

SUNDAY, MAY 13:

Note: Due to snow cancellation of church, this sermon combines what was intended as two messages. The two message were:

Title: Core Strength 5: "The Second Half of the Gospel"

Message Overview:

Scripture: 1 John 3:16-4:21 (Lessons #25-35, Pages 69-104)

Memory Verse: 1 John 3:16 "This is how we know love: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

Text: 1 John 4:11 "Little children, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Video: Training with Bobby Buff (Personal Trainer: At the Gym) (Andrew & Matt L.)

Kids Activity: Mother's Day prayer activity

Working Our Core: Living in the Holy Spirit

Blurb: Usually we think about our salvation as something between God and ourselves. But 1 John pushes us into "the second half of the Gospel," namely, that it is also about ourselves and others. Looking at our mothers helps us see what this love looks like. This Sunday we'll dive deeply into God's love, and experience how His first love for us pushes us to love others in the same way.

WORSHIP OUTLINE:

Opening Song: *There Is Joy in the Lord* -Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Good morning!

Important holiday: Fishing Opening! (Actually, Mother's Day!)

Welcome to Forest Hills Church!

Where we love God and others, grow in Christ, and serve in the power and leading of the HS

My name is David Werner, and I'm the pastor here at Forest Hills Church

Special welcome to those who are here for the first time.

We hope you experience your cup running over with blessings!

PP: Memory Verse:

"This is how we know love: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." -1 John 3:16

Memory Verse:

John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16...

Let's try it together...

Worship Music Set: - Sanctify

Our God Saves

They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love

Restoration

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Prayers: Mother's Day prays, and activity with kids (Andrew)

Video: Training with Bobby Buff (Andrew & Matt)

Offering: *God Is Love*

Message: Core Strength 5: "The Second Half of the Gospel"

Bumper Video

PP#1: Core Strength: The Second Half of the Gospel

"Little children, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." -1 John 4:11

Core Strength: "The Second Half of the Gospel." 1 John 4:11, "Little children, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

PP#2: Outline of 1 John:

Introduction. 1 John 1:1-4

God is Light/Truth (and what this means for us!) 1 John 1:5 - 3:10

God is Love (and what this means for us!) 1 John 3:11 - 5:12

Conclusion: 1 John 5:13-21

As we've been working through 1 John, it's been a real *workout!* It's a sermon from the elderly Apostle John to the Christians in the surrounding area. It can be confusing because John doesn't write in a logical outline like we prefer. Instead, he takes his core ideas, his main points, and brings them up over and over again. At first, John does this describing God as Light (meaning Truth). We have to accept God the way God is, not the way we want Him to be. It's the only way to receive life. We can't just believe whatever makes sense to us, or live our truth. It's God's truth.

But now, here in the second half of this sermon, we see John showing us that God is Love. Now remember, love here is not some soft, warm feeling, like it is usually described in our culture. "I'm falling in love with you!" "My heart swells for you! I have those butterflies in my stomach. Love!"

John uses the word for love that means commitment. It's a feeling. It's a choice. "I choose you as my wife. I might feel in love with you, but my commitment holds even when I don't feel in love with you." For John, love is an action. It's behavior. It's what we do.

When this gets confusing for us, thankfully, John points to what this love *looks like*. He says, "Look at Jesus. Jesus is the Love of God in seeable form." "What do I see in Jesus? Does He have feelings for me? Not sure how to answer that! What I can answer is that I see Jesus choosing to take my sins upon Himself. I see Him choosing to sacrifice Himself for me, allowing Himself to be crucified for my benefit, and being raised again so that He can offer me life eternal. This is what I see, and this is what I know is true. And what is true is this holy, godly love."

PP#3: *Image for Mother's Day*

I'm so glad that today, when our spiritual workout is about this holy, godly love, that it's Mother's Day. On Mother's Day we honor and celebrate our mothers. Why? If you boil it down, it's

because in our mothers—when they’ve gotten it right—we have seen this holy, godly love. Our mothers have shown us—even if just in part—this self-sacrificing: choosing-to-put-us-before-themselves, making us our favorite thing, a commitment-that-leads-to-action...in the middle of the night, when they were sick and miserable, when no one else believed in us, this willingness to bear pain we cause them, all for us. For our mothers, love is about actions. In their actions and behaviors, we have seen this godly love. That’s why we celebrate Mother’s Day.

So, we today have not seen Jesus dying on the cross for us, but we have seen our mothers dying to themselves for our sake.

So, I want to give you a couple of minutes to share in groups of two or three. Get into a group with one or two others, and I want you to share how you saw God’s love in how your mother treated you. Now, if you’re mother is here today, all the better. Tell her to her face! But each of us, share the ways your mother treated you, that showed you what God’s committed love looks like.

Take a couple of minutes and share with your neighbor how you saw God in your mom.
[Time of discussion.]

So, having identified how this love of God looks like in our mothers, let’s go to 1 John 3:16. This is our memory verse, and J.D. Walt says that this verse pairs with John 3:16.

PP#4: John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that who ever believes in Him, will not perish, but have eternal life.”

1 John 3:16 “This is how we know love: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”

John 3:16 tells us what God did for us. God gave. Jesus sacrificed Himself. This is a great summary of the Gospel. And, in 1 John 3:16, we see the “second half of the Gospel.” This is what we do for others. “Jesus laid down His life for us, and [so] we ought to lay down our lives for others.” When we receive God’s love, it changes us, and changes our behavior. When we receive God’s love, we embody that love, and it turns us toward others, to commit to behaving towards others in self-sacrificing ways: putting others before ourselves.

PP#5: The Second Half of the Gospel

1. Our salvation is also other focused

We normally think of salvation being “us”-focused. If *we* believe, then *we* are saved. But John here in 1 John 3:16 shows the affect of salvation, meaning, it pushes our focus off of us. Again, just like we see in good motherhood. Mothering is an expression of this godly love.

PP#6: 1 John 3:16-24 (CEB)

16 This is how we know love: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 But if a person has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need and that person doesn’t care—how can the love of God remain in him? 18 Little children, let’s not love with words or speech but with action and truth.

1 John 3, verse 17: we live this out by sharing, giving to others in need. Verse 18, “Little children [remember, that’s John’s term of endearment] let’s not love with [cheap and easy] words, but with action and truth.” See? Love is action!

PP#7: 1 John 3:16-24 (CEB)

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love each other as He commanded us. 24 The person who keeps His commandments remains in God and God remains in him; and this is how we know that He remains in us, because of the Spirit that He has given to us.

Verse 23, “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ [first half of the Gospel], and love each other as He commanded us [second half of the Gospel]. 24 The person who keeps His commandments remains in God and God remains in him; and this is how we know that He remains in us, because of the Spirit that He has given to us.”

See that? When we give our hearts to Jesus, He gives His Spirit—the Holy Spirit—into us. We who, perhaps at best, could only love our own children like this, now have the Spirit in us to be able to love others in the same way!

The world doesn’t teach this. The world teaches the opposite: to love things and use people.

PP#8: 1 John 4:1-21 (CEB)

4 You are from God, little children, and you have defeated these people because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They are from the world. So they speak from the world’s point of view and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. The person who knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God doesn’t listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Chapter 4, verse 4, “You are from God, little children, [as God’s children we have a different identity] and you have defeated these people [who teach false things] because the One [the Holy Spirit] who is in you is greater than the one [evil] who is in the world [and teaches us selfishness]. 5 They are from the world. So they speak from the world’s point of view and the world listens to them. [We live in a culture of self-centeredness.] 6 We are from God. [Different identity!] The person who knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God doesn’t listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” Live in the Truth, the Light. Love like our God.

PP#9: 1 John 4:1-21 (CEB)

7 Little children, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. 8 The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent His only Son into the world so that we can live through Him. 10 This is love: it is not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as the sacrifice that deals with our sins.

So, now we get to the heart of John’s message. It’s in these amazing next verses. Verse 7, “Little children, let’s love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. 8 The person who doesn’t love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how the love of God is revealed to us [this is how we see what God’s love looks like...it looks like Jesus!]: God has sent His only Son into the world so that we can live through Him. [First half of the Gospel. Verse 10,] This is love: it is not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as the sacrifice that deals with our sins.”

Hold up there a minute. Notice a key characteristic of godly love here: “Not that we loved God.” Not that we loved first. Not that we had anything going right in us. Not that we were worthy

of God's love or affection. Not that we did or in any way earned God's love. Godly love is *not a response!* I'm handsome and I catch your eye. I'm loveable, and so you love me. No! Godly love chooses to love one who in no way earns or deserves that love.

PP#10: The Second Half of the Gospel

1. Our salvation is also other focused
2. Our love is not dependent on the worthiness of the recipient

Little children—to use John's endearing term—when you love, love like this! Love first! Love without having the people you love, be in any way loveable! Love the undeserving!

And, it is because God chose to love you, before you were loveable, or in any way deserving, that we then pass on this love now in us, to others. God has scattered His kids across this earth, each filled with His love, so that we, in turn, can go out and love all those the world says are unloveable! Church: people out there, in our communities, should experience unconditional love from us!

We need to stop fumbling this one! Think of your mother, who loved you first, and when you were so very unloveable. What would it take for you to really love others like this?

I want to show you a Mother's Day video. It's a funny skit by "The Skit Guys." But notice, the one guy says to the other, that he should honor his mother, because she loved him when he was unloveable! He actually says this! Have a look.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fanPfcpEFPA>

"Why She Gets a Day" by Skit Guys (2:35 min.)

Your mom gets a day because she loved you when you were unloveable. This is godly love. We, filled with godly love like this, love others who are also unloveable.

Turn to 1 John 4:11.

PP#1: 1 John 4:1-21 (CEB)

11 Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. 12 No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and His love is made perfect in us. 13 This is how we know we remain in Him and He remains in us, because He has given us a measure of His Spirit.

"Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. [That's the second half of the Gospel!] No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us [God, Love, is in us!] and His love is made perfect in us. [This is sinlessness...God's perfect love welling up in us and filling our hearts.] This is how we know we remain in Him and He remains in us, because He has given us a measure of His Spirit." We are God's, and we have His Spirit in us, and this is how we are able to love others.

PP#2: The Second Half of the Gospel

1. Our salvation is also other focused
2. Our love is not dependent on the worthiness of the recipient
3. Our loving actions come from God's Spirit in us

When we don't love others the way we should, it's not because we can't. It's true that we can't, without God. But we have God! So, when we don't love them well, it's because we restrict God's love flowing out of us. We deny His Spirit in us. We refuse His promptings. Think about that. When we fail to love, it's because we are obstinate, defiant. We don't want to. We don't want to be bothered, or have our plans messed up, or give quite that much. We resist God!

But there's powerful news here, too. Our loving of others? It's not dependant upon our love! Our loving actions flow from God's love in us, the love He has already showered upon us—unworthy as we are! We can love like God, because we have God's love in us to make us able! Good news!

PP#3: 1 John 4:1-21 (CEB)

19 We love because God first loved us. 20 If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates a brother or sister, he is a liar, because the person who doesn't love a brother or sister who can be seen can't love God, who can't be seen. 21 This commandment we have from Him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

Verse 19, "We love because God first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates a brother or sister, he is a liar, because the person who doesn't love a brother or sister who can be seen can't love God, who can't be seen. 21 This commandment we have from Him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also."

That's the second half of the Gospel!

And, we are full-Gospel children of God! God has loved us, and we don't deserve it. We are called to love others, and they don't deserve it.

You have the living example in your own life in how your mother loved you. So, on this Mother's Day, go honor your mother the best way you can, by going out as her child, and as God's child, and loving others in that same way.

PP#4: Core Strength: The Second Half of the Gospel

"Little children, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." -1 John 4:11

1 John 4:11, "Little children, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."
Happy Mother's Day!
Amen.

Closing Song: *Marching to Zion* - Sanctify

PP: Memory Verse

"This is how we know love: Jesus laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." -1 John 3:16

Announcements:

Benediction: -Pastor David