



# Advent

Many gifts, one package



# Punchline

Love: Tis better to give **AND**  
receive





# What Is Love?

- ★ Agape - unconditional love
- ★ Action that shows desire for good
- ★ Highest form of love
- ★ Not something that happens to you, but something you express to someone





**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**

1 John 4: 7-8 NIV





**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. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**

1 John 4: 9-10 NIV





**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**

1 John 4: 11-12 NIV





# God's Love

- ★ God is love
  - Not just His activity but who He is
- ★ Knowing God is knowing love
- ★ The two cannot be separated





# Inseparable

**“Jump Around”  
-House of Pain**





# See God's Love

- ★ See God as active
  - The good things and the not good things
- ★ Remember that all God does comes from love
  - Might be caring and nurturing
  - Might be tough love
- ★ See God and see that He is love





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1 John 4: 9-10 NIV





# God Showed His Love

- ★ God's biggest show of love was Jesus
- ★ He sent His son to die FOR US
- ★ He did this because HE LOVED US
- ★ No greater show of love than this





# Joella And The Steak



**Sacrificial  
Love**





# Accept God's Love

- ★ This can be difficult
- ★ God's past sacrifice came before your present circumstances
- ★ Your present circumstances aren't the end, you can have perfect circumstances in heaven
- ★ Accept God's love this Christmas season





**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all  
your soul, and with all your strength**

Deuteronomy 6: 5 NIV





# Love God

- ★ We are to love God
- ★ Heart - seat of the mind
- ★ Soul - source of inmost being
- ★ Strength - everything you can muster





# Kitchen Sink Cookies





# Love God With Everything

## ★ Heart

- God at the front of your mind not the back

## ★ Soul

- Letting God be the driving force

## ★ Strength

- Actions and obedience





**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**

1 John 4: 11-12 NIV





# Love Others

- ★ Self sacrificing and not withholding
- ★ We show that God is alive and active when we show His love
- ★ Loving others puts the whole picture of God being love together





# Picture Worth 1000 Words





# Love Others

- ★ Based on their needs not our need to feel like we helped
- ★ See needs around us
  - These will involve sacrifice





# Love Others

- ★ Love those that we don't like
  - Pray for them
  - Being hard to love doesn't mean undeserving of love
- ★ Showing love shows a belief in a loving God who is active and present





# Love Is A Gift

- ★ We **NEED** the love of God
- ★ God gave it in Jesus being born
- ★ Remember to show God love
- ★ Love those around you
- ★ Show the world who God is by how you love
- ★ It's a gift to give **AND** receive





## Audio file

[Love Audio.mp3](#)

## Transcript

If I could ask for one thing this Christmas, let's see. I mean, I like the healthy thing too, but honestly, the that boring for me. So I actually went very similar to Becky. I would not a full House remodel. I went with like a brand new kitchen. I am the cook of the house. So give me like some plenty of counter space Stacy. And we're both in the kitchen yesterday and we're like, stepping over each other and stuff all over. Like, I don't even have a place to put a cutting board. Like we want a big kitchen. I want a bigger stove. All this kind of fun stuff to play with in the kitchen. I'm sure Mark and I can agree on a brand. New decked out home gym, right?

A garage.

A like a rage for Tom. Yeah, like a rage. See, this is the kind of stuff, but we all like we all have things. Maybe that we want for Christmas. Whether it is things like health, debt, paid off or kind of the fun things that you've asked for. I've seen things posted on social media where people like this is my 40th year in a row I didn't get. You know this toy I asked for as a kid and still as an adult, they're not getting it. That kind of stuff. I was trying to think of one I asked for probably a starter jacket as a kid. I wanted a Chicago Bulls starter jacket and I never got a starter jacket. Clearly, I'm over that, but. We've been talking about different gifts each week anyway, right? So different gifts in Advent are series here. It'll pop up in a minute on the themes of Advent is that many gifts, one package. So all the themes of Advent I describe as a gift, a gift coming in one package of Jesus. So we've talked about Hope, talked about Peace. We've talked about joy. Today we will talk about love and then on Christmas Eve will talk about Jesus being the package that all these gifts come in. So we've had a candle lit for each one so far. We will light this one here for love. Our 4th candle. Yes. They all work. There we go. So our candles are now lit for advents. Who here, as we think about these gifts and dive into love as a gift, had ever been told it's better to give than to receive. Many of us. Right. OK, good, good, good, good. We've all been taught this right. Christmas time should be spirit of giving. We want to give gifts. We are giving gifts to the Meadow Ridge Library. It's going to be fantastic. Right. Important we should give. But I think love is a gift goes both ways, because for love what I want us to think about is this love Tis better to give and receive. Love to better to give. And receive. We want to talk about love being a gift that we receive and we also give it. So let's talk about love for a little bit. Let's kind of define it. We've done this with each word. Word in this series now when Jesus talked about love, Jesus spoke in a language called Aramaic. Then when our the New Testament Bibles, the Gospel writers wrote they translated into Greek. So there's a lot of different ideas of what he was getting at. And in Greek there are a. Number of words. For love with arrows, which is kind of a romantic type of love, you have phileo. Which is kind of a brotherly or or friendship type of love, enjoyment, type of love. And then there's agape, which is his unconditional love. And this is the type of love that we really think Jesus was getting at when he talks about it. So agape love being an expression or action that shows the desire for good and well. It's sacrificial and it is the highest form, the highest type of love, and it's something we give. This is not a love that happens to us, like falling in love, but something you outwardly express to someone else. And that's the type of love we're



going to talk about with Advent. So let's dive into some passage work here in the Bible. We're going to be in first John Chapter 4. Our main passage will be verses 7 through 12. It's bookmarked there. If you want to follow along in an actual Bible on your table. Otherwise, it'll be up here, behind me. You can use a phone, tablet or anything to follow along as well. If you're doing that, I will be in the NIV translation. So I'm going to read this whole passage and then we're going to kind of break it. Down and see what we see. So first John 4 verses 7 through 12. Dear friends, let us love one another. For love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love God or whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through. This is love. Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete. In us, so we want to give and receive love in this passage, I think really hints at both. So I want to start with the idea of receiving love first, right? So we're going to talk about receiving love 1st and the first piece of that is to actually see God as love. To understand that God is love. OK, so God is referred to as a lot of things throughout the Bible. He's referred to as spirit, as light, as peace. But he's also love. God is love, loving isn't just one of God's activities. This isn't just something God does. All of his actions come from a place of love. He judges in love. He speaks in love, he counsels in love. So knowing God is to literally know, love. We can't separate the two things we can't claim to know God. And not know what love is, right? We came from God. We know God, we represent God. God is love. So we know what love is, because God and love can't be separated. Two things that we just can't really pull apart. Who here is thinking about this? One has ever been to a football game at Camp Randall Stadium. Badger football game. Many of us. It's OK if you haven't this. Store OK, they have a massive tradition at Camp Randall Stadium where between the 3rd and the 4th quarters they play the House of Payne song, jump around right and the whole student section. The whole stadium starts jumping and jumping. If ever been there. We sat once towards the top of the stadium and it feels like The thing is going to tip. The press box gets shaking, they show it on TV. It has been going on forever. I'm a lifelong Wisconsin resident, a lifelong Badger fan. I cannot hear the song jump around and not think of a badger football game. I can't watch a badger football game and not think about the fact that jump around is going to happen, right? God and love are like the Badger Football games and jump around. They do not separate. They're kind of want. They're together. I can't pull them apart.

You know, they tried.

That yes, they tried out one guess what? It didn't work cause you can't separate them. All right. See, we exactly everybody did it anyway, because they're not separated. House of Pain even showed up there. One of the last couple of years celebrating like the anniversary of the song. OK, they cannot be pulled apart. Right. So we need to see God and see love. So let's start by seeing God. That's the first part is. See, God is active in our lives. What he's done. So the good things, the things you may have asked for, the things you wanted to happen, the things you prayed for, and he's come through. But then also the things that didn't go how you wanted, the things that confused you, the things that maybe still hurt the questions you still have? Right. Remember that all God does comes from love. Now in those good situations where you get what you want, it might be a caring and nurturing type of love. He also might come through with a tough love, right? That's a little harder, but it still comes from a place of love. Even though it's hard. God loves us and he knows what's best for us as his children. He sees what we can't see. So all of his actions in our lives come from love because he is love. So we want to see God. And see



that he is love, right? So we're going to see God and see that love first. That's our first way to receive it. The second one is we want to look at how God actually showed it and believe that he actually shows us love. We'll go back to. That first John passage. 4 verses 9 and 10 it says 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. This is love not. That we loved God. But that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning. For our sin. So God can show his love in many ways, and he has. But the biggest one is what we're looking forward to in this Advent season. The fact that he sent his son to Earth, Jesus, his only son coming to Earth, is his biggest show of love. He didn't send Jesus because he thought it would be like a fun vacation to come to Earth. He didn't say, hey, I'm just going to come. There's some really cool humans down there. Won't you just go kick it with them for a little while? Right. Or you go off and learn something like when? You're going to college. Somebody did. He sent his son to die for us. He sent his son to die for us and he did it because he loved us. Someone had to pay for our sin and for the blemish that we put on our relationship with God. That was Jesus. He was able to do that. God showed his love and showed that it's self sacrificing by sending Jesus to pay for our mistakes, not his own. Not Jesus's mistakes. He didn't deserve the death he got, but he paid it because we we needed it. We're the undeserving ones. It's shown to the undeserving, but we still got that love from God. Love comes at a cost and God was willing to pay that, and there was no greater show of love than that. That's a parent. I love my kids. I love both my kids, Jeremiah and Joella's eight and four year olds, and I have shown them both love in a lot of different ways and I'm going to talk about one can throw the slide up here that is a massive show of love. For me, this was Stacy's birthday, I think. Or Valentine's Day. I don't remember number of years ago. We have a tradition. You know us when it's like a birthday or something, we cook it very similar meal and by we I mean I cook it. OK and it's usually a steak and a potato and some nice dessert. Well, when Joella was little she climbs right up on dad's lap and she grabs my steak and she looks at me with those Big Blue cute eyes like Daddy's Little Princess. She's had me wrapped around both fingers since the day she was born. She grabs my steak and not just a little piece I had. To cut her. A little one. She grabs a whole big slab of my rib eye that's nicely crusted with salt and all this good stuff. I'm sure it was delicious. Glad you enjoyed it. I let her. Do it. I sacrificed my big juicy steak. Out of love for my little girl. God sacrificed way more than a stake for us, way more because he loved us and we need to understand and accept that sacrifice and that kind of love. So it's one thing to see God's love around us and to see God. Then we have to actually accept that that love is for us. That God actually loves each of us that much to send Jesus for us, and that can be more difficult than we realize. We can't think God doesn't love us. This happens. Maybe you're struggling with some of that stuff from part one. The things you're seeing around. You and thinking. Man, I how can God love me with all? This going on. Or or. Is this really from a place of love? Does God really love me? Does God really love us with all of this happening? Well, the short answer is yes, he does. And one thing I think that helps to remember that is that God's past sacrifice came before your present circumstances. God loved you. Before any of this, he knew what was coming. But he loved you in advance and sent his son to Jesus to die for you anyway. He did that so that your present circumstances aren't the end and you can have the perfect circumstances in heaven. Here, God loved us first before we could love him. Before we could love anyone. So that's where we go back to. They're the mornings we get up and maybe you're feeling rough like me. You go and you look in the mirror and after I get over the fact that there's more Grays in my beard that my daughter points out every day. And I look at myself. And say man like. I've screwed up. I don't have this. Perfect life all the time. Does God really love me and can he still love me? Have to go back to that past sacrifice that God knew everything leading up to this and loved me anyway. God loved me first before I loved him. And before I even



screwed up and he loves you before you screwed up. Before you even loved him and he still loves you now. So accept that love this Christmas season because it came with Jesus's birth. So we have to receive God's love, right? So we see it. We want to accept that it's for us. So we bring it in, we receive God's love, and then there's the other part of that gift. Now we give it. We're going to flip to the Old Testament real quick for one verse. It's due around me, 65, says. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. So this is being spoken to the nation of Israel and it says you are to love God and this is a total all-encompassing type of love and it gives kind of the three different places you're supposed to love. It says your heart. When I was studying this and reading through it, they kind of talked about the heart being the seat of the mind. So your heart and your mind are so closely intertwined. And then your soul, the source of your inmost being. What drives you? What's deep down when you look? And then your strength, I say it is everything you can muster. Everything you got. You put that all together, and we're supposed to love God with that and unreserved devotion undivided. Emotion. Devotion, love God with everything because he loves us with everything. Have you heard the phrase ever? Everything but the kitchen sink for that one right? Just means everything. Well, there is something actually called a kitchen sink cookie as these right here you have them on your table. You can feel free to eat them at any point. This is a kitchen sink cookie and basically what it means is you just take everything the pantry and you Chuck it into one cookie. I mean, why not, right? Sounds great. I think in the cookie you have, there's some M&M's, chocolate pieces, pretzels, white chocolate chips, Graham crackers. And I threw a cranberry orange glaze on the top because why not? Because I had it everything but the kitchen sink. I don't. It's all going to taste like together. But it seems good. Good. Hey, we're out. You're out of here already. There you go. All right. Everything but the kitchen sink. Right. You throw it all in the cookie. We should love God with our kitchen sink cookie. But include the kitchen sink with everything in our lives have an unwavering devotion to God's unwavering devotion to God. With everything you have with your heart. Remember the seat of your mind, heart and mind related. So loving out of your mind with what you think about. Right. Our mind sometimes can easily think about other people and not great ways. Right? People that maybe. Are a little difficult. Eliminating ill will towards them. Right. We're gonna talk about actually loving them a little bit, but like eliminating just in your mind, any ill will or or disdain for them. Also having pure thoughts, lust and desire is an absolute issue in our society and with everybody physical, emotional being attracted to a person. An alley. It can happen with people you're in contact with at work or in the neighborhood. It can happen with people you see on TV or social media, but keeping our minds pure, keeping our thoughts on God. I love the phrase. Keep God at the front of your mind, not the back. So he's up there first. So we love God with our heart and with our mind. And we love God with our soul. Again, this is our inmost being what's inside you? You're driving force when you dig deep down what's making you tick. And that's God. Expressing that love for God deep down, making sure he is that peace in your soul. And then with your strength, I always see strength like actions, strength it comes. I think in actions or obedience. Doing what God wants over and above what you want to do, or what someone else wants to do, whether it's popular or not, whether it's easy or not. Or not turning from God when things start to go South, not just running and looking for that greener pasture. Seeing that the grass is always greener, but still following God, listening for God, that takes strength and it's hard, and it takes everything we can muster sometimes. But we love God with. That so give love to God. So we love God. But then we also got to love others. So look at the last. Part of First John 4. Verses 11 through 12 say, dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one's ever seen. God. But if we love one another, God lives in US and his love is made complete in US. So God loves others, or God loves us.



We're supposed to. Love others. OK, this is that godly love that self sacrificing love. This love does not get withheld from anyone. And when we love others, we're actually loving God as well. He commands us to love others, so we're obeying him, which is loving others and loving. Women, when we do this, we're also showing God to these other people. We're showing that God is alive and active by showing his love. And we're still loving the way God does that, showing that God is still present and active, cause he's doing it through us. And then it says it makes God complete. He loves us or makes this love of God completely. He loved us. We love him. We show his love for others and it just brings this whole awesome picture. Together, the picture of God being love and we see that all come. So showing love to others is how we can do that, right? It's like the idea of a picture is worth 1000 words. I've heard this before. There may be multiple ideas or descriptions, or the essence of something can be conveyed in a single image, and I have a few different ones up here. They can come from scenery or places you've been. People will put some that are relaxing. Right. It's just worth, you can't even describe it, put into words, seen pictures from conflict zones or war zones that tell the story of what's happening there. Family Pictures tell stories. I have one of my favorites up here that is Jeremiah holding Joella in the hospital the day she was born. What that picture meant I can't describe to our family for Joel being born. Jeremiah was so excited and still is to be a Big Brother. It was all. Of us together, right? I can't put that into words, but the picture has it showing love to others is the picture of God that's worth 1000 words. And yet, it's not an emotional loving of others. But a sacrificial and service love to them, serving and caring for them. It's based on their needs and this is a big part of this. It's based on their needs, not our need to feel like we help them. It's based on them. So we have to be aware of the needs of others and how we can meet them. This summer we talked about the Good Samaritan, that parable, and it's if you're not familiar, there's a man that is beaten and left for dead by the side of the road. 3 different people come by the 1st 2 cross over and don't help him. The third one, the Samaritan, stops. And helps him bandages his wounds. Take him to the end. Pays for it. It didn't matter who the person was that was beat up. The Samaritans saw somebody beaten and hurt, saw and need, and met it in the way that he could. He loved that person. The point wasn't. Is this a person I'm supposed to love? The point was, there's a need. How can I meet it? So see the needs around us again, as a church, we help with the Meadow Ridge Library every month there is a need for those snacks and sandwiches and we're able to do it and it's awesome and they're so appreciative and we get to love those kids and that library.

That way.

Individually this can be done in a variety of ways, in theory. Sometime it's going to snow this winter, you can shovel a neighbor's driveway. If there's somebody that's unable to do that. Also thinking about as we're coming up on Christmas, a phone call or a text or some time with a person that maybe is lonely or going through a hard time this Christmas as joyous as Christmas can be. For some people, it's very lonely if they've lost people or live by themselves or anything like that. So just a text or phone call or some time with somebody like that is a way to love them. There's a whole bunch of others. But these will. Involve some type of sacrifice from you. Time, effort, money. Depending on what it is, might involve a sacrifice in those ways. It also sacrifices recognition and repayment. We don't do this to be recognized. We also don't do it to be paid back, so we'll show them love so that they'll love us later. We can never repay God completely. For the love that he showed us. But he did it anyway. So we give up that repayment too. When we love others. And remember, this is a love that doesn't withhold, and that includes the people that have wronged us or the people we don't really like. Because there are people like that in the world, remember this we have wrong to God and we still do through sin. But God doesn't withhold his love



from us. Now again, you don't have to become everybody's best friend, but we can still love them. So how can you love or serve those that have maybe wronged you? You might be thinking, Jeff, I can't be in the same room with that person. There's no way that I can. Honor God and be near. Them. Fair. I'll give you that fair. You can still pray for them. You don't have to be near them to pray for. That's really cool about prayer. You can literally be on the other side of the world and still pray for them so you don't get out of it. Go to God for them, for God to work in their lives, for them to see and hear God, for God to bring them hope, peace, joy and love this Christmas season. Them being hard to love doesn't mean they're undeserving of love. I'm hard to love sometimes. That's my wife. I know it. OK, we all can be. It doesn't mean we don't deserve it. We get it from God, even though we. Don't deserve it. So we love others even. If they maybe don't deserve it. Maybe they're different from you or they. Look, talk, act, believe different. They still deserve love. Remember that you showing them love shows them God. You have to say anything to show them God. Showing them love shows that you believe in a loving God who is active and present because he's active and present in you. Working that love through you. So love others, period. Kind of full stop and give that love because it's a gift. Loves a gift and it's one that we all need. We don't need. That love of God, it's not just a nice gift to look at and to have, it's a necessity. So God gave it in his son being born. So don't forget that the birth is what we're looking forward to and moving towards this coming week, right? We're we're now a week out from Christmas Eve and then Christmas Day, my kids ask Alex every day how. Many days till Christmas. Right, we know. But in the planning, she gets it. Right, you know. Ohh no, we get in days. You have to ask in days. Yeah, no, Alexa gets it right. At least in our house. In the planning and excitement of everything else, remember, remember what we're working towards in Jesus birth. Remember that and show God love. With everything you have love God because he loved you. Love God because he loved you first. And then love those around you in the ways that you can sacrificially and without withholding it, or picking and choosing who you think deserves it. Love, like God loves us. Show the world. Who God is by how you love. Show the world God's love because it's a gift to give and to receive. Let's pray. Gotta thank you for today and that we can come here today. We can talk about your love. God, I mostly thank you that you loved us. You loved us first. You loved us enough to send your son, and that's what we're looking towards this Christmas season. That's what we're looking towards. God in the coming days and the week. So I pray that we would keep that on our hearts and our minds. God and how amazing that love is for. Separate. That would be something we'd remember, but that we would show that we'd show to you and we would show to those around us to pray that you would make it clear those people that we need to love, that we would see the needs around us, we would do what we can to love those people. And God, that we would think every day that we are loving you with, with, with our hearts, God with our soul, and with our strength. So thank you again for this morning your name. Amen.