

# THE POWER OF LOVE

## Part 2 - God-Borne Love

Right through this year, we have been talking about the one thing – the most important thing that we think God has put before us as a church family: that despite the storms we're all facing, despite the circumstances, NOW is the right time for a move of God's Spirit in us and through us. This will take us outside our comfortable environment here into the community around us, our city, and reach into the nations of the world, to reach people who have not yet heard or experienced Jesus!

We're hoisting our sails to catch the wind of the Spirit to sail to the other side – the places we're being sent in His power. We're looking to catch that wind, be empowered by His Spirit, and go where He is leading. He's inviting everyone to join in – it's all hands on deck, everyone in, we can't do this alone!

Something important from last week:

- + Saul was blinded by the light but became a light to the Gentiles with the message of Jesus.
- + Saul went to lay violent hands on the Christians, but then Jesus had the Christians lay loving hands on him.
- + Saul went to take hold of the Christians, but then Christ took hold of Saul.
- + Saul went to break the body of Christ (the church) but then finds he's been taken up into the body of Christ, baptised and breaking bread with the body of Christ as an unexpected guest at their table.

What makes such a powerful change? The Love of God!

### The Power of Love is a Curious Thing

1 John 3:1-2

John goes on to say in a few verses that this is so big, so intense, so much, that we can't even really fully understand it – but what we do know is that we are being made like Jesus as God's love works in us!

Have you ever been given a gift so large and overwhelming that you don't know how to respond? That is the experience we have been given in God! His love has been given to us! It's powerful and extravagant and changes everything!

John 7:38 - You are loved! The water is flowing! Let it flow!

Love is powerful because the love we have is God Himself working in our lives!

## It Might Just Save Your Life

1 John 4:7-21

A chiasm is a literary feature/device, where a sequential set of ideas is presented and repeated in reverse order. The result is a series of paired phrases that step from the outside into a central point.

### **The paired verses:**

- + Verse 7 and 21: Know God, know love
- + Verse 8 and 20: No God, no love; no love, no God
- + Verse 9 and 19: God came into the world and loved us
- + Verse 10 and 18: God satisfied the Law so that we are free to love through His son
- + Verse 11 and 17: We are to love others as Jesus loves us
- + Verse 12 and 16: God's love abides in us – that's How we know Him
- + Verse 13 and 15: Belief in Jesus causes God to abide in us by His Spirit
- + Verse 14: the centre, the key: "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world." – 1 John 4:14 (ESV)

What does love lead us to in John's thinking? It leads us to testify to the world that Jesus is the Saviour that has been given to us, given for us.

Love sends, love arrives, love Saves – because God is Love!

This is the message of your life! Did you know that? This is who you are!

## **It Might Make You Sad, It Might Make You Mad**

The world is in need of a saviour, and we are the ones He's chosen to tell them! What would that look like for you? What would that take? What level of humility do we need to adopt to love each other?

If there's fear there, if there's a gap, if hearing this makes you sad, then there might be a gap between where you are now and your last encounter with God's raw and powerful love!

But guess what? You are invited into that encounter! He has made the way open to you, me, and everyone to come and encounter His love! John connects abiding in love and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Need a love encounter? Invite the Holy Spirit!

What if the true issue was that our comfortability with love is really our comfort with the work of the Holy Spirit, and really, that is our comfort with intimacy with God?

Lack of love? How close are you to God? And if you think you're not close – bingo! You've found a lie you're believing! He wants to exchange that for His truth.

## **More Than a Feeling**

John writes in v17 that we can be confident when we stand before God because as Jesus is, so too are we in this world. We are Jesus-people in the world, doing Jesus-things, so that Jesus-fruit results.

When we come to the last moment, when we stand before our creator and look at the life we have lived, His love gives us confidence!

## **The News**

How do we make that real? How do we encounter this love?

Two entry points for God's love to grab hold of us:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” – Matthew 22:37-39 (ESV)

Struggle to love others? How's your worship? God's inviting you to worship Him with every part of your life!

Struggle to love God? Step into loving your neighbour – the people around you.

Ask the Holy Spirit how you can be Jesus today to someone else.

## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been given a gift so large and overwhelming that you don't know how to respond? What was it? What did that do to your life?
2. How do you view God's love? As a gift like that, or something else? What impact has God's love made in your life?
3. God loved us so much that He sent His Son. Now we have His Son, He loves the world so much He sends us too. What difference does seeing the world through lenses of love make to you?
4. If we struggle to be motivated to love others, maybe there's been a while since our last encounter with God's love. What was your last encounter?
5. Our openness to Holy Spirit's work in our lives can significantly impact our encounters with God's love. Where is God leading you to be open to His love through the ministry of His Spirit?
6. How does it change your perspective on loving others when you know you are empowered to love like Jesus, alongside Jesus, who is present with us every day?
7. Why not take this moment to invite God in again to experience His lavish love for you?