

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

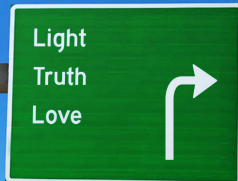
The DEVO

NOVEMBER 4 - 6, 2019

WALKING IN THE

TRUTH

SERMON SERIES 9/8 - 11/24



MONDAY

1 John 4:7, 8; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Matthew 7:15-20

If 1 John 4:7, 8 sounds familiar, it's because it is. John repeatedly uses the "love theme." Love appears 27 times in 1 John 4. He makes stupendous claims which we may not fully grasp because they are so familiar and at the core of Christianity. Do we apply what we learn? Many times, it is easier loving those we don't know well than loving our brothers and sisters in Christ whom we know well.

A new pastor was called to a congregation (not Pastor Tim Peck). His first sermon was on "God's Love." His second sermon was on "Loving Others." His third sermon was on "Loving Each Other." Each Sunday the theme was *love*. Even when his text was from the Old Testament, his message was on *love*. After several months of preaching on *love*, a couple of elders approached the pastor asking, "Don't you have any topics other than *love*?" The pastor replied, "Love is found in every book of the Bible. I have only begun using the Scriptures on *love*. However, when I see you loving each other, putting into practice what I am teaching, I will move to another topic." (Rev. Leland Evans)

We all believe love is important, but often we think of it as a feeling. In reality, love is a choice and an action as 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 shows: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude. 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. Love never fails."*

“Walking in the truth” means believing in Jesus Christ. The evidence that we are *walking in the truth* is the fruit produced—the fruit of the Spirit, especially love (Galatians 5:22). In Matthew 7:15-20, notice what Jesus says: “*By their fruits you will know them ... By their fruits you will recognize them*” (vv. 16, 20).

Throughout this week we will look at the implications of 1 John 4:7-21: “The Truth about Perfect Love.”

QUESTION

Where did you first experience love? Was it from your parents, grandparents or others? When did you experience God’s love? When did you consciously love another person as you were loved by God?

PRAYERS FOR BRYANT AND ANNE WILHELMSSEN

Pray for Bryant and Anne Wilhelmsen who serve through Global Grace Mission. They have been wandering on “Refugee Highways” from Germany to Afghanistan for years. God has planted their family here in the shadow of the Alps, and it is here where they mingle and reach out to the asylum seekers.

TUESDAY

1 John 4:9-12; John 3:16

Yesterday we read: “*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God*” (1 John 4:7). The first implication from these Scriptures is that God is the Source of our love. Perfect love originates with God.

Our world with its shallow and selfish view of love has turned these words around and contaminated our understanding of love. The world thinks that love is what makes a person *feel good* and that it’s okay to sacrifice moral principles and others’ rights in obtaining such “love.” That isn’t real love. It is the exact opposite—selfishness. Real love is like God’s love.

“*We love because God loved us first*” (1 John 4:19). God loves us enough to give His Son for us (1 John 4:9, 10). “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son*” (John 3:16).

In a sense, **loved** isn’t a word. There is no past tense to *love*. If you *love someone, you will love* them, no matter what. Sometimes we hear: “We fell out of love.” The implication is: “We did not have *true love*.” “*God so loved*” is action in the past which carries on to us today. In the Greek, *loved* is an action in the past that carries on into the future (affects us today). If we truly know God, we will love as God loves.

To illustrate, a person died. In the afterlife, the person was given a tour. In one room there was a large bowl of soup on a table. Sitting around

the table were emaciated-looking people holding spoons with long handles. In another room there was a large bowl of soup on the table with healthy-looking people holding spoons with long handles. The newly arrived person asked, “What’s the difference? Why are some emaciated while others looked healthy in similar environments?” The host answered, “The first room is hell. Each person is selfish, and because of the long-handled spoons, they cannot feed themselves. The second room is heaven. Each person generously feeds another with the long-handled spoon.”

The truth about perfect love: God is the Source of our love. The questions is: Are we selfishly holding on to God’s love or are we generously demonstrating God’s love to others?

QUESTIONS

What is the origin of “perfect love”? How will you demonstrate God’s perfect love to others this week?

PRAYERS FOR BRYANT AND ANNE WILHELMSSEN

Pray for the people coming off the “Refugee Highway.” Many are ready to learn about Jesus. These are exciting times when the answers to prayers prayed many years ago become living evidence that the Spirit of God is working.

WEDNESDAY

1 John 4:10-12; John 15:9-17

Yesterday we read: *“This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him”* (1 John 4:10). The second implication from these Scriptures is that Jesus is the example of what it means to love.

Everything Jesus did in life and death was supremely loving and utterly self-giving. Jesus is God’s *only* Son. While all who believe in Jesus Christ, acknowledging Him as their Lord and Savior, are following The Perfect Love, only Jesus lives in the unique relationship of Son and Father.

“As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you obey My commandments, you will remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends ... Everything I have learned from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit—fruit that will last ... This is My command: Love each other” (John 15:9-14).

Love explains:

1. Why God creates—God loves people.
2. Why God cares—God loves people.
3. Why we are free to choose—God loves people.
4. Why Christ died—God loves people.
5. Why we receive eternal life—God loves people.

Jesus is the complete expression of God in human form revealing God the Father to us. *This is love: not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent his Son as an **aton**ing sacrifice for our sins” (v. 10). Ιλασμό in the Greek is translated “atoning sacrifice.” The best translation is “acquitted” (clear of charge, debt paid). Jesus’ love made null our sin, reconciling us with God, bestowing a spirit of mutual love upon those who follow the Truth.*

God’s love is perfected in us as we learn to love other people like Jesus loves us. No one has seen God, only the Son (John 1:18). Jesus’ followers experienced God’s love through Jesus. We experience God’s love through others.

QUESTIONS

How have you experienced God’s love through others? How have you shown God’s love to others?

PRAYERS FOR BRYANT AND ANNE WILHELMSSEN

Pray that Bryant and Anne remain attentive to the wisdom of God in these times of true harvest. Pray for wisdom as they often enter German asylum courts in defense of these new believers. Since the harvest is so great here in Bavaria, the authorities do not believe what is happening among them.

THURSDAY

1 John 4:13-15; John 15:9-12

Yesterday we read: “If we love one another, God lives in us and God’s love is made complete in us” (1 John 4:12). The third implication of these Scriptures is that the Holy Spirit gives us the power to love.

The Holy Spirit lives in us and makes us more like Christ. When we love as Jesus loves, the invisible God is revealed through us and God’s love is made complete. Those who saw Jesus in person, confessing him as Son of God and Savior of the world, did so through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

“We know that we live in God and God in us, because God has given His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him/her and he/she in God. And so we know and rely on God’s love for us” (John 4:13-14).

When we confess Jesus, we receive the Holy Spirit. God’s presence in our lives is proof that we are *walking in the truth* and belong to God. The Holy Spirit gives us power to love (Romans 5:5). Relying on that power, we can demonstrate God’s love to others. As we do so, we will gain confidence.

The truth is that God’s love is perfected in us as we learn to love others as Jesus loves. Loving people as God loves is being like Jesus (John 15:9-12).

We are not told how many people to love, but how much we should love those we already know. Our responsibility is to faithfully love those God has given us. As we love those close to us, God may bring others into our lives to love. No matter how shy we may be, we don't need to be fearful of the commandment to love. The Holy Spirit strengthens us in doing what God asks.

When we began *walking in the truth* (became followers of Jesus), we received the Holy Spirit. God's presence in our lives is evidence that we are **followers of Jesus** (Christians). The Holy Spirit gives us the power to love (Romans 8:16).

QUESTIONS

What is the relationship between Father, Son, Holy Spirit and us?
Have you relied on the Holy Spirit in reaching out to others with God's transforming love?

PRAYERS FOR BRYANT AND ANNE WILHELMSSEN

Pray for weekly Bible studies among political asylum refugees arriving all the time into the city. Pray for the ongoing refugee children's ministry and for transportation options to transport refugees into the city from surrounding villages where refugee camps are often located.

FRIDAY

1 John 4:16b-21, Romans 8:38-39

Yesterday we read: “We know that we live in God and God lives in us, because God has given us His Spirit” (1 John 4:13). The fourth implication from these Scriptures is that God’s love always involves a *choice* and an *action*.

Our love models God’s because we are *walking in the truth* as God’s children. How well do we display our love for God in the *choices* we make and the *actions* we take? We are accountable for our *actions*. With God living in us, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, we have no reason to fear. We have been made right with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ’s death (1 John 4:17, 18).

God’s love is offered. We have the *choice* of accepting it and trying to love as God asks or rejecting God’s love and taking our chances on the future. God loves us perfectly. (Read Romans 8:38-39)

How well do we display our love in the *choices* and *actions* we take? Sometimes fear grips us. We can resolve our fears by focusing on God’s immeasurable love for us and by allowing God to love others through us. God’s love will quiet our fears and give us confidence in making the right *choices* and *acting* as God asks of us.

How well do we love those right in front of us—our children, our family, our brothers and sisters in Christ—those created in God’s image?

When we *choose* to follow Jesus, *walking in the truth*, we become part of God's family—those whom God chooses. We are each alone and together called to love. God's love is perfected in us as we learn to love others like Jesus loves.

God's love is the source of all human love, and it spreads like wildfire in loving God's children. God kindles a flame in our hearts, which in turn enables us to love others. The tiny spark spreads with the wind of the Holy Spirit. We are once again in the season of Santa Ana winds (Devil Winds). We know: *"It only takes a spark to get a fire going. And soon all those around can warm up to its glowing. That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it. You spread His love to everyone; you want to pass it on."* (Kurt Kaiser)

QUESTIONS

In your life, when has perfect fear cast out love? When has God's perfect love cast out fear?

PRAYERS FOR BRYANT AND ANNE WILHELMSSEN

Ask God how you can be a part of this increasing harvest. Through prayer and discernment, maybe God will call you for future service to the uprooted people coming to Europe.

Sources

- Story by Rev. Leland Evans can be found in Rev. Dr. Glen Thorp's "Freed and Equipped for Ministry: A Critical Study of Spiritual Gifts and Their Use Within the Church," Doctorate Dissertation/Project, San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, CA, 1982.
- *Life Application Study Bible: New International Version*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 1991.
- Kurt Kaiser. "Pass It On" (Song written in 1969)
- *Serendipity Bible for Groups: New International Version*, New York: Serendipity Literary Agency, 1989.

