



# AUTO-SERMON TRANSCRIPT

## *What is true love?*

Love Your Neighbor, 5 of 7, April 28th, 2024

"True love serves loyally for the long-haul."

1 Corinthians 13:4 by Michael Lockstampfor (miklocks)

[\[https://www.ocalaneighborhood.church/watch-a-message/love-your-neighbor-5-what-is-true-love\]](https://www.ocalaneighborhood.church/watch-a-message/love-your-neighbor-5-what-is-true-love)

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[Music]

Well good morning church welcome to you and to our neighbors I'm glad to be together with you it has been for me I'll just say personally for me it's been a month a month and a half or so of just going crazy different stuff eating now up different times,

and I just feel completely out of sorts. And yesterday, I think I hit like a reset button. And so I'm feeling okay, but I don't know if you,

do you ever have those seasons where everything that's kind of normal is just slightly off, or you're just a little bit more tired than you feel like you ought to be? Yeah, okay, well good. I am glad that you can relate.

And I'm glad that we can meet together on a Sunday morning and kind of admit that up front and be like, "Hey, this might be where I'm at this week." We've been going through a series that we've called Love Your Neighbor.

Many of you are proudly wearing your t-shirts. I'm really excited about that. And we're four weeks, are we four? This is our fifth week in this series. And we have never quite sat down on a Sunday.

asked the question of, well, what is love? Like, how do we define love? Which seems like a pretty decent question to consider if the whole series is called love, your neighbor. Like, we should be clear on what it means to love somebody, right? So when I say the word love, like, what are some pictures that come to mind? What is true love?

Like we might think of a mother with their child, like that's true love. In fact, one of the verses we've already looked at is see what kind of love the father has given to us that we have been called children of God and so we are.

And so maybe true love is like that parent-child relationship. But I think oftentimes we have a different picture, like when we think of true love, we think of romantic love,

right? right? Yeah? All right, cool. When we think of,



when we ask, are we talking about true love? Like, typically this is something that comes to mind. Like, there's a romantic couple and we've fallen in love with one another and now we're making these vows to stay together forever.

And that is really, interesting. Much of that is based on our feelings. It's interesting to me as you think about and consider the ways that most people talk about love, it actually is kind of like an attacker. We are victims of love. Have you ever thought about it that way? Let me give you some examples and I'll see if you agree with me.

Our culture acts as though we are just victims of love. We fall into love as though it's like some pit trap on Gilligan's Island that they put, like we fall in to love or we fall out of love as though somebody like shoved us out of a helicopter or something, like we don't really have any choice, we just fell out, fell out of love. Love is crazy, we think we're crazy in love or we're head over heels,

like that's kind of a violent thing. situation to have your feet over your head, right? We're smitten, like that sounds violent to me. You take my breath away,

like that's choking. Not a great, not a great thing. I get, like we are crushed, we have crushes, we are dumped,

and we even like, things are really violent. bad, like we have apples in our eye, like you are the apple of my eye, like who threw that at you? The way that we talk about love,

like we are victims of this thing, right? No. (laughs) All right, I'm glad we got to chuckle a little bit.

The thing about love is like if you ask, there's a whole room full of people. if I ask 50 of you what love is, we would have probably 55 definitions, right? Love is a thing that each of us feels like,

well, I know it when I see it, but when I put words to it, I'm not sure that I could necessarily describe it. I just know when it's happened. I'm aware of when it's happened. And our definitions of love are actually really personal.

Like the way that you talk about love or the people that you love. or your loved ones, is something that is intrinsic to you. You take that idea very personally. Love is connected to something that's deep in our soul.

And I think it probably is related to God making us to be like him. But whether you trust Jesus or not, whether you've been walking with God for a long, long time,

or this is your first time interacting with anything spiritual, like love is a principle that we all have some kind of a relationship to. And we're gonna look at a passage together this morning that oftentimes,

I can only think of two times where I've not seen this passage in connection with this kind of scene. It's a passage that gets read very frequently at weddings. But as we look at it,

I think as we visit that, we might be able to see that. that the definition of love that it is describing is not the picture that we thought it was, that there's something deeper behind it.

So can we do that together this morning? Are we up for that kind of a challenge? Okay, beautiful, I'm glad. We,

yeah, let's skip that. All right, so let's pause and let's pray together. before we go any further. It's our habit together to pray, the disciples' prayer together. As neighborhood church,

this is the model of prayer that Jesus left for those who were gonna be his disciples and follow him. And he said, "This is how you should talk to God." And so I'm just gonna do what he told me to do. So if you'd like to pray out loud along with me,

I'll put the words here on the screen. But at the very least, let's bow our hearts and let's pray together. And I'll just ask with your eyes closed just to think for a quick moment before we start this prayer.

What's the biggest burden or concern that you've carried this week? And with that in mind,

we pray together. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your name. kingdom come, your will be done "on earth as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread "and forgive us our debts "as we also have forgiven our debtors. "And lead us not into temptation,

"but deliver us from evil. "For yours is the kingdom and the power "and the glory forever." forever, never, amen. I'll invite you to turn with me to the Book of First Corinthians.

This is different from what we have been looking at. We're gonna turn to First Corinthians in chapter 13, if you wanna navigate there with me. If you've got the Blue Bibles, they're kinda scattered around the room.

It's on page 1197, if you wanna follow along in the Blue Bibles, it's page 1197. I'm gonna turn to page 1197. but we're going to navigate to 1 Corinthians 13. And my goal for the morning is to read the whole chapter and then we'll circle back around and we'll set some context and then we'll zero in on some very specific words,

okay? So, and as we begin, or I hope that we'll see that true love serves loyally for the long haul. 1 Corinthians 13. chapter 13, I'll begin reading in verse one.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,

and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love,

I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things,

believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies,



they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part, and we prophesy. prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child, and when I became a man, I gave up my childish ways. For now, we see in a mirror dimly,

but then, face to face, now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known, I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known, so now faith, hope,

and love abide. These three, but the greatest of these, is love. How many of us have heard that passage, or even part of that passage before?

How many of us have heard that passage in a wedding before? Yeah, so it's a really common passage to address, to use in weddings,

because it gives a very, kind of big definition of what love is, right? And it exalts love, it says if nothing else is gonna last but love will stand forever,

like that's a good sentiment to have on your wedding day, right? Yeah, okay, good. But I wanna just take a look at where this chapter comes from because it's in chapter 13 and there are,

I think, 15 or 16 chapters in the book. And so I wanna just take a moment to set this in its context because sometimes when you look at a picture, you think you understand what the picture is.

You look at these toads and you're like, "Well, clearly they're in a jar and that's mean." Like you should not put toads in a jar but when you zoom out and get the whole picture, you're really,

that what you thought was mean is actually like saving their life, right? And sometimes Bible verses are like that. When you look in real, real close at one or two verses, it can seem like it says something that you are mad at a part of it,

but when you zoom out, you take the bigger picture, you go, oh, that makes a lot of sense, right? So that's what I'd like to do with these verses. We've got, presumably, chapters,

a little bit more, 12, 13, 14, and 15, that are all around this. So I've kind of put chapter 13 around. Now, let me say first, I got excited with my clicker.

I'm sorry. This letter was written by the apostle Paul to the believers who were in a city called Corinth. And it was a really wealthy city.

I kind of equate it to Las Vegas. Like it was a port city. There were a ton of people in and out all the time and the gospel came to Corinth through Paul. Like Paul came and preached and served there for 18 months.

That story's in Acts 18 if you want to read that. But he started this church and then he left and after he left, he hears about what's going on in the church and he's so concerned about what's going on in the church that he writes this letter.

This is actually-- actually probably the second letter he writes, but it's the first one we have, so that's why we call it First Corinthians. There are a ton of issues in the church. Like, they are strong believers,

they want to believe in Jesus, but there's a lot of issues. But the first issue that he wants to address among all the issues that they have is that they have divided themselves up.

There are these factitious divisions. and there's these cliques in the church where one person follows, one group of people follows, one teacher and another people follow the other teacher and they don't talk to each other and they kind of don't get in.

So he says of all of the problems that you guys got, the first thing that we need to address is this. And then he goes on. In chapter 11, he says this is your dress code for worship.

These are the things you should wear to church when you gather together. Like you, you should be aware of that. aware that how you dress reflects what's going on in your heart. And he gives some corrections about how they're celebrating communion. He says,

"You guys have messed this up. "You're missing the point here." Then he says that in chapter 12, "Jesus has one body with many diverse parts." So he says, "We are the body of Christ, "but not each of us has the same gifting.

"Not each of us has the same role. "And so when you come together in church, "you should not be surprised that "it's not the same thing." homogenous. You should not be surprised that there are people who have different preferences than you and who have different things that they're excited about than you,

that maybe even they talk different languages than you. Like that's actually what God is doing is he's taking these diverse pieces and using them together in one body. Then chapter 13, then chapter 14,

he says that spiritual gifts, that diverse gifting is actually not so that you can feel better about your relationship with God. but so that you can use what God's doing in you to bless other people.

Your spiritual gifts are for building other people up, and when you get together, you should have a peaceful order that you worship God in.

There should be some kind of plan about what you're doing, and it should be kind of peaceful when you come together to church. And then chapter 15, it clarifies the message of the gospel with the hope of Jesus Christ. return.

So, chapter, if we were just talking about, if we hadn't started with chapter 13, and I told you chapter 11, 12, 14,

and 15, what would you say is the, like who are the people? What's the context that he wants us to be grappling with in this section of the letter?

Like who are the people, is he talking to a couple on the day of their wedding vows? He's talking to the church. He says the way that you ought to do church is these things.

The way you ought to think about when you show up to worship Jesus with people is these things. And in the middle of that conversation, he drops first Corinthians,

Corinthians chapter 13. I'm like, I don't know that I like any of you that much. Like I'll read that passage to Jesse, but on a Sunday morning,



love is patient and kind. It does not envy, it does not boast. Like I don't know if, what would it look like if a church behaved that way?

way? Like we actually have to stop and think about it 'cause myself included, I've never seen one that does that. And his vision for a healthy church is summed up in this core of love your neighbor.

Love the people. people. Love is the thing that we gotta build all these things out of. He says you can't effectively,

in the first couple of verses there, I'm not gonna preach him, but I'll just tell you, in verses one through three, he says you can't effectively do anything for God if you don't have love. And secondly,

if you disagree with that principle, keep praying about it, you'll get there. there. There's a way that we come to God and we think that that's kind of silly, that's kind of mushy, I don't know that I get that,

but he says as you mature, you'll understand that actually we can't do anything good for God if we don't have love, okay? So that's all background, and our big idea for this morning is that true love serves loyally for the long haul.

True love serves loyally for the long haul. I'm going to take this idea. in two sections, but I'm actually gonna start with the second idea. So what does it mean long haul? And I'm zeroing in on verse four.

The rest of what I'm gonna say is out of the first half of verse four. So we're gonna spend the next 30 minutes talking about two words, but it's gonna be good. It's gonna be helpful. I hope we prayed about it.

It's gonna be good. All right, love is patient and love is kind. Now you'll notice he starts off with these two words, what it is, love is patient and kind,

and then he begins to define love negatively. So this is all the things that it's not. So we'll talk about the things that love is not next week. This is an incomplete definition. But for today,

love is patient and love is kind. Then that really is gonna be enough for us to wrap our heads around. Love is patient, love is kind. Patience relates to time invested.

That sounds silly that I'd even have to say, but what is patience? Patience, you cannot divorce patience from time. You cannot be patient quickly.

quickly. And I'll warn you too, if your takeaway from this is, "Man, I really need to be a more patient person," when God answers the prayer that you would be more patient,

what He will do is He will put you in situations where you get to practice patience, and practicing patience takes time, and patience too. He'll put you in situations where you can't go quick.

You can't make it happen faster. You can't change their mind. You gotta be patient. You gotta wait. Patience is related to time invested.

Similarly, students hear me, particularly. Similarly, true love cannot be expressed in a single moment.

True love is patient and it takes time. True love cannot be expressed by a single moment. It is exemplified over time.

God uses this idea to help us understand even what he's like. When he introduces himself to Moses, Moses in Exodus chapter 34,

he says the Lord, the Lord, Yahweh, Yahweh, I am the God who is slow to anger. And he'll say that multiple times. I'm the one who's slow to anger.

I am patient. You're giving me every reason to be mad, but I am patient over time. Consistently. consistently, we read together Psalm 103 and we read the whole 22 verses,

which is more than we typically do, but four times in that beautiful Psalm saying, are you not understanding God's patience and his love that's demonstrated by how he is patient toward us,

although he remembers that we are dirt. He shows his kindness to us and he loves us patiently. And in 2 Peter chapter three,

he says that God is patient and his desire, what he wants for everybody is that they would all be saved. He wants to be in relationship with us and he's willing to wait to make it happen.

He's like, great, that's good for God and what does that have to do with me? He says, if you're gonna walk with me, James says, Jesus' followers are instructed to be quick to, to hear, slow to speak,

and slow to anger. Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Problem is,

our society isn't wired that way. Have you noticed that a thing happens? And we don't even like get to talking before we're mad. Like,

a thing happens and we're to write an angle. Come on now, how are you gonna do that? Like I have all these feelings and I'm so upset that this, how could you even, and I can't even find the words. He's like, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. If you're gonna walk with me,

if you're gonna reflect my character, God says you should be slow to speak. Shut your mouth. Slow to anger.

Quick to listen. Hear what it is that they're trying to say. It's hard because when they start off wrong,

you already know they're wrong, but they got more to say. But it's not about who's right and wrong. It's about what kind of a relationship are we building?

God knew that we were wrong from the get-go. Like, he gave us brains and knew from the beginning when we opened our mouth that we were wrong. And yet, he's still listened to our self-centered,

our angry, our corrupted prayers. And he says, "Yeah, yeah, but I wanna walk with you." Like, "I'll listen to this so I can get you to the point "where you'll hear me when you say, "I love you and the things that you're saying "are killing you,

so stop that and trust me. "Stop trusting in your own ability to make things right "between you and me and trust me "that I have paid the price." Okay, it took me 13





years to get to the point where I even could comprehend the idea that I might be wrong about something,

and that was early. I've questioned that idea. idea numerous times over my life. Here's the deal, relationships are grown over time.

It doesn't happen overnight. When you meet somebody, you don't already know the whole story and they might say some off the wall stuff but you don't know where it's coming from.

I think about it if our life is a chapter, like if our life is a book, and if I'm on chapter 12 and I meet somebody,

I don't know if the chapter of their life that they're on is actually still chapter three, or if the chapter that their life is on is on chapter three. 50 and I don't know how close I am to the end of my book and I don't know how close they are to the end of their book and so I I can take a chill pill and be quick to hear before I got so many things to say and before I choose to get angry and that's the

test of character character is demonstrated under under testing. Testing happens over time. Love is patient,

doesn't demand that you have it all together today. I can be with you now in your mess, and I can take another step with you tomorrow.

I'm not in a hurry. I'm here with you every step of the way. That's the crazy thing about wedding vows is you have all those feelings on that day.

But the test is what happens in seven years or 13 years or in 50 years. The person you marry is not the person that you're gonna die with They will change But the promise is there and that distance that patience is What love is the other real word?

I'm gonna step off his platform Love serves loyally for the long haul. Patience is hard,

right? I think we kind of know that. We had the privilege, I had the privilege a couple of weekends ago to go camping with my boys, and we went camping and we went trout fishing. And I grew up on a pond,

like we went fishing all the time. I caught bass and all this kind of stuff. When I moved to Florida, I haven't caught a single fish in Florida. I've been here 10 years, almost. And I cannot catch fish in Florida. I don't know what it is. I did something wrong.

So we went up to Georgia and I actually caught a fish. Woo! Yeah, still zero, zero in Florida, but Georgia. So we went camping and I can remember growing up on that pond,

there was an old guy who let us use his dock and he would come out and I'd get so frustrated and he'd come out and he'd say, "Michael, there's really only one fish in the pond." two things that you need to know to fish." I'm like, "What are the two things? Tell me your secret,

so sensei." He's like, "You only got to have two things. You got to, A, be smarter than the fish." I'm like, "Oh, maybe I don't know that." And he says, "The second thing, you got to have a hook in the water.



You got to be smarter than fish. You got to have a hook in the water." Like, for all the times I get flustered and just pull the thing in and I just throw it on the ground. I'm like, "I'm a hundred percent not going to have a hook in the water." catch a fish if my hook's not in the water But it's hard because I've been here for two hours throwing the thing out and I haven't got a single thing Yeah,

but as soon as you stop throwing the hook in the water You're done. You're not fishing anymore. You're sitting on the pier, but that's patience.

That's trying again. That's waiting some more so believe me my friends Who has exhausted our patients don't look at anybody?

I'm looking at the podium Who yeah, there's a there's a bunch of fish in those yeah, yes, it was not big >> [LAUGH] >> No, we ate it. Yeah, yeah, yeah,

that was dinner. Okay, who has exhausted our patience? Here's what I know, is that we have limited resource.

If we were automatically as patient as we needed to be, this wouldn't be in the book. He wouldn't tell us love is patient if we were good at it. So, who has exhausted our patients?

And as their picture comes into your mind, how will we draw more from Jesus as well? I'm not asking you to just generate more patience.

I'm not asking you to just stick it out for another-- I'm not asking to pull you out of it. up by your bootstraps and do better next time. I'm asking you, I don't have the answers, you don't have the answers, but Jesus says I am life.

I've come to you that you might have life abundantly and so if you're empty, if you're dry, if you're tired, then come to me and take from me. Who has exhausted our patience and how will we draw more from Jesus as well?

He's generous. I had a couple of thoughts because I don't normally do this. I don't normally give you the application but I have a couple for you today.

Practicing patience, how do we do that? Forgiving folks are forgiving. This is just a principle of Christianity and goofy thing is Jesus tricks us into praying it every week. If we ask God to forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.

debtors, like he says, oh, are you forgiving the way that you've forgiven? Or are you forgiving the way that you've been forgiven? Like, he asks us to consider that we have been forgiven of an insurmountable amount of debt to God.

And so then, what right have we to exact payment from other people? So forgiving folks are forgiven, which is real churchy, right? Let me make it not churchy.

Be unoffendable. unoffendable. God is the catalyst of all love and he says,

"I've demonstrated my love for you and that I've sent my son to pay for sin." And if that's true, if that offer is real, if that offer is legitimate,

then sin is forgiven, then be aware that all debts are paid in full. Debt's to me, and debt's to God. All sin is paid in full.

So what right do I have to go around expecting other people to pay me for the ways that they hurt me? Like, it's inconsistent. It says, "Forgiven, people are forgiven." so be unoffendable.

Say what you want to say. Like, I will wait. I will hear. I will listen so that when I do open my mouth like you, I've bought some equity.

You've got a reason to trust. Listen more than you talk." Spent a lot of time.

time over the last couple of months like just listening to Proverbs, the book of Proverbs, and over and over again, just keep saying, yeah, keep your mouth shut. Don't talk so much. Keep your mouth shut. I thought, man, I picked the wrong job. If I wanna be wise,

I talk way too much, but if we're gonna practice patience, we're gonna listen more than we talk. And lastly, we're gonna have to carve out margin. If we have so scheduled our lives and we are so busy,

crammed full and we always have something to do back to back to back to back to back to back to back to the whole day, then we're not gonna have time to listen.

If we don't carve out some margins in our day where I have an hour that if somebody needs my attention, I can spend that time with them without feeling pressured or with them.

feeling concerned, then that actually is what Christ has called us to. Carve out some margin. You realize the Sabbath principle means, if Jesus intended for us to take a whole day off every week,

that there are things that we could do that God doesn't want us to do. So carve out some margin, listen more than you talk,

and be unaffected. unoffendable. Love is patient. True love serves loyally for the long haul. Serves loyally. Okay, what are we talking about? True love serves loyally for the long haul.

Love is kind. Love is kind. When I think of kindness, I kind of think of like niceness.

Like, love is kind. Like, there are some people that are kind. are kind in my life And I just kind of like to be around them like they're just nice to be around right Maybe our grandma's like this. Oh, she's so kind.

Yeah, cuz she's making you dumplings. Of course. She's kind right like that's what Grandma's do like we want to be around those kinds of people But the the word here actually carries this connotation of like serviceable serviceable or good good or useful.

It was a term, the kindness term here was used to describe servants and slaves who were kind of eager to serve.

Like they saw an opportunity and they took it. They saw something that needed to be done and they just got busy doing it. And you have those people in your life where you're like, you are looking at them.

the big mess and they walk up and kind of pat you on the back and walk away. You're like hey I thought you wanted to help like why don't you pick something up. Like I'm guilty of this. Kindness,

love is kindness, love is kind or people who are eager to serve, who see the pile of dirty dishes and just start washing, who you invite them over to dinner and they like get up and start cleaning up the table.

at the end. You're like, you don't have to do that. I'm like, I know, I know. I don't have to, but I get to. Love is kind. Kindness is not niceness.

I've got my slides all out of order. Kindness is not niceness. It is being useful to us. I don't even have the slide in there. It got lost somewhere.

So these are some blanks for you. Kindness is not niceness, it is being useful to others. There's a pastor who gives this definition,

like a biblical definition of love is this. Seeing a need, meeting a need, and it comes out. nothing in return. That's a lot of words. So the way that I put it usually is what's a biblical definition of love?

A biblical definition of love is a loyal selflessness. A loyal selflessness. Loyalty demonstrated patiently over time,

selflessness serving in the best interest of the other person. In the same chapter, actually in the same context where he says every believer ought to be quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger, James also says that pure religion, like the best kind of faith is faith that visits widows and orphans with integrity,

like shows up in his... kind to people who have nobody to be kind to them. Every biographer of Jesus, in every single one of the four biographies that we have about Jesus,

every single one of them states that Jesus came to serve rather than to be served. 1 Peter in chapter two says that Jesus served unto death.

death. Like he was willing to go to the cross for the benefit of other people. As an example that we should follow.

Most days I'm real okay with Jesus dying for me. I'm not okay that he said, yeah, now you do the same. You go and love people. You go and serve people.

people. But he writes, first Peter also writes in chapter five, that pastors, pastors who serve the flock should do so eagerly.

Being eager to show kindness, being eager to care for those who've been entrusted to you, not begrudgingly, not because I have to, but because I get to.

so how do we kind of change our attitudes from I have to to I get to? Cultivating kindness, consider others' preference. Philippians chapter two says,

consider others as better than yourself, and so follow Christ's example. Consider others' preferences as better than yours. When it comes time to make a decision,

most of us have to make a decision. some kind of a preference, but I think oftentimes our preferences are pretty loosely held. I don't really care what we do. Okay, in those instances, just let the other person's preference dictate what you do.

Consider their preferences better than your own. Meet them with kindness, be eager to show them kindness. Second is a term I picked up from a pastor down in South Florida who says,

"Fill the gaps with grace." In any relationship, there's going to be times where there's miscommunication or there's times where not everything has been said clearly.



and it's normal to us. Everything's kind of like the way it always has been, right? But how do we approach this building and how we maintain and how we care for this building as though we were eager to show hospitality?

What if instead of thinking about everything kind of works, we thought about how could this be a blessing to somebody we haven't met? yet. So you might have noticed like we're taking up carpet, like taking up carpet because we need closet space because as people use this building stuff like accumulates and we need places to put things and so we need some closet space.

So how, where can we fit a closet, we can fit a closet right there. But we have to be eager to show hospitality, we have to do the work before anybody's asking us to do the work.

work. Love is patient, love is kind, be ready to share your stuff. What feelings arise in us when we imagine serving others?

So when I say like somebody just showed up at your door and you need to show them hospitality, what feelings come to mind? Is it panic? Oh no! What if they see? Or is it why they see?

they get my stuff? Like they didn't do anything, like I've worked hard for what I got. Like why are they gonna come in here and they expect me to just take care of it? Like what are the feelings that arise in us when we imagine serving others?

Somebody asked me one, or somebody told me one time, if you wanna know whether you've got a servant's heart, pay attention to what happens in you when someone treats you like a servant. If you wanna know if you've got a servant's heart, pay attention to what happens in you. you when someone treats you like a servant. 'Cause usually I respond poorly. And then the question, follow up,

would be, how will we serve like Jesus this week? Not only, what are we gonna do, like what's the activity that we're gonna do that we can serve other people the way that Jesus would serve us,

but also what kind of an attitude are we gonna approach that with? Are we gonna approach that with, well, Michael talked about love is kind, I gotta be nice to people now. And you say,

man, I've been forgiven of a whole lot and my smile could communicate grace and happiness and kindness to somebody who needs it today. I get to be the face of Jesus in the world today.

Pastor Oren, in a conversation with him this week, he pointed this out, and I thought it was fascinating. Are you familiar with mad libs? Where you take out certain key words and then you put different words in here.

Here's a little bit of a mad lib. These are the verses that we have been looking at. Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It is not insistent its own way. way. But what if we took these things out and had blanks here?

And what if we put our name in it? Okay, maybe not your name. What if I put my name in it? How's this? Michael is patient and kind. Michael does not envy or boast.

He is not arrogant or rude. He does not insist on his own way. He's not irritable or resentful. He does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. He bears all things,

believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Michael never ends. There's tensions when we put our name in that, that we're like, yeah,

I'm not there. Agreed? And that could be burdensome. If this wasn't the way that it actually is filled out.

God is patient and kind. God, I can send it to you later. God does not envy or boast. He is not arrogant or rude.

He does not insist on his own way. He is not irritable. or resentful. He does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

God bears all things, believes all things. He hopes all things. He endures all things. God never ends. For all of the uncomfortability I feel when I put my name here,

the hope and the comfort that I have is that God is love. love, that he has solved the things that are broken in me,

and he invites me into life with him. Romans 2:4 says that God's kindness is designed to lead us to repentance.

I don't know if I have a slide. There's some blanks for you. God's kindness is designed to lead us to repentance. repentance, to turn from what was killing us to embrace him for life.

Here's the mind-boggling part. Other people's repentance may be based on our kindness towards them. It's not natural to us,

but it's God's desire that he would grow it in us. It's true love. serves loyally for the long haul. Let's pray together. Jesus,

we thank you for your word. We thank you for the ways that you're slow and you're patient with us. For all the times we wanna be frustrated that you're not going at our pace. Lord,

I pray that you'd help us to catch what it is that you're doing. I thank you for the patient ways that you've listened to all the nonsense I've said to you over the years.

I thank you for the kindness that you've showed to me, that you would serve me when I was your enemy. Lord,

I want to be like you. I want to reflect your character. And I'm not there yet. So Jesus, today we thank you for your presence in this room and we pray that you would,

that we could meet with you in these moments. I pray that you would guide our hearts. as we confess to you all the ways that we have not been patient or kind,

that our repentance would mean embracing the life that you give and drawing from your well. Would you make us a church?

church that's defined by true love? Would you make us each individuals who not only love you with our whole heart,



love our neighbor as our self? And would you help us to look to you for a definition of love? It's in Jesus' name we ask.

Amen. So as we close we'll just take a few minutes to be quiet together. I don't want to interrupt but we'll continue to meet with Jesus and so here's some questions that we talked about today for you to consider.

But these might have a better work. They might have a better return if you take these questions and ask them of some other people who are trying to follow Jesus. Share honestly what God is doing in you and ask them what they're seeing in you.

How do they see growth? Where do they see places to keep working on? So that's how we've designed this. But if you need help finding a group or starting a group that does that, I'd be glad to.

to walk with you through that or invent one for you. But for right now, in these moments, let's take just a few minutes and quiet.

Just a little bit of margin here to sit with Jesus and ask him how he would lead us this week.

[Music]