

Loving God and One Another

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[0 : 00] So the scripture reading today will be 1st John chapter 4 verses 7 and ending in 21 starting in verse 7. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 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.

In this love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide 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 the Savior of the world. To be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.

[1 : 07] So that we have come to know and to believe that love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God and abides in him.

By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment. Because as he is so, also are we in this world.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not perfected in love. We love because he first loved us.

If anyone says, I love God, and he hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God from whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from him. Whoever loves God must also love his brother. The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Welcome to the service this morning, Trinity English Church.

[2 : 18] I'm grateful that today we have membership Sunday. We'll be inducting our first members after the sermon. And that's very exciting for me as a pastor.

So 1 John chapter 4, 7 to 21. So please follow along with me as I speak from this passage. Many of you probably know a song by the Beatles called All You Need Is Love.

Love, love, love, all you need is love. Even if you don't listen to the Beatles, you've probably heard of it somewhere in a public location. And that kind of captures what a lot of people think about love.

In that love is important and everybody knows what love is. And everybody knows that love is important. That's kind of how we think of it. So very rarely do we find ourselves explaining to someone what love is.

Because we take it for granted that they know what love is. But this passage that Ben just read for us suggests something that's very shocking and even offensive to some people.

[3 : 20] Because it's teaching us that it's only those who know God and have experienced God's love really know what love is. Love is not something that we can take for granted. Love is not something that is common knowledge to all.

And in fact, because of that, because love is uniquely revealed to and known by those who know and love God, John exhorts his fellow believers in this passage, Those who have been loved by God ought to love one another.

Now that's the main idea of this passage. Those who have been loved by God ought to love one another. And first, he teaches us about God's love for us. That's the first thing he tells us. And then secondly, he teaches us about how that love of God motivates us and undergirds our love for one another.

So God's love for us and our love for one another. I'll talk about those two things in turn. So first, verse 7 begins to talk about God's love for us. Beloved, let us love one another. Love one another. Right? That's the first, the command, love one another. And that's, you can tell that's the main command of this whole passage because it's repeated twice more. In verse 21, at the end, it says again, love one another.

[4 : 28] Right? And then it's beginning at the end. And then in the middle as well, in verse 11, it says we ought to love one another. Right? And the reason for that is in verse 7. For love is from God and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Right? This is the reason why we love one another. For, because love is from God and whoever loves has been born of God because love is from God. So the converse of that statement is also true and that's in verse 8.

It's that anyone who does not love then does not know God because God is love. And because God is love, those who obviously do not know love then cannot know God.

And this is a really famous statement, right? That God is love. It's a weighty statement that a lot of people use. But it's frequently misused. And it's very important that we preserve the order of this statement that God is love as well.

And we can't say that love is God. Right? Because God is love is found in Scripture and it's backed up in many different places in Scripture. But the converse of that, love is God, is never found anywhere in Scripture.

[5 : 31] And the reason for that is this. Is that if we say love is God, then our own fallible definition and understanding of love becomes the standard by which God is judged. Right?

Instead of God's perfect standard and His love being the standard by which we judge our love. Right? That's why it's important that we preserve that love. Because it's when we reverse that order, that's when we start to rationalize all kinds of illicit and inappropriate relationships with the pretext of love.

Saying that, well, a husband who commits adultery and then goes off with another woman will say, well, I love her. No. That's not love. Right? That's not the way God calls us that.

Because you do not define love. And love does not define your actions. But rather, we define love by what God has done and how He has revealed to us what love is supposed to be like. Right? And that's why when people say things like love is God, that's when they say, you know, kind of things that don't make a lot of sense.

Like, oh, you know, if you love someone, you should let them do whatever they want. Right? Because that's what love is. You should let them do what they want. You should let them be who they want to be. Right? People say that. But that's not what we do.

[6 : 39] Even unbelievers know that. That that's not what true love is. Because that's not how we treat people whom we truly love. Right? It's the illegitimate children that get left alone to do whatever they want to roam those streets.

It's the real children, genuine children that are disciplined. They're educated. They're taught. Right? In the same way, it's the phony friends that we have who will let us do whatever we want to do.

Even when we're ruining our lives with bad decisions and vices, they'll let us be.

But the true friends will try this. They will confront us. They will even get angry with us for ruining our lives and making bad decisions. Right? So we all know this. And that's the kind of love with which God has loved us.

Right? It's not a dismayed kindness that said you can do whatever you want to do. So when we find ourselves or when we hear other people start to contradict the teaching of Scripture, to violate the teachings of Scripture, and with the rationalization, the excuse that, you know, oh, God of love would not teach something like that, or that's not a very loving thing to do.

Right? Then that's a sign that we're in grave danger. Because when we start to say things like that, we have to ask ourselves, who says so? Right? According to whose definition of love? Yours? Society's definition of love?

[7 : 53] No. God is love, and He alone can define what love is supposed to be. So we can't judge God and His actions by our standard of, rather, we judge our actions, our love, by what God has revealed to us.

So then how are we to know this love that God has revealed? And He gives us the answer to that in verses 9 to 10. Follow along with me. 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.

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.

So where was the love of God revealed? Not in a romance novel, or a drama, or a textbook, or even a philosophy text. The love of God was made manifest in this, it says, namely that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us. We were just singing about it, right? If He had not loved us first, we would refuse Him still. And this is a very reassuring truth, because it shows that it's not because we were first intelligent, or kind, or faithful, that God loved us, but rather it's God loving us first.

[9 : 16] That's what leads us to be faithful to Him. And that means as believers, if you're a believer, and you're a Christian, you follow God, then we don't have any cause to be prideful about our state with God, our relationship with God, our salvation, because we recognize that it's not our own intrinsic merit that led to God saving us, but rather God loved us first.

It's God's mercy and grace that now makes us part of His plan, His family. So we have nothing to be prideful about in relation to unbelievers. And it also means that we don't have anything to despair about.

If you are a believer, and you're struggling with the sin, and you feel like you can no longer approach God because of your past, or because of the bad things you've done, then we don't have to despair, because we remember that it's not our level of obedience, or form of righteousness that made God love us.

No, God loved us first. And then we respond to Him in obedience and love. So when we're tempted to despair, we can remind ourselves, no, we can boldly approach God, because He loved us first.

Now, what does it mean that God loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins?

That's a big word that doesn't get used very often nowadays. Apart from the language of atonement and Bible, we rarely see it.

[10 : 34] When you propitiate something or someone, it refers to basically appeasing or satisfying the wrath of someone. It's placating someone. So it has in view, it's implicit in the word, is the idea of the wrath of God against sin and sinners.

So Jesus Christ died then on the cross to fully absorb God the Father's wrath towards sin and sinners. And in that act of propitiation, that's where God's love is revealed to us.

And so that reveals to us what love is supposed to be. It's self-sacrifice. It's a pouring out that self-sacrificing. That's the kind of love that God shows us. Now, some people might criticize that idea of propitiation.

A lot of people are, don't like the idea of the wrath of God. They don't want to talk about the fact that Jesus Christ had to pacify God's wrath. But the truth is, this is very different from what you would normally think of as pacifying someone, because the examples in other religions you might think of, for example, in the Greco-Roman Empire, the Greco-Roman gods, the pagan gods that they had, people were, you know, afraid of them.

So they would offer sacrifices or they would do certain things, fulfill certain obligations to ensure that no harm would befall them, right? Similar way in Asia, even now, right? Shamanism and animism, a lot of people worship spirits and different gods and offer sacrifices to make sure that nothing bad happens to them.

[12 : 02] And that's not just in Asia. It happens in Western civilization as well. All these charms and talismans that people invest in, they do that because they think that that will keep them safe, that they will keep them from harm. That's a way to appease the gods, right?

So the fundamental difference between all of these examples and the propitiation that Christ has done for us, has accomplished for us, is the fact that it's not the human beings, it's not we who offer to God a sacrifice in order to fend for ourselves, but it's God himself who offers a way for propitiation.

He offers the sacrifice. He sends his son to die in our place. That's the fundamental difference. We don't go and say, okay, I'm afraid of what God's going to do to me, so I'm going to do these things to make sure he doesn't do anything to me.

That's not the idea. That God himself, because of his great love for us, makes a way in order to appease and to satisfy his wrath. So that's why in this very passage, the famous passage that says, teaches us that God is love, it talks about the wrath of God in the idea of propitiation.

Because unless you understand the wrath of God, you cannot understand the love of God, right? In the same way, let's say you owe a debt and somebody forgives you of your debt, forgives you of your loans.

[13:17] It's only when you understand, when you know just how great a debt you owed, that's when you really know how much you were forgiven, how generous and forgiving that person was toward you.

In the same way, it's only when we recognize the depth of our sin and the depth and extent of God's fiery and unrelenting wrath toward it that we can truly understand how much deeper and how even more relentless his love toward us was, that he made a way to satisfy that wrath so that we could have a relationship with God.

Theologian, my professor from St. Mary, David Wells, summarizes this in this way. Man is alienated from God by sin, and God is alienated from man by wrath.

It is in the substitutionary death of Christ that sin is overcome and wrath is averted so that God can look on man without displeasure and man can look on God without fear.

Sin is expiated and God is propitiated. And that's why we must understand the wrath of God. That's why in that act of propitiation, of satisfying the wrath of God, we see the depth of God's love revealed toward us.

[14:40] And because God's love was decisively revealed in Christ and what he did to propitiate the Father, that's why in verse 18, he teaches us there is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

That's what it says in verse 18. As I mentioned before, because our loyalty, faithfulness, obedience, they were not the prior condition of God's love. Rather, God loved us first. We do not have to fear the punishment because it was not on the basis of our obedience that God saved us, but God saved us in spite of our sin and disobedience.

And now, because of that, we have right standing with God through what Jesus has done. And I, I like to, I talk about this a lot because in my past as well as a believer and growing up, I grew up really insecure.

Really insecure, not in just with peers, but really insecure in my relationship with God. I was really, really legalistic and I, and often was, I often tried to produce a certain kind of emotion or a remorse after sin because I believed that only when I had done that and had sufficiently paid my dues that God would take me back and have a relationship with him.

And, you know, I don't think I'm alone in that. I think a lot of believers live in that kind of a subtle, kind of a guilt-ridden life. And the church historian, Richard Loveless, writes this. He says, below the surface of their lives, many Christians are guilt-ridden and insecure.

[16:09] They draw their assurance of acceptance from God from their own sincerity, their past experience of conversion, their recent religious performance, or the relative infrequency of their conscious, willful disobedience.

Isn't that true? We derive our sense of assurance in our relationship with God from how well we have been doing and what we have done in the past. But, this passage teaches there is no need for fear for believers because Christ died as the propitiation for our sins.

Our assurance comes not from our performance, but from the demonstration of God's love and commitment to us in what Christ did on that cross. And, and if that's the case, and the only way we know love is through what Christ has done for us, then, Christians, those who have experienced God's love are ones who are uniquely equipped to know love.

Right? And at this point, of course, we might be asking ourselves, but what about the unbelievers? What about people who do not believe in Christ? Don't they love? Don't they love one another?

Right? So, to an extent, that is a true statement. They do love. And, and, and the reason for that is that we're all made in the image of God. Right? So, we are able to approximate to a degree the, the love that's in the Trinity between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit because they are love and men are created in God's image.

[17:32] Now, but just, while that is true, just as much as if you go to, you know, to look at Michelangelo's sculpture of David, it's a breathtaking sculpture that's very realistic.

Right? So, you look at that and it's, I mean, it looks even more realistic to certain people's actual bodies. Right? But, but when you look at that, no matter how realistic it looks, it does not, it can never become an actual human being because it lacks the breath of God.

Right? But in the same way, no matter how realistic the love of unbelievers look as they're approximating the love of God, it cannot become the true love that this passage speaks of because it has not been enabled, they've not been enabled or empowered by the spirit of God whose love. The love that this passage has in view, it's this kind of sacrificial love that Christ has demonstrated, it's seen, it's, it's, it's given to believers. It's their, it's their exclusive possession because it's the spirit of God.

So, John explains this further in verse 13. He says, by this we know that we abide in him and he in us because he has given us of his spirit. Right? Now, if you're following along with me, you will catch a parallel with the verse immediately before this, in verse 12 because it says, if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

[18:50] Right? So, in verse 12, it says, the condition for knowing whether God is with us or not is that we love one another and then in verse 13, the condition for loving, knowing whether God is with us or not is that we, is that we have a spirit.

Right? And the reason for that, and those two are actually identical things and the reason is that God is love. Right? So, when we love one another, then that's an evidence of God's presence with us.

That's the evidence of the spirit of God because as Romans 5, 5 says, God's love is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The possession of the Holy Spirit, that's where that love comes from.

That's the spring of love, the wellspring of love. Therefore, when we have the spirit, we love one another. That's why those parallel statements are there to teach us this truth. So, that means that to be a Christian then is to be adopted by God the Father into the family of God, into the loving family of God, to be united with Christ, the body of Christ, the church, and by participating in his death and resurrection, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be brought together as living stones in the temple of God.

Right? That's what it does. The relationship with the triune God, that's what it means to be a Christian. And verse 16, that's why it says here, so we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

[20:09] So, it says that it's the love that God has for us, but actually, literally, the preposition that's used there in the original Greek is not for, it's actually in.

So, it says, if you were to translate that literally, the love that God has for us should say the love that God has in us. Right? So, that shows us the love that God has poured into us is exactly the love that we experience.

And that's why it says that God's love is perfected in us when we love one another. The love that God bestows on us, that perfects itself, that comes to its fruition in fullness in our love for one another.

And because the experience of this love is wrapped up in the very existence of the triune God, that's why we have to know Jesus in order to know this love. So, follow along with me in verses 14 to 15.

It says, and we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.

[21:17] So, did you guys catch that third parallel? Right? So, at first, it was, we must love one another in order for God to abide with us. Second, it was, we must have the Spirit of God to mean that God abides with us.

Now, it says, you must confess that Jesus is the Son of God, then God abides with us. Right? Again, the triune God, you cannot know this love without having a relationship with the triune God. Right? Because the Father, Son, and Spirit are one, we cannot know the Father's love without confessing his Son, Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior. And we cannot know the Son's love without being filled with the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ.

Right? So, this might be, if you're not a believer, this is probably a difficult teaching. And, because if you have not yet placed your faith in Christ, then it's saying, basically, that you do not know what love is.

And, if that's the case, you might object at this point that, well, I've seen Christians who are terrible at loving people. Right? And, you know, I would agree with you. And the reason for that is because there are Christians who claim to be Christians but who are not real Christians.

[22 : 20] Right? That's one reason. And, and the second reason might be that because you're judging, you're defining and judging love on the basis of your own experience of love, your own skewed perception of love, that you are not thinking, you think that Christians are unloving people.

It could be, it could be either of those things. But, as Christians would say, we do not claim to be perfect. We do not claim to be able to love one another in a perfect way.

But, I can tell you that every Christian will tell you that we love one another better now than we did when we first became a Christian. I believe every single Christian can say that.

And that's because you cannot have a relationship with the God who is love without becoming a more loving person. That's what exactly, that's what this passage is exactly teaching us.

And, and if that's the case then if you're not a believer we want to invite you because there's an invitation here. It says, verse 14, we have seen and testified that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

[23 : 22] Right? Not a Savior of Israel. Not a Savior of this ethnic group. Not a Savior of this particular group. He came to be the Savior of the world. He's not limited to a specific geographic location.

It extends to you, to everyone that's here. And then verse 15 therefore tells us whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God God abides in him and he in God.

Whoever confesses. Right? That's the criterion. So when you confess Jesus Christ you will be born again into the family of God. When you confess Jesus Christ you will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So please, if you're not a believer don't leave this service this morning without a serious consideration of this invitation. but if you are already a Christian then we have a particular burden and responsibility and an expectation because as this passage teaches us those who have been loved by God ought to love one another.

Right? You can't draw near to a fire without being warmed by its heat. Right? You can't go into a body of water without getting wet. Right? In the same way you cannot draw near to the God who is love without becoming a more loving person.

[24 : 39] Right? So verses 11 to 12 says, Beloved, if God so loved us we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God and if we love one another God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

This is a saying that recurs throughout the Old Testament that no one has seen God. Right? No one has seen the essence of God because God is invisible God is spirit. Right? But this is parallel to what John says actually earlier in chapter 1 verse 18 where he says no one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side he has made him known. Right? So here he's saying in chapter 1 he has said that no one has seen God the only way you can see God or know God is through Jesus because he's the incarnate God.

And that's crazy because now what he's saying here in this passage is that no one has seen this God no one can see God but now we see this God in our love for one another. When Jesus walked the earth and he revealed God he was God in the flesh he was the Son of God he revealed the Father to us and now it's the church the body of Christ in our love for one another that we reveal this God.

This was precisely the mistake of the church fathers the desert fathers who left society and Christian community to pursue a relationship with God alone.

[26 : 00] Right? They sought to deepen their love for God and increase their knowledge of God by going alone. But the truth that's tied in this passage is that God is revealed in Christian community.

It's in our love for one another that's where we find the presence of God in the family of God in the body of Christ. Right? There can be no vertical reconciliation with God apart from a horizontal reconciliation with one another.

That's why there's no such thing as an isolated Christian. no such thing as a Christian a maverick Christian that lives and does his or her own thing. And so verses if this weren't clear enough John makes this even more abundantly clear in verses 20 and 21.

If anyone says I love God and hates his brother he is a liar for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from him whoever loves God must also love his brother. We have a saying right? Out of sight out of mind. And if you reflect on your own experience you will say that that's a true statement.

[27 : 17] My family my parents live in Seattle, Washington which is quite far and I can say that even with my parents whom I love dearly if I don't make an effort to call and to stay in touch with them to FaceTime out of sight out of mind.

They don't come to my mind nearly as much as you guys come to my mind right? Because they're not here they're not around right? And that's why this passage is teaching us that you know what if you claim to love God yet hate the brother or sister the fellow Christian that's around you then you are a liar because you cannot love God without loving the brothers and sisters that you have. Right? We can't love the person that you can see with your own eyes and hear with your own ears and touch with your own hands then how can you possibly love God whom you cannot see? Right? That's what John's getting at. He reiterates this point in verse 21 and this commandment we have from him whoever loves God must also love his brother.

And what I find so moving about this passage is that if you look kind of just survey it real quickly in verse 7 and verse 11 see how Apostle John addresses us how he addresses his audience he says beloved right?

[28 : 40] Beloved that's how he addresses us that's how he refers to his fellow believers and that's the sign that's the evidence that John himself has been mastered by the very thing that he's teaching he's calling us loved one another and he himself loves the people he's writing to he calls them beloved and that's the and that's the thing that's why he calls us to brotherly love right?

He says love your brother love and that's something that we've talked about in the past but brotherly love it's we have siblings that we tolerate simply because they're a family right? they have all kinds of oddities and foibles yet we live with them like sometimes we share a bedroom with them right? and that's and we do that because they're our family right? and that's it's the same thing that the Christian community is the family of God we're not here because we share the same ethnicity or you know political opinions or because we're in the same age group or because we live in the same area that's not why we're here we're here because we have the same father and we've been brought into the family of God that's why when we have run into each other's foibles and oddities and even sins we don't just say oh forget it I'm leaving right?

we commit to one another that's what it means to be family that's why John calls us to brotherly love right? that's why when there's weak or infirm among us we care for them and serve them that's why when there's poor among us we are generous toward them and give toward them that's why when there's those who are lonely among us we comfort them we become their friend we are compassionate toward them that's why when people sin against us within the church we confront them we talk to them and we forgive them right?

that's what it means to be a family of God the Bible the Bible contains a whole host of commandments toward one another right?

[30 : 40] tells us to greet one another confess your sins to one another care for one another serve one another bear one another's burdens encourage and edify one another exhort one another stir up one another to love and good works be patient with and forgive one another teach and admonish one another submit to one another these are all quotes from the Bible and all of these things are summed up in this one command to love one another right?

because those who have been loved by God ought to love one another today we're going to be inducting the first members of Trinity Cambridge Church if we could grab the tuckets I think that'd be great and membership is simply a formal recognition of this love for one another because as we said earlier he said he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen that's why it is not enough for a Christian to simply claim to love God without involvement in the local church and membership is an expression of that commitment to one another to love one another and this is especially important in a society like ours because it's so transient and it's people move for jobs or whatever and a lot of people hop from one church to another and in a transient society like ours sometimes relationships within the church can be treated like disposable goods that was good for a season now I'm gone but that's not how we treat family that's not how the family of God is supposed to be and by becoming members we are basically rebelling against that culture and trend of transience and independence and saying that no the church of God the family of God it's permanent we're acknowledging its permanence and acknowledging our own interdependence to one another and of course until and because also until you might say like at this point that you know but aren't we all in the family of God aren't all believers all across the world aren't we all part of the are we all members of the same church of

God you know that is true we do belong to the universal church but until we reach heaven the universal church the church across generations and across boundaries cannot function like the family of God we can't function like the family of God with the believers who are in China or South Africa right you can't because of the geographic boundary the language boundary the cultural boundary we cannot function like that in the family we need brothers and sisters whom we see whom we hear whom we relate to interact with that we can love and be loved by and that's why he says he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen right in many ways it's easier for us to claim to love a brother that we don't have to see right it's like oh like I never see him or I never see her oh yeah and when someone asks you do you love that person of course of course I love that person it's harder when that person is living with you and you have to deal with all that person that person's issues it's harder to love that person that's why church membership is important we're saying that you know what we're going to deal with those things we're going to love one another through those things we're going to commit to one another through those things that's what this represents so by taking this important step many of you guys are taking today you are acknowledging that this local church then is our spiritual family and I want to commend each of you who is doing that because it's a weighty decision

I also want to commend those of you who have seriously weighed this decision and have decided not to become a member at this time because it is a weighty decision and it is important so I want to commend those people who have done that as well but I do hope that soon you will become members as we work out those things together and commit and consider what it means to be the family of God if you have not thought about membership at all and if this is a new concept to you then I invite you to think about it and to pray about it and consider in the future of submitting a membership questionnaire and take going through the class membership class with us now if you'll turn to your worship guide you'll find inside the membership covenant so I'm going to read the names of our membership candidates and when your name is read out loud I want you to stand up and once everybody's up we're going to read the covenant membership covenant together so John Buckley is already standing

Cheryl Huckins Emily Huckins Matt Huckins Taylor Jacoby Sarah Lee Lauren Miller Stephen Miller Mariah Nolan Stephanie Tuckett Taryn Tuckett Jenny Wong Hannah Wu Jun Wu and Sean Wu so I'm already standing so let's hold it in your hand let's read the membership covenant out loud together having having been brought by God's sovereign grace into the fellowship of the spirit through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and having been baptized upon our profession of faith we do now in the presence of God angels and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ we engage therefore by the aid of the [36 : 43] Holy Spirit to love God with all our heart soul mind and strength to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge holiness and peace promote the church's spirituality and fruitfulness to sustain its worship ordinances and discipline to welcome and test biblically instruction from the scriptures by the elders of the church seeking to grow toward biblical unity in the truth to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry the expenses of the church the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel through all nations we also engage to love one another to remember one another in prayer to aid one another in sickness and distress to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech to avoid all gossip backbiting and excessive anger to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay we further engage to share the love of Christ with others to educate our children in the

Christian faith to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances to walk circumspectly in the world to be just in our dealings faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs food drink and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith we moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will if possible unite with a like-minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant we acknowledge that implicit within this covenant is the consent to be governed by the doctrinal and relational commitments that have been officially adopted by the church and that address our statement of faith biblical counseling peacemaking church discipline marriage and divorce and singleness and courtship may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all amen thank you guys so please be seated okay so thank you so thank you