

CALLED TO THIS

Week 1 | *Compelled by Love* | Teacher: Libin Abraham
Sermon Questions for 8.30.2026

OPENER

Libin opened by looking back at the roots of Bent Tree in the Jesus movement of the 1970s: when a group committed to Scripture also wanted to overflow with God's love for one another, living in such a way that the only explanation was Jesus. Fifty years later, God is calling us to that same task in a new moment, full of new questions, new divisions, and new neighbors. This begins a short series called *Called to This* - exploring the core convictions that shape who we are because of Jesus, starting with the calling to be a people Compelled by Love.

READ

Ephesians 4:1-16; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; John 13:34-35; Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 16:14

MAIN POINTS

1. Love Stays

Paul calls us to bear with one another in love through humility, gentleness, and patience, refusing to walk away simply because a relationship becomes inconvenient or hard. This does not mean tolerating abuse or unsafe situations, but it does mean we resist the cultural pull to sort people into friend or enemy and discard those who disappoint us. Love sees a person made in the image of God, stays curious before condemning, and listens long enough to understand.

2. Love Speaks

Biblical love holds truth and compassion together rather than trading one for the other. Love does not require unconditional affirmation of everything about a person, and it does not abandon Scripture to feel more compassionate, but it also never dehumanizes. Jesus himself was full of grace and truth, not grace or truth, and love tells the truth with tears in our eyes rather than stones in our hands.

3. Love Serves

Our love for one another is proven in how willing we are to build each other up and meet real needs - from preparing a classroom to bringing a meal to simply sitting with someone who is grieving. Love does more than stay and speak; it shows up in action, using our gifts to contribute to the building up of Christ's body. Before people understand all we believe, they will encounter how we love.

ENGAGE WITH GOD IN A GROUP

- Libin said, "We are compelled by love because we remember the love we have received." What is one moment when God's love for you felt most real, and how does remembering it shape the way you love others?
- Paul says our love should carry a weight that corresponds to the grace we have received. Where do you sense a gap between the gospel you believe and the way you actually treat people?
- Love Stays means we do not discard people over ordinary offenses or disagreements. Who is someone you have been tempted to write off, and what would it look like to stay with humility, gentleness, and patience instead?
- Love Speaks holds truth and grace together. Where do you find it hardest to stay in that tension, leaning too far toward only affirming or only correcting?
- Love Serves by showing up in practical ways: from a meal to a listening ear to using your gifts. What is one specific way you could serve someone in your group or your neighborhood this week?
- Libin gave examples of loving a family member who has walked away from faith, a loved one navigating sexuality or gender, or a neighbor of another religion. Which of those situations feels closest to your own life right now, and what would it look like to hold conviction and compassion together there?
- Jesus said love would be the marker that sets his followers apart. If someone watched your life closely this week, what would your love communicate about him?

BOTTOM LINE

Because of the love we have received at the cross, we are compelled to be a people whose love stays, speaks the truth, and serves - so that Jesus is the only explanation.