

**First Baptist Church Merritt Island**  
**Executive Pastor Carey Dean**  
**October 6, 2024**  
**For God So Loved Us**  
**1 John 4:7-12**

---

Church, Jesus is transforming lives on Magnolia Avenue! He calls people throughout our community to participate in His gospel plan.

I want you to hear how God is making Himself known in Rockledge, on a street called Cascade Circle through the lives of Dylan and Victoria White. As Dylan and Victoria come to share how God is at work where they live, let me tell you something you may not know.

This past year, they said “Yes” to the Lord and are now part of a ministry called “Apartment Life.” God called them to move their home to Fountain Villas Apartments and embrace its residents as their mission field.

Apartment Life’s mission is to “radically transform lives in apartment communities by making Christ known.” They are at the very beginning of seeing God open doors to the hearts of their neighbors.

---

testimony: DYLAN and VICTORIA WHITE (see video sermon)

---

God is at work on Cascade Circle and Magnolia Avenue, and He wants His love through you to reach everyone where you live, work, learn, and play. On this first Sunday of Mission Conference, we are focusing on God’s heart for our neighbors, and next Sunday, we will give our attention to God’s heart for the nations.

In light of the storm that is coming to our community, we need to listen in a unique way for this community to know us by one thing: our love.

**1 John 4:7–12**

***Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.***

The passage we just read is beautiful, powerful, and filled with a sense of urgency to respond to God’s love. There is a temptation when we read 1 John 4:7-12 to jump to the repeated command of “love one another.”

Rather than beginning with the command to love, we must first focus our minds and anchor our hearts in the profound truths of God's love. This will be our starting point this morning.

I have lived inside these verses in my quiet time this week. I've been immersed in these truths, and I want to share the pages of my journal with you throughout the morning. We begin with a simple truth that I believe we will spend eternity discovering and enjoying.

The first truth this morning is this: God is love.

### 1. God is love — 1 John 4:8

A question that came to my mind when I read this truth was, "Is love, God's essence or one of God's attributes?" The answer is "Yes." It is both a part of His essence and one of His attributes.

The word essence means the fundamental core nature of something. The Apostle John writes this profound truth in a way that even a child can understand: God is love. Love is who God always is, not simply how he relates to us or responds to circumstances. It is at the core of God's nature and exists in perfect unity with all other intrinsic elements of His nature, like His being holy, eternal, and immutable.

But love is also an attribute of God. The word attribute means the inherent quality or characteristic of something. His love is not held in the heavens far from us. It reaches down and relates to you and me.

God's other attributes, such as justice, perfection, and righteousness, do not diminish His love but exist in perfect harmony. To see how something can be both God's essence and His attribute, consider the sun. It is light, and it gives out light. Its essence of light becomes known as an attribute as we feel its radiating heat on our faces, or it breaks through the darkness with its rising. In the same way, God is love, and His love emanates to us and transforms our life.

So "God is love," but what kind of love is His love? Let me first tell you what it isn't. It isn't anything like the world's imperfect version of love. No matter how hard the world tries to love purely, its love always comes with strings attached. It's conditional, often self-serving, and usually short-lived.

God's love, however, is agape love. The Greek word, agape, describes the highest form of love, a love that transcends every human frailty.

The agape-love of God is:

- Unconditional: freely given without any requirements or expectations

- Sacrificial: a love that puts others first, even at great personal cost
- Determined: always seeking the highest good, no matter the circumstances

Church, can you see how important it is to start with the first truth being “God is Love?” If we don’t start there we will be striving to love others from our flesh instead of God loving others through us.

The second truth flows out of the first: Love is from God.

## 2. Love is from God — 1 John 4:7, 9

God alone is the source of all true love. If He is the source, then any love we share must flow from Him. True love demands evidence and proven, as genuine. God didn't just declare He was love; He demonstrated it. The ultimate evidence of God's agape love is found in verse 9.

***4:9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.***

Jesus, God's only Son, is the complete and perfect demonstration of God's Love. God's unconditional love sent His only Son to a world dead in their trespasses. God's sacrificial love sent His only Son to give His life for our sins. God's determined love manifested His only Son among us so we might live through Him. With such a great invitation to experience such a perfect love, why does anyone refuse? When people reject God's love, they are rejecting God Himself. Verse 8 is a sobering verse.

***4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.***

Make no mistake that those who turn away from God are still desperate for love. They try every imaginable source to find a love that will satisfy their need but always end up with a distorted and empty version. Only God is love, and until they know Him, their attempts will fail over and over again.

As some of you hear my words, your heart is pounding within you and saying, “That is me! I want to be loved and have tried everything and feel more unloved than ever. I feel empty of love because I have never known true love.”

If this is you, please keep listening. There is good, no, great news ahead! For when we believe and receive the gift of this next truth, everything changes. I mean everything!

The third truth of the morning is this: God so loved us.

## 3. God so loved us — 1 John 4:10

***In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

Beloved, For God so loved you, and you, and you! All the “you-s” in this room make up the “us” in this verse. God’s love loved you while you were still dead in your filthy garment of sin.

He loved you when you were that prodigal flailing in the pig pen of your rebellious choices. God loved you when you pursued sexual immorality, when you spoke profane words, gossip, and slander. He loved you in your heart’s idolatry, greed, malice, and arrogance. He loved you in your hypocrisy and prejudices, and in your disobedience and unrepentance. God loved you!

He loved you so much that He sent His only son to make a way for you not to remain dead in your sin but alive in Him. The word describing that saving act of God is propitiation.

Propitiation is where God’s love and justice met at the cross. God’s love sent His only Son, Jesus, to take the punishment God’s justice required for every sin we have done. It was God’s love that put Jesus, not you, on that cross, and it was God’s justice that placed all of our sins on Him. Jesus became sin for us.

*2 Corinthians 5:21*

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Jesus’ crucified blood satisfied God’s justice and made peace between us and God. Because of Jesus, we are forgiven and can now be called His “Beloved.” So, friend, place your faith in Christ and you will find the love that you have always been searching for.

We end with the fourth and final truth.

4. God abides in us — 1 John 4:12

***4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.***

Oh, the relentless love of God! Let’s walk through the progression of the truths from this morning.

- God is love.
- Love is from God.
- God so loved us.
- But here is the incredible part, God’s love does not stop there. God abides in us.

Listen, the very agape-love of God abides in you!

*Romans 5:5*

*God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

The proof that God really lives in us is found in 1 John 4:7 and 12.

- Whoever loves
- has been born of God
- knows God
- has God abiding within
- has God's love perfected within

God's love in you cannot be silent! And although no one has ever seen God, His love will be seen through Christ's life and love alive in you.

One of the evidences will be our praying for and sharing with others, the Gospel, the very message that has transformed our lives. That is happening every day among us. There are so many stories in this very room today of God's love alive through you.

In the center of main street is a "Who's Your One?" column of testimonies. Each pendent hanging represents your stories of praying for, sharing with, and seeing one person in your life come to know Jesus. That display in main street represents God's love on display. I encourage you to keep putting God's love story on display!

Represented in that column of testimonies is one story I want you to hear. This is a perfect example of what it looks like when God's love abides within us.

---

testimony: KEN and SABRINA SEVEIR (see video sermon)

---

Jerry is seeing and experiencing God's love through Ken and Sabrina and their friends Mark and Kay. Their story and Dylan and Victoria's story are living out the truths of 1 John 4.

When we believe God's truths, they transform into practical living in our lives. The profound truths of 1 John 4:7-12 demands a response from us this morning.

Beloved, will you love one another? We will leave this place this morning with the most practical of opportunities to love. The reason we are canceling tonight's planned Mission Conference event is so that you can prepare for safety, but also so that you can love your neighbor. I believe it is God's providence and kindness to let us sit together in this passage before the storm hits so that we can commit our response to His command to love our neighbor.

So, when you go to fill up your gas tank, love your neighbor. When you see one roll of toilet paper left on the shelf, love your neighbor. Give the love of God within you a chance to display itself to the people around you:

Ask the Lord:

- to love unconditionally through you
- to love sacrificially through you
- to love relentlessly through you

Beloved, let us love one another. Beloved, let us love because He first loved us. Beloved, If God so loved us, we ought to love one another.