

Advent 2025 - Love

January 4, 2026

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This week, we finish our Advent series with Love. Thank you to Earl, Debbie, Ed, Aisha, Janet, and Don for being part of the service. The scripture readings are Psalm 103, verses six to 13, Lamentations 3, 22 to 25, and John 13, 13 to 35. Happy birthday this week to Lauri, Marie, and Donna.

Scripture Reading

I'm gonna be reading from John chapter 13, verse 33 to 35.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Sermon

Morning everyone. Morning. Thank you very much for being with us. Our last Christmas Advent is love, and Christmas can be a wonderful time for people, and Christmas can be a challenging time for people. But it's beautiful when you stop and think about it, that if you're by yourself at Christmas, you're not. Jesus says, I will never leave you, I will never forsake you, I am with you always. And at Christmas, we celebrate Christmas, Christ mass. Love can overwhelm us, and yet the same time, we're never truly alone with that love, celebrating through people. This week, just several times this past week, just in town or walking around and so forth, a lot of people were saying, Merry Christmas, and Merry Christmas, and Merry Christmas. And it's wonderful to hear people sharing that with one another. Just imagine, just imagine, you and Jesus alone together at Christmas. Allow his love to overwhelm you.

In the wonderful movie, A Christmas Carol, Scrooge is a wealthy, yet very lonely person. He has no time for Christmas. In fact, he says Christmas is a humbug. He criticized Christmas as a waste of time. He was lonely, yet he would not admit it. His love was money, and anything else was humbug to him. He would not admit loneliness, but he surely was lonely. He once had a lovely woman and gave her a ring of proposal for marriage. However, he was so caught up with the love of money that he had no time for her. She knew that an idol took his life. Money was more important than their love, the love that he promised her. Even today, the pursuit of money can be an idol, and we don't worship idols. God has not sent idols for us and to us. Rather, God sends himself with us with this overwhelming love. And of course, when we mess up, he forgives.

So let's just spend a little bit of time today talking about love from scripture. I just noticed over the years that when we talk about love, even though it's the greatest, many times it comes across as ho-hum. Oh yeah, it's love. But no, there's something special about this love. If you have a concordance and notice how many times the word love is found, it is amazing. It's used some 801 times. Christmas can be, should be a wonderful time of love. So let's just go back. This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they had come together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. But Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace. He had in mind to divorce her quietly. But no, no, no, an angel of the Lord. And by the way, angels are real. Angels are everywhere. He did not want to expose her to public disgrace. And he had in mind to divorce her quietly and an angel appeared in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because he's conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. God forgiving us then 2000 years ago, God forgiving us now.

God said concerning Jesus, this is my son. This is the one whom I love. And so all through scripture, love is there. And you can count it. It doesn't make any difference though, if you count it. What does it mean to you? To you, love, love your neighbour as yourself. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and all the prophets hang on these two commands.

One of the most profound words regarding love is found in 1 Corinthians 13. Where it says these words, love never fails. If I speak in human or angelic tongues but do not have love, I'm only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol. If I have the gift of prophecy and if I can fathom all the mysteries and all the knowledge, and if I have the gift of love and of faith, and if I can move mountains because of that, I'm still not anything. And then the explanation, love never fails. But where there are prophecies, it will cease. And where there are tongues, they will be stilled. Where there is knowledge, it'll pass away. For we know in part, we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, that part disappears. So here it is. Love protects. Always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love will not fail. And now these three remain, faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Now someone says, well, what's this got to do with Christmas? Everything, everything, the greatest gift that God gives us is himself. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, wonderful spiritual people in this room and throughout the world, celebrating the wonderful, wonderful blessings of love. Dearly loved children, walk in the way of love, just as Christ does. Wow, amazing. And love your neighbor as yourself. And many of us understand that. Some of us have neighbors close to us, housed by the next, chatting, visiting, helping one another. Sometimes lots of snow comes in, we shovel out people's driveways and so forth. It's not such a big deal, but what's great is you get to know people. You get to come alongside people. And when they trust you, they'll ask for your [audio glitch].

Galatians talks about loving this neighbor who? Any neighbor as yourself. And then the Colossians, we have heard of your faith in Jesus Christ and the love you have for all of God's people. So the Old Testament and Old Testament, all of these people coming together and on the top of it all, how do you fulfill, what do you say? What's the most important thing in the entire Bible? It's gotta be love. God's love. Second Timothy, but the Spirit of God gives us power and love and self-discipline. And then in Galatians, wonderful book, it says the only thing that counts, it's the only thing that counts is faith, expressing itself in love. So we get it, right? We get it, but it never stops. It just keeps on going. Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. And this is my prayer in Philippians, that your love may abound more and more in the knowledge and the depth of insight in Christ Jesus.

He says, we always thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all of us, yep, at Christmas, maybe it just comes to the top, but all year long, it's love. Timothy brought good news about your faith and your love, it's going to be there. We always thank God for you continually mentioning you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father, the work produced by faith in you, your labor prompted by your love, doing the work with love. We ought always to thank God for you brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love of all of you for one another is increasing. It's gonna manifest itself. And then in Titus, teach people to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled and sound in faith. Be controlled with love and endurance.

And then this little book, Philemon, I hear about your love for all his people and your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And then Hebrews, Hebrews is a complicated book on occasions, but he says this, makes it very clear, Hebrews chapter six and verse 10, God is not unjust. Well, of course, he will not forget your work, and he will not forget the love you have shown him as you've helped his people. James, blessed are those who persevere under trial. All of us have had troubles with that. Blessed are those who persevere under trial, because when they have stood the test, they will receive the crown of life that God promised to those who love him. In first Peter, though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you have not seen him, Jesus, we love him. There will come a day. He promises it over and over and over again. There will come a day. We will see. We will see the face of Jesus. And if anyone obeys his word, God is truly

complete in him. And then interesting, this John talks about a church called the lady, to the lady chosen by God, and to her children, whom I love in the truth.

And then again, not Judas, but Jude, Judas servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved in God, the father, and kept for Jesus Christ. And then, I've never really thought about it this way. Have you ever heard a sermon about Christmas in Revelation? Me neither. But it's there. It's there. They triumph over him by the blood of the lamb, by the word of their testimony. And listen, and they did not love their lives so much as to even shrink from death. Because they know, and we know, love will overwhelm even death.

These words, "Lord my God, when your love spilled over into creation, you thought of me. I am from love. I am of love. I am for love. May nothing ever distract us from your love, neither health or sickness, wealth or poverty, honor or dishonor. May your love be overwhelming for all of us forever. Lord my God, when you spilled over in creation, you thought of us."

And now these precious words, "Love divine, all loves excelling, joy in heaven to earth come down, fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded. Love through art, visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart. Finish then, thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

May this Christmas, may this Christmas, celebrating God's love, help us to remember the eternity of God's love for us. Amen.

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Thanks for watching. Have a great day. The Beamsville Church of Christ meets at 4900 John Street, Beamsville, Ontario.

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