

## **Title: Rooted in Love, Why We Gather**

### **I. Introduction and Text**

**'So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.'** Colossians 2:6-7

**"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:4-5**

- A. Love is everywhere in our society today, but do we really understand the source of love.
- B. Along the way our society lost track of love's source.
- C. In Islam, God is great, but loving? That feels too soft. Too vulnerable. Too... human.
- D. Buddhism: Love is something to rise above. Where there's love, there's loss. Better not to feel at all.
- E. With atheists, the universe is just atoms and accident. Love is a fiction, it's just nature's trick to keep the species going.
- F. But what if their cry for compassion doesn't disprove God? What if it "points" to Him?
- G. Behind and before all things is a God bound together in love - a Father, a Son, and a Spirit expressing eternal, joyful, and radiant love. You are part of that expression, you are made to join in, and He has gone to hell and back to give you the chance to do so.

### **II. The First Love Story**

"In the beginning, God..." (Genesis 1:1)

- A. Scripture begins not with a bang, but with a Being.
- B. Creator? Judge? Law giver? But what was God doing before the beginning?
- C. The Bible says, God was loving.

**"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24)**

**God is love. (1 John 4:8)**

- F. Father, Son, and Spirit—not three gods, but one God in a perfect, eternal communion of love.
- G. Perichoresis—the divine dance. Love flowing from the Father to the Son in the delight of the Spirit. This is the heartbeat of reality.

### **III. We Were Made to Love**

“Let us make man in our image...” (Genesis 1:26)

- A. From the first breath we took, we were never meant to be mere spectators of divine power—we were sculpted as image-bearers of divine love.
- B. As Pascal wrote, there’s a God-shaped hole in every heart. It’s not a pothole. It’s a home-shaped hole. Because we’re always seeking refuge somewhere. Always loving something.

**"They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen." — Romans 1:25 (NIV)**

C. In his book, *Counterfeit gods*, Tim Keller writes...

“If you center your life and identity on your spouse or your children, you will try to make them live up to your expectations, and they will inevitably disappoint you. If you center your life on career and money, you’ll be driven and exhausted. If you center it on approval, you’ll be constantly anxious... Anything that becomes more important than God is an idol.” — Tim Keller, *Counterfeit gods*

### **IV. But Love Has Gone Wrong**

- A. The Bible doesn’t say, “You were made to obey.” It says, “You were made to love.
- B. Our natural affections are misplaced. Our natural bent is to worship substitutes. ngs.
- C. We do so at our peril, because God is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14.

“You shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” (Exodus 34:14)

D. Our sin is that we have loved wrongly. God’s grace is that He has loved us anyway.

### **V. God Doesn’t Need Our Worship—We Do**

“Come, let us bow down in worship,  
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” (Psalm 95:6)

- A. Atheists ask, “What kind of supreme being demands constant praise?”
- B. The Bible offers an unbothered reply: “He is not served by human hands, as though he needed anything.” (Acts 17:25)
- C. God doesn’t need our worship. We do.
- D. When we worship, we're remembering who He is, and we are remembering who we are.

**"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:18**

- E. What we worship, we become. As we worship and praise and focus on God, we are gradually changed—lifted from despair, pride, envy, and fear into hope, humility, gratitude, and joy.
- F. G.K. Chesterton is said to have written, “When man ceases to worship God, he doesn’t worship nothing. He, instead, is capable of worshipping anything.”
- G. Worship is what happens when love finds its proper home.

## **VI. The Cross: Love on Display**

- A. Suffering is the question that won’t go away. Why cancer? Why breakups? Why graveyards?
- B. 300 years before Christ, Epicures asked if God is all-good, and all powerful, then why does evil exist?

**“Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?” (Psalm 88)**

**“All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.” (Psalm 90)**

- C. The largest category of psalms is lament. The Bible doesn’t dodge suffering. It leans in.
- D. The problem is in the assuming that suffering disproves love. Christianity is not a faith of denial. It doesn’t erase suffering. It redeems it.
- E. In Jesus, the Author writes Himself into the story—and then takes the full weight of the plot twist.

**The one who knew no sin became sin. (2 Corinthians 5:21)**

**“God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)**

- F. Only Christianity offers a God who loves us so much He joins us in our suffering, and He redeems it.

## **VII. Love Demands a Response; We Love the One Who Loves**

- A. The Shema in Deuteronomy 6, it’s not about duty. It’s about desire.

**“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)**

- B. The gospel is not a religion of performance—it’s a romance of the heart.
- C. If your view of God makes you bored on Sunday and excited for brunch, perhaps your god is too tame. Too distant. Too... respectable.
- D. But the God who dances before creation, bleeds for the guilty, and rises to conquer death? That’s a God who woos your heart, every bit of it.
- E. The Christian life isn’t a never-ending, soul crushing, treadmill of obligation. How could a God of love ever demand that?
- F. The Christian life is a never-ending, joy-filled, all-consuming journey of the heart—a relationship with the One who loved you first, and best, and will love you forever.

## **VIII. Applying the Greatest Commandment: Loving God in Real Life**

- A. When Jesus was asked for the greatest commandment, He reached back to the the Shema

**"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)**

- B. Application starts with Sunday.
- C. Loving God with all your heart means showing up to worship—not out of guilt, but out of gratitude. Love is faithful, even when your feelings aren’t.
- D. Gathering with the Church isn’t optional. It’s the gravitational center.
- E. Why do I have to show up on Sunday? "I can worship anywhere."
- F. Yes, but worshiping anywhere is not the same as worshiping together.

**Do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another...” (Hebrews 10:25).**

G. You come not because you’re guilty into it. You come because you’re called into it.

H. You come to be reminded you are not the center of the story, you’re not even the center of your own story. You come because you have a part to play, even when you’re not sure what the part is.

### **IX. Final Exhortation: Come, Beloved**

#### **X. Communion: The Meal of Love**

#### **XI. Benediction**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength—do it not to earn His love, but because you already have it.

Therefore, let the love you have received become the love you now live.

Walk in grace. Speak with mercy. Serve in joy. And wherever you go, may the God of love go with you.

In the name of the Father who loved you first, The Son who proved that love on the cross, And the Spirit who pours that love into your heart—

Amen.

Go now, blessed by love to be Love’s blessing.