

1 John 2:7-11

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[0:00] about that in a little bit, but we need to understand how it is a new command to love our brothers and sisters in the new covenant. We need to understand how it is truly new and understand that that truth leaves us with two ways of life, one that results in eternal life and one that results in eternal death.

And just to whet your appetite again for this, I want to mention now that this newness of this new command has a lot more to do with broader theology than you may realize.

Um, lots of conversations have been going on and evangelicalism broadly for the last few years in particular, um, what Christians ought to do or not do with the mosaic law, mosaic covenant in Christian life.

Lots of conversations about who belongs to the new covenant community, not new to us today. Those have been going on for centuries. In other words, who belongs to the church and who doesn't as well as other things.

And so believe it or not, this topic, this new command that we're going to see from John in an indirect way actually applies to all of these questions.

[1:17] It provides an insight that helps us answer all of these questions. And so with these things in mind, please read with me. First John chapter two, verses seven through 11.

John writes, beloved, I do not write to you a new command, but an old one which you have had from the beginning. The old command is the word which you have heard.

On the other hand, I do write to you a new command, which is true in him and in you because the darkness is going away and the true light shines even now.

The one who says he is in the light yet hates his brother is in darkness even now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

But the one who hates his brother is in darkness and he walks in darkness and he does not know where he is going for the darkness has blinded his eyes.

[2:27] Our first heading for this morning, if you want to take notes or are taking notes, our first heading is the old command in verse seven.

We're going to consider this first. Paul talked or John speaks of this old command. He says again, read with me, verse seven. Beloved, I do not write to you a new commandment, but an old one which you have had from the beginning.

The old commandment is the word which you have heard. So what is this old command? When exactly did John's audience receive this command?

At first glance, it is easy to think that John is referring to Old Testament law, perhaps even some kind of natural law. If you're into philosophy and these kind of things, after all, he says from the beginning.

And as is clear from verses nine through 11, he's talking about a command to love one another. Well, we all know that command is ancient. That summarizes the law. Leviticus 19, 18.

[3:30] You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Well, that all seems to flow and make sense, but not so fast. Something more is going on and we ought not to quickly jump so far back.

Now, zooming out, John is actually not referring to the Old Testament directly, but rather is referring to the teaching of Jesus Christ as recorded in the gospel of John.

And that's the same John, right? John 13 verses 34 or excuse me, 34 through 35. Jesus says, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

So, again, we have the question, how can Jesus say this is new? Isn't this the same Jesus who said the whole law is summarized in two commands, one to love God and another like it to love neighbor?

[4:43] Isn't this really old? But notice this. In Leviticus 19, 18. Moses writes, love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus raises the stakes. Think about it this way, and this is an amazing thought. There is nobody who loves you more than you except for Jesus Christ.

In that sense, Jesus is giving a new commandment because he says to all the beloved, to all the faithful, to all Christians everywhere, you and I, that we are to love one another as Jesus loves us. And don't forget that he says this right after washing a bunch of gross first century sandal bunion ridden feet. It's that kind of love.

Right? Humble. I'm beneath you. I'm here for you. I'm here to serve you. Love one another just as I have loved you.

[5:53] So, by the time John writes 1 John, this new command from Jesus is old. By the time John writes 1 John, the church is established.

It's going out. It's doing all the things. And they've already heard this new command from the Gospels, from the Jesus traditions, perhaps from Jesus himself, if some of them were around. And so, in that sense, at the time of the writing of 1 John, this commandment is now old.

This new command is now old. They know that they are to love one another as Christ has loved them. The Gospel that they received and responded to in faith with the teachings of Jesus to love one another is, as verse 7 says, the word which they have heard.

And so, in that sense, John writes to them an old commandment. This is important in a first century context because unlike our world today, where we're so ugh about the old, they loved it.

Anything new was viewed with deep suspicion. It was automatically assumed if it's new, it's foolish. And so, John can't just outright say this is all new because his entire audience, Jew and Gentile alike, would go crazy.

[7:12] They would be upset by that. And so, the old is prized unlike us today where we are so enthralled by the new. And so, this old, prized, true command that John introduces has a certain inherent credibility because of the Old Testament.

And yet, as we read in verse 8, this old, prized, true command is also new in the light of the new creation.

And this leads to our second heading, Dawn of the New Command. Dawn of the New Command in verse 8. Read again with me.

So, after talking about this old command, John says, on the other hand, right, at the same time, you might say, I am writing to you a new command, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is going away.

And the true light shines now. Or already. John is not denying that the command is old. He is simply recognizing it is also new, which is why he says this all-important phrase on the other hand.

[8:36] And we've already seen how and in what sense this new command is new. Which love is Christ's love. John 13 again. The heights and depths are raised, and so it's new.

But John also points us to the fact that it is new every day in the life of the body. John says of this command, verse 8, that it is true in him and in you.

This is an ongoing reality. The idea is that this old new love command is truly expressed in Christ, and that it is truly expressed in and among the church.

So again, in other words, this continues. It's ongoing. It's not a box you check one time like baptism. This is something we just simply do and are. Love for the brotherhood.

We are to be marked by our love for one another. And so in that sense, it is ever new. Well, how can that be? How can this love be ever new?

[9:39] Again, he clarifies even further. John answers in the latter half of verse 8, Because the darkness is going away, and the true light shines now.

The true light in John's writings is most often a reference to Jesus Christ. Jesus says as much in John's gospel, John 8, 12.

He says, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. That sounds very familiar.

And John, in 1 John, is reflecting on this moment in redemptive history. He rightly recognizes that in the light of Christ, everything has changed.

It's new. The darkness is going away. It wasn't doing that before. Now it is. It is going away. The true light is already here. He's describing the dawn of a new day.

[10:40] Because post Christ's death, post his resurrection, post his ascension, we are in fact in a new day, with a new covenant, as the first fruits of the new creation.

James 1.18. And so this is a classic example of the already not yet paradigm you see throughout the New Testament, known as inaugurated eschatology, if you're familiar.

We see that already the light is here. We can see a glimpse of its beauty. As the sun rises, is the idea, the imagery, we have a north star to guide us as it warms us.

And yet, it's dawn. There's still darkness. We still feel the chill of the night in our bones. It's warming up on the front as we walk in the light, feeling the coldness of this sinful world on our backs.

This is kind of the imagery John uses throughout his writings, this both and of light and dark, where darkness is going away. It's progressively happening day to day, and yet it's still here, just as the light is coming, and yet it's already here.

[11:48] What a perfect image. And so, John says, triumphantly, the darkness is going away.

And so, love is ever new as the light shines brighter and brighter, as we walk more and more and further and further and closer and closer in and towards that light that is actively coming.

Now, I would be remiss if I did not take this moment to show you all something about the newness of the new covenant.

This is somewhat of a brief excursus, but it's important in light of our text this morning, but also, given that our church, as Nathan mentioned in the announcements, has been having an ongoing conversation about progressive covenantalism.

And if you don't know what that is, come August 1st. It's going to be sick. But as has been shown, things have changed with the coming of Christ.

[12:52] John invites reflection on these changes. And so we, as attentive disciples, do well to pay attention and consider how our relationship to the law, Torah, has changed with the establishment of the new covenant.

This is a massive topic with massive implications, answering questions like, is the new covenant community mixed or elect only? Should we keep Sabbath?

Should Jewish believers still be circumcised today as a matter of law keeping? Should I move to Moscow, Idaho? And I'll just tell you right now, the answer is an emphatic no, unless you're going to go plant the biggest, baddest, glorious Baptist church.

Okay? Now, I can't answer all those questions today. Again, come August 1st, it'll be a moment of revelation. But from our text, I want to note something we've already kind of danced around.

To borrow from Paul, it is important to remember that as new covenant Christians, we are not, as he says, under the law. Okay, Galatians 3, 23, just one example.

[14:07] Paul says this clearly. He says, before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be in the law.

That's Romans 2, 12. He also says we are no longer from the law, Romans 4, 14. So he says it in a multitude of ways and for a lot of different reasons, but over and over and over again, Paul makes the point, we are not in, from, or of, or under the law.

something has changed, something dramatic. Right? What are we to do with this? How is God's word, including the law of the Mosaic covenant, made obsolete, as Hebrews 8, 13 says?

How is, how is God's word then, the, the Mosaic law, Torah, how are these things still profitable for teaching and reproof and rebuke, as Paul says? On the other hand, while recognizing we're no longer under that, that's over with, is he talking out of both sides of his mouth?

What is going on? Right? And likewise, how can John say in his epistle over and over that we know Jesus by keeping the commandments, but be in sync with Paul and Hebrews, who seem to remove the law from the equation in some sense?

[15:21] What's going on? By the work of a New Testament scholar named Brian Rosner, he wrote a little book called Paul and the Law, highly recommend. And on this topic, he argues that for Paul, we no longer relate to the law as covenant, but we relate to the law as scripture.

I'm going to repeat that. We no longer relate to the Mosaic law as covenant, but we relate to it as scripture. What does this mean? This means that the Mosaic law is not binding for us today as

covenant because that covenant is obsolete.

That law was baked into the covenantal framework of the Mosaic covenant. And so rather, it functions as scripture, specifically in two ways that Rosner, I think, rightfully shows and argues from the New Testament, from Paul in particular.

For us today in the life of believers, the Mosaic law simply functions as wisdom in prophecy. And so in that sense, it is profitable to read, to teach, to use for rebukes, exhortations, and all the rest for discipleship.

Still invaluable, still sweet as the honeycomb, still all the things that the Old Testament says about itself. But it's not a covenant for us anymore. So it functions in our lives today in this moment of redemptive history under the New Covenant, which is enacted on better promises and is a better covenant.

[16:49] In this context, we relate to it as wisdom and prophecy, but not as law. And so just know, isn't it interesting that the vast majority of the time in 1 John, when John repeatedly tells us to keep commandments, there is that all-important possessive pronoun fronting it.

I'm going to guess 90% of the time. You can Google that. I don't know. But a lot. Just one example, 1 John 2, 3. And by this we know that we have come to know him, he's talking about Jesus, if we keep his commandments.

And that's not to set Jesus in contrast to Moses, right? Moses was looking forward to Jesus. What it is to recognize is that with the coming of Jesus, things have changed.

This really is a new covenant with a new law. And this is why in James' epistle, he can refer twice to the, quote, law of liberty.

In James 1, 12, in verse 28, he can refer to, quote, the royal law in James 2, 8. Designations, mind you, that are never used of the Mosaic law.

[18:08] He's not talking about that law. He's talking about the new commandment, new covenants, or excuse me, new covenant, and the law with that. Likewise, Paul, in Galatians 6, second half of verse 2, he refers to the law of Christ.

So we have Paul, John, and James talking about a law that is clearly not Old Testament law. They use different words, but they're talking about the same thing.

Not the law of Moses, but the law of Christ. And so, friends, understand this. The new covenant really is new, and it really is better. Our new covenant law is the life, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ, perhaps best summarized in the Sermon on the Mount.

We can geek out later. It's great. And his yoke is easy. His burden is light. Learn from him. Love as he loves.

Now, in the dawn of this new commandment, framed by the new covenant, John presents a sort of test or evaluation for the church to use.

[19:27] He presents two ways of life. One proves a person to be a member of the new covenant, to be a brother in the faith, whereas the other way of life proves one to not be a brother, though he claims to be.

Okay, so we're not talking about people who are visibly on the outside. He's talking about people visibly inside, but who's truly in and who's actually out. And so, John continues in verses 9 through 11.

We'll reread them. He says, the one who says he's in the light, but hates his brother, is in darkness even now.

And I'll just point out, why does he say even now? Because he's reflecting on the fact that we're in a new covenant era, things have changed, it is really better, and yet, there are still false sheep in the fold.

Right? So the one who says he's in the light, but hates his brother, is in darkness, even now. This kind of thing still happens. Verse 10, the one who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling with him, but the one who hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and does not know where he's going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

[20:52] And so, one way of life that John describes here is that of self-deception and hate. He refers to the one who says he is in the light.

Verse 9, light, of course, being a general reference throughout scripture for truth and wisdom, but in John's case, he particularly identifies the light with God the Father at times, and God the Son at times.

1 John 1.5 being an example, and John 8.12 as we saw earlier. So the person John is imagining is one who says he is a Christian. This person says, I'm with God, I'm saved, I love Jesus. And we have every reason from what John's telling us to think that this person really believes that about himself or herself. Yet, verse 9, this person hates his fellow Christians, his brothers and sisters.

And it is by this very hatred of brother that demonstrates he is deceiving not only himself, but possibly those around him.

[22 : 03] This is why verse 11 describes him as blind. It says he does not know where he's going. He's deceiving himself. Simply put, this person says the right things, thinks the right things, thinks he believes those things, but he does not do the right things, which shows he does not really believe those things.

things. And so as James says in James chapter 2 verse 18, he says, but someone will say, you have faith and I have works. Show me your faith apart from your works.

And James says, I will show you my faith by my works. But how do I know if I hate my brother?

I think if we're all honest, we've been frustrated with somebody in this room at some point. Maybe a lot of it's not me, but that happens. So what does it mean to hate my brother?

What does it mean to hate? I'm looking at my actual brother right now. I don't know why. In his commentary on 1 John, that was unplanned, Robert Yarbrough notes that Jesus' description of hate in Luke 6 verse 22 is probably operative in John's mind.

[23 : 32] Jesus says, blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of man.

A lot could be said of this verse, but note the things that Jesus says describe hate. Exclusion, insult, rejection. And so brothers and sisters, it's perfectly normal in church life to have issues, grievances, even annoyances.

Right? Why is that dude always sneezing, right? Little stuff to bigger things, right? With one another at different times and in different ways. fact, we all have and will all sin against one another.

And we'll talk about that more in the next two weeks. But I say to you now, in light of John's warning, that when those difficulties, when those challenges arise, are if you are responding hatefully without repentance, you are a false believer.

No nuance needed. That's what John is saying. If you are excluding people within the body, insulting them without end, rejecting them, I have no time for you, no patience for you, right?

[24 : 55] This kind of attitude all the time, perpetually, without end, then you are the person John is talking about. And again, I'm sure we have all avoided somebody at some point out of frustration.

Things can get tense sometimes in personal relationships, and sometimes that's even wise to just distance for a little bit. He's not talking about that. He's talking about a way of life.

He's talking about somebody who actively is doing these things with no stop, no regret, no remorse, perhaps even justifying it. Well, you don't understand what he's like, right?

That kind of stuff. Verse 11, he says, this person walks in darkness. Walking in the ancient world is a metaphor for one's way of life.

That's what he's talking about. This person's way of life is this darkness, this hatred, this self-deception. It's not merely that he acted hatefully at one time.

[26 : 02] Every person in here, myself included, is guilty of that. Who hasn't done that? But it is an entire way of life, and it shows over time.

It shows in the absence of love and the absence of repentance. That is who John is describing. Now, please hear me when I say this.

I say these things not because I have anybody in mind. In fact, while no church is perfect, and we're going to unpack this more in the next two weeks, I'm just so encouraged, generally speaking, broadly speaking, specifically speaking, of the love this body has for one another.

Many of you know, I was gone for two and a half years when my wife took a job and then did an internship. And at one point during that time, we got in a horrible wreck.

And even though I had had two churches that I had been members at, and they were great and stuff, so I was two churches removed from this church, and yet within 24 hours, there was a meal train set up.

[27 : 13] And that's a special love. That's Christ. And we felt so loved by that, and I hope you have felt our love over the years in various things.

But it is amazing the love this body has. So please hear me say that. I am not rebuking anybody right now, but I am giving the warning. Because nonetheless, I am one man with limited perspective.

I don't see any issues of ongoing hate in our church. Praise God. But perhaps it is happening, and I'm just missing it.

So I say this out of love, as a warning to you, in light of John's warning, to examine yourself in light of this text. If there is relational friction in your life right now, that has been ongoing, brooding, getting worse, no light at the end of the tunnel, you're responding with exclusion, insult, rejection, then go repent and make peace.

love, and remember the encouraging words in John's epistle. He says in 1 John 1:9, famous verse in the Bible, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[28:35] And so that is one way of life, that of hate and self-deception. It is darkness which results in blindness, aimlessness.

It is the opposite of being a created being. It's perpetual uncreation, being sub-human, pursuing that, and it results in eternal damnation.

But John presents another way of life, a good way, a wise way, the only true way, that of love. And so read verse 10 with me again. It's sandwiched in between this dark way that he describes, and maybe it's a chiasm, I don't know, don't care.

I might regret that later. the one who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling with him.

[29:48] As I already said, in many ways, today's sermon ends with a foretaste of a topic we will consider heavily the next two weeks, and that topic, of course, is love. love. But I want to note a few things here that will set us up well for that, as I alluded to earlier.

Again, John 13:35, Gospel of John, Jesus says, by this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

This is the tell. This is the ultimate proof. There is no greater or more convincing thing of our relationship with Christ than our love for him and for one another.

You can have all the right doctrine, all the right strategies, all the best ideas, the biggest, growing, coolest church, reach the most people for Christ, and I'm talking about true conversions, but if it's not done in love, then on that person's account, it is worthless.

So this is not just a mark of a Christian, but it is the mark of the Christian and of the true church. And this mark, this love, John says, says two things about such a person.

[31:15] Number one, it says he abides in the light. And number two, it says, he says that there is no cause for stumbling with such a person. To abide in the light is John's way of saying that one is walking with God in faith and obedience.

Dr. Rob Plummer puts it this way, to be in the light is to be in the realm of God's people, the church. Living in the light of the new age dawning, recognizing that we are the first fruits of a new creation, we're in a new covenant, that's what he's talking about.

Right? Living in the light of this new age dawning, this moment in redemptive history, and he continues reflecting the God who is himself, light.

And so again, to love one another as Christ has loved us. And this person has no cause for stumbling. This does not mean that this brother or sister does not sin.

John is not describing sinless perfection. That is explicit. First John 1:8, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

[32:31] Right? In other words, we're the one walking in darkness. And the truth, he says, is not in us. So he's not talking about sinless perfection.

Rather, he is saying that insofar as we are walking in the light, as we are believing in Christ for salvation, loving God, loving neighbor, insofar as we are doing these things, he will not be a terminal detriment to himself or to his brothers and sisters.

In other words, he is bound to prevail. That the victory, the salvation, the final vindication is provided by grace through faith from our Lord.

From beginning to end, he began the work in us and he will bring it to completion. That is what John's describing. There is no cause for ultimate, fatal, stumbling.

Praise be to God. Now, in closing, I just want to offer a few additional applications in light of our text.

[33:40] Some of them may seem fairly obvious, but that's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. John's a fairly obvious writer, very direct. But number one, walk with God in church community.

Walk in the light with the brothers and sisters, if you want to use John's words. And what does this entail? Well, this entails the regular and meaningful reading of scripture with brothers and sisters. Of course, we do this on Sundays and that's the chief gathering of the church in which we faithfully obey that. This includes in homes, this includes with one another in discipleship contexts and just regular Christian fellowship.

It should be normal. This entails regular and meaningful prayer with brothers and sisters. I'll just say to you, please come to the Sunday evening prayer meeting.

Admittedly, it's one of the hardest ones to get to. I totally get that. I have littles. It's a hard time.

Usually, my wife has to stay and we work that out. I understand the challenge, but I promise it's the most rewarding.

[34:47] It is so great to pray with the church in an intimate setting like that. Come and you will be blessed. I would add, if you don't already have a habit of doing this, pray through the members directory.

Thankful I made the cut. text the person you are praying for to ask how you can specifically be praying. If you're a man, text the men.

If you're a woman, text the women. I'll just tell you as one encouraging example, one of the many examples of love in this church, for me particularly, has been Daniel Tipton.

I just want to commend him. In particular, for reasons unbeknownst to me, maybe he just sees it as a great need. But he's been texting me regularly to let me know, that his family is praying for me during their family worship and my family.

I don't really know why that started, but it's been such an encouragement to me. So I just share that with you to say, what a good thing to do. What a loving thing to do.

[35:52] This entails singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to one another. This entails hearing the word preached and taking the Lord's supper together. And sure, it means the ordinary means of grace.

being an active, meaningful member of your church. Not just showing up on Sundays, but being present, and then also being open and hospitable Monday through, well, the whole week, but you get the idea, right?

All the time. Application number two. This one might seem out of left field. Practice regenerate church membership.

In other words, be a Baptist, right? Jamie Dunlap makes the following point in his book, Love the Ones Who Drive You Crazy.

In his introduction, he says that his entire book, which as you can guess, deals with loving church members that are not so easy for you to love for whatever reasons, doctrinal differences, personality.

[36:55] He's an Ohio State fan, get that one. You know, really difficult people. And he warns that everything in his book, all the advice he's going to give you, all the biblical teaching, the motivations, the truths therein, the foundations that the Bible itself gives for the new covenant community and why it is we are able and must love one another assumes a Baptist ecclesiology, it assumes regenerate church membership.

And so this is why we constantly in the New Testament see the command love your brother, not just another. I was really proud of that.

So if you practice a mixed community as our Paedo Baptist brothers do, or if you do not guard the membership and just let whoever in as they walk the aisle as some of our so-called Baptist brothers do, or perhaps worse, don't even practice membership, then all that the New Testament says to encourage and establish love among the brotherhood in those difficult relationships is robbed of its power.

In that scenario, we aren't of the same spirit, because you're letting somebody in who doesn't have the spirit, which is one of Paul's big appeals for Christian love, or of the same spirit.

Conversion. We've all been converted. That's what he's saying. And so we save ourselves a lot of heartache, a lot of confusion, a lot of difficulty in loving our fellow members when we do the hard work on the front end of ensuring to the best of our ability that new prospective members are true Christians.

[38:45] Otherwise, you are inviting the blind, aimless one who hates his brother into the fold. And so brothers and sisters, let's work together to guard the membership, to practice regenerate church membership.

Don't just leave that to the elders, though they lead us in that. But we're a congregational church. It's every member's responsibility to do this. And some of you are thinking he's telling us now, you know, but I'm in.

So application number three, understand where we are in redemptive history. This is not just high brow theology for sake of high brow theology.

This is not just nerd stuff. This matters practically, day to day, for every Christian. John's word for us today only makes sense when one has a deep understanding of the, what you might call the meta narrative of scripture.

That is the overarching story from Genesis to Revelation and how God's redemption has worked itself out through his covenants. Right?

[39:58] No one can begin to fathom what John means just in our passage alone by this old new covenant without understanding how the storyline of scripture unfolds and the developments therein.

And so practically, this means a few things, means a lot of things, but I'm going to share a few. Read and reread your Old Testament. Right? Know the story for yourself.

And this one probably needs more unpacking. So you have more time in systematic theology and more time in biblical theology. Okay?

If you don't know the difference, again, come August 1st, progressive cow. But when you spend more time in biblical theology, in other words, when you study the whole storyline of scripture, the actual text, the actual God-breathed stuff, and not just Brudum or Frame or MacArthur or whoever, as great as those guys are, you're going to have a much better understanding.

You're going to see a lot of pitfalls when people only read systematics and don't actually pay attention to the storyline of scripture. And it's just going to bless you. It's going to bless you. You're going to be closer to the Lord.

[41:10] I mean, that's just easy math. More time in the Bible, more time with God. That's not rocket science. And no, I'm not saying no time in systematics. I'm just pleading with you that it's God's word that's inspired and inerrant and infallible and good and all these things.

Spend more time in that and then work out to those things. Another implication of this is pay attention to how the covenants, which reveal God's redemptive acts in each period of redemptive history, build on one another and culminate and climax in Jesus Christ.

Only when you pay attention to that will you see how the Bible truly fits together and be able to approach these really hard questions about the law, the Sabbath, should you still be circumcised, and a whole bunch of other stuff related to politics, nations, all the rest.

If you're really into Christian nationalism, which I hope you are, but if you are, this will save you from that. So please pay attention to that storyline. And then the fourth application, the most obvious one, and the one that I'm not going to say a lot about, because again, we've got two more weeks to talk about it, but application number four, love one another.

And so again, if you want to know more about that, come the next two weeks, but I will tell you now a bit of a not-so-secret tease. Look to God, right? That is the key. We're going to see that right away next week in 1 John 4.

[42:44] And so, before praying this out, I just want to say how excited I am for these next two weeks. People have asked me, what made you come back for the second time?

If you don't know, I've been a member here now three times. I've moved for seminary and jobs and come back and different things. And people ask, why did you come back? And I always tell them, it's because I heard the plumbing got fixed.

In all seriousness, Crohn's awareness, by the way, in all seriousness, it is love for you all. I have family here.

I mean, I mean, literal biological family. Some of my closest friends since college are still here. but I mean all of you.

And as I said earlier, one of the amazing things is my wife and I know how loved we are here as well. Nobody loves perfectly. You don't, we don't. And yet, oh my goodness, so much love.

[43:54] And so I mention that to say it is so good when brothers and sisters dwell in unity. So I just want to remind you all as an encouragement that this is a true church marked by true love.

Praise God. And I'm so thrilled to unpack more of that in the coming weeks. I won't talk about progressive covenantalism, most likely, but I will be talking about love.

My love for you, your love for me, and our shared love for our risen Savior, our God who is love and from whom love flows. Let's pray.

All right.