

Sermon Note: Love

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

We don't always know what people mean when they say "love." It can sound sentimental or vague—used to describe everything from relationships to favorite foods. But love, as the letter to the Hebrews describes it, is far more grounded. It shows up in how we treat strangers, how we care for those who suffer, how we share what we have, and how we hold one another with honor and compassion.

As we conclude the Dearly Beloved sermon series, this passage brings the journey home. We've explored longing, endurance, and the grounding presence of God—and now we're asked to live it. Love becomes the shape of faith in motion. It's how we remember who we are and *whose* we are. It's how the unshakable kingdom becomes visible in ordinary acts of mercy, hospitality, and praise.

Illustration Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BKkKzdl6jM>

In this scene from *The West Wing* (Season 2, Episode 10), Josh is met with quiet, unwavering care from people who know him, stay with him, and help him find his way forward.

Why This Video?

There's nothing flashy in this scene, no grand gestures or dramatic music. Just love that shows up in a tangible and meaningful way. Leo doesn't try to fix Josh or minimize what he's going through. He offers something more difficult: presence, steadiness, and the willingness to walk alongside him through the darkness.

This is what the final chapter of Hebrews looks like when the rubber meets the road: mutual care, honor, remembering, and holding space for the pain of others. Leo's quiet insistence, "*As long as I've got a job, you've got a job*" is more than loyalty. It's pure grace. This is the kind of love that binds people together and makes our lives of faith visible: in everyday acts of kindness and trust.

Video Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you in the way Leo responded to Josh?
2. How did Leo's presence speak louder than his words?
3. Why do you think Josh struggled to name what he was going through?
4. What do you notice about the way others—like Donna—quietly cared for Josh?
5. Have you ever experienced someone "jumping in the hole" with you during a hard time? What did that mean to you?
6. What does this scene suggest about the kind of love that sustains people—not just in crisis, but over time?

7. How might small, faithful acts of presence and care strengthen a community?
8. What keeps us from offering this kind of love to others? What helps us do it anyway?

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 (CEB)

¹Keep loving each other like family. ²Don't neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it. ³Remember prisoners as if you were in prison with them, and people who are mistreated as if you were in their place. ⁴Marriage must be honored in every respect, with no cheating on the relationship, because God will judge the sexually immoral person and the person who commits adultery. ⁵Your way of life should be free from the love of money, and you should be content with what you have. After all, he has said, I will never leave you or abandon you. ⁶This is why we can confidently say,

*The Lord is my helper,
and I won't be afraid.
What can people do to me?*

⁷Remember your leaders who spoke God's word to you. Imitate their faith as you consider the way their lives turned out. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

¹⁵So let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise through him, which is the fruit from our lips that confess his name. ¹⁶Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.

Scripture Study Questions

1. When have you experienced the joy of Christian community across cultures or generations? What made that moment meaningful for you, and how did it reflect God's love?
2. Why do you think hospitality to strangers is highlighted in verse 2? What does it mean for us today?
3. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." What does that mean to you personally? How does it help you evaluate what matters in a changing world?
4. Verse 15 talks about offering a "sacrifice of praise." What do you think that looks like in everyday life—not just in worship, but in how we live and speak?
5. This passage encourages mutual love, generosity, and care. What's one way you will choose to live that out this week? Be specific—who will you show love to, and how?

Additional (Optional) Questions

1. How does your faith influence your interactions with others?
2. As a follower of Jesus, what are your core priorities? Where do they show up in your daily life?
3. Do you think all Christians share those same priorities? Do different churches or traditions seem to inspire different priorities for how people live their lives?
4. Do you think most people are generally good or bad? Do you think you are generally good or bad? Why do you think that? How do your beliefs about human nature shape how you treat others?

5. Integrity has been defined as doing the right thing when no one is watching. Who are you, at your absolute core, when no one is judging or expecting anything from you, and when you believe there are no real consequences to your actions?
6. Do you act differently when you know someone is watching? Have you heard of churches that use this logic to inspire good behavior or encourage people to resist sin and temptation?
7. How do you hope people describe you when they talk about your true nature?
8. We are called to “be the sign that there is love in the world.” What are some ways you work to demonstrate love and care for yourself, for others, and all creation?

Weekly Action

Choose one person to extend love to this week—a friend, a stranger, or someone who’s struggling. It could be an act of hospitality, encouragement, or generosity. Then, at the end of the day, pause to offer a word of praise to God for that person and for that connection. Let this act of love be an offering, and let this prayer become a daily rhythm.

Prayer

God of yesterday, today, and forever, we praise You for Your constant presence and faithful love. Fill us with compassion, courage, and creativity to love one another as You have loved us.