Week 2-Selfless Love

Vision and Objective:

We love selflessly, through our words and our actions because of Jesus’s love for us. Embodying our faith through how we love is the foundation of the flourishing community.

Opening Prayer

Our Father, we come this evening to study and learn from your word for as the Psalmist said, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”. Please use this time that we have together as that lamp and help us to keep to the path that you have put before us. In the name of Jesus, your son, amen.

Scripture Passage: 1 John 3:16-24 NRSV

**16** We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. **17** How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+John+3%3A16-24&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-30579a)] in need and yet refuses help?

**18** Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. **19** And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him **20** whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. **21** Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; **22** and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

**23** And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. **24** All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Background information: 1 John is an ancient letter written to ancient churches after Jesus’s resurrection. This new community is navigating what it means to be Christ-followers as they experience opposition from Jews who don’t believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

The author wrote the letter in hopes of helping the community flourish (1 John 1:1-3). This passage, right in the middle of the letter, digs deeply into the theme of love. John claims that love is a key marker of a true Jesus-centered community.

Questions to Discuss:

What words, phrases, images, or ideas did you see repeated?

**Heart, brother/sister/little children, do not condemn us when we love; condemns us when we do not love**

**Love**

**Commandment---->abiding love w/God**

How do the related words relate to each

other?

**Commandment---->abiding love w/God**

**Love----> family**

**Heart---->Conscience**

How does this passage define “love”?

**All encompassing, laid down life for each other, action**

**Selfless action for others**

**Cares for neighbors**

What does this text teach us about God? What does this text teach us about love?

**God loves us, we also should love**

**Be more like God (abide)**

**Follow commandment (love) enables us to boldly ask God for help**

**God’s Guidance is needed**

**Community is not just people in your fellowship, God is everybody’s God**

**Sometimes it can be “tough love” (12 step programs)**

**Loving neighbor does not mean that you lose your boundaries**

What makes it difficult for us to love each other as described in the passage?

**Self-centeredness, Busyness, Status-worrying about, diversity of thought**

**Closed-mindedness, fear, ignorance---->lack of empathy**

Activity

Because love is the foundation of the flourishing community, reflect on how you have personally experienced God’s love in your life. Sharing our stories also helps us know one another more deeply.

Each person, who wishes to, will share a time when they felt the love of God, and a time when God’s love felt far away.

**One prospective: (Actually, most of time-don’t feel but trust that he is there) Faith**

**12 steps changed faith. deepened it**



Closing Prayer

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.  
  
*Old Gaelic blessing found at: https://www.lords-prayer-words.com/times/closing\_prayer.html*