

A More Excellent Way

1 Corinthians 13

Sermon Five: A More Excellent Way Displayed [1 John 4:10-11]

March 21, 2021

Opening ILL: A picture is worth a thousand words. Hearing my grandparents describe me and how humiliating that was. In preparing and developing these messages, it dawned on me that we need an example of love to really show us what all of this looks like. We need this love displayed for us in the hope that we might emulate the example that we see.

I. Introduction/Review

- A. A More Excellent Way Defended.**
- B. A More Excellent Way Defined.**
- C. A More Excellent Way Described.**
- D. A More Excellent Way Displayed.**

Point: We are going to step away from 1 Corinthians 13 for a sermon in order to focus on how love is displayed. In other words, we are going to focus on how we see love in action, specifically by God and in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

II. An Exposition of this More Excellent Way Displayed [1 John 4:10]

A. In this is love.

1. Notice that what John is doing here is not to defend, define, or even describe love. What John is doing here is putting love on display.
2. This is hearkening back to v. 9, which says, “By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.”
 - i. Is this phrase, “The love of God” referring to God’s love for us or our love for God?
 - a) The answer is made clear in v. 10.

B. Not that we loved God

1. Does this mean that our love to God doesn’t matter? mh genoito
2. What this means is that the very root and beginning of this display of love was an act in which God himself took the initiative.
 - a. We are not loved because we are special. We are special because we are loved.
 - b. We are not loved in response to our own loveliness, but because of the sheer determination by God to love us.
 - i. **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,
 - ii. 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
3. What this means is that this display of love was not motivated by God’s response to our love to Him, but instead by His love for us!
 - a. This makes all the difference in the world!
 - b. This display of love was not a reward for the affections of people. Instead, it was itself an expression of affection to people.

ILL: Buying somebody a birthday gift because you love them as opposed to because they got you one. They are both good, but isn’t one better than the other?

C. But that He loved us!

1. He experienced love for us.
 - a. Don’t miss this! He loved us.

Quote: “To please God... To be a real ingredient in the divine happiness... To be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.” C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory” page 39

2. He expressed His love for us.
 - a. How?
 - i. By sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 - ii. What does this word “propitiation” mean?

III. An Exploration of this More Excellent Way displayed.

A. How does the death of Christ display God’s love?

1. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest display of patience in human history.
 - a. **Romans 3:25** whom [Jesus] God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
2. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest display of kindness in human history.
 - a. Remember what kindness means: Dictionary.com definition: “of a good or benevolent nature or disposition.”
 - b. Could there be any act in human history that could compete with this act of benevolence?
 - c. Has there ever been something so good done for those who deserved it less? NO
 - d. **Romans 5:6-9** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.
3. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest display of humility in human history.
 - a. **Philippians 2:5-11**
4. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most appropriate display of love in human history.
 - a. Remember what “appropriate” means: to be fitting, seemly, etc.
 - b. It is appropriate to our need.
 - i. We needed righteousness...we didn’t have it.
 - ii. We needed a propitiation...He provided it.
 - c. It is appropriate to His character.
 - i. This is the kind of person Jesus is. He lays down His life for His friends.
 - a) **John 15:13** Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.
 - b) **Matthew 11:28** Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.
5. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest refusal of provocation in human history.
 - a. Remember how Jesus was mocked! He blessed instead.
 - b. **Luke 23:33-39**
6. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest display of the joy of love in human history.
 - a. **Hebrews 12:2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

B. He bore, believed, hoped and endured all things for us.

1. For us!
2. Here is where we have to stop analyzing and simply marvel!

IV. A More Excellent Way Applied [1 John 4:11]

A. Let this break you!

1. Remember, the kindness of God leads you to repentance!
 - a. **Romans 2:4** (see context)

Quote: “How astonishing the thought, that the maker of heaven and earth, the holy one of Israel, before whose presence the earth shook, the heavens dropped, when he displayed a faint emblem of his majesty upon Sinai, should afterwards appear in the form of a servant, and hang upon the cross, the sport and scorn of wicked man!”—Newton

B. Let this bless you!

1. **1 John 3:1** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
2. **John 15:9** Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

C. Let this beckon you!

1. **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.