

Alright. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. I think the Lord is calling you back to Him. Back to You, Lord. Back to You. My heart will sing forevermore back to You. Back to You. Love is calling. Love is moving. Love is here. There is so much more. He's calling. He's calling. He's calling. He's knocking. He's drawing. He's kind. He's patient. He's gentle. He knows your name. He knows where you are. He knows what you need. He sees you in it all. He calms the wind. He calms the waves. He shuts the mouth of the lions. He's calling. He's calling. He's calling. He's calling. He's calling. May you answer. May you respond. I'm so glad you're here with us. Wherever you are, Denton, Gainesville, Flower Mound, Lewisville, Online. Whether this is your first time, you're here all the time. We're finishing up, really, a series. There's kind of this heartbeat of the season of just Living Loved. I think that last song really just captures it. It grabs it. In fact, just a few weeks ago, we heard that song for the first time in our all-staff meeting. Our team wrote that, and as they sang, it just broke the whole staff meeting. And the rest of the staff meeting, we just abandoned the whole thing to just be with God, because He's calling. And there's this big difference between knowing you're loved and living like you're loved. That's what we've been talking about. It's one thing to know, to believe, to understand, to have the knowledge, the information, the facts, to say that God loves me. It's a whole another thing to live like you're actually loved. And I think this series has been so important.

In fact, what I would say to you is I think we needed this series. I think so many of us, we just needed this series. We just needed the love of God to be poured out on our lives, whether for the first time or for this time, to be reminded of it again, or to experience it for the first time. We just needed this. And I've watched as God's been pouring out His love, bringing healing and freedom to so many people in so many different ways. And I love what Paul says. This is kind of how I feel right now is I just keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better. He says, "I keep asking." This is supernatural. Man can't give you the wisdom and the revelation of the love of God, only He can, so I keep asking that you may know Him better, not know more about Him, but know Him. And that's been the prayer of this series. I told you, I'm not trying to teach you anything new. I've just been praying for a revelation and an encounter. We've just been asking and saying, "God, I open up my heart to you. Would you fill it with your love?" Not here, but here. See, a great question is, what is the evidence of living loved? If you live loved, what's the evidence? How do I actually know it? The evidence is freedom. If you want to know if you're actually living loved, it's freedom that's the fruit. I'm free from this world. I'm free from pride. I'm free from shame. I'm free from performance. I'm free from worry. I'm free from fear. I'm free from the fear of man. I'm free in my life from all kinds of things. And if you ask the question, what does it mean to actually live loved? You take those words and you break them down, live loved. Well, what does it mean to live? Well, it's like your daily life, your daily interactions, the daily activities that make up your life, what you say, where you go, what you do, who you interact with, how you respond to situations and circumstances. It's the daily interactions with the world. That's what it means to live. Well, what does it mean to be loved? It's not an emotion or a feeling, it's the goodwill of God. So, we've been talking about this, is that love, that God loves you. It's not that He has emotions or feelings towards you, which He

does, but it's deeper than that. It means His will for you is good. His will, His desire, His choice, His heart, His perspective, what He wants, what He wishes, is always for your good. Therefore, every word and action, all His ruling and reigning, every way He asks you to submit and surrender, everything He does, everything He says, every way He moves is for your good. And so, when I have daily interactions that are defined by the goodwill of God towards me, wouldn't my life look radically different? If I did my daily interactions, where I went, what I said, how I responded, who I interacted with, what took my emotions and my feelings, as if God's will was always for my good, wouldn't things be different?

You see, what we've been doing in this series is I've just been reading you a passage of Scripture and just kind of letting it do its work. And I want to do that one more time today as we finish up this series. And I want to read to you 1 John 4:7-21. And 1 John 4:7-21 is the passage that all of our leaders memorized this semester. See, every semester, we have about 700 leaders that lead the way here at church, and they have all committed every semester to memorize a chunk, a passage of Scripture, because we want leaders that aren't full of style, but that are full of substance. We don't want leaders that just have good things to say, we want leaders who have actually been transformed on the inside out. And so, when you fill your mind with the word of God, your life becomes full of the realities of God. And so, I hope it inspires you that 700 non-paid people that lead this church are memorizing chunks of Scripture to be transformed from the inside out as they lead you into the places that God is taking us. And 1 John 4 is written by John, one of Jesus' 12 disciples. He's known as the Apostle of Love, which is fascinating because he started as the Son of Thunder, the guy with the anger problem, the guy who wanted to call fire down from heaven to burn up people who rejected Jesus, the guy that was so narcissistic that thought he could sit at the right hand of Jesus. And yet, he had a revelation and an encounter with the love of God that moved him from the Son of Thunder to the Apostle of Love. In fact, John, writing about himself, calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved". John isn't narcissistic. He's not prideful. He caught a revelation, and he had an experience with the love of God. And so, he became focused on Jesus' love for him, not his love for Jesus. He heard God's voice. He discovered that God loved him, and he made that message his way of life. And he became consumed with God's love for him as opposed to his love for God. Now, compare that to Peter. Peter would call himself "the disciple whom loved Jesus". The disciple who loved Jesus. That's Peter. In fact, when Jesus is about to go to the cross and He tells the guys, "Guys, I'm about to be arrested, go to the cross. I'm about to lay down my life." And Peter steps forward when Jesus says, "All of you are going to deny me. Every one of you is going to leave me." And Peter steps forward in only the way that he can and says, "Not me, Lord. Not me. Even if all these guys deny you, not me, Lord. I will even die with you." And in that moment, Peter made the great mistake that you and I make all the time. He was more focused on his love for Jesus than Jesus' love for him. And what happened? Just a few hours later, Peter denied Jesus three times to a servant girl. He crashed and he fell hard because he was focused on his love for God instead of God's love for him, while John was focused on Jesus' love for him. That's why John is the only one of the 12 disciples to have the courage to be standing at the foot of the cross. Why? Because people who are focused on

God's love for them withstand life storms. People who are focused on their love for God crash and fall when life comes against them. Even if we are faithless, he remains faithful. This is never about your love for God, it's always about God's love for you. And in 1 John, we've looked at the key passage, each message this series. If you've caught it, the key passage that I've brought to you has been out of 1 John because John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. So, he figured out how to live free.

And so, he says, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us. He sent His one and only Son into the world, that we might live through Him. This is love. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is made complete in us. We know that we live in Him and He in us because He has given us His Spirit. And we have seen and testified that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and He in God. And so, we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment because in this world, we are like Him. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: whoever loves God must also love his brother." Love frees you from fear. When I open myself to love, I will be free of fear, because perfect love casts out fear.

You see, you were never created to be afraid. The human soul, the human heart, the human mind, the human body was never meant to carry fear. That's why it's so destructive. That's why fear is so crippling. That's why fear is so oppressive, enslaving. That's why fear holds us back from living the life we were created to. It literally enslaves us from that which is right in front of us. When we're afraid, we hide, we hoard, we hate. Fear destroys us from the inside out. In fact, if you want to know the definition of fear, fear is emotional distress caused by a sense of impending danger, evil, or pain, whether real or imagined. Let me say that again. Fear is a sense of emotional distress caused by a sense of impending danger, evil, or pain, whether real or imagined. Fear is the sense of impending doom that causes anxiety and great concern in our life. In fact, I would say it to you like this. Fear is to be consumed with the world's bad will towards you. But love is to be confident in God's goodwill for you. Fear is to be consumed with the world's bad will towards me. Love is to be confident in God's goodwill towards me. We were never created to live in fear, and yet if we're honest, it's more normal to be afraid than it is not. We are afraid of all kinds of things. We're afraid of rejection and abandonment. We're afraid of not having enough. We're afraid of being too young. We're afraid of being too old. We're afraid of retirement. We're afraid of not being able to retire. We're afraid of being sick.

We're afraid of being rejected. We're afraid of fear of man. We're afraid of public speaking. We're afraid of what other people might think about us. We're afraid of public restrooms. There's lots of things that we are afraid of, but you were never created to be afraid. You say, "Why can you say that?" Well, you go all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

Do you realize in the Garden of Eden, there was no fear? Why was there no fear? Because they lived loved, and love had driven out fear. In fact, go back to creation. God makes everything, right? Seven days, He creates everything, and everything God created was (good). No. Very good. Because His will for us is? Good. Very good. He won't make anything that's for your bad, that's dangerous, that's evil, that will inflict pain. He doesn't create anything that is against you. Everything He made was for our good. So, Adam and Eve walked around the Garden of Eden, living loved. In fact, when God creates them, He scrapes Adam together from the dust of the ground. Scrapes him together, breathes His breath into him, and when Adam opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was the face of love. He opened his eyes, took his very first breath, and when he saw, he saw the face of love staring back at him. And when He scraped together the dust of the ground, it was the Father's embrace that brought His son to life. We come alive when we receive the Father's love. And there was no fear in the Garden. And there was one thing God told them they couldn't do – eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day they did, they would surely die. And what's the one thing Adam and Eve get tricked into doing? Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan comes and tricks them to pursue in the world what they already had in God. He tries to trick them to get through performance what they had freely received by grace. And the moment they took that piece of fruit and they sinned, in that moment, they sinned, they turned themselves away from God, and death entered the world and fear came with it. You see, sin means to miss the mark, but really what sin is, is when I sin, I'm turning away from God, and I'm turning towards something that will lead to death. This is why repentance is to turn away from dead works and of faith towards God. That's why it says repentance from dead works and of faith towards God. So, sin is I close myself off to the love of God and I open myself up to something that will lead to death. Repentance is I close myself off to death and I turn myself to God and open myself up to His love. And in that moment, when they sinned, they closed themselves to the Father's love and opened themselves up to death. And when death came into the world, fear came with it. And so, what did they do? They were naked, their eyes were open. They realized they were ashamed. So, they made fig leaves, and they ran in the bushes, and they hid. And look what it says. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the Garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid." First time fear has ever been experienced by humanity. First time that emotion has ever happened. First time that reality was ever released into the world. "Because I was naked, and so I hid." Adam and Eve sinned. They turn away from the love of God, and they opened themselves up to death. Death enters the world, and fear came with it. And all of a sudden, they are naked, ashamed. They're afraid, and so they control. And thus, the cycle enters the world. Shame, fear, control. And they hide from God just like we do. They

were naked, they were ashamed. They knew they had done bad, they were bad, they were a part of bad. They knew they were wrong, they did wrong, and they were a part of wrong. So, they had this shame, this shame, this sense of wrong, bad in their life. And so, what happened? They were afraid. They were afraid of the punishment, the consequence of death, because they knew if they turned their back on God and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, death was the result. And now death was hanging over their heads. So, fear, this impending sense of doom, is now hanging in their life. And so, what do they do? They hide. They can try to control their situations and circumstances to take care of themselves. And so, shame, fear, and control has entered into the world, and thus it's how we live. We feel bad about ourselves, where we've been, what we've done, what's been done to us. We're afraid. We have this impending sense, this emotional distress of something bad, badwill coming against us, so we hide. We can try to control everyone and everything. If you've ever met a controlling person, so you understand control is rooted in fear and fear is rooted in the fear of what's going to happen to me because of what I've done. Controlling people are afraid. And control manifests in two. One way, it controls with this sense of super insecurity, like, don't look at me. Don't see me. I don't want to say anything. I'm never going to talk. Ah, turn away, I don't want to be exposed. That's control from fear. But the other side is the super narcissistic pride bully. Do you realize bullies are the most afraid people on earth? They try to inflict fear before anyone else can notice their fear. They're so afraid because they have the nakedness, the shame in their life, that instead of hiding, they come aggressively to make you hide, and that's their form of fig leaves. Shame, fear, control.

And the goodness of God is He comes to find us. Like the prodigal father coming off the porch to the son. Like the father going to get the prideful son in the field. He comes to find us, and He tries to free us from this fear that we released into the world that we were never meant to have. That's why one of the most often repeated phrases in the Bible is: "Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Fear not, for I am with you." It's like God says it over and over again, "Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Why? Because I'm with you. Because love is here." And when love is here, you don't have to be afraid of the badwill coming against you because you have goodwill that's for you. God's presence is the antidote to fear. When I become aware that God is with me, I will be free from fear. When I become aware of God's presence, I will be free from the oppression of fear. This is why children, when they're afraid, what do they want? They want their mom or dad. When they're afraid of the storm, of the dark, of a noise, they just want the presence of their parents. And when the presence of their parents is there, they feel loved. And that love drives fear right out of their hearts, right out of their mind, right out of their life. And God is constantly trying to say, "Don't be afraid, for you are loved." This is why it says those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God, for you did not receive a Spirit that makes you a slave again to fear. You are not enslaved to the spirit of fear. You are not controlled. You are not oppressed. You are not held back. You are not in bondage to that harassing, demonic, dark spirit of fear. No, no, no, no. You're not even a slave. You're a son because you've received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him, we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's

children, turning our attention from the things we're afraid of to the love that is for us. Now, if we are God's children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Not only is He with me, not only is He for me, but He has blessed me. And if God is for me, who or what can possibly be against me? You're not a slave of fear, because the Spirit of love has been poured out in your heart. And the Spirit of love is constantly taking your attention from the situation and the circumstance to the one who is with you. Or how about this one that says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." Fear is not from God. That's why it was not in the Garden of Eden, and that's why it will not be in the Garden City, and that's why it is not part of the Spirit of the living God that lives in your life. But make no mistake about it, the spirit of fear is a real demonic spirit that harasses and oppresses and is dark and controlling and demanding and loud. But that's not from God. In Jesus' name, it's been broken off of your life. He's given you a spirit of power. He's given you a Spirit of love, goodwill towards you and towards the world around you, and a sound mind. You can be at peace because you can be confident in the love of God that is for you. You with me on this?

Man, this just grips people. This destroys people's lives. So, may you have the heart to receive it. I mean, do you remember the story of when Jesus and the disciples go across the sea into the storm and Jesus is sleeping in the boat? Long day of ministry, Jesus tells the disciples, "Guys, let's get in the boat. Let's go across the sea." And as they go across under Jesus' direction, Jesus falls asleep in the boat. And as they're going, the storm begins to build, and it gets bigger and bigger until the wind and the waves are swamping the boat. They think they're going to drown. They think the boat is going to sink. The spirit of fear grips their life. They wake up Jesus and say, "Don't you care? We're about to drown here. Do something." And He looks at them so perplexed. And He says, "Quiet, be still," to the wind and the waves. And then, He says, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" In other words, Jesus looks at them and He says, "Why are you afraid when love is in the boat? Because when love is in the boat, fear gets thrown overboard. Why are you so afraid? Love is in the boat. Not a feeling, not emotion, goodwill. My will for you is for your good, and it's right here in the boat. Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" See, remember, faith is not the opposite of fear. No, love is. Love is the opposite of fear. Faith is acting as if it were so. So, what Jesus is saying to them is, "Why are you acting as if you're not loved?" Because when love is in the boat, fear gets thrown overboard. And what I love in that moment is we see the patient graciousness of love. Chris, is that clock right? Because we're in trouble if it is. It's wrong? Just give me a real clock on there that has a countdown. I do mental math. It's a whole thing. But it went red really fast. Thank you. What I love is that you would say, "If love is in the boat, then why is there fear?" It's because of the direction of their attention.

See, fear is demanding. Fear is aggressive. Fear wants to put itself in the center. But love is very patient and gentle and kind. It's very passionate, but it waits until you're ready. That's why 1 Corinthians 13, the description of love, love is patient, which means it always has time for you. Love is kind, which means it's very peaceful and gentle. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, which means it is never jealous, and it is never trying to take anything good away

from you. Love does not boast. It is not loud and aggressive, talking about how amazing it is. Love is not proud. It's not narcissistic, putting itself in the center. It is not rude, which means it is not harsh or condemning or edgy or vengeful. It is not self-seeking, which means it doesn't make it all about itself. Love is not easily angered, which means it is not controlling. It keeps no record of wrongs, which means it doesn't constantly point out all of the failures of your past. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth, which means love not only never has badwill, it never revels in anyone else's badwill. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, which means love keeps going no matter what. And love never fails, which means love always wins. Okay. It's very patient. It's very gracious. It's very kind. It's not demanding. So, love will never make you turn your attention away from fear, but it will constantly call you and draw you. And what I love about this story is that it's Jesus who sends them into the storm. He says, "Get in the boat. Let's go across the other side." He knows the storm is coming. He puts them in the boat, and He sends them into a storm. You see, love wasn't to calm the storm. Love was to expose the fear that was living inside of them. We think love is calming the storm or avoiding it altogether. But if love is goodwill, then God is constantly trying to set you free.

So sometimes God will put you in a boat and send you into a storm to expose the fear inside you that you didn't even know was there. If they were on the shore and we asked the disciples, "Do you live love?" "Oh, I lived love. There's no fear in my life." Take these 12 burly men, put them in a little bit of wind and rain. "Ah!" All this fear that was inside of them got exposed. And we think love is calming the storm out there. No, love is calming the storm in here. Love is exposing the fear that exists inside of us that we don't even know is there, bringing it to the surface. God wants to love you enough to expose it to calm what's in here. Because if He calms what's out there without ever calming what's in here, you're not free. And you're not full of love, you're still full of fear. So, He has to expose what's in here to calm what's in here. Then you kind of don't really care what's happening out here. That's why David can say, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me." He says, "Even though there's a storm out there, there's love in here." Now, make no mistake about it, God doesn't send bad. He doesn't send sickness. He doesn't send cancer. He doesn't try to destroy your life. No, but He will use the badwill of the world to expose the fear inside of you to set you free. And if He can heal this part of you, you now have confidence to walk in this chaos that's out here. So, He says, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith? Why are you acting as if you're not loved?" To be afraid is to act as if you aren't loved, but you are.

So, can I ask you a question? Are you afraid? And what are you afraid of? And why are you afraid? Because every place you're afraid is a place where you're not letting love drive out that fear. I think where we get confused with Jesus is He's always more interested in calming the storm in here than the storm out there. And we question His goodness when the storm out there doesn't calm when all the while He's trying to drive out the fear that binds and cripples and holds us back in here. This is why 1 John 4:19, what we just read, "there is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is

not made perfect in love." Love is the opposite of fear. Love and fear can't coexist. They can't be in the same place. Why? Because love drives, casts, expels, throws out fear, like taking out the trash. That word literally means throwing it out without care of where it lands. When love comes into your life, it throws the fear out without any regard. It's like it turns on the light, the darkness flees. It turns on the lights, all the rats run out. It's like it sends a flood or a torrent of water to rush inside of you and cleanse you from the inside out. When you open yourself to love, there's no room left for fear. Let me show it to you in a different translation. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear since fear is crippling. A fearful life, fear of death, fear of judgment, is not one yet fully formed in love. When I open myself to love, there's no room left for fear. I'm full of love. Therefore, there's no space for fear because love has banished fear, and I no longer have to live a fearful life because I've been formed or shaped, or molded by love itself. One more. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels, casts out, drives, gets rid of all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced His perfect love. Every place where you're afraid is a place where you're not experiencing love. Every place where you're afraid is not a place where you don't know you're loved. It's a place where you're not experiencing His love. It's a place where your heart is not open to having His perfect love fill you and drive out fear. Are you with me on this?

Okay, now this is really, really important. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment. At the root of every fear in your life is the fear of punishment. Why? Because when we sinned in the Garden, death came into the world and brought fear with it. Every other fear, every other phobia, every other silly, illogical fear in your life is a fruit of the fear of the punishment of what we have done. In other words, death, the eternal separation from God. This is why the cross of Jesus is so profound, because Isaiah tells us that the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him. Jesus was punished even though He did nothing wrong in our place. The fear of punishment, getting what we deserve for our consequences. The fear of judgment, getting what we deserve. The fear of condemnation, being accused, found guilty, and deserving of punishment. The fear of death, being eternally separated from God, was placed on Jesus at the cross. The punishment that brought us peace was placed upon Him. He was whipped, and He was beaten, and He was persecuted, and He was mocked, and He was scorned. And He was rejected by man, and He was rejected by God, and He was pierced, and He was cursed, and He was hung on a tree. Not because He did anything wrong, but because we did something wrong. He was condemned, accused, found guilty, even though He did nothing wrong for our sins and our failures, deserving of punishment, and He died. He died. He actually died and was buried in the grave. And three days later, when He rose again from the grave, He defeated sin, death, and the grave. And once and for all, He defeated the root of all of our fear, the root of the punishment of death, the eternal separation from God, so that we would never have to be afraid again. This is why the cross is love, because it goes at the root of every fear in your life, and when the root is uprooted, all the fruits dry up. Come on. When the root of my fear, death, eternal separation from God, the punishment that I deserve, when that is uprooted, all the other fruits just dry up. All the illogical things like afraid of someone seeing us, or afraid of a cool teenager seeing me in the grocery store, or public speaking, or being embarrassed,



or what these people might say about me, all of that is illogical, and we know it's illogical, and it begins to dry up. Why? Because He removed the root, so the fruit begins to dry up. See, you don't stop being afraid by somebody telling you, "Don't be afraid." You stop being afraid when you realize, "I don't have to be afraid of death." That's the Christian life. And until you realize, you don't have to be afraid of death. Why? Because Jesus already died in my place, so I will never die. God demonstrated His love for me in this. While I was still a sinner, Christ died for me. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not die, that's the root of fear, but have everlasting life. I will not die, I will have life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, to accuse it, find it guilty, and deserving of punishment. No, Jesus came into the world to save the world, so that He would be condemned, accused, even though He did nothing wrong, found guilty, even though He did nothing wrong, and deserving of punishment, death, even though He did nothing wrong, so that we could forever be free. The righteous for the unrighteous, once and for all, to bring you to God. And when that root of fear gets uprooted from your life by the cross of Jesus, love comes in and fear moves out. This is why the psalmist says, "I trust in the Lord, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" If there was no fear before the fear of death, the Garden of Eden, then once death has been dealt with, there should be no fear again in your life, and in my life. Because what? I'm afraid of what you think about me? I'm afraid of using a public restroom? Come on, man. Come on. That one's hard, but still. Take your fear and put it as a fruit, and acknowledge that the root of that tree has already been dealt with, and let it start to wither and die. It's not just, "don't be afraid." It's reminding yourself, the root has been dealt with. I can't be punished because He already was. I can't be condemned because He already was. I can't die because He already did. If I put my faith in Him, that's the right and the reality that now is my life as a child of God. This is why it says, "God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us." Like a flood, like a tidal wave, like this flash flood, His love fills our heart and drives it out. It's not knowledge, it's an experience. This is why Paul says, "I am convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love." Neither death, eternal separation from God, nor life, the daily interactions that I have to do, neither angels nor demons, the supernatural beings, neither our fears, the emotional distress of impending doom today, nor our worries, the torment of worries in our head about tomorrow, not even the powers of hell, not even Satan and all his horde can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above, nothing above me, in the earth below, nothing below me, indeed, nothing in all of creation that's ever been made will ever be able to separate me, will ever have enough badwill against me that will be able to ever separate me from God's goodwill that is for me that has been revealed. It's a revelation, it's not just knowledge, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Are you convinced? Are you convinced? Because Jesus was convinced, and that's why He lived free. Show me one page in the gospels where Jesus was afraid. He wasn't afraid of the Pharisees. He wasn't afraid of the disciples. He wasn't afraid of the crowds. He wasn't afraid of stones. He wasn't afraid of sticks. He wasn't afraid of the cross. He wasn't afraid of His reputation. He wasn't afraid whether people thought about Him. He wasn't afraid if you liked Him or didn't like Him. He wasn't afraid. Why? Because He knew He was loved, and so He lived fearlessly.

In fact, the very beginning of His ministry, when He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending on Him like a dove and alighting on Him. And suddenly, a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my," say it, "beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus was so full of the love of the Father that there was no room for any fear. He knew He was loved, so fear had no hold on Him, no grip on Him. Perfect love drove out all fear. There was no room. There was no space. He was so full of the poured-out love of the Father through the Holy Spirit in His life that there was no room for emotional distress and impending doom of the world's evil that was going to be against Him. And right after He's baptized, and this is declared over His life, the Holy Spirit leads Him into the desert, into the wilderness, to be tempted for 40 days. The Holy Spirit led Him into a storm the way that Jesus led His disciples into the storm, to expose what was inside of Him, not for Him, but for us, so we would know what was there. And three times Satan came to tempt Him. Three times the tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Three times. "If you're the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread. If you're the Son of God, bow down and worship me, and I will give you all the kingdoms of this world. If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from the temple. Do something spectacular so that we all might see it." If you are the Son of God, notice anything that's missing? The Father just called Him the beloved Son. Satan calls Him the Son. Satan will never remind you that you are loved, because love makes you fearless. Satan doesn't care if you know you're a son or a daughter of God. Many people walk around and say, "I'm a child of God." That really has no vitality to it. Satan cares desperately that you don't ever have a revelation or an experience that you are the beloved son or daughter of God, because when love is in your life, fear has no place. That's why Jesus says about Satan, "He has no hold on me. He has nothing in me that would give him authority over my life. Why? Because I'm so full of love, there's no room for fear. I'm so turned to the Father's love that there's no place for fear in my life." And our problem is we get so consumed on the fear that we turn away from the love, and that fear overtakes our heart, and that fear then drives out the love, and all the while, love is calling you back to Him, calling back to you, back to you. Your love is calling me back to you, back to you. Your love is calling, and the fear goes, because love and fear can't coexist. So, Satan doesn't care if you know you're a child of God. He cares desperately that you never have a revelation or an experience of His love.

If you remember the first week of the series, I told you there's four baptisms in the Bible. There's the baptism into salvation, there's the baptism into water, there's the baptism into the Spirit, and there's the baptism into the Father's love. To baptize means to be immersed, to be submerged in. And the Holy Spirit, when we get saved, put our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit baptizes or immerses us into Christ. We then baptize each other into water. Jesus then will baptize us into the Spirit if we want, and then the Father will baptize or immerse us in His love. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. First baptism, you get saved. The Holy Spirit baptizes you, immerses you into the person of Christ. You get included in Christ. Everything that's true of

Him is now true of you. You've been crucified. It's no longer you who live, it's Christ who lives within you, and you now become a son of God, included in His family. But then, there's water baptism. And Jesus tells us, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This is, the old me is dead and gone, and I'm rising up to a new creation in Christ. My old life has been left behind. I'm now a new creation in Him. And then, there's the Spirit baptism, where Jesus will baptize or immerse you with the Holy Spirit and fire, where Jesus literally immerses you into the Spirit of the living God, and there's this next level of character and power that begins to flow through your life. And then, there's the baptism of love. Suddenly, a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This is Adam being scraped together from the dust of the earth, life breathed into. This is the prodigal father bursting off the porch, running and picking up his pig-smelling son. This is the Father speaking from heaven in Jesus's baptism, immersing Him. You see, it's when we receive the Father's love that we become alive. That we start knowing about it, and we start living at it, and we start experiencing it. And then, all of a sudden, Satan has no hold on me. And like John, I go from being the Son of Thunder, the narcissistic, prideful, selfish, sinful person to this person of love who lives in the goodwill of God and starts to have goodwill towards those around them. Because if goodwill is flowing through me, I have nothing but goodwill to give. Freely I have received, freely I give. I love because He first loved me. And everything begins to change.

Can I ask you, have you experienced those four baptisms? By faith, have you ever declared Jesus as Lord and Savior? By faith, have you ever walked through the waters of baptism to say, "I'm a new creation in Christ? The old me is dead and gone." Have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Through hunger and desire, asking somebody lay hands on you, anoint you with oil, that you would be filled and overflowing with the Spirit of the living God. And have you ever experienced the baptism of love like a flash flood that just blows through your heart? The love of God overtaking your life through revelation, experience, and encounter? I can't preach you there. I can't preach you there because that's knowledge. It's just a heart posture that starts opening up and desperately keeps saying, "Father, I open my heart to You. Pour out your love. Pour out your love. Pour out your love. Pour out your love."

Last verse. "I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, knowing and experiencing, that you may have the power, the ability, together with all the Saints, may that be true of all of us, to grasp, to take a hold of, how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." A big life comes when you live loved. The more loved you live, the bigger your life becomes. And to know this love that surpasses knowledge, to know beyond information and intellect and verses and doctrine and experience that can never be comprehended, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. That you may be so full of God's love that when people bump into you, the only thing inside of you to spill out is love. Come on. When people bump into you, what spills out? Worldliness, performance, worry, fear, or love. Those are the four things we directly combated over the last four weeks. And they don't get resolved by doing something; they get resolved by receiving. You don't have to do anything, but open yourself

up to the love that's already yours. But become aware of the love that's already in the boat. And let that love, that person, that presence, that substance throw fear overboard. You are loved. How different would your life be if you actually lived like it?

So, will you close your eyes with me? Can we just take a moment in our own way to maybe just open ourselves up to the love of God? Can you, right now, just ask for an experience and an encounter of God's love? Love is not just a feeling and an emotion. It is a person. It is a presence. It is a substance. Don't be lost in fear when love is in the boat. So, Holy Spirit, would You do what I never will be able to do for my friends? Will You pour out the Father's love into their hearts? Would You bring a flash flood even right now as we sit here into the recesses of our soul? A flood that is so strong and so powerful that we have no ability to withstand against Your love that wants to free us from fear, and worry, and performance, and worldliness? Holy Spirit, lead us and guide us to long to be immersed in salvation, in water baptism, in the Spirit of the living God, and in the Father's love that makes us alive. I believe for some of you this will be a marker-stone season, because you had an encounter with the real, tangible love of God that sets you free. May we be the disciples whom Jesus loves and declare that over ourselves and live like it. Father, may Your love continue to work long after this series is over. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.