

Sermon Growth Guide

August 8, 2021

What Great Love - Love Wins the Day

1 John 5:1-12

Key Verse: 1 John 5:11 "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Big Idea: Don't miss God's gift of love to you.



Foundations

Today we conclude our series **What Great Love**. And what a gift we have to hear from Jim DeJarnette as he moves into his retirement years after faithfully serving First Pres alongside his wife, Barb, for 39 years. Thank you, Jim and Barb!

Jim proclaims, "Our Scripture this morning is about the full expression of God's love through the incarnation of His Son Jesus and the powerful victory won by His birth, death and resurrection."

There is so much in this world that tempts us to fear, isn't there? Yet we are reminded again through today's passage that God's love is sure and we rest secure knowing that nothing comes in between God's love and God's children.

Jim continues, "Draw close to Jesus. Let Him into every detail of your daily life. He redeems and transforms you in ways beyond our imagining—beyond our deepest hopes. He changes us; heals us. He extends mercy and grace to the beginnings of our stories, and He rewrites the ends of our stories! Do you believe it?"

Pray that God will guide and guard your Life Group, growing you each this week by God's Great Love into an even purer reflection of the beloved Son.

Understanding God's Word

According to verse 3, how do we know we love God?

In verse 3, John writes that the commands of the Lord are not burdensome. Do you find this to be the case in your own life? Host a conversation about what John is experiencing here and how that might affect your walk.

What is "the testimony" in verse 11 and how can you better live out of this testimony?

Applying God's Word

We are reminded today that we belong to God and we are exhorted to not miss God's gift of love to us. Share with those around you how you can better allow the love of God to penetrate your mind and heart.

Witnessing God's Word

Jim concludes his sermon by encouraging us to ask ourselves if, in our own pride and short-sightedness, we have missed the fullness of God's love for us. What about those around you? Will you pray the prayer Jim taught us today? "Lord, glorify Yourself..." by using me to display your love to _____ this week. Amen, may you be greatly encouraged to pass on the very love of God that you have experienced throughout your years to those who need it the most.

This morning, we finish our sermon series, **What Great Love** with **Love Wins the Day!** Let's open our hearts in prayer to receive God's Word, and the triumphant message it holds. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, the fullness of Your love takes our breath away! The gift of Your Son, Jesus, changes the course of everything! ... our lives and our world. Soften our hearts, by Your Spirit, to embrace all that Your Holy Word has for us this morning. In Jesus' name. Amen.

My wife, Barbara Jeanne Jelly Beanne, and I went to a liberal arts university in Oregon. I actually met her within five minutes of getting on campus! I had no idea at the time that we would fall in love, and four years later, we would be married! There were a lot of students, and I have thought over the years—I might have missed her! Among the thousands of students, what if I had missed her! But, I had help. God knew my heart and He knew she was the one! Perhaps the greatest miracle in my life was that somehow God convinced Barb that I was the one for her too! I could have missed her—but God wasn't going to let that happen.

There's a fountain on the grounds where we went to school. Early on in our relationship, we sat at that fountain, and I wanted in the worst way to kiss her. But, I couldn't get the courage to do it. On our 25th wedding anniversary, I took her back to that very fountain, and with greater confidence—I gave her that kiss! Oh, I didn't want to miss that kiss! Say it together: "Don't miss that kiss!" Our passage today is about not missing the greatest gift of our lives. It goes beyond human love; beyond anything we could hope or imagine—it is the full expression of God's love for us in the birth, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. My message to you is don't miss God's gift of love to you. Let's say it together: Don't miss God's gift! We live in a world that often feels like the devil's playground, where confusion and lies are part of the daily calendar. But when Jesus reigns supreme in your life, **Love Wins the Day!**

Our Scripture this morning is about the full expression of God's love through the incarnation of His Son Jesus and the powerful victory won by His birth, death and resurrection. As the great hymn, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* states, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." Such love is a gift beyond all imagining ... whatever we do in this life—don't miss God's gift! Our Scripture begins by stating, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." This is our starting point, our foundation—trust in Jesus Christ. A person who trusts Christ is born of God and is able to overcome the world. There is power in certainty! When Sir James Simpson, the famous physician and pioneer in anesthesia, was nearing death, a friend asked him, "Sir, what are your speculations?" Simpson replied, "Speculations! I have no speculations! 'For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.'"

Verse 3 states, "This is love for God: to obey his commands." This is all about rich relationship with our loving Father. Dwight L. Moody used to say, "Every Bible should be bound in shoe leather." We show our love to God not by empty words, but by willing works and obedience to his commands. And His commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." John then brings ultimate clarity to all this by saying, "Who is it that overcomes the world?"..... "Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." Here, we see the power of certainty once again! And as we look at the following verses, we begin to understand the magnitude of God's gift that we must not miss! We are given clarity in how to understand who Jesus is, and a vivid look at the fullness of God's love for us.

In verse 6, we read of Jesus: "This is the one who came by water and blood... He did not come by water only, but by water and blood." OK, now we get to the crux of



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everything. How do we understand who Jesus is? ... How do we understand this gift that must not be missed? Through three great testimonies: water, blood and Spirit. Firstly, He came by water. Jesus took on human form, was born as a baby, as vulnerable as any of us, His tender flesh soft to the touch, capable of experiencing joy and heartache, physical comfort and injury. In His baptism, by water, we encounter the first great testimony from God the Father, identifying who Jesus is. In Matthew 3, God speaks audibly, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Now, the second testimony from God ... not only did Jesus come by water, but also by blood. As the time drew near when Jesus would be crucified, He said, "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" In an audible voice from heaven, which all around heard, God said, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The third testimony comes from the Holy Spirit, ministering within us—and we can trust the Spirit's witness, because as verse 6 tells us, "The Spirit is truth." We were not present at the baptism of Christ, or at His death ... or AT HIS RESURRECTION! But the Spirit was! The witness of the Spirit is at work in us even now! Romans 8:16 states, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." It is by the Holy Spirit that we understand who Jesus is, and that we belong to Him. As verse 10 states, "Whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony in their heart."

Beloved friends, we belong to Jesus; to the One in whom victory resides! Don't miss God's gift! Jesus is the full expression of God's love! So draw close to Him. Let Him into every detail of your daily lives. He redeems and transforms in ways beyond our imagining—beyond our deepest hopes. He changes us; heals us. He extends mercy and grace to the

beginnings of our stories, and He rewrites the ends of our stories! Do you believe it?

I want to share a simple prayer with you that God will always answer, when prayed with a heart open to receiving the fullness of His love in Jesus Christ. That prayer is, "Lord, glorify Yourself through" ... and you fill in the blank. It can be the smallest to the most overwhelming things. "Lord, glorify Yourself through my child's illness ... through my wife's accident ... through my grandchild's struggles ... through our marriage ... through this day of rest ... through my work. It is a prayer for God to accomplish what only He can for His glory. It is about God getting into the hardest places and bringing about His good purpose in the midst of it all—no matter what has happened. "Lord, glorify Yourself" is about not missing the gift of His presence, His participation, His love and mercy, when it could have made all the difference. Don't miss God's gift ... His love can, and does win the day!

The biggest and most difficult things of our day are not beyond "Lord, glorify Yourself." Remember, Jesus is the One who came by water and blood. He has walked in our human experience ... and far beyond, He has taken every human woe, sin, heartache and illness to the cross. We pray, "Lord, glorify Yourself" to the One who has borne our cancers, our Alzheimer's, our tragedies, wars, viruses, losses, barren agonies—He has borne all of it on the cross. "Lord, glorify Yourself through all these things" is asking God to enter into the midst of our lives, in the totality of our experience, and bring victory according to the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Love wins the day! Let today's Scripture encourage us. We live in a world where we fear there is no certainty. But lest we get lost in what feels like the ever-expanding quicksand of confusion—let's remember where confusion and lies come from. The author of confusion and lies is Satan ... not God! Jesus said resolutely, "I am the Way, the TRUTH, and the life." There is



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no shadow of turning with Him. You can count on God for absolute certainty! The third verse of Martin Luther's great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, speaks with absolute clarity. Let's say it together:

"And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed His TRUTH to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure; one little word shall fell him."

That one little word is a NAME. It is the name of TRUTH ... not lies ... CERTAINTY ... not confusion...HOPE ... not despair ... VICTORY ... not defeat. It is the name of LOVE. LOVE that wins the day! ... every day, every time, every situation—it is the name of JESUS.

Our Scripture concludes with these words:

"Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts [God's] testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

Church, let's say it together: "Whoever has the Son has life!" That is absolute; you can count on it! Don't miss God's gift! Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. Beloved friends, don't fall prey to confusion; the devil is the author of lies, not God. He wants nothing more than to rob you of the life that God, in the fullness of His love, is giving you in Jesus Christ.

This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Don't

miss God's gift! Remember as I began, talking about my beloved wife, and how I realized, in the midst of everything, I might have missed her? Oh, what a loss that would have been.

Is there any part of you that worries maybe you have missed out on the fullness of God's love for you? Any part that is uncertain where God's love is to be found in this confusing and "spinning out of control" world? Any part that has been taken in by Satan's lies that have defeated your spirit and wounded your heart? Any part that asks, "Am I too late?"...

The answer is no ... it's not too late. God will never stop pursuing you with His great love. All you need do is turn toward Him and receive the Love He yearns to give you.

Don't let the fullness of God's love pass you by. It's not too late ... not at all. The Light of our Savior is not diminished by darkness or confusion; in fact, it shines all the brighter! Claim these old words: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the Light of His glory and grace."

Let's pray: Lord Jesus, we want to know the fullness of your Love. Heal the wounded and confused parts of us that have fallen prey to anything less than the Truth of Who You Are. From this point forward, let Your love win the day in our hearts, minds and souls—until the refrain of our lives becomes, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen and amen.

