The Greatest Love Affair of All

Dec 29th God is Love – 1 John 4

Jan 5th God’s Love is Eternal – Jeremiah 31.3-6 & Psalm 136

Jan 12th God’s Love Never Runs Out – Eph 2.4-5 & Eph 3.18-19

Jan 19th How Have you Loved Us, God? – Deut 7.7-8 & Malachi 1.1-5

Jan 26th Remaining in God’s Love – John 15.9-17 & Revelation 2.1-7

Feb 2nd Experiencing God’s Love – Romans 5.5 & Psalm 17.6-9

*As we gather together again after Christmas and Epiphany I expect many groups make take a session to catch up, to reflect together and pray in the New Year. Below are notes to correspond to the last four sessions in this important mini- series.*

**Jan 12th God’s Love Never Runs Out – Eph 2.4-5 & Eph 3.18-19**

WELCOME: What would you most like not to run out of?

WORD: Read the two passages

* What has stood out to you from reading and/or from the sermon this week?
* Looking at Eph 2.4-7 how would you summarise in your own words what Christ has accomplished for us (there are three main actions)?
* What does verse 3 tell us about our state? How does this help us appreciate God’s loving grace even more?
* Verses 4-6 assume our union with Christ, so his action is our action, since we are in him – how does this knowledge impact your life today?
* Looking at Eph 3.17b-19 What relationship does love in our lives have to do with the fulness of God?
* Verse 18 is part of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians – why does Paul pray this?
* What are you learning about the importance in your own life of being rooted and established in love?

WORSHIP: Take a moment as a group to worship – put on this piece of music to rest in God’s love: <https://youtu.be/qHQQcUizZuQ?feature=shared>

WITNESS: Discuss the significance of receiving God’s love for ourselves and its impact on our witness.

**Jan 19th How Have you Loved Us, God? – Deut 7.7-8 & Malachi 1.1-5**

WELCOME: Share a time when you experienced God’s love for you?

WORD: Read the two passages

* What has stood out to you from reading and/or from the sermon this week?
* What do verses 7-8 reveal about the nature of the covenant relationship between God and Israel? How does this compare to the New Covenant through Jesus Christ?
* The text emphasizes God's love for Israel. How does understanding that love impact our view of God and our relationship with Him?
* Verse 8 mentions that God’s love is tied to His faithfulness to His promises. How does this inspire you to be obedient in your own life?
* How do these verses challenge the idea that we must earn God's favour? What implications does this have for our faith?
* What do these verses tell us about God’s overall plan for Israel and how does it relate to His plan for humanity?
* Turning to Malachi. In verse 2, God declares His love for Israel. How does this statement set the tone for the rest of the passage and the book as a whole?
* How do verses 2-3 illustrate the contrasts between God's love and Israel’s indifference? In what ways do we see similar attitudes in the church today?
* How do God’s promises to Jacob and His judgment on Edom reveal His sovereignty over nations? How can this assurance impact our faith and trust in God’s plan?
* How can we apply the truths found in this passage to our relationship with God? In what ways can we be more responsive to His love and calling?

WORSHIP: Prepare in advance a bowl with different verses about God’s love on them. Invite folk to take out a verse and have a few minutes of quiet to reflect on it. Then go around and take it in turns to use the verse you’ve got to thank God for God’s love.

WITNESS:

How can we, as a community, reflect the characteristics of being chosen by God? What does this mean for our actions and attitudes toward others?

**Jan 26th Remaining in God’s Love – John 15.9-17 & Revelation 2.1-7**

WELCOME: Set a timer but go around and ask each person to share their latest low light and high light – then out loud all together pray for the person on the left of you.

WORSHIP: Pray together night prayer or lectio 365

WORD: Read the two passages.

* What has stood out to you from reading and/or from the sermon this week?
* What does Jesus mean when He says in verse 9, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you”? How does this statement deepen our understanding of His love for us?
* What does it mean to “remain in my love” as stated in verse 9? What actions or attitudes are necessary for us to remain in that love?
* How does Jesus’ command to love one another, as stated in verse 12, relate to the concept of obedience to His commands? How should this influence our interactions with others?
* We are called friends (verse 15) and in verse 16 to bear fruit. What does this fruit-bearing look like in practical terms, both individually and as a community?
* In what ways does the command to love one another challenge us, especially in difficult relationships or situations? How can we cultivate a Christ-like love?
* How can this passage guide our understanding of the community of believers? What role does love play in fostering unity and support among Christians?
* Looking at the passage in Revelation. Verse 4 reveals that Jesus has against the Ephesians that they have forsaken their first love. What does this mean, and how can we identify signs that we may also be drifting from our first love for Christ?
* In verse 5, Jesus calls for the church to remember, repent, and do the things they did at first. How can practical steps be taken to initiate this repentance and rekindle our love for God?
* What challenge or reminder do you want to take hold of and not forget? How will you remember it?

WITNESS:

Christmas will be long forgotten in many people’s minds but it’s amazing how many people from the community joined us at a service or event. God’s not forgotten them – why not take some time this week to pray that the Holy Spirit would be very active in West London in causing people to ponder on God, to want to search for God and pray that people will have promptings, dreams and other interventions that lead them towards finding God.

**Feb 2nd Experiencing God’s Love – Romans 5.5 & Psalm 17.6-9**

WELCOME & WORSHIP:

Take some extended time to pray more deeply for one another. To love one another well and listen to each other’s needs carefully and to bring them thoughtfully to God in prayer.

WORD: Read the two passages

* What has stood out to you from reading and/or from the sermon this week?
* How does Romans 5:5 fit into the broader context of Romans 5? What previous verses lay the foundation for the hope that Paul is discussing here?
* The verse mentions that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” What is the significance of the Holy Spirit in the experience of God’s love? How does the Holy Spirit work in our lives to reinforce our hope?
* How do love and hope interact with each other in this passage? Why do you think Paul emphasizes love in the context of hope?
* What does this verse suggest about the nature of God’s love? How does understanding God's unconditional love impact our faith and our relationships with others?
* Take a moment to reflect on this verse. What specific aspects of God's love and hope do you need to internalize more deeply in your life? How can you pray for a stronger experience of these truths?
* Looking at Psalm 17: Verse 8 emphasizes the psalmist’s desire for God to keep him as the “apple of His eye.” What does this metaphor imply about God’s love and protection? How should this truth influence how we see ourselves in God’s eyes?
* In verse 8, the psalmist requests to be hidden “in the shadow of Your wings.” What does this imagery of shelter convey about God’s protection and care during times of trouble? How can we pray together for God’s comfort, protection, guidance, and deliverance?

WITNESS:

Pray for our church in this season to be a welcoming community sharing the love of God well in West London and beyond. Take some time to pray for our mission partners: Emily & Alfred, Nabil & Sarah, SAT-7, IJM, SOMA and The Home in Chiswick.