

Are You a Murderer

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of perfect love in our lives, and how its absence can lead to murder and hatred towards others.

Duration: 1:02:08

Scripture: Genesis 4:1

Topics: "Murder", "Community", "Love", "Hatred"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. challenges the congregation to reflect on the deeper implications of love and murder through the story of Cain and Abel, emphasizing that harboring hatred or indifference towards others can be akin to murder in the heart. He stresses that true love, as exemplified by God, is essential to prevent jealousy, bitterness, and division among believers. The sermon calls for a pursuit of perfect love, which is patient, forgiving, and enduring, and encourages the congregation to examine their hearts for any signs of hatred or judgment. Ultimately, Beach Jr. reminds everyone that we are called to love one another as God loves us, which is the foundation of our faith and community.

Transcript

To speak on a topic that the Lord has stirred my heart very deeply over for many, many weeks, many weeks. I wanna encourage you, if you do not now, our brother David will be glad to assist you to get a bulletin because on the back of the bulletin there's a place for notes. And I consider this to be so important.

Anybody need note paper? Okay, nobody needs it. How incredibly wonderful. Everyone has come prepared.

That's very good. I consider this to be so vitally important. That's why I encourage you to do this.

Let's bow our hearts and pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the presence of your lovely Son here in our midst that is made evident to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. We thank you, Lord, for challenging our hearts already, Lord, and just revealing your presence to us, Lord.

And I'm asking you now, Lord, that you would grant an ability for all of us to hear your word this morning and that we would not only be hearers of the word, but doers, the blessing is pronounced upon the doer of the word and not the hearer only. So, Lord, we pray for the blessing to come upon we whose hearts are

determined to do by your power your word. We commit this into your hands.

In Christ's name we pray, amen. Okay, somebody have the time real quick. Okay, 20 after 11, okay.

I would like to invite you to turn your Bibles to a familiar story in Genesis chapter four. Genesis chapter four, okay? We're going to look at the story of Cain and Abel this morning. We want to read it and then I want to ask you a question before we read it.

I don't want you to answer it quickly because I'm sure that your immediate response will be a no. But I want you to consider this question throughout this whole message, okay? Are you a murderer? Now, like I said, most of you said, well, of course not. All right, well, listen carefully, okay? We're going to begin in verse number one.

We're going to read a lot of scriptures this morning, too, so that's why I want to encourage you to get these scriptures down and then read through them through the week and oh, God will bless you, he'll bless you. In Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel.

And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Notice that Cain and Abel were brothers. They were brothers.

They weren't strangers. They were related one to another. They came from the same mother, okay? In the process of time, it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his fruit of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, why art thou wroth and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel, his brother.

And it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him, murdered him. And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not, am I my brother's keeper? Now, listen carefully. The question that Cain asked the Lord, am I my brother's keeper? Was a question being asked by a murderer.

Am I my brother's keeper? God said, where's Abel? Cain, am I my brother's keeper, Lord? When God asks us about the welfare of somebody, when it is brought to our mind regarding the welfare of a brother or a sister, and our response is likened unto that of Cain, am I my brother's keeper? Can I be troubled with my brother? Is it my responsibility to watch over and care for my brother? Such a response indicates the presence of murder in our heart. For it is only the murderer who when asked by the Lord the welfare of his brother or sister, responds by saying, am I my brother's keeper? 1 John chapter three. Please remember throughout this entire message, am I my brother's keeper? Is the response of a heart that has murder in it.

Verse number 11, 1 John chapter three. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain. Love one another, not as Cain, who was of that wicked one and slew his brother.

Beloved, we are called to love one another, not as Cain. Therefore, I'm going to make a statement based on these scriptures that are so clear, and I pray that this statement will be placed very deeply into our spirits. Listen carefully.

Cain was a murderer because the love of God was not in his heart. Verse number 11, love one another. Why does the Holy Spirit through John get on the subject of love and then immediately not as Cain? Why do we go from love to the story of Cain and Abel? The reason the Holy Spirit goes from the subject of love to Cain and Abel is because Cain and Abel, particularly Cain and his action toward his brother Abel, is a perfect example of what happens when the love of God is not deeply growing in our lives for our brothers and sisters.

The absence of love in our heart for one another will result in the presence of murder and hatred and bitterness and being critical and being judgmental and finding faults. John chapter 5, verse number 42. Jesus Himself taught this very truth, speaking to Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus said in verse number 42 of John chapter 5, but I know you that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name and you receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.

So Jesus identified the problem that these Pharisees and Sadducees had, and it was not some profound revelation. It was simply the fact that they did not have the love of God in their hearts and therefore they sought to murder Jesus. What made Cain a murderer? Love one another not as Cain who was of the wicked one and slew his brother.

And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous. The thing that made Cain a murderer was the absence of true, genuine love for Abel. You cannot murder, you cannot slay, you cannot hurt or you will not hurt someone you love.

Or if you do hurt them, you will find out about it and you will repent and you will go to them and ask forgiveness and you will seek restoration. And so therefore the only thing that will preserve us from such a thing is the love of God being perfected in our hearts and in our lives one toward another. The only mortar that will hold the house of God together is the divine love of God being perfected in each living stone.

The Bible talks about perfect love in 1 John. You may turn to it. 1 John chapter two.

Want to distinguish, listen, want to distinguish between perfect love and simply love. We need the perfect love of God in our lives. 1 John chapter two.

And hereby we do know that we keep his commandments, or we know him if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps or is keeping his word, in him truly is the love of God perfected, being made perfect.

Hereby know we that we are in him. The scripture also says in 1 John chapter number three. I'm sorry, I missed the scripture reference.

It's first, it's the scripture that says perfect love casts out all fear. I can't find it here. I have the wrong reference down.

But it's somewhere in 1 John. Perfect love casts out all fear. The intent there is to recognize that there is a distinction between perfect love and simply love.

The word perfect there means full grown, mature love, love that has come to full age. And so it is this perfect love, this mature love that God wants us to be striving for. And this perfect love is in direct relation to an ongoing desire to obey God's words, obedience.

If you love me, keep my commandments. Mature love, full grown love is raw, is developed in us as our hearts are stirred and inclined toward obeying God, having a sensitive conscience to God and doing those things that are pleasing in his eyes. And so therefore the question we need to ask ourself is this, is there a growing desire? Yes, Eddie.

1 John 4.18, thank you. 1 John 4.18, for there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out all fear. It doesn't say love casts out all fear, it says perfect love.

Because we immediately, once we become Christians, come to know the love of God, but the perfect love, the mature love, the full grown love has to be developed in our life. And that's why it is so important for us to continuously stay close to the Lord because the absence of perfect love makes us vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy, which were seen in Cain and Abel. Cain slew his brother, he became jealous and angry at his brother, he became critical at his brother and he murdered him.

And that we find is because the love of God was not in his heart. The love of God, that perfect love. And likewise, as long as we are living in an immature love, though it may be the love of God, if it's an immature love, we are vulnerable to and susceptible to the very thing that Cain became vulnerable to and slew his brother.

Only as we are enabled by God to be broken and be filled with this perfect love of God can we then know that our hearts are free from the dangerous tendencies to hurt one another. Now listen, beloved, closely. I want to, and this is where I want you to try and write down these scriptures.

I'd like to now go through the scriptures, a number of scriptures, and begin to show you the qualities of this perfect love that we are in desperate need of. Remember, the absence of this love drove Cain to murder his brother Abel. And the absence of this love in our lives could become a potential inroad where the enemy can sow into our hearts the seeds of jealousy, contention, strife, critical, judgmental attitudes one toward another.

And when that occurs, the enemy has got a foothold in our lives. And unless it is corrected, the enemy will divide and destroy and ruin the testimony that God wants to bring forth in our lives. Firstly, the kind of love that we need is so beautifully found in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

I encourage you to read through the whole thing. And just take each verse there in particular because there we see an expression of mature love. 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love suffers long.

Love does not envy. Love does not lift itself up one against another. Love does not behave itself unseemly.

Seeketh not her own. It's not selfish. Perfect love does not become easily provoked.

It does not become easily angry. Doesn't lose its temper. It doesn't think evil of anybody.

It's not happy in iniquity. It does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth. Love bears all things.

To bear means to patiently endure something, to patiently endure pain, to patiently endure difficulty. It bears all things. It doesn't faint.

It doesn't give up. Cain should have been able to rejoice with his brother that God had accepted his sacrifice and in a humble spirit came and said, Abel, would you help me? God rejected me. He rejected my offering.

Would you help me to understand what you did? Could you see some area in my life that needs correction? It was the absence of love in Cain's heart for his brother that prevented him from humbling himself in the presence of Abel. The absence of love in Cain's heart prevented him from humbling himself in Abel's presence. And likewise, it is the absence of love in our heart, one for another, that prevents us from humbling ourselves in each other's presence.

Oh, how we need to love one another so deeply, so fervently, as we'll see. So, the qualities of perfect love are so nicely described in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, but I'd like to mention a number of other qualities. And as these are mentioned, I pray the Holy Spirit will speak to us and convict us and instruct us and challenge us to see our need to ever pray that God's love would be perfected in us.

Secondly, Philippians chapter one. Philippians chapter one, verses nine through 11. And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

Perfect love that comes from God is a love that is discerning. Perfect love is a discerning love. Perfect love has the ability to distinguish between things that differ.

Paul says that he wanted the love to grow more and more in knowledge and all judgment. The word judgment there does not mean fleshly judgment. It doesn't mean critical judgment.

It doesn't mean the kind of judgment that we're so used to engaging in one with another and that we're so used to hearing others judge in. But this is the kind of judgment where you assess a situation and find the truth about it. You assess the situation and find the truth about it.

So perfect love is always pursuing the truth. You cannot separate or divorce love from truth. Perfect love does not ignore truth.

Perfect love is not ignorant of truth, but perfect love is constantly discerning, distinguishing, and understanding truth, understanding the truth about a situation. Perfect love does not make a judgment about any human being or any situation without the facts. Perfect love does not judge someone based on their social status, based on their financial status, based on the color of their skin, based on the amount of education they have, based on the color of their hair, the color of their clothes, the kind of way they talk.

Perfect love does not make a judgment based on those things. Therefore, we are in great need of perfect love because within the church, there is great judgment going on based on a person's financial status. I'm reminded of the words of James when he rebuked the early church.

They were engaging in gatherings and they would take the rich people that came in and they would escort them to the front and they would set them down in a prestigious position, but then a poor man who had on

dirty clothes and had no money, they would simply say, oh, sit at my feet, sit on the floor. And James rebuked him and said, how can you have the faith of Jesus and respective persons at the same time? Perfect love will not make judgments based on false evidence. Jesus walked and He had perfect love, but yet He was able to distinguish between truth and error.

He was able to know the hearts of men and He was able to demonstrate truth to all men. The absence of discerning love in our life, which is nothing more than perfect love being manifested, automatically means we must be very careful because we are susceptible to wrong judgment. Next, perfect love is a covering love.

1 Peter chapter 4, verse number 8. 1 Peter chapter 4, verse number 8. Beginning in verse number 7, but the end of all things is at hand. Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer. And above all things, now, if you read the Greek language, above all things, what it means is simply this.

Firstly, above all things, making it the priority. Above all things, have fervent. That word fervent means stretched out of measure.

That word literally means, it's a word that used to describe the Greek athletes when they were striving for mastery in a race. They would stretch themselves out of measure. They would go beyond the normal capacity.

They would stretch themselves beyond what is normal. And beloved, we need fervent love. We need the kind of love that stretches us beyond our natural tendency, beyond our natural comfort zone, into the place where we are stretched out, demonstrating the love of God to all people.

Have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover. Oh, I love this. Shall cover.

Literally, it means to wrap something, like bark is wrapped around a tree, or like skin is wrapped around the body. So, perfect love has, as one of its qualities, covering love. And this covering love enables us to cover, to wrap people, to cover their faults, to cover their shortcomings, as opposed to expose their faults.

What do you do when you find out a fault about somebody in the body of Christ, or maybe your own family member? What spirit are you motivated by? Do you take delight as soon as you find out something about somebody to get on the phone? Oh, guess what? I just found out about so-and-so. Oh, I'm gonna tell you, this is good. You sitting down, it's gonna be a shocker.

I suspected this to be true, but now I know it is. Why don't you call sister so-and-so and let them know about it too, and call brother so-and-so? Because he was talking on the phone to me last week, and he suspected the same thing. What do you do when you find out about a fault in someone's life? Are you a tail bearer? Do you take that and spread it, spread it, and spread it, and uncover that brother or sister? Or do you have covering love? Do you weep before God when you see a fault in somebody? And instead of picking on them and telling the whole church world, you pray and ask God that He would be merciful to them.

Have fervent love one for another. Love covers. Do you remember the question? Are you a murderer? Have you ever exposed somebody's sin instead of covered it? What do you do with faults when you see them? You see, we need God's fervent love one for another.

What does the Lord do with your faults and my faults? What does He do? He covers them. Come on, what's the Lord doing right now in your life? Come on. Let's just pretend the Lord's coming back in five minutes.

And He's only coming back for those who have no faults. Which one of us are going to go? Come on. Which one wants to stand up and go up there and wait for Him? Well, is the Holy Spirit revealing all of our faults and all of the secret struggles of our heart to everybody in here? When you leave here and get in the car, does the Holy Spirit start finding fault with you and start withdrawing His love and withdrawing His kindness and start kicking you around saying, you're worthless, you're a scum, you're just a dirty old sinner.

I don't know why I even bother with you. Twenty-one years, Jesus saved me and never did He ever come to me in such a way. Do you know that you're obligated and I'm obligated? Because Jesus said, love one another even as I have loved you.

We are obligated to love each other with the same quality love that Christ has for us. Nothing less. I recently tried to describe this truth by asking a particular couple who had children.

Actually, I share this with several families throughout the week. Just assume that you have children. If you don't, just think of the person you love the most.

And just assume that you had to take these children and place them under the care of someone else. And that you had to subject yourself to the leadership skills, the parent skills, the love that these tutors have for your children. And down the road a few days, you start to see that these people that you've entrusted your children to don't have the kind of love for them that you do.

Just think of the pain that you would feel when you, as the invisible guest, let's pretend you could be invisible. There you were in the home and there you saw these tutors getting critical over your children and screaming at them because they had faults and beating them and misjudging them and emotionally punishing them by closing their heart to them. And one of the little ones come up crying, I need a hug.

Get away from me. I don't have time for you. Just think of the pain that you would experience.

You would say, Oh my, this is not right. They're not demonstrating toward my children the love that I have for them. What can I do? What can I do? My children, they're not understanding the kind of love that I have.

Think of the pain. And likewise, think of the pain and the sorrow that must be in the Lord's heart when we as brothers and sisters, one for another, fail to properly demonstrate to each other the kind of love that Father has for us. Hey, we're all members of the same family, but we only have one God and Father.

And He's the one that really originated our lives and He's the one that's really got the love. I mean, I've got seven children and I expect my daughters to love each other and my sons to love each other. But let me tell you something, they're my children.

I mean, my brothers, my daughters can have love for each other, but that love is not like the kind of love I have because they're mine. And I expect them to understand that they need to treat each other in a fashion that properly demonstrates the kind of love that I have for them because I'm their father. Jesus said, as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.

You see, Jesus set the example. He loved His disciples with the kind of love that God had for Him. And now He's saying, you have to love one another with the kind of love that I've had with you.

So we're under obligation to know this kind of love, covering love. Jeremiah chapter 31, verse number 3. Jeremiah 31, 33. Another quality of this perfect love that we must pray God will develop in our life.

The Lord hath appeared of old time saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Another quality of this love is that it's everlasting. It doesn't faint.

It doesn't get tired. It doesn't get tired. Good, it's only ten minutes to ten.

I've got a couple more hours. Praise the Lord. I've got two hours left.

Love is patient, remember now. It's also considerate, right? Listen to me, beloved, please. Listen to the Word of God, excuse me.

Listen to the Word of God. Your love is going to get tired. You're going to get tired of loving.

Listen, you're going to get tired of loving people that don't seem to appreciate it, that seem to take advantage. Listen, even the love that parents have for their children gets tired. And we as parents need to make a transition.

We need to exchange our love for our children and get God's love for them because God's love is everlasting. It doesn't get tired. It does not faint.

It doesn't become weary. What are you going to do when you're called to love somebody who shows no appreciation for it? They even abuse your love. They take advantage of it.

They walk on it. What are you going to do when you have to love people in the body of Christ who are unlovable? What about Jesus who loved Judas? He knew from the beginning that Judas was going to betray Him. And yet He loved Him.

He called Him a friend. He took Him into His life, into His heart. We're called to have that kind of love.

What will you do with the one who has betrayed your trust? What will you do with the one who has slandered you? The one who has misunderstood you? The one who has even spread lies about you? What about the one who hurts you? The one who broke their trust to you? What will you do? You say, I don't have the capacity to love this person. You are right. You don't.

But God has the capacity to give you His love. And the beginning of getting God's love starts when we recognize our love is insufficient. Our love is conditional.

Our love won't work. And then we confess our bankruptcy, our poverty, as David mentioned this morning. And as we confess our spiritual bankruptcy, and we say, Lord, I don't have these things, or I know Your love, but God, Lord, I need that perfect love.

That's how you get it. Romans 13.10 Perfect love fulfills the law. There is no law, there is no commandment against love.

As it says in Romans 13.10 Love works no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Only as we walk in perfect love one toward another can we know that we're fulfilling the law and not

breaking any of His commandments. You will not steal, you will not murder, you will not commit adultery, you will not do anything that God says not to do if you truly are walking in love.

Next, we're going to go for a few more minutes. Paul prayed that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of God, which passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. It is impossible to know the fullness of God without being filled with the fullness of God's perfect love.

Impossible. Next, Hebrews 13.1 Let brotherly love continue. Perfect love is an enduring love, a continuing love.

Stop punishing people by withholding your love because they don't perform to the standard that you have set for them. That is not God's love. If God did that to us, where would we stand? Here's a way to test your love.

How happy would you be if God started loving you with the same quality and measure of love that you're measuring, that you're demonstrating to the least esteemed person in your heart? You can't love God or you don't love God any more than you love the least esteemed saint. That is how much we love God. John said, He that saith, I love God, but hateth his brother, is a liar.

Don't punish people. Listen, the greatest danger within relationships is to punish a person by withholding from them love and kindness and compassion because they've disappointed you, they've let you down, they've hurt you, they've abused you, so you close your heart. Don't do it.

Pray God will keep you, pray God will keep me from ever doing that. That's not God's love. When that happens, when we're tempted to do that, it's a sign to us that we really need to pray for perfect love to come into our hearts.

Perfect love is without fear. 1 John 4, verse 18, another quality. Perfect love is without fear.

Perfect love casts out all fear. This not only is no fear toward God, but it's no fear toward one another. Listen, the reason why we are so burdened with so many kinds of insecurities is because we don't know the perfect love of God.

Perfect love casts out insecurities. When we are perfectly secure in God's love, we are perfectly secure one with another. Listen, listen closely.

Evil suspicions about people disappear when perfect love comes into our heart. We don't need to guess people's motives. Listen, when we rest in the perfect love of God, listen, we don't derive a sense of security from whether people accept us or not.

Some people, they live and live and live and the only thing they're concerned about is whether a person likes them or not. And then that taints what we do because then we start becoming men-pleasers and people-pleasers. When we know the perfect love of God, we can serve people unconditionally whether or not they accept it or not, whether they recognize it or not, whether they're pleased or not.

We just love because we're getting our need met from the perfect love of God from nothing else. Listen, we can be vulnerable to people. We can risk being hurt.

Hallelujah to God. I'm going to go through this rather quickly now because I've got a few more here, but I want you to get it on paper and go through it. Perfect love, another quality, it's a giving love.

Ephesians 5.25. A giving love. A self-emptying. Self-sacrificing.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and what? Gave Himself for it. Now that's not only a call for husbands to do to their wives, but it's a call to no greater love hath this than a man would lay down his life for his friends. And then it says in John, if He laid His life down for us, then we ought to lay our lives down for the brethren.

Laying our life down, self-sacrificing love. Next, perfect love is a forgiving love. Ephesians 4.2. If anyone has a quarrel, forgive.

When somebody offends you and hurts you, perfect love will forgive that person. Not only will perfect love forgive, but perfect love will seek a way to forgive even when the other person was wrong and you were right. Perfect love does not say, well, bless God, you were wrong, and until you make it right, I'm not going to give you anything.

That's not God's love. Who was right and wrong in redemption? Did God say to us, well, when you get your act together, I'll come down and save you. No, God was right, but yet He was willing to find a way to bring reconciliation.

When you have a quarrel with someone, and they're wrong and you're right, and you will not open up your heart until they come and they somehow say they're sorry or you almost make them pay it back. You punish them until you feel like you've punished them. That is not God's love working in your heart.

You should go to any means possible to make it right with anyone. Any means. Listen closely.

Perfect love is a correcting love. Revelation 3.19, Jesus said to the Laodicean church, As many as I love, I rebuke and correct. Hebrews chapter 12, verses 5 through 11.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto sons. Despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be worried when thou art corrected. For whom the Lord loveth, He correcteth, and He chasteneth every son whom He receives.

Perfect love is a correcting love. It's a rebuking love, but it's done in meekness and gentleness and in tenderness, never in haughtiness. Lastly, perfect love is willing to be wronged for the sake of peace.

1 Corinthians chapter 6. 1 John chapter 6. It's willing to be wronged. How dare any of you having a matter against another go to the law before the unjust and not before the saints? Verse 4. If then you have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame.

Is it so that there's not a wise man among you who's able to judge between his brothers? But brother goes to law with brother and that before unbelievers? Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you because you go to law one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded or to be taken advantage of? Do you understand what he's saying? Love should enable us to suffer wrong and to be taken advantage of for the sake of peace and harmony rather than to demand what is right always, to demand what is just and then disgrace the name of Christ.

Disgrace the cause of Christ.

Are you willing to be taken advantage of in measure for the sake of unity and peace? Perfect love will enable you to do that. In closing, turn your Bibles to 1 John beginning in verse number seven. I'm going to sing a song in closing and I want you to listen to me in love because the reason why is because this is a song in my heart and it closes perfectly the message from God's heart this morning.

Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone that knoweth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God for God is love. Beloved, let us love one another.

1 John 4, 7 and 8. That says it all. Let us love one another and we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love and he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.

Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. May God give us the grace and capacity to pray for an ever increasing love. Take all of these scriptures that you wrote down read them through again, pray over them and say, God, show me the areas in my life that don't line up to these precious qualities that describe perfect love and when you show me, Lord, give me the grace to acknowledge it, admit it and then pray for perfect love to be developed in that area of my life.

If you do that, God will change your life forever. Amen? Amen. Let's have a word of prayer and then in just a few moments let the word go into our hearts.

Father, we thank you and praise you for this great theme in your word. God is love. Lord, we're humbled because your word tells us it is not that we loved God first but rather God loved us and gave himself to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Lord, we're humbled because we know nothing, absolutely nothing about love and we only deceive ourselves if we pretend to know anything about it. So we all want to get on the same level right now. The same level.

No one's up here and someone down here. We all acknowledge we're on the same level. We are spiritually bankrupt.

We are poor beggars. We do not know this perfect love and if we do know love, it's only a little bit. We thank you for that little bit you've given us but our hearts have been challenged by your word today and we want to grow.

We want the love that lives in us in an immature form. Though it's your love, we want it to grow into a full-grown demonstration of perfect love. Possessing all of these qualities that we just looked at in your word.

We look by faith to you, the author and finisher of all the work in us and we give you praise and honor. Let's sing that together. Probably some of you know it.

Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God for God is love. Beloved, let us love one another 1 John 4, 7 and 8. Amen.

We have communion. Praise the Lord. This is a great way to celebrate communion, isn't it? We have a few men that will volunteer.

Dad? Eddie? Sure. Come on up.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30424.mp3>

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