



COMPELLED BY LOVE

Called To This | 8.30.26

Libin Abraham

(The following text is automatically generated and has not been edited)

Libin Abraham 0:00

When I was thinking about our 50 years, I kept coming back to the genesis of our church. What happened in the 1970s is that there was the Jesus movement sweeping across the nation, and God was on the move, but people wondered if God bypassed the church because the church had sound doctrine and good theology, but they seemed, quote unquote, irrelevant to the needs of the community. They seemed disengaged from the brokenness and the real life that people were living through. So God put it on the heart of men like Gene Getz and others. What would it look like to be an Acts two church, to be a church committed to faithfully teaching God's word and doctrine, and to be a church overflowing with the love of Jesus for one another and for our community. In those early days, the Bible Church movement they had what was called the testimony service after their Sunday gathering, and they would have a meal together, and people could get up and share real needs that they had, and so some this happened multiple times. Hey, I'm in need of a car. I just don't have a car. My car broke down. I don't have a car to get to work. And Gene Getz or the pastor of that church would stop until someone volunteered their car and gifted that for as long as they needed. And somebody else would speak of their need and say, Hey, who's going to be able to meet that need? And somebody else will stand up because they wanted to live a life where the only explanation was Jesus. Don't you want to live that kind of life? The only explanation for our love, our devotion to one another, our heart of service is Jesus. Well, today in 2020 22,026, we're invited to the same calling they had in 1976, what would it look like to be a church faithful to Scripture, to doctrine, and committed to the love of Jesus flowing in and through our life for a world that so desperately needs Him? Today, there are new questions being asked in our community, new divisions appearing, new issues rising up around us, new technologies shaping and forming lives, new neighbors moving into your homes and by your neighborhoods. What does it look like for us to be in this moment and faithful to Scripture and faithful to the love of Jesus pouring in and through our life. So over the next three weeks, we're going to do a short series called "Called to This. What are our core convictions as a church family that drive us? Yes, certainly as individuals, what shapes the way we engage in the world, the way that we show up at our workplace and in our neighborhoods? What are core convictions and ethics that drive us, but also collectively as a community, as one body, what are the core ethics that shape us as a church family and as a community? And here's what those four things are. You've heard them before, but we're going to take a deep dive into them. First of all, because of Jesus, we are compelled by love, compelled by the love of Jesus. Second of all, we are united in diversity. The heart of the gospel has never just been diversity, but true biblical unity in the midst of our diversity. Third of all, every single person we are gifted with purpose. The Holy Spirit has gifted you with purpose for His glory. And lastly, but certainly not least, we are sent on mission, as God keeps drawing a herding and broken roll to Himself. We're compelled by love, gifted with purpose, united in our diversity, and sent on mission. We're going to be anchoring ourselves in Ephesians chapter four over the next few weeks. In Ephesians, Paul is writing To Ephesus, Christians spread across all of Ephesus. He's in prison, but he writes them a letter. And Ephesus was one of the most commercially powerful and influential cities in the Roman Empire, and they were a community filled with religious diversity and pluralism, sort of like America and Texas is today commercially powerful, but competing ideologies and religions in their world. And in the midst of all of that, you have the church, this early group of Christians, who for the first time are figuring out how does this whole Jew and Gentile thing work together.

Libin Abraham 4:17

Like we don't have a church for the Jews and the Church for the Gentiles-we have one church. So, how do we follow Jesus, and how do we follow Jesus together as one body? So, Paul begins to write in chapter four, verse one. He begins by saying, "Therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, I, as a prisoner, urge you.

You feel that urgency to walk worthy of the calling you have received. Now, if you've been absent for a little while, you know that when you see it, therefore you ought to ask, "What's it? Yeah. So that's a good way to gauge how long. You've been here, okay? That's how we know you've been here for a little while. What's it there for? Well, Ephesians chapter one to three, Paul has beautifully laid out the gospel, what God has done for us in Jesus. He has talked in chapter one about how we are chosen in Jesus before the foundations of the earth were laid, how we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, that we who are dead in our sins have been made alive in Christ. That we who are far away and strangers to the promises of God, we've been brought near, and we've been made His family. We have been adopted as His family. Chapter two talks about how you are saved. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, so that we have nothing to boast about except in the cross of Jesus. Then he goes on and talks about how Jews and Gentiles, once those who were hostile to one another, are now made into this one new humanity. That we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, and we have been knit together as a dwelling place for God through the Holy Spirit. And now, because of all of that, because that's true about you, that's how you've been rescued and saved, and how deeply you are loved. Now, Paul says, "I urge you to walk worthy of the calling you've already received, not to be saved, but because you are saved, walk worthy in light of it. The word for walk is the idea of this is how you walk in the world. This is how you engage in the real world. Here's how you navigate relationships. How you show up when it's time to make a decision. How you treat people. How we handle everyday moments. How do we walk in the world? The word for worthy is the Greek word *axios*, and it has this idea. Think about one of those old balance scales, where you put the gospel on one side of the scale, and your life on the other side, and Paul's encouragement is: let those weights be of equal weight. Let the gospel in your life be of corresponding weight. Walking worthy means that our life makes sense with the gospel, but they are of corresponding weight. A lot of research has been done around why so many people have left the church. Around 40 million people who've been dechurched in the last few decades, and one of the reasons they highlighted was hypocrisy in the church. That many people walked away from church because they saw the gospel preached on Sunday, but wasn't really lived out Monday through Saturday. The church had good theology, but the practice didn't match it. So we said something from the platform, but the way we lived was not consistent. And I believe we will see a great revival in America when the gospel that's preached on Sunday is beautifully, consistently lived out every other day of the week, that we stay true to the scriptures, we stay true to the gospel. Our ethics, how we live, is of equal weight with the gospel of Jesus Christ. So walk worthy in light of the gospel, so what does that look like? Well, Paul continues in verse two, and he says, "With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. Paul is saying one of the first evidences that you are walking worthy of your calling is your relationships, how you navigate everyday relationship to walk in love with gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love.

Libin Abraham 8:54

So he's saying that we are a people who are compelled by love. One of the first evidences of how the gospel takes deep root in our life is that love is shaping and moving in our life. Now, love is talked about and sung about everywhere you look. Every movement claims to be loving. Love is the most misunderstood word in our dictionary. Love can even seem like passive or soft or a mere sentiment, but that is not biblical Christ-centered love. Love in the New Testament is not a feeling. Love is a force. Love is a force created by the cross of Jesus that redirects the course of our life, love's not passive. It is powerful. It's not a feeling. It includes feelings, but it's not merely feeling. Love is a force. So from the cross, love redirects the course of our life. Where do I get that from? Look at Second Corinthians chapter five, verse 14 to 15. Where Paul writes, it says, "For the love of Christ compels us. That word for compel us. Look, we are left only with one option when we consider the love of Christ. It moves us. It presses us. It leaves us with one reasonable conclusion. We're compelled since we have reached this conclusion that one died for all, and therefore all died, and he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised. Paul is saying we've met the cross, we've experienced this unfathomable love that the Son of God would be nailed, crucified to the Roman cross, and that He, one person, would die for all and be raised. And if He did that, then our lives are deeply compelled to not live for ourselves, to not live for our comfort or conveniences, but to live for Him, who died for all. He didn't just die for me. No, no, He died for all. So now, love compels us. It moves us. It motivates us to live our life, to pour our life out for He who died for all. Because there's a lot of all still left in the world who have yet to experience and receive this love. So what happens at the cross becomes a force that moves us, that redirects the course of our life. Because at the cross, Jesus would experience all of humanity's wrath and anger, and yet he absorbed it without retaliating. At the cross, Jesus would extend mercy to those who didn't deserve mercy. At the cross, Jesus is there forgiving literally his enemies who were crucifying him, and yet he's praying for them. That's the love of the cross that compels us, and when that love gets deeply rooted in us, we can put up with a few annoying people, can't we? We can navigate some differences. We can even love our enemies who mean harm. Why? Because Jesus

is alive where, in us, and if He could love enemies, then couldn't He love them through us? I know this is crazy to say in 2026. That means we can get along with people who vote differently than us. Yeah, it means that because the love of Christ compels us in a world that is increasingly growing in outrage and division and hatred for one another, a church deeply compelled by love is a signpost. It's a rare breed, but it's a signpost of a different kingdom, because earthly kingdoms do not function like that. So, a loving church that loves enemies and neighbors alike is a different, is a signpost of a different kingdom. You remember the night on which Jesus was to be betrayed. He gathered with his disciples in the upper room, and there, in that upper room, Jesus would give them one marker, one sign, that would distinct, distinctively separate his people, his followers, from the rest of the world. I think about that moment, and he could have chosen any mark or any sign. He could have said, "Any time you show up to a party, all the water is turning into wine. That's one way to grow the church. But he didn't choose a supernatural miracle or preaching style or parable style, he said. The thing that separates my followers from the rest of the world is what? It's love.

Libin Abraham 13:49

So Jesus gets up from the dinner table, begins to wash feet, something reserved for the lowest of slaves in their social ladder. He washes the feet of disciples who would soon scatter. He washes the feet of Peter, who just the next day or later that day would deny Jesus. He washes the feet of Judas in a few hours, the one who would betray him. Jesus washes even his feet. I would have totally skipped over Judas, everybody but Judas, but Jesus didn't skip him. So Jesus says, after this radical event of washing feet in John 13:34, I give you a new command: love one another, just as I have loved you. You are also to love one another, and by this, by this kind of love, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. Now, the command to love wasn't all that new because God had given that command all the way back in Leviticus to love God and to love others. But what made this command so new were these six words: love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you don't love based on feeling the love. No, no, you love based on how Jesus loves. Now, the definition of love is Jesus is both the definition and the demonstration of love. We love just as He loved us, so how did Jesus show up to that moment? How did he engage with that person? How did he navigate that cultural moment? We love as he loved us. Now I know you're thinking, yeah, but Jesus is speaking to just his followers. We only have to love one another. We don't have to love the world. Yeah, you're smart. That's true. He's speaking to directly his followers, and even in Ephesians, he's talking to the church. Bear with one another in love. That's true. But at the same time, Jesus didn't just give us the new command. He gave us the great commandment, which, by the way, in Matthew 22 is love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is the greatest command, the most important command, and the second is connected. Second is just like it: love your neighbor as yourself, not your Christian neighbor. Love your neighbor, whoever they might be. Why do you love your neighbor? Because God so loved the world, the world, not just the church, but He loved the world so much he sent his only begotten Son. Yes, we love especially those within the community of faith, and we love our neighbor because this is the way that God shows that He is love. So when you look at the Gospels, Jesus constantly in love moved towards those who society would say were unlovable, the tax collectors, the lepers. He welcomed even children who were not even considered real people, and yet Jesus loved them. And at the same time, Jesus, when loving them, he never avoided truth. Jesus never had to choose between hospitality and holiness, he never chose between conviction and compassion. No, no, no. He uniquely held them together so he can meet a Samaritan woman at the well, extend grace to her, offer her living water, while revealing the truth of her life and the pain of her life. He could meet a rich young ruler, and the text says Jesus loved him. But then Jesus revealed the idol of his heart, which was his own possessions. He could rescue a woman about to be stoned because she was caught in adultery, and he could say to her, "I don't condemn you, but sin no more. He never chose between hospitality and holiness, conviction and compassion. No, John actually says that's what uniquely set Jesus apart from every other religious leader and societal leader. Here's what set Jesus apart. John one verse 14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. No, no, no, no. Full of what? Grace and truth. Jesus didn't vacillate between grace and truth. He didn't say, "Well, I'm going to be gracious here and truthful here. I'll try to reach a perfect balance of grace and truth. No, no, no. He was always full of grace and simultaneously full of truth, and that's the invitation for the hour we are in.

Libin Abraham 18:29

If we are people filled with this Jesus inside of us, to be a people full of grace and full of truth, Paul writes to the church, and he elevates love as a priority. Read First Corinthians 13. He can say, "You can have all the gifts, you can understand all the mysteries, you can even give your own body at the stake, but if you don't have love, you have nothing, because love is the greatest gift. And then he gives this sweeping command to the church in one Corinthians 16, verse 14: Do everything in love. That might be the second shortest verse. That's a good one to memorize. Do everything in love. What's fascinating in the

Greek? The word for everything means everything. It's not complicated. You lead in love. You teach in love. You serve in love. You correct in love. You show up for one another and love you. Whatever you do, you do it in love. Here's why this matters: the credibility of our witness is directly connected to the visibility of our love. The credibility of your witness as a follower of Jesus, deeply connected to how visibly you love, you can be doctrinally correct, but if you are relationally cruel, you're not walking worthy of His love. I'm not walking worthy of this grace. We can have received grace, but if you refuse grace to extend grace. Man, we're missing the mark. Credibility of our witness is connected to the visibility of our love. So back to Ephesians four. After all that, by way of introduction, now we're back in our text, Ephesians chapter four. What does it look like to live like that? To be compelled by this love? Well, the good news is Paul lays out three things in chapter four of what it means to possess biblical Christian Christ-centered love, they're not that complicated. Here's the first one: love stays, love remains, love stays. Look down with me at verse two again. With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love. When Paul says bearing with one another literally means putting up with each other, choosing not to walk out when things get hard, when things are inconvenient, and it will be easier to leave. Paul says that's not Christian love. Christian love is bearing with one another. How do you do that? Well, you do it with humility. Humility says, "Man, I must be missing something here, so I'm going to seek to understand what I'm not yet seeing. That's humility. How do you do it? You do it with gentleness. You may be right in your conviction, in your conclusion, but gentleness says, "I'm not going to overpower you because I'm right. You do it with patience. Patience says, "I know God is at work in me, and I know God's at work in you. So we're going to stay the course and bear with one another in love. Now, I always want to give this caveat: this does not mean biblical love does not mean you stay in an abusive relationship or something that is so harmful for you? No, no. Biblical love never invites that to remove appropriate boundaries or to put yourself in a harmful situation. No, no, that is not what it means at all. What it does mean, though, is that when we deal with ordinary differences and annoyances and disappointments, we don't disregard one another. Now we choose the path of humility, patience, and gentleness. We bear with one another in love. Just imagine how many church splits could have been avoided if we took this to heart and we decided to bear with one another. I know this may not be my preference. I have a different opinion about this, but I'm going to choose humility. What could I be missing? Let me talk to somebody that sees this in a different way. I'm going to choose patience. I'm going to stay the course. I'm not just going to be potted from one church. I'm going to be planted. I want to choose patience, trusting that God is at work in me as He is at work in them. Love Stays in our society. We are trained to sort people out pretty quickly. Are they friend or enemy or somewhere in between? If they're in between, they're just invisible. Are they useful or disposable to me? I only keep those who are useful for me.

Libin Abraham 22:58

And somehow we have been trained to reduce people to what we least like about them. All it takes is just one difference of opinion or one lousy sentence that you're thinking, man, that person is against me. But love stays. Love is curious before we condemn. Love listens long enough to understand. This is what it means to bear in love: humility, patience, gentleness. Love stays. Second of all, love doesn't just stay. Love speaks. Love speaks. Look down at verse 15 with me. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head, Christ. What's fascinating in the Greek text is that verb speaking is not there. This is the best we can get to the translation, but that verb is not there. The only leading verb is truth. Now, in our language, we don't really use truth as a verb, but in the Greek, truth is the verb. So really, this verse is, in the most direct translation, is saying, "But truthing in love. Say that with me: truthing in love. Paul saying, "In everything you do, you are truthing in love. Hold on to truth. Embody Truth, live truth, breathe in, breathe out. Be committed to truth as you love, as you engage the world with compassion and humility and gentleness and patience. We don't depart from truth. No, no. Every day we wake up truthing in love. Again, our society would say that to love somebody, you have to affirm everything they may say is true, but it's not. But that's not biblical love. Biblical love confronts desires that are not godly. Biblical love does not ignore sin. Does not. Suspend accountability. Biblical love can remain truthful to the witness of Scripture and God's design for love, and in all of that, we don't have to give up conviction to be compassionate. It exposes belief systems and pushes back against worldviews and systems that might be harmful, and love does not force you to be silent. No, no, no. Love does actually speak. Love does not conform with the patterns of this world. It is truthing in love. While we love, and while we show up, and while we stay, we never void ourselves of embodying the fullness of truth, our compassion must never be untethered from the truth of Scripture. Our compassion and our conviction, grace and truth, always remain together. You cannot have one without the other. So, what it means is that we do not affirm everything, but we also do not dehumanize anyone. What it means is we can reject a thought or an idea while not rejecting the image bearer who holds that thought. What it means is that we can speak truth, live truth, not with stones in our hands, but with tears in our eyes. What it means is that we never separate conviction and compassion, and to be loving, we don't bend scripture or reinterpret scripture. No, no, we remain faithful because love stays, and love speaks truthing in love. Is there First John chapter three?

Go back to First John chapter three verse 18. John, who's often called the disciple of love, here's what he says: Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and truth. Often we separate love from truth, and John says you can't do that. You have to love in truth. You have to love in action. Love stays. Love speaks. And here's the third thing: love serves. Love serves. Paul was saying in verse 16 of Ephesians 4: From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part. Pausing every one of you within the Church of Jesus, you carry gifts and calling and lived experiences. Every one is needed to build one another up in love, to serve in love. Love finds a way to serve. Love says, "Man, if that person is lacking something, if they need something, if they need encouragement, I'm going to speak life and encouragement. I'm going to use my gifts to serve somebody, because love does more than stay; it speaks, and love does more than speak. Love serves. That people this morning came up super early to set up classrooms to serve children, so they would encounter the grace of God.

Libin Abraham 28:06

That's why many of you this week you're going to open up your homes and you're going to host a life group or a small group or a Bible study because you want others to love God's word and to grow up and be built up. That's why when there is a need in your neighborhood or in your community, man, you're the first to show up with a meal. How can I meet the crisis in our life? That's why we give generously to the building up of people's lives, both here locally and around the world. That's why we continue to encourage you to stir up the gifts of God, because love serves. I think the temptation today is to pick one of the three, not all three. Love either will stay, love either will speak, or love either will serve. But my heart for our church, as we are compelled by love, is that we do all three at the same time. Love stays, love speaks, and love serves. Want to end our time by giving you some real-life scenarios of what this will come into play? Probably real-life moments that have already happened to you or will happen. I could think of 10 scenarios, but I only have time for three. How does love serve, love stay, love speak? How does this show up when your adult child tells you that they no longer want to follow Jesus. They're giving up Christianity. But first, love stays. Love tells them your doubts are welcome. Jesus can handle your questions, can handle your doubts. Love stays by letting them know that your relationship with them is not contingent on their profession of faith, love says, "I'm going to keep praying. I'm going to stay in your life. Love stays, but then love speaks. Love can genuinely and candidly share the grief in your heart because your faith in Jesus is what matters the most to you. You can share that. Love and ask questions. Tell me about your journey. When did it happen? What did you see? What what wounds are you carrying? What have you seen within the church or the culture at large that's causing you to question and doubt? Love. Ask meaningful questions. And oftentimes, when a family member walks away from the faith, there are things that they still care about deeply, that will become a bridge back to Jesus, and they still carry those things-deep passions and longings. Love continues to speak and point them to Jesus. Love stays, love speaks, and then love serves. Love doesn't give up on them. Love keeps praying, interceding, declaring the promises of God for your child or for your parent or your sibling. Love intercedes on your knees. Love finds a way to be the gospel, even if they're doubting the gospel. Love exudes the love and compassion and grace of Jesus. Love shows up not less but more in their life, because now you are loving them with the compassion that God has toward every lost son and daughter. Love shows up, love stays, love speaks, love serves. What do you do when a family member tells you that they're gay, lesbian, or they want to transition their gender. Many of you have walked that journey. What does it look like for love to stay, love to speak, and love to serve? Love stays by letting them know that you are thankful that they would be open enough and trusting enough to share this with you. Love lets them know that you're not closing the door of relationship; that you want to continually be involved in their life. Love stays by actually affirming their struggle, saying, "I know this has been hard for you. Maybe there are inner struggles and complexity things that are happening, and I just want to voice that. Thank you for trusting me enough to share that. That's one way the love stays. And then love speaks. Love can affirm their struggle without affirming the conclusion they have arrived at. Love will affirm God's design for marriage and sexuality, which is that marriage and sexuality is between one man, one woman, committed in this covenant of marriage, and all sexual expressions are found within that covenant. Love does not have to compromise your conviction or give up a biblical worldview of marriage and sexuality.

Libin Abraham 32:40

Love tells that child or that young adult who wants to transition, look, you are fearfully and wonderfully made, and yet in this broken world that we live in, we will experience confusion and dysphoria. Sometimes it's mentally, sometimes as physically, sometimes as spiritually, and sometimes as sexually, we experience this confusion and dysphoria, and yet you can, by the help of God's grace, choose to offer your bodies to honor Him and to love Him. Now, if they're not a believer, your priority is to point them to Jesus. Let them experience His grace and power in their life. Love stays, love speaks, and

then love serves. Love keeps showing up, not less but more. When they are in need, you're the first to care for them deeply and love them. Love serves in such a way that they know that they are more than their sexuality. They're more than their gender. That they have a relationship with you they can count on to be there when they most need it. Love finds every way to serve. Love stays. Love speaks. Love serves. What do you do with a neighbor who's not a believer in Jesus who belongs to a different world religion? And you're wondering, man, what does it look like for me to be a good, faithful Christian as a neighbor? First of all, love stays, and that might actually mean you physically stay and don't move away. You stay, and you see them not as a threat to fear, but as a person God has handpicked and placed right next door to you to reach them and to love them with the grace of Jesus. Love stays. Love then speaks. Love is curious. Tell me about your world belief. Tell me about the God you believe in. Tell me about the path of salvation that you are so devoted to. Man, I respect that. Tell me what you believe is true about the end times, because every every faith has a view of eschatology. Get to know what they believe. Love will even speak by offering to pray for them in the name of Jesus. In most world religions, they will receive prayer no matter who you pray to because they know there's some stuff happening in their life they have no answer for. And when they see God answering their prayer that you prayed in the name of Jesus, or they feel as often as happened in my life, man, they feel the presence and the power and the peace of God just in prayer. They become curious and they want to know more more about your God. They've got questions about Jesus. Love speaks. Love will share with them the hope you have in Jesus, how He met you, how He transformed your life, how He took you from a place of darkness and and brought you into this kingdom of life. Love will speak about the certainty of your salvation that only the Christian faith offers. No other world religion can offer the certainty of knowing that we are saved and secure. Love speaks, love stays, and love speaks, but also love serves. You're the first on a show up with a plate of casserole or whatever you want to cook to welcome them, and when they're in a crisis, and believe me, Christians and non-Christians experience crisis in times of need. You are the first to show up, and they recognize from your life, man. No one is committed to my well-being than these Christians. No one loves me the way that these Christians do. When I visited the Muslim seminary a few weeks ago, which, by the way, I will tell you more about that in a couple weeks, we were meeting with some of their leaders, and I thought it was interesting that two of their key leaders were former Catholics. One was Hispanic, and one was part European. They're not from the Middle East. They're all born and raised here. So I said, "Man, why did you convert to Islam? Their answer was, "Man, my coworker went out of his way to show me kindness. My neighbor didn't care about what religion I was in, but they went out of their way to take me under their wings, to show me the ropes when I was brand new in town.

Libin Abraham 37:04

What they were saying was, I felt love and kindness and compassion from people who were Muslims, and therefore, I want to be a part of their community. Their coffee shop across the street has a slogan to combat loneliness. They don't want anyone to feel alone, and that actually becomes a front door to how people experience that system of belief and world religion. When I left there that day, it lit a fresh fire in my heart, and here's the fire in my heart: We cannot let the world out love us. We cannot let the world outlove us. Jesus said the marker of this sacrificial, generous love is to be the marker of the church. That should be the thing that sets Christians apart, you and I. That we will be the most loving group of people on the planet because we know what is true. We have met Jesus at the cross and at the empty grave. We have this unconditional love that we possess that the world cannot replicate, and there is no counterfeit for. So here's a question I want to leave you with: Who is God inviting you to love? Not because they have earned it, but because you have received it. It doesn't begin with asking yourself, "Do they deserve it or not? It begins with, "Have I received it? And if you're in Christ, you have received it. We were dead in sin, but He made us alive. We were once strangers to the promise of God, but He adopted us into His family. He pursued us when we were unlovable, forgave us of our sins, made us new, made us children of God. We have received it, and our only response is we are now compelled to extend this love to the world who needs to meet Jesus, I think today, 50 years into our church, the most clear evidence of Jesus being alive in us is in the way we love one another and the way we lovingly engage our world. Unfortunately, today, based on all the service, most of our culture expects Christians to be angry, divided, or afraid, but what if we could change the narrative ventry? What if we could say we're not afraid? We're full of faith and full of hope. We're not. We're not faithful. We are deeply loving. We are compassionate. We have convictions that are clear and solid, and yet we refuse to let anyone out love us. We will refuse to quit loving. We find unity around the cross of Jesus because He is our cornerstone. And before people hear a sermon or come into a service like this or experience a programming, guess what? They're going to meet you, and that will be the first doctrine of Christianity. They will see how is our love for one another and for the world, and may we live a life of love where the only explanation is a crucified and risen Jesus. Amen, amen. Let's pray together. Father, we cannot do this on our own. We can only have a love that stays and speaks and serves by the power of Your Holy Spirit daily at work in us. I pray today, God, that You would baptize us afresh with Your love, the Father's love, a Father's love that heals wounds, that restores broken hearts, gives us a

deep passion, longing for those that do not yet know you, that will meet conversations that are hard and complicated with compassion and conviction. Help us to be a people full of both grace and truth.

Libin Abraham 40:53

And if there is somebody here today, God, who has yet to experience this infinite love of our heavenly Father, may today be the day they see a God loving them and running towards them, welcoming them, pursuing them, and their eyes will be lifted to Calvary to see a nail-pierced hand extended towards them, a risen Savior giving them life eternal, and I pray God that as a church family, that that we would outdo one another in love and service, that we would embody Jesus living and incarnate among us in the way we love, by the Holy Spirit's help, may we claim this marker back to what has always been true of the church, and I pray will always be true of our church. In Jesus' name, we pray. And everyone said together, "Amen, amen, amen. Aren't you grateful for the word of God and for the love of Jesus that fills our heart, church family?"