



Date: February 16, 2025

Speaker: Sam Rainer

Series: How God Draws Near : The Seven Words of Worship

Message: Love

Reflect:

- How has your understanding of love changed as you've grown older? Did any part of this week's message change your understanding of love?
- Can you think of a time when you misunderstood what love was, either in a relationship or a situation? As you have grown, what has most improved your understanding of what love is?

Encounter:

- Read 1 John 4:7-12. What do these verses say about the relationship between knowing God and loving others?
- How does the cross define love, according to 1 John 4:10 and John's eyewitness account in the sermon? How is this different from the way our culture might define love?
- Compare 1 Corinthians 13 (the "Love Chapter") with 1 John 4:7-12. How do these passages complement each other in defining what love is and what love does?

Transform:

- How can you reflect God's love in a specific relationship or situation this week? What might need to change in your approach to love others as God loves us?
- As a group or church, how can we better live out the call to share God's love with others in our community or the world?

Related Passages:

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** – Provides a poetic description of love's attributes, emphasizing patience, kindness, and selflessness. This complements 1 John 4's action-oriented view of love.
- **John 3:16-17** – Shows God's love for the world and Christ's sacrificial role, tying directly to the sermon's emphasis on God's initiative in love.
- **Matthew 22:36-40** – Highlights the greatest commandments: to love God and love others, which form the foundation of worship and Christian living.
- **Romans 5:8** – Demonstrates God's love through Christ's sacrifice "while we were still sinners," reinforcing the idea of unselfish and persistent love.
- **Ephesians 5:1-2** – Calls believers to imitate God's love by walking in love as Christ did, reflecting God's love through actions.

Interesting Facts and Tidbits:

- **The term "love" appears over 750 times in the Bible**, emphasizing its foundational role in God's character and our relationship with Him.
- **The New Testament uses four different Greek terms for love:** eros (romantic love, not used in the NT), storge (family love, rarely used), philia (friendship love), and agape (God's unconditional love).
- **The word "propitiation"** in 1 John 4:10 means "satisfaction of God's wrath," showing how Christ's sacrifice fulfills both God's love and justice.

Additional Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for love to be defined by God rather than by our own feelings or culture?
- What does it mean that God's love is both unselfish and persistent? Can you think of an example of this kind of love in your life?
- How does anger against sin demonstrate God's love for us, as mentioned in the sermon? How can we apply this understanding to our relationships?