly they don't really trust institutions or trust people in their lives. And if we do this, if we're successful at loving one another the way Jesus defines it, and we're gonna look at how Jesus defines love, even the person who's most wounded will be one to Christ and that's our goal. So what is love by Christ's definition.

0:07:05 S1: Actually, he gives us two similes, two definitive qualifiers that help us see, very crystal clear, what love is. Well, why does he do that? It's because love is a very murky term. It's like 28 different definitions in the Webster dictionary and we use it in so many different ways. We say "I love my pet, my Labrador." I hear a lot of people love Labs I notice. "I love my Labrador Retriever." [0:07:33] the Labrador Retrievers. "I love my Labrador." But we also say, "I love my wife", or, "I love my husband." Now I hope "I love my dog" isn't the same as "I love my spouse." If it is, you need to see me. [chuckle] We gotta do some counseling, because those terms should not mean the same thing. So, love can be used in multiple different ways. "I love ice-cream" and "I love my pastor," but you lick ice-cream, but you don't lick you're pastor. Please! You don't lick your pastor, okay. [chuckle] So, we use it in different ways and Jesus knows it. As a result, he

defines it very clearly, in a very picturesque way, so we get it. And you see that, in John 13:34 and in Mathew 22:39. I always take on too much, so I'm trying to pare it back. I was gonna do "what is love" and "who are we to love" and "how to love," and I said "I can't cover it all." So, I just pared it back.

0:08:31 S1: Let's just focus on "what is love," because I wanted to give you some new stuff, maybe stuff you've never heard before. If you wanna deal with "who to love," Jesus is very specific, as he brings out, in several passages, specific groups we need to target. That is the poor. That is people with different ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. He targets children and the least, the last, and the lost. So, read those passages in your Soma manual. One passage I left out was Luke 10:25-37, under the ethnic one: "We love people from different ethnic groups." That's "The good Samaritan story," that's Luke 10:25-37. Read that, but if I have time, I'll get to the "how we can love." But I want to refocus most of the time on "what is love." Here's the two passages, the two similes that define love according to the new testament and actually, according to scripture. Here's what it says: "A new command I give you, love one and another as I have loved... As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." So, "a new command I give you, love one another" and the qualifier, or the crystal clear definition, is "as I have loved you, so you must love one another." The other statement on love definition is "love your neighbor as yourself."

0:10:04 S1: What do these mean? We're gonna unpack these together. Let's pray. Lord help us now, as a church, to learn how to love, how to love the way you define love, not how we define love and what's comfortable to us. How do you love? How have you loved us? What does it mean to love our neighbors as ourselves? Speak to us through your word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we may experience you and be transformed. So we become the kind of church that you desire. We pray all these things in Jesus' name and all God's people prayed, Amen. So, what is love? Verse 35 gives us the result if we learn to love, "everyone will know that you're my disciples." But who cares about that. Okay, these are all Christians. What it means is that people will realize, "hey these people, like in the New Testament, in Acts, these people have been with Jesus." Meaning, "Wow! Jesus really makes a difference in people's lives." When people see that, they will come to know Him. In the New Testament and, actually, today people loved Jesus. People loved Jesus then and people still love Jesus today. Jesus is very popular. What they don't love is his family. What they don't love is his church. In the early church, people came to know Jesus and love Jesus because of the church.

0:11:28 S1: Today, people love Jesus despite the church. We need to turn that around. Reality is because we're not reflecting the love as Jesus defined it, in all its radical power. We need to turn that around. We need to love in such a way that people begin to come to know Jesus and love Jesus because of us, not despite of us. So what does it mean, "as I have loved you"? What does it point to? Does it point to everything Jesus did with the disciples? Well, kinda. But there's an ultimate definition of love, and God's definition of love is not an abstract claim but a concrete event. And John brings it out very specifically, 1 John 4:10, He says this, "This is love," meaning this is love defined, here it is, "Not that we love God, but that He loved us." Well, how did He do it? "And sent His son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

0:12:29 S1: Well what does that mean? It means that Jesus saw us in our miserable condition, that we were blind, that we were dead because of the sin in our lives, that we left God out of our lives and as a result we were living a life apart from His leadership, and that has lead us into all kinds of messes and problems that leaves us very alienated, leaves us very empty in our lives. So God saw

that, He came in Jesus, and through faith in him He has the power to set us free from our human condition, from our blindness, from our alienation, from our despair, from our loneliness, all kinds of things, from our addictions. He made us right by offering himself on the cross, and on the cross two things happened. There was a little switcherooni that went on, He took our sins and placed them on Jesus, He took Jesus' righteousness and gave them to us, so that by faith in Jesus, we have a new position.

0:13:26 S1: He sees us just like Jesus, which now opens a relationship with him. We have access to God, He gives us Holy Spirit and now we have a relationship with God. A whole new world is opened to us and that happens simply by faith in what Jesus has done for us. It's not based on our performance or our record, but based upon His performance and His record. So the cross is the definition of love, or it's a picturesque, it's an event that shows us what love is, and as a result, the cross is the primary symbol for the church. People know that that building is a church because they see somewhere in that building a cross. And that cross though, is the icon or branding or image, but it represents something. There's a quality it's supposed to represent, and that quality, according to scripture, is love. And every company has a brand and every company that brand carries with it qualities, it reminds people of the qualities of that company. For instance Apple, Apple's icon is what? Yeah, everyone knows this right? But then an apple bitten out of represents something doesn't it? It reminds you of there's a company that's creative, it reminds you of functionality, of quality, that it's better than Samsung, no I did not say that, no! No, Samsung people will be upset, sorry Joe! I was just kidding about that 'cause I know Joe's out there [chuckle] And McDonald's too, you see McDonald's, it's icon is what?

0:15:01 S1: The golden arches, yeah, but those golden arches tell you something. It tells your kids, "Mom and dad stop!" We gotta have a Happy Meal because of what? Because the food is tasty? The toy in it! McDonald's knows that, so McDonald's represents speed, relatively tasty but you know [chuckle], it's cheap, it's speed, it's fast, it's convenient, and it's very kids friendly, kids love it. So the cross is our icon though, but it also represent something. When people see the cross, or people who worship under the sign of the cross, or they see a believer, and they see the cross or they see fish, or whatever, there's something that they should experience from us. There should be this connection, that connection is love. Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." The greatest expression of love is to give one's life for another person. And we, that resonates with us, we affirm that because the stories that move us most, whether it's in movies or literature, or even in song, are movies and stories about a hero who sacrifices their life for the good of others. One of the favorite movies of mine is Saving Private Ryan, and it just represents the gospel.

0:16:30 S1: They go out and search for Private Ryan because his mom already lost three sons and they want to spare her that heartache, so they put their lives on the line and they do an all out search for Private Ryan to save him. But it costs them their lives. And the hero, the lieutenant, it costs, no the captain, the captain's life and there's a very picturesque scene where as he's dying, he draws Private Ryan is and he looks into his eyes and said, "Earn this." Earn it. Be worthy of this sacrifice. That's what God did for us. Through Christ, He went on an all out search for us, to save us. He looks into our eyes having given that sacrifice and says, "be worthy of this." Not that you have to earn it, we can't earn it, it is a gift. It is a gift He offers us, but walk worthy of it. So no greater love than this. So love defined by the cross is service for the good of others at personal cost. Service for the good of others at personal cost, this came from my professor Donald Bloesch, international scholar. I would see it to say, "sacrificial service for the good of others at personal cost," but it's

redundant because the personal cost is sacrifice, but it drives home the point. It's sacrificial service for the good of others at personal cost.

0:17:57 S1: Okay, so let's take that apart. Service. Love is not a feeling. It's something you do, it's something you show. And now, it may begin with ardent feelings in your heart, but it's not necessary because everyone knows that you have friendships or spouses where you love them but you don't always feel love, right? You don't always feel the passion of love but you still love them. But so love, though it may be hooked to feelings, it's not dependent on feelings because love ultimately involves something that we do. And I love this one poem, and I looked it up, and Oscar Hammerstein II wrote it. Here's what it says, "Smile's not a smile until it wrinkles your face. Bell's not a bell without ringing. A home's not a home when nobody's there. A song's not a song without singing. Love isn't love 'til you give it away. Love isn't love 'til it's free. The love in your heart wasn't put there to stay. Oh, love isn't love until it's given away. You might think love is a treasure to keep, a feeling to cherish and hold, but love is a treasure for people to share. The love in your heart wasn't put there to stay because love isn't love until it's given away, because love is something that you do."

0:19:39 S1: And in 1 Corinthians, Paul writes a chapter that gives a comprehensive definition for, especially for married people, what love is. 1 Corinthians 13 is known as the love chapter. Now, listen to it, it's just a couple of verses, and ask yourself, "Are these feelings, attitudes or actions?" And I find it interesting that most of them are in the negative, so you got to put them in the positive at the same time, okay? So are they feelings, attitudes, are actions? So, love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It does not dishonour others. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no records of wrong. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. All of those are what? All of those are an action. You don't see them until you see that in action. Romans 12, Paul sets out, having talked about why we need the Gospel and what the Gospel is, in his application section, he says, "Okay, here's the first application. If you know Jesus and you drill it down, you understand what he's done for you, here's the result." And most Bibles creates this heading over Romans 12:10-21, it creates the heading of Love and Action 'cause all these things are love and action. And rather than read the passage, 'cause it's long, I'll just list those things that he mentions that this is love in action.

0:21:25 S1: If we love others, these are the kind of things that we'll do. Honor one another above yourselves. Serve the Lord. Be joyful, patient. Be faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn. We're gonna do that. We're celebrating the coming birth of Elliot and Bethany's child. We're celebrating. And so in both celebration but also mourning, caring for each other when we're in difficult times. Live in harmony with one another. Associate with people of low position 'cause the tendency is we tend to associate with people in the same position. Meaning there are to be no socioeconomic barriers in the church. Do what is right in the eyes of everyone. Live at peace with everyone. If your enemy is hungry, feed them. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. And it ends with, "Do good." All those are action. So love is something that we do. It's a response to another person in their need. But it's for the good of others. So it's a service for the good of others, it's not for ourself.

0:22:53 S1: Christ didn't die on the cross in order to exalt himself. He became exalted but he wasn't elevated to a new status 'cause there's no higher status than God. He's already part of the trinity, he just returned back to his original state. Going to the cross did not benefit him at all, it benefited us.

It was for our benefit. And so of service... If love is really love, it's involved service, but service that does not benefit us. We don't do it because it makes us feel good, though it may, or that somehow it validates our faith, or in some way somehow we're earning our faith, or are going to earn eternal rewards. Jesus says if that's what you're looking for, you already have it. It's not so it looks good in our resume or we look good to our bosses because we know corporate fundraisers. A lot of times you are motivated because it looks good to the boss. It's not so we can earn good karma, that's a very popular thing, that's a horrible thing, thinking the only reason I do good is 'cause I want good to happen to me, that's what karma says. It's not so you can get your kids into a better college or so that you feel as though you're a good person in order to justify that there are sins in your life which is what people do.

0:24:06 S1: It's for the benefit of others. Now, two things I was... Just kinda bug me a little and I don't wanna be too critical on this, but this kinda bugs me. There's an explosion of youth groups going to missions alright and I've always seen it this way, I send a group of kids or even adults to some place, let's say Mexico it seems to be a popular site. After a horrible arduous week in Mexico serving the poor, we send them to Six Flags because we want them to recuperate from that horrible week of suffering with the poor alright, and what we're doing we think it's heroic that we spend one week in the life of another person who lives this everyday. This is their life and we think it's heroic to survive one week of it and this is how they live, but we think we have to reward ourselves for being so... What does that make them then? If we're heroic for spending one week in Mexico, what does it make them?

0:25:11 S1: And I know that is golf charity and it bugged me, golf charity is a lot of rich people getting together to go golfing, fortunately they raise \$250,000, that's great, alright that's great. But every aspect of it was tied to some benefit to the other person, so I maybe spend 120 bucks to go golfing, but I get a wonderful meal and I get a bunch of raffle tickets, and there are 100 or more wonderful luxury gifts that I could win and [0:25:39] and then they had an auction and in auctions, big auctions lots of money. Good cause but in order for me to spend \$2,000, I'm gonna get a week in the Bahamas. Every aspect of giving was tied to some way it benefited me and that's not the biblical definition of love. And they could have raised \$500,000 if people just loved the way Jesus said to love and that is love through service for the good of others without any benefit. That's what love is, that's what charity is. Imagine what would happen if we actually loved the way Jesus loved at personal cost.

0:26:25 S1: David wanted to offer a sacrifice. He was the king, someone wanted to provide it for him for free. He says, "No, if I am going to sacrifice... If I'm gonna worship the Lord, it has to cost me something." Here's what he says in 1 Samuel 24:24, "No, I insist on paying for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." Because love always involves some form of sacrifice. Jesus by definition loved us in a costly way, it cost him his life but it cost him something even more I think. I think the cross was a temporary pain but there was something he suffered with even more I think. Here's what it says in Philippians, "Who being in the very nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage, rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even the death of the cross."

0:27:36 S1: Now, the cross was suffering, it was death. He gave his life yes, that's what the ultimate definition of love is, but there's something else that he sacrificed. What else did he sacrifice in this

passage? Which for me it'd been harder. This is harder if you're somebody, if you're someone of an utter importance, what's the hardest thing for you to swallow when no one recognizes you? But we talked about that earlier, no one, your words don't matter even though you're the authority. Your position doesn't matter even though you're in power to be utterly powerful, authoritative, knowledgeable and no one recognizes it. In fact they treat you as the opposite. It's humiliation; that's what Jesus did for us. He was humiliated, he had this incredible lifestyle in heaven, Six Star resort or probably 10 star resort but it comes down to this motel [0:28:32] existence. Spirit becomes flesh and takes on all the pain and all the suffering and all the limitations of a human body, that sucked.

0:28:42 S1: He is a king and he becomes a servant. Think of that, becoming a CEO now you're cleaning toilets. And it says, "As a man who were before he had no temptation now he's going through utter temptation and all the struggles of being a human and where he's esteemed in heaven he's always underestimated on earth." Today people underestimate him even though he has the authority, he knows he's God, he knows how things are designed, people think he stupid or doesn't work, the Bible doesn't work or it's teaching something, it's off or it's a slant. He has incredible ability, his utter place of power and yet people think he's weak, and he's of utter importance he has the place but people give him no honor. In Jesus' own time, they underestimated him. They said he's stupid, doesn't know what he's talking about and yet He said "I am the truth." It's a slant, he doesn't have any authority, we don't know where he came from. "I'm the way, I'm a singular path." He's weak and he lost his life, he has the power to transform life. Imagine you have all this power, all this ability and no one recognizes it, no one honors you for it. That would tear me up.

0:30:00 S1: All I can do, and I know something, and someone else things I'm stupid, and I know that I'm right, and I know they're stupid. [chuckle] Doesn't it? You think that... What... You know, I know, I know what you're talking about, and I know that, and I know that I know that you don't know that you don't know, but you don't know what you're talking about. All right. I'm gonna do those tongue twisters... [chuckle] So sacrifice, so love of it's... Really love should be sacrifice. It should take a cut out of your life, and it should take a cut out of your lifestyle, 'cause it took a cut out of Jesus' life, but it also took a cut out of his lifestyle. And does it take a cut out of your lifestyle? Let's... What does this look... Let's put some flesh on this. I'll give you some examples how this works out. You have a friend. All right. It's 2 o'clock in the morning. You're dead tired. You got to get up early. You've got no energy, no nothing, and they're in crisis. You give up sleep to be present with them. You show up. That's what it looks like.

0:31:01 S1: In your finances, what does it look like? It means to voluntarily live below your income, to live in a house that is less than you can afford, to go on vacations maybe once instead of four times, or to spend below your budget so you can invest money into you. To live as a believer, financially, means that our giving should have some effect on our lifestyle. It should lower our economic level some for it to be really sacrificial, if it doesn't affect your economic level, it's not sacrifice yet. It has to take a cut out of you. That's radical, isn't it? What's it's like? Well work... Well, it means it's like helping a co-worker so they can get ahead rather than you. And you give them the credit rather than you taking the credit. It means risking popularity in order to let your light shine. Now, if you let your light shine in a gentle way, I think you become popular, but sometimes you won't, and it's sacrificing your popularity to let your light shine. In marriage, it means, and this is for Elliot, and it means that when the baby cries, sometimes you got to... You take turns, get up, so your wife can get some sleep. And sometimes it's reverse, where you know he's gotta work in the morning, and you get up and sacrifice your sleep, because you know he needs

some sleep.

0:32:26 S1: And it's working in that, helping out. It means splitting domestic chores. I say this, because most men do not do enough in the home. People, this is number one complaint women have against men. They do not help out domestically, and you need to help out domestically, because you're partners. So as equity and fairness in marriage, it means treating your partner as a spiritual equal because they are agents, agents to God, and it's looking after their dreams and goals as well as your own dreams and goals. In parenting though, this is radical. Be prepared, parents. It means sacrificing your vision for your kids for god's visions for the kids. It means sacrificing your wants, your desires, what you mapped out for them in order to parent them in a way that god created them according to their bents, their passions, their abilities that he put in there. Now, I heard this comment over and over again. People are amazed of... They say, "Pastor, I'm amazed by how sacrificial you're being to your children, 'cause you let them go to whatever school they wanted to go to. That's amazing." And it's not amazing. It's because I serve a god who sacrificed for me. I'm sacrificial, because he is sacrificial. It's not a sacrifice. It's not. Actually, I had them choose the school with some guidance that I knew that they needed. One of them needed a private Christian school.

0:33:52 S1: I knew that's what they needed. Others needed a secular school to help them [0:33:57] . So I knew what they needed, but also gave them a choice, and I gave them the opportunity at... Yes, incredible sacrifice. Why? Because Christ sacrificed for me. That's why. So I thank you for noticing. [chuckle] All right. So the question is, "If it's loving is... " Ask these three questions. Am I... What am I doing in response to the situation? Are my motives pure? Does it benefit them rather than me? And does it cost me anything or what is it costing me until all those [0:34:32] . If you... Something you do, and your motives are pure, it's for them, and it's costing you something, that's love. And John applies it. John applies it to his congregation in a particular way. You find us over and over again in the epistles, 1 John 3:16-17, "This is how we know what love is." Here's his love defined, "Jesus laid us down for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." Notice he says here's the definition of love. Jesus died on the cross, then he... Next sentence, "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them..." Meaning it's not a feeling, meaning you don't do something about it, that's what meaning pity... If you don't alleviate their struggle, how can the love of God be in that person? How can it be?

0:35:19 S1: That may sound so harsh, but it's not. What he's saying is, "If love as defined by the cross is in you and it's drilled down, this is what will happen." This is what... This is the result. This is the natural response, and if it isn't happening, you have love, but not the kind defined by the cross. 'Cause the cross has not overcome your greed yet, or the place of money in your heart and in your life. And until it does, you have yet to drill down on the love of God as defined by the cross. Now that's hard, but that's truth. And 'cause I love you, I'm bringing truth to you, because it's right here and right there.

0:36:00 S1: Other things to say about this phrase, "As I have loved you." What it says, it's a simile. Jesus said, "As I have loved you, love one another." So there's a connection between the vertical love or horizontal love, or there should be. There should be a correspondence. The same love we received from Christ, is the same love that we should express to others. There should be a near example... It's a simile, so it can't be exact. We can't love the way that God does, we love imperfectly, but it should be close though. And if it's not close, if there isn't a match between the

vertical love we have for God, and the horizontal love expressed to others, then we will lack credibility. People see us as hypocrites. And they have a right not to believe our message, because until there's that match, that our horizontal love matches the vertical love with him, then our message has no credibility, until they see it. And if it does, people will see it and say, "Wow, what a difference Jesus makes," and he'll draw them to himself.

0:37:04 S1: Second thing, a little, other comment and we'll move on is, this new commandment. What's so new about it? It's in Leviticus 19:18, it's not a new commandment, it has existed since Leviticus. Well, people say, "Well, he's referring to a new example." It's God who gave us life. Well, there's other heroes in the scriptures that gave their lives, so Jesus isn't unique in that way. But what does it mean? It means this, there's another way the New Testament uses the words new, it means fresh. Just like every morning when the sun rises, we say, "It is a new day." We have a whole new 24 hours, it is a fresh experience of a new day. And what is being said here is when we love the way Jesus loves others, even though it's the old rugged cross, and it's an old message, it'll be a fresh experience of him. Those who experience God, that kind of love through us, every experience is a fresh experience of Christ, a fresh experience of the cross, a fresh experience of God. And that's the desire for us, for through us people have fresh experiences of the love of God. And are they experiencing that through you?

0:38:16 S1: Now let's unpack another one, that is as yourself, love others as yourself. Now we typically see it this way, we love others the way we feel comfortable loving, because certain things resonate with us so... For instance, for my birthday, my favorite two desserts are blueberry pie and coconut cream. Now even though my birthday is coming up, please I don't want 100 blueberry pies. Okay, I'm just... Yeah, no! Not in my face either, okay. [laughter] But here's what... So, I love blueberry pie or coconut cream, so I say, "Hey, if I love blueberry pie and coconut cream, and it's Victor's birthday, then I'm gonna bring him blueberry pie and coconut cream." [laughter] Now is that loving? [laughter] What if he's diabetic? Okay now... [chuckle] That's not what love is.

0:39:14 S1: I know this is true in marriage. One spouse, what is meaningful for them is service, nice acts, but their spouse though needs words of affirmation. So what happens if I love my spouse the way I like to be loved, and I do nice things for her or for him, or in reverse or for him, but they need words of affirmation? There's frustration there isn't there? What they want is you to tell them that you love them, and you cherish them. They want to hear all the things that they do right, 'cause that's how they experience love. But if all you do is bring chocolates and flowers, they mean nothing, because they don't need to be loved through service, they need to be loved through affirmation.

0:40:02 S1: So that's what love is. It's not loving the way I want to be loved into the specifics, it's more deeper than that. What it means is that I am to love a person in a way that communicates love to them, because I want people to love me in a way that communicates love to me. So that they experience through what I say and what I do, they experience it as loving, because I'm loving in a language that they hear and they experience. So for instance, if it's your birthday, how you celebrate a person's birthday? You ask them, "Well, how would you like your birthday to be celebrated?" That's all you gotta do. Or if you want to communicate love, you just go talk to your spouse or your kids or your friends, "Hey, what communicates love to you?" And then love them any way that speaks love to them, so they experience it as love. What it means is we need to operate outside of our love language. We need to operate outside of ourselves, which is what sacrifice is. That's sacrificial, living outside of ourselves for the good of others, so that they experience love through

us.

0:41:04 S1: What this requires is that we learn what a person likes or dislikes. It requires that we get to know people, we get to know people, so that we hear what they need. And for your response, it requires time, lots of time, which is sometimes the definition of love. It means conversation, so they talk about themselves, not you talk about yourself all the time. You [0:41:35] , and then you take mental notes, you learn, you take mental notes, and you act on what you learned. So to love a person as ourselves requires that we get to know the person, by spending time with them, having conversation with them, learning what is loving and what's not loving to them, taking mental notes, and then acting on what you've learned. A good example or I've heard it said... And this is the common Christian response to helping the poor or the needy and that is, the reason why they're poor is because they're lazy or they made huge, bad decisions.

0:42:07 S1: And maybe that's true in a very minor, a minority part of the time, but in reality, how do you know that? What does love require of me? I may believe that, but what does love require of me? The first step of love is for me to get to know the person, right? So I can say is that true. And if that's what you believe about the poor, the needy, have you ever talked to one? Have you ever talked to one? Do you have a friend? Have you befriended the homeless or befriended someone who's extremely poor and had a conversation with them? Maybe that'd be... If you wanna love, the first step is to do that very thing. In fact, someone made it easy on us. It's in the bulletin. It's in your outline. Thursday, July 27th, Orange Register, a reporter went and interviewed every one of those people who lived in the tent city under the big A and heard their stories. And there was not one person down there who wants to be there, not one. And all of them had unique stories of what happened in their life. It's worth reading that article. In fact, I have it here. I'll make copies for you. It's worth getting to them because that's where love begins, getting to know people and responding by what you hear.

0:43:15 S1: Now, I'm gonna do a little practicum. I'm a little, I may be a little long, but this is worth it. This is worth it. You're gonna love this, okay? I wanna give you something new. What I noticed about Journey is this. We're divided as a church. We have pockets of fellowships. And what God wants to do is one new humanity, one family, we are pockets of groups of family defined by what? Largely. It's not ethnicity either. Age. Or defined by age. Well, I'm gonna help us get together as one family, okay. And at the beginning part of getting together as one family is understanding each other so I'm gonna help you understand the different age groups in this church. And that's the beginning of a conversation we're gonna have. Here's something you need to learn. How many boomers are out there? All you boomers, raise your hand and clap, baby. Show your presence.

[applause]

0:44:07 S1: What a bunch of weenies. Oh, no. Come on. If you were born between 1943 and 1960, in general, you are a boomer. What do we know about boomers? Here's what we know. They lived in the age where there was such a thing as objective truth. They believe we should go back to that day. We'd be much better off if we lived the day just as you... That day is gone, people. Alright? Live with it. Accept it. There's a great optimism about truth. And the belief was that as through science and psychology and reasoning, you could actually get to something that's really true. Now... This is true and as a result, they would rate their lives around things that they found this is absolute truth. The spiritual question of this generation is "What is true?" And as a result, this generation produced Josh McDowell and Evidence that Demands a Verdict; Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ;

Apologetics, Ravi Zacharia. Creation evolution debates 'cause we really thought you'd be engaged in evolution, they can prove evolution is wrong. There's clear proof of design, that there was a designer behind the design. If people could see that's rational, that's true, and prove it, it'll convince people of the authority of the Bible, the truth of the Bible, and win people to Christ. And that's been our approach. And we usually use large stadium events or college forums. Lately, it's been DVDs because the more you get the message out, it'll convince everyone.

0:45:36 S1: The critique of this culture, although they had the face was the culture's critique was Christianity is a myth. Jesus never lived. That was the quest for the history of Jesus. But actually, they found that Jesus did live and there are 12 documents in Roman literature, secular ones, that prove that Jesus existed. So then you say, well, the Jesus of faith is different from the different of life. It was the creation of the church. The only thing that's real is what you taste, touch, and see through the scientific methodology. God isn't necessary for creation and we can explain it through natural means. And if we can explain a natural means, then actually that's how it had to happen, which is not necessarily true. So what was important is what is true, so they struggled with truth and coming, drilling down on truth. Then this next generation came along and blew that all away, Gen X. How many Gen X are out there? If you're born between 1961, that's me, and 1981, you are a Gen X. How many Gen Xes are there? Yes. It's, I don't know. Let's here ya.

0:46:34 S?: Woo.

0:46:35 S?: It's worse.

0:46:35 S1: Oh man. It's worse. We gotta work on that. Characteristics of Gen X. Here's what they are. They are the first post-modern generation. The objective truths of the boomers, these claims of their parents, they can't see it. There is no such thing as objective truth because the very beginning point of the search for objective truth is you and you have personal biases. And you have prejudices and there's no way of getting around it. There's no such as news. There is only spin. There's no true history. It's your interpretation of history. For this generation, truth is much more personal. It's relative, but it's very personal. It's true if it's true for you. It's true if it works for you. So arguments made by Josh McDowell and CS Lewis and Lee Strobel, they're nice. They say boomers, wonderful, great work. It doesn't work on us. Your Jedi mind tricks don't work on us. In fact, it really is a turn off to this generation. It does not resonate with them. Why? Because if you cared enough to talk to them and to get to know them, here's what you discover. They have a different spiritual question that they are struggling with. This is the generation who, there's no subtle way of saying this, they are the best BS detectors on the planet.

0:48:01 S1: They know when something rings true, and they know it intuitively when someone does not... Anyone wanna say amen to that one? All right. Wait a minute. Come on you X-ers, you know it's true. They did not grow up with "Leave It To Beaver" or these multi-generational settings or "Andy Griffith." They have problems with trust. The majority of them grew up in latchkey homes. They let themselves into the house. Their parents weren't around a whole lot. Their favorite TV shows were "Friends" and "Cheers." Because for them what was important was being part of a tribe, a new family of like-minded peers. They do not trust big institutions like family, corporate America, big church organized religion and work because these institutions failed them in their life. They do not live to work. They work to live. What is important is living, not working. Boomers work. It's work. You live to work. But X-ers, they work to live. That's why it doesn't matter if you maybe get a better job with more money. No, if it cuts into the living, they're not gonna do it.

Because they wanna live. They wanna work to live. That's their focus.

0:49:13 S1: So what's valuable to them is not work, but authenticity. Being real. If they see something's packaged or you're gonna sell them, it's a total turn-off. What they want you to be is just honest with them, to share your mess. You can't even begin a faith conversation until you're at least truthful about the struggles you have and the mess in your life. But if you're willing to be transparent and share the mess in your life, then maybe they'll let you tell them about how Jesus helped you with the mess in your life. But until you're willing just to be honest with your struggles, they don't want to hear you.

0:49:49 S1: Now imagine trying to reach this generation, if boomers in trying to reach this generation, send a mass load of apologetics and Josh McDowell pamphlets, and books and all these rational [0:50:01] [REDACTED] to this generation or reach them for Jesus, which is the language of the Boomers, can't you see how we will miss this generation? Because what they need to hear, what helps them experience the love of Jesus is for you to share your personal faith with them, how Jesus makes a difference in your life.

0:50:22 S1: This is what it means to love in a way that you're not looking at your own interests, but the interests of others. You get into other people's world. You speak their language. Now the Millennials is a whole different group. Here's the Millennials. How many Millennials are out there? Between 1982 and 2002 you were born. Any Millennials out there? Come on now, speak up. Yeah, baby!

[laughter]

0:50:43 S1: This group is huge, okay. They look at X-ers and say you're just a bunch of [0:50:50] [REDACTED]. What? We're gonna do life together. What? It's actually more than that. "Let's do life together. Hey, let's hang out." No, there's gotta be a purpose to it, man. Come on. They are a post-modern generation. They are the largest generation of all time, 80 to 100 million. Boomers are 60 to 80 million. X-ers are 40 to 60. I'm so sorry. Millennials are 80 to 100 wide, which is why the market is driven by the Millennials. They own the market. Just get over it. That's because they're huge. There's a lot of money there. They grew up in a child-centered home. They had helicopter moms, soccer moms, tiger moms. Lot's of extracurricular activities. Everything they did had to produce something. As a result, unlike the X-ers who just want to hang out and do life together, there has to be a purpose. There has to be an end. There has to be something that you produce. They are very optimistic. They are very pragmatic. They want to make a difference in the world, which is why they're very civically minded. They love to volunteer, which is why there is an explosion of volunteerism today and in missions.

0:52:00 S1: But they are also very narcissistic. All right. This is the generation that produced the selfie, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. And no, I do not want to know what you just did with your hair or what you just ate. I don't really care, but they think that I should care. Because they Tweet about everything [0:52:21] [REDACTED]. That's the narcissism. That somehow they're so important that they can tell you everything and everyone wants to hear about the very details of their life. They're very civic-minded, but they spend differently though. This is the cool part of this generation, they spend money differently. They spend money with a mission. They like to spend their money on things that are tied to a mission, like Thom McAn shoes. Drives me crazy as a Boomer. I'm cheap. I'll go to Payless for 15 bucks. My daughter spent \$80 to \$100 on Thom McAn shoes. Why? Because she

knows that a child in the Third World will wear a pair of shoes. And it puts me to shame as a Boomer. It puts me to shame that I value money so much that I'm gonna keep it for myself. And money means less to this generation because they wanna help others. It shows how materialist we are as a Boomer generation. And what a wonderful quality this generation of sacrificial giving. She would sacrifice extra money so someone else could have a pair of shoes.

0:53:40 S1: That's incredible. I love this generation because that's what Jesus would have done. Something else. Their spiritual question is what is good? They grew up in an era of conflict and hostility and polarization and global problems, and they want to know, "Does your faith make a difference in the real world, and if it doesn't get out of the way." Because they want to tie their life to something that makes a real practical difference in the world. They want answers to the problems of this world. They want big... They want answers to problems, but here's the problem with this generation, they lack survival skills. They have big dreams, but they lack know-how, as a result a lot of 25-year-old millennials look around and say, "Why am I not CEO, already? Why am I not Senior Pastor, already?" Uh, 'cause... How'd they get there, the boomers know how to get there. They don't, but they had big dreams though.

0:54:40 S1: The critique of this generation is pain and suffering. Pain and suffering is the critique of this culture. The world sees all this pain, all this evil, all the things that are not good. And if Christians claim that there is a good God who governs everything and the world says it's not true, it can't be true. 'Cause if there was a good God, it wouldn't see such a mess. Pain and suffering is the big issue. The new atheist really believes that, the problem with this world is religion. Religion itself is the problem. The reason why we're so polarized, there's so much conflict, people are killing themselves, there's such bigotry in this world, homophobia, is because, religion. Religion's the problem. So we're better off without it. Now, imagine, if I'm trying to preach this generation the Gospel, and I preach a Gospel of, come to know Jesus so you can go to heaven one day. Does that message resonate with this generation?

0:55:33 S1: That the whole key to faith is: One day, you'd be saved, go to heaven and live with him forever. Does that resonate? No. 'Cause they're not focused on heaven. They wanna know what difference Jesus makes in life, now. They're focused on answering the problems in this world, now. And they look at the excerpts and they say, "You know what? There has to be more than just hanging out. We can't be just this spiritual 'Breakfast Club,' we have to do something, we have to make a difference." Which is why our vision as a church resonates with this generation. 'Cause when we say, we wanna be a Revelation 7:9 church, that all languages, all peoples, all tongues come together, they say, "Yes, 'cause that's what the world needs. 'Cause we're comin' apart." And when the vision is, "One New Humanity," that resonates, 'cause that's what... If they can see Jesus bring everyone together, "Yes, 'cause that solves the problems in our world."

0:56:29 S1: That's why it's so vital for us as a church... On Earth as it is in heaven, that we live in a... We have become part of the community, that we're a taste of heaven. That resonates 'cause that's what they wanna see, that answers the problems to this world. Which is why, and leads to my point, as a church, it's vital that we embed ourselves in our community because unless we do, if we do not, if this group does not see the difference Jesus makes in the real world, they will leave the church. 'Cause they want answers to the problems, they need to see the church answering the problems of this world, which is vital. Why part of our vision of the church is to embed ourselves in our community, so the millennials see, "Yes, Jesus makes a difference." Amen.

0:57:15 S1: Now, there's another generation coming. And I'm gonna end, now. It's the iGen Generation, they don't even know a name for this generation. They don't even know a name for this generation. It's those born after 2002. Anyone born after 2002. They're gonna enter college in four years, so that will help define. There's no... No one's sure of the defining characteristics but they know the spiritual question. The spiritual question to millennials is, "What is good." The spiritual question of the iGen Generation is, "What is beautiful." And justice is tied to it, because what is a just society? What is a beautiful society? What is a just society? What is beautiful? Which is why we're working on our website so diligently, so its graphics are top notch because, they won't read what you put down on anything unless it looks good. Now that may be shallow, but that's real.

0:58:02 S1: 'Cause if it looks good, if the graphics are phenomenal, if it's beautiful, that catches them. And if they can see the beauty of the Gospel, and the Gospel talks of beauty... Or the Bible talks of beauty as glory. If they see that the world offers them, "Here's what it takes to be glorious, to be a great person." And the Gospel offers a whole different vision, if they could see the beauty in the Gospel, and the beauty the Gospel... The kind of beauty it creates in those who embrace the Gospel, you will win this generation. But they need to see. They need to see the beauty of Jesus shining through you and the beauty of the Gospel. Now imagine you try to talk to this generation. And all you wanna do is "Service, service, service, service, work, work, work, work." And they'll say, "Where's the beauty in this? Where's the glory in it?" You miss em'. So, that's a long illustration, or this is what it means to love others as yourself.

0:58:58 S1: It begins with getting to know each other. And I was helping you get to know the different generations. Now you say, "You left a generation out." I did. On purpose. What generation? The builders. All the aunts and uncles, elderly, parents. Why? Because, I want you to talk to them. I want builders to talk to all the other generations. So after church, during the fellowship time, I want you to go outside your generation. I want boomers to talk to... Whether they're builders, or millennials, or Xers, and ask, "Hey, what did pastor say is true about you? Tell me about it." And builders, talk to someone else. Your generation, everyone else talk to the builders and get to know each other. This is part of being a church family. This is part of loving others as yourself. And I'm out of time. So how to love as Jesus loved? Quick one: Is simply there's this matchup, if I'm to love others the way Jesus loved me, it means I need a strong vertical relation with God. I need a fresh experience with God all the time. The degree to which I experience the love of God through Jesus is the [1:00:15] through which I could express it to others. And I'm gonna end with a fresh experience, The Love of Jesus, which I hope will fill your tank and help to express that same love. All right, roll the tape.

[music]

1:00:55 S?: Please leave a message after the tone.

1:01:01 S?: Hey, Dad... It's me. I know it's been a long time since we talked. I was kinda hoping you'd answer but... I understand you probably don't want to talk to me. I've just gone so far and the things I've done, I just regret it, you know? And I know how bad I've hurt you and let you down, but Dad, I miss you. I miss how we'd drive around and just talk about life, and I just want to come home. I know you've probably written me off. I can't blame you, actually. Here's the thing, it's kind of a shot in the dark, but I'm coming through town soon and I'd really just like to see you. I know I can't just show up at the front door like I used to, but if you wanna to see me, just hang a small sheet out on the porch. And if the sheet isn't there when I drive by, I'll keep going and I'll try not to bother

you anymore. I love you, Dad.

[music]

1:04:05 S1: Did you feel that? That's God's love for you, that's the love that he has expressed to us. I hope that you can receive it and express it to others. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for that powerful reminder, through media, of your love for us. May that touch us and move us. Fill our hearts so our hearts will beat with that same love. And Lord, help us to express it and let it out of ourselves, allow ourselves to love in that same way. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.