



From Here to There

Love

Galatians 5:16-21, Matthew 22:37-40,
1 John 4:7-12

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The call to love

The challenge of loving

The freedom of love

The practice of love



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Message-based Group Lesson

Overview

As we move from the “here” of bondage to self to the “there” of life in the Spirit, this transformational process means that there is an ever-increasing display of Christ-like character. In Galatians 5 Paul describes this character as the fruit of the Spirit. The first of these fruits is love. Some argue with merit that love is the overall fruit of the Spirit and all the others are expressions of that love. Whether or not you think this is completely accurate, love does hold first place in this list and is consistently portrayed by Paul in all his writings as the core expression of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

But why is it so hard for us to love? What residues of our life apart from God still have a grip on our hearts? Has the way we have preached and understood the gospel contributed to this struggle? These are essential questions and ones we will look at in this message.

Engaging with each other

1. Spend a few minutes making a list of popular love songs. What do the lyrics say about how people think about love?

Engaging with the Bible

1. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus tells us that the whole Law is summed up by the command to love God and love others. How is this the fulfillment of the whole Law?
2. Many presentations of the gospel focus on Christ paying the penalty for our sin. Does this mindset help or hinder our ability to love? In what ways?

3. In 1 John 4:7-12 our ability to love is directly connected to our being loved by God. Why is this so important?
4. How is God’s love demonstrated? How does this compare or contrast with our normal notions of what love is?

Engaging with our lives

1. Think about that thing that nobody else knows about you and that you fear if known by others they would not love you. How does the fact that God knows all about you and still deeply loves you impact you?
2. Think of a person who is difficult for you to love. How does the concept of loving them for the next 10 minutes help you love that person by the power of the Holy Spirit?