

Sermon Growth Guide

July 25, 2021

What Great Love - Love In Action

1 John 3:11-24

Key Verse: 1 John 3:18 “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth.”

Big Idea: God’s love requires sacrificial action for the good of others as we reflect the love of Jesus in a broken world.



Foundations

This passage is a strong reminder of what it means to love like Jesus. When Jesus loved us, He gave everything away for our sake. He gave away the privilege (though not the reality) of being God and He suffered humiliation to the point of an excruciating death.

Love that talks a good game but does not follow through is empty and even harmful. As well, we use the same word for our love for ice cream that we do for our children. Talking about love, saying we love, and actually loving are different things. When I say love ice cream, I mean that I really like how it makes me feel. But when John tells us to love like Jesus, that kind of love is about others, not me.

In fact, John tells us that it is not really our love that we pour out on others. It is the love of God being given to the world through us because God himself resides in us. Pastor Tim quotes Bob Goff, who said that Christians who love this way “give away love like they’re made of it.”

C.S. Lewis, in *The Screwtape Letters*, puts it this way: “God really does want to fill the universe with little replicas of himself. We want cattle who can finally become food. He wants servants who can become sons. We want to suck in; he wants to give out. We are empty and want to be filled; he is full and flows over.” How will you love?

Understanding God’s Word

Read verses 23-24. According to these verses, what is the key to being able to love sacrificially, giving boldly of ourselves like Jesus gave His life for us?

What role does the Holy Spirit play as we seek to love others and why is the Spirit’s work important to you?

Applying God’s Word

To love like this requires sacrifice and that means giving up something that we think is essential for our lives. To be able to do that, we need confidence that our needs will be met and that comes only from trusting that the Lord will supply our needs. This means not only our physical needs but also our emotional and spiritual needs. Giving sacrificially may not mean going to death or emptying our bank account. But it may mean that for the good of the community, we let someone else talk while we listen. It may mean giving up power, prestige, or status for the sake of someone else’s good. What are some things you could let go of for the good of others and the health of the community?

Witnessing God’s Word

We live in a divided and increasingly hate-filled world. Is there a specific circumstance in which you can you show the world Jesus’ way of love this week?