

“Love Because We Are Loved”

Ephesians 5:1-2

Sermon Series: “The Walk”

Introduction: We crave love and know that we should love others (this is a compelling piece of evidence for the existence of God), but we often fail to love. Why is this the case and how can it change? It is the case because we have a heart problem. It can change when we experience the love of God that flows through us to others.

The key word in understanding verse 2 may be the little word, “as.” Clinton Arnold writes of it, “Christ’s love for his people is both the reason and the pattern for living a life that is characterized by love. The conjunction [“*kathos*” translated “as”] should be taken as having both a causal and a comparative force.” Basically, this means that the love of Jesus gives us the example of love and empowers us to love as He changes our hearts through the gospel. This is really an expression of the main idea of the second half of the book, which is, “We live out what Jesus expects of us by living out of what Jesus has done for us.”

Main Idea: We are empowered to love by the love of Jesus.

1. We are loved by Jesus.

A. The Example of His Love: When we were sinful, rebellious enemies of God, Jesus gave His life away for us by offering Himself as a sacrifice to God. Tim Keller says, “The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope.”

B. The Sacrifice of His Love: He went through incomprehensible suffering for us.

C. The Atonement that Resulted From His Love: The phrase, “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma,” speaks of the Old Testament sacrificial system that was

ultimately pointing to Jesus as the true sacrifice for our sins. We believe in penal substitutionary atonement, which means that Jesus died in our place for our sins paying the penalty that we owed to God and atoning for our sins. His sacrifice atones for our sins, but it was motivated by His love (Isaiah 53:4-6, Romans 5:6-8, 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 9:11-12, 1 John 2:2).

2. We are empowered to love through Jesus.

A. We have a new identity as dearly beloved children of God (1 John 3:1, Romans 8:31-39).

B. We have been regenerated and have a new nature so the love of God is in us (Romans 5:5). We do not naturally have the capacity to love God so love for God has to come from God. Martin Luther called this the dilemma of the Great Commandment (Luke 10:25-28). It is part of the difference in religion and the gospel. This is where real change comes from. It is what the Puritans called “the expulsive power of a new affection.”

3. Therefore, we are able to obediently walk in love. What does that look like?

A. We are to love other people (1 John 4:7-11). Here are some characteristics of real love:

-Love is an action (Luke 10:29-37).

-Love is a lifestyle.

-Love is forgiving (4:32). This implies that real love is based on how God loves us and not how others treat us (Matthew 5:43-47).

-Love is giving.

-Love is sacrificial.

B. We are to love God. Here are two primary expressions of this:

-Obedience (John 14:15)

-Worship (Luke 7:36-50)