

5. Spend a moment reflecting on your day-to-day thoughts and actions. Where and how can you more actively love others? Consider how you can first receive God's love so that you can actively offer it to others.

6. Read Mark 2:1-12. In this story, where do you see "agape" love on display? How can you display this same type of love in your own life?

7. As you prepare your heart to celebrate the birth of Christ, what are some circumstances or hardships in your life that are keeping you from experiencing Hope, Peace, Love and Joy? Take time this week to bring those before God in prayer.

---

## SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

---

### **Advent: Love**

"A Love That Changes Everything"

Mark 12:31, Luke 6:31, 1 John 4:11

December 18/19, 2021

### **Advent is a season of preparing our hearts to celebrate the birth of Christ**

Reflecting on the story of Jesus' birth and life is a means by which we take another step in understanding and participating in God's love for his creation.

### **Three Definitions of Love**

\_\_\_\_\_ - Affection towards someone that is not earned or deserved.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Divine mercy, grace, and compassion.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Selfless, giving, unconditional, and active love.

1. Jesus shows us what \_\_\_\_\_ is like.

Jesus has shown us a different kind of love and follows that with a command for us to \_\_\_\_\_ that we may love others in the same way.

We understand love as an emotion. Jesus' explanation of the two greatest commandments shows us that love is more than something we feel. Love is something we \_\_\_\_\_.

We \_\_\_\_\_ God by loving others, and we love others by first \_\_\_\_\_ God.

2. A love that \_\_\_\_\_ humanity.

“The goal of the work of God is not angels or heaven but a transformed humanity on earth.” Adolf Schlatter

Love your \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 6:31)

The power of God’s love changes our \_\_\_\_\_.

God is coming \_\_\_\_\_ and he’s on our side.

3. A love that \_\_\_\_\_ our stories.

“When we submit our lives to what we read in Scripture, we find that we’re being led not to see God in our stories but to see our stories in God’s.” Eugene Peterson

Christian faith is not a moral code that says “live \_\_\_\_\_ this”. The biblical way is to tell a story and in the telling, invite us to participate and “live \_\_\_\_\_ this”.

The \_\_\_\_\_ love we see in Jesus compels us to love in the same way.  
(1 John 4:11)

### Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

2. What are specific ways you can actively love your actual neighbors, and enemies (or people in your life you find yourself in conflict with)? List your actual neighbors and pray for them. List your enemies and pray for them.

3. Read the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:5. What does it mean to love the lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength? What point do you think Jesus is trying to make by quoting this command?