

Love Is

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Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 0 0] amen it's Christmas I've become convinced as much as I like warm weather hot weather I think I love the Christmas season even more it's a time of faith renewal for me I'll pray for you as well maybe a time of once again remembering why I do this why I serve as a pastor why I follow Jesus this is it has so many distractions to that spiritual renewal every single Christmas I have to fight to focus on what Christmas is really about for me it's always work maybe for you too maybe it's just getting busy with the trappings of the holiday and the shopping and the cooking and the planning and all that

I so many distractions I want to encourage you don't let it don't let us slip by this Christmas try to dive in into the mystery of the incarnation dive in into the mystery of the God man and the first advent the coming of Christ dive in don't let this Christmas go by without deep reflection and meditation and prayer in the word of God about what it is what it is we celebrate and we get to do it every day actually but it's still special this time of year am I right this time of year is still special even Hallmark gets excited I'm joking so we're studying Christmas is love the real love of Christmas 1 Corinthians 13 is where we find ourselves now with today we dive into the portion of it that is most memorable to all of us let's pray

Father as we come to your word now as we come to reflect deeply upon what it means that Christmas is love what love is according to you not according to Hallmark or according to our love songs but what love really is so teach us will you teach us we all need we all need to understand and grow in love so please help us what a great time to reflect upon love at Christmas what a great time but it's also a hard time some of us have lost loved ones and so we are hurting we think of certainly our sister Brianna Taylor who is saying goodbye to her father Lord we think of her we think of so many others Lord we think of our dear sister Anne who is lost who we have lost and members of our church have lost oh Lord have mercy

Christmas is not always the most easy time to rejoice because of loss so help us to see Jesus so that we might be lifted up we pray for our brother John Rice who just lost his mother I think even this morning Lord bless him and comfort him oh Lord in the midst of sorrow give us the joy of Jesus the joy of the Lord a joy that goes beyond our circumstances give our elders joy as they serve in a difficult time oh Lord help us we all need your joy so help us to sense feel and experience anew your love nothing will give us greater joy than to know that we're loved by you and through that we can love one another so bless your word now and use your unworthy servant to bring it to preach in love and for love in Jesus name amen first

Corinthians 13 well are you going to start at 31 okay we'll back up at 31 I see it up on the screen we'll start there 12 31 I'm going to read through down to verse 8 but earnestly desire the higher gifts and I will show you a still more excellent way if I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love I am nothing if I give away all I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love I gain nothing love is patient and kind that's our text love does not envy or boast it is not arrogant or rude it does not insist in its own way it is not irritable or resentful it does not rejoice at wrong doing but rejoices with the truth love bears all things believes all things hopes all things endures all things love never ends amen that is the word of the lord please be seated thank you again praise team so much praise beautiful music thank you choir man that was beautiful too

[6 : 1 3] I'm not much of an I was never an English major matter of fact I think my English got better barely studying Greek and Hebrew in seminary you had to know some you had to go back and remember what's a preposition so I'm going to take a stab at something when you say something is something you are giving an important description of it God is speaks of being what you are what it

is the building is is large that's a description of that building it is not small that person is a liar that's a significant significant description of that person he or she is not in a habit of speaking the truth

God is love that is a significant description of the character of God the Bible actually says that in 1st John 4 8 and verse 16 says it twice in one chapter God is love and when the Bible repeats itself it means get this in his very being God is love he is the author and giver of love the greatest lover who's ever been God God love would not exist without God and Jesus is the supreme expression of God's love and therefore of love period you want to see the greatest picture of love love don't go to a painting don't go to your favorite music the greatest picture of love is Jesus supreme nothing even comes close to the love of God in Christ Jesus when Jesus came down at Christmas

God's greatest expression of love became human let me put it this way more theologically correct when the second person of the Trinity came down at Christmas and became the man Jesus we saw the supreme expression of God's love so if we truly celebrate Christmas we are celebrating divine love a divine love love that has that has impacted our lives personally but also collectively as a church what we are doing is celebrating that magnificent awe-inspiring heart-rending soul-searching life-transforming love of the living God therefore those who celebrate this divine love should be the most loving people on the planet so how's your love life this Christmas last time we saw how important love is without it nothing great gifts great gifting great speech even great personal sacrifices mean zero on the scoreboard of heaven without love when we experience the love of Jesus that love is meant to be expressed through us not just soaked up by us like a sponge so what God has to do is squeeze his love out of us so that those around us get wet so now we're going to begin to look at the various expressions of that love of God in Christ as seen in his disciples these descriptions are really descriptions of Jesus put Jesus name in the text

Jesus is patient Jesus is kind Jesus is not envy or boast that's true that's accurate that's what this is about but do something more scary put your name in the text Kevin is patient Kevin is kind Kevin does not envy or boast keep on going it's real quiet in here because you're like me aren't you you're cringing I did it and I'm still cringing I did it in my studies and I'm still cringing because I know how short I fall of this I know I know me a little bit I need you to help me see me sometimes but I know me a little bit and when I look at that text and I put my name there I go the same thing you're going help me

Lord help me Jesus and that's exactly what you should be doing that's exactly the expression we should all be having right now help me I want that I want you to squeeze that out of me pour it in me and squeeze it out of me and one of the best methods God uses for squeezing the love out of us is dealing with difficult people or difficult circumstances it seems the first description of Christ like love and maybe even to some degree the second does exactly that as we look at this detailed description of love I want you to understand one thing they're all verbs patient love is patience love is kind all of those are verbs love is not something we say or believe it is something we do it's what first John 3 18 says little children let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth he doesn't mean we should talk and say we love each other doesn't mean we shouldn't he just says if that's all you got you ain't got it bad English good gospel

[12 : 58] I know because there's much talk about love I mean really how much talk it rolls off our tongues I love you but it's what we do that gives the truth or the lie to what we say if you tell someone you love them and then treat them in an unloving way that's called a disconnect and we need God every day in Christ by the power of his spirit to make us more consistent lovers are you praying for your love so in these first two descriptions what love is remember this is the only time he says that these first two verse these first two love is all the rest love is not until we get down further in close into verse seven so today love is we see that

God's love is patient passively patient and actively kind toward others first of all Christmas love triumphs over hardships patience has to do with being slow to anger it means long suffering it would be the opposite of having a hair trigger on your anger this implies a measure of internal and even external control in a difficult circumstance while waiting so patience implies waiting and here's the beautiful thing about the scriptures what we see God himself is described over and over again as slow to anger as patience I'm going to show you some verses so hang in there Exodus 3 4 6 this is the Lord this is after the people had sinned with the golden calf and Moses asked to see the glory of God the Lord passed before him and proclaimed the Lord this is his covenant name all caps Yahweh the Lord the Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger there it is and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness Nehemiah 9 17 and 18 they refused to obey and were not mindful of

the wonders that Nehemiah is praying to God they were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt but you are a God ready to forgive gracious and merciful slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and did not forsake them they should have been forsaken but God is patient and long-suffering how about Psalm 103 verse 8 the Lord is merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love his patience is why the prophet Jonah ran from God and would not go to

Nineveh that's why Jonah didn't want to go he knew how long-suffering God was and so because remember Nineveh was God was Israel's enemy so he wanted them dead wiped off the face of the earth now after he finally got the message and preached his incredibly short and condemning sermon you're all gonna die God this is what he said to him you're all dead 40 days or 30 with us and you're all dead what a message where is the gospel in that right you think now that's legalism but it was true it was true but here's what happens Jonah 4 2 because God brought a revival in Nineveh and he prayed to the Lord and said oh Lord is this not what I said when I was in my country that is what I made haste to flee to Tarshish for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster that's why I didn't want to go he's whining but he knows the Bible and notice the same phrases appear

I just gave you examples from each genre of the Old Testament from the history from the law to history the what's the word I'm thinking of my poetry and then the prophets all say the same thing about God and it includes time and time again he is slow to anger you think we need to know this but here's another thing think about how many centuries the God had patiently waited from Adam's first sin to Christmas day you're talking about patience playing the long game from I mean God knew what he was going to there was no what are we going to do let's think about it no it was already the plan but I couldn't have waited let's do it now you know get it done but God ain't me he ain't you centuries millennia go by before Christmas comes all the years of humanity's destructive rebellion and even

[19:03] God's own people's fickle hearts towards him and he waited and Paul puts it this way in Galatians in the fullness of time God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law in the fullness of time God waited centuries he waited he waited for actually he did it he caused the Roman empire to rise up and he waited because he had ordained it and Jesus is born at just the right time just the right moment Christmas shows us the great patience of the God of heaven and when we see Jesus then we see Jesus walking among us do you see his patience do you see his patience when he begins I mean let's just jump to his beginning of his ministry let's just jump forward

I mean there's patience before that he had to mature like us the son of God had to grow up that just blows my mind all by itself then at 30 he begins his ministry and for three years he with patience put up with a group of people who were trying to kill him the whole time you ever want to you ever been hunted by folk can you imagine for three years there's a group of powerful people who want you dead Cornell and they are watching for an opportunity to kill you can you imagine living under that and they have the power to do it only thing standing between you and them is God Jesus with patience endured their tricks their traps and they finally got him when God was ready do you see do you see his patience with his disciples how they failed time two of them wanted to kill folk let's call down fire

James and John said the sons of thunder let's call down fire on those folk do you got Peter he with the shoe sized mouth always putting his foot in his mouth you got their lack of faith when they couldn't cast out the demon and Jesus is like how long should I be with you oh you little you know he's putting up with his disciples their lack of getting it he's telling them he's going to die they don't get it he's telling them who he is they don't get it fully they're still thinking it they don't get it aren't you glad he's patient with disciples Paul comments on the Lord's great patience towards him and us for our salvation here's this beautiful first Timothy 1 15 to 16 I think I put three that's the way it should be 1 15 just so you know he says the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost but I receive mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost the foremost of sinners he's saying Jesus might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life do you see it he's saying listen if Jesus could save me and I was a slayer of saints I was a killer of terrorists to

Christians if he could be patient with me while I was on my way doing thinking I was doing it's amazing how we think we're doing God's service and wrecking things God and God God God God God God God God God God was patient with me not that he said Paul was right but he didn't wipe him off the planet because he was going to save him don't you see it that's what he's been with you

I don't know when you came to faith in Jesus some of you may have grew up in a Christian home and you don't remember a day when you weren't a Christian God bless you thank you thank God I hope my children would feel that but some of us have my testimony and we didn't grow up in a Christian home and I realized the patience of God how he saved my life deep stuff like drugs and whatever he saved me he was patient he waited he didn't just let me go and even if you were born in a Christian home your parents have a testimony your grandparents said somebody got a testimony God was patient with your family believe me and he's still patient with us think about that how patient has the Lord been with you even this week and rejoice the old saying is true patience is a virtue how many times have you prayed as you dealt with someone difficult

[24 : 46] Lord give me patience especially if you are a parent we are so impatient with each other have you noticed that I put it this way we demand immediate change or at least they plan for immediate change immediately we leave marriages jobs churches because and other things because we want change right now deal with your sin or problem or I'm out baby as if we ourselves we forget that we ourselves change very slowly let's be honest with that I can't tell you how many times God has to point his finger on something in my life before I go oh that's what you're saying you mean I have a problem here for the hundredth time my wife has told me or the thirtieth time someone else has told me or the hundredth time

I read it in the scripture I see it now and God has been waiting the whole time not falling off the throne not going off angry you know having a his seafid around heaven he's been waiting patiently for you and we're not speaking of ordinary human patience here we're speaking of the type of patience that is only produced by the spirit of God because of the love of God revealed in Jesus this is not just ordinary patience this is spirit empowered patience it's Galatians 5 the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control it all it sounds very similar to first Corinthians 13 in many ways but the spirit is what is who produces this patience in us because we are united to Christ and we are trusting in him and that's who's doing the work he is creating the image of Jesus in us as we go along and walk with him this

Christmas patience this Christmas love is patient because it is the image of Jesus and sometimes he has to do it through many times it's through the hard spaces and through the difficult people the story is told of a well-known Christian theologian who was traveling out of town speaking at a conference I can kind of slightly relate his flights were badly delayed you've been there so he arrived at his hotel all worn out when my wife and I went to Bali and I had to preach there for our missionaries and we hit seven airports before we got to Bali we were flying at the time when China when there was I think was it Beijing where they were having the outbursts and protests and they shut down the airport that was our airport so we thank God they caught it so we were stuck here in the states and not stuck there but with seven airports it took us three days to get to Bali same clothes for three days I understand what this man this is a true story about what this man went through he goes he gets to the hotel worn out he goes to the desk clerk and after looking for several minutes the clerk tells him you know what he says right he tells him I don't see your reservation at this moment it was the last straw the one that killed the camel's back you know that one and this guy he lost it his temper flared he flew off the handle the clerk now the clerk is a bit taken back you know they're trying to help you but they can't do anything but he kept working he kept working he finally found him a room and so when the theologian signs in the clerk in awe and amazement looks at his name and says are you really Dr.

so-and-so from blah blah seminary I'm trying to protect the guilty he says I just became a Christian a few months ago what an honor to meet you mayday mayday mayday pull me out Scotty beam me up Michael somebody come get me I mean come on haven't you experienced that I mean have you ever experienced that when you you get outed it reminds of what Paul says in Romans 12 12 rejoice in hope be patient in tribulation be constant in prayer why do I choose that did you see do you see what's going on there in the middle is it on screen no you don't have that one Romans 12 12 you have can you find it don't worry about it just follow me rejoice in hope in the middle be patient in tribulation last be constant in prayer notice this patient and tribulation is surrounded by

two other attributes rejoicing in hope constant in prayer look at the friends it keeps
[30 : 12] I think Paul wrote that like that for a reason he wanted us to get this listen patience in tribulation patience in hardships comes to us as we are rejoicing in hope we are looking past the situation towards the future we know God is still good and will be good to us on the other side of this tribulation that's where we start we gotta have hope without hope you will never have patience without hope we give up without hope people die so we got so hope is important hope again looking to Christ looking to the fact that God has a plan looking to the fact that you know you are safe and secure in his hands that's one now watch this on the other side constant in prayer because saints patience doesn't just come now God in his grace sometimes just pops it he'll hit you with something and you'll wonder why your heart rate never went up that happens

I know that happens but most of the time you have to pray your way through you have to pray your way through because prayer says I'm dependent I don't have the resources to deal with this tribulation I don't have the resources to be patient Lord I want you to fix it now if you don't fix it now I'm going to pitch a hissy I wonder how many hissy we would not pitch if we prayed I'm just saying God gives patience through our union with Christ as we trust in him for the future and call upon him in prayer lastly there's one other point and we're gonna oh boy maybe never mind we'll come back to it next week

I'll have to do extra work here but in college I remember I wanted to be live on campus but I didn't kind of hard to live on campus when you live in the city where you're going to school mom didn't want to spend that money shame on her so I never had the dorm room experience the roommate experience but my daughter three of my daughters have had that experience I'm so glad they have it you know sometimes you have they've had good roommates and they've had some bad roommates we don't talk about the bad ones the good ones were patient and kind actually if they forgot to clean up the dishes they didn't get beat up and blasted by the roommate you know patience and when they got sick their roommates will help take care of them you know soup you know showing them patience and care and kindness

Jesus can be thought of kind of like a roommate he's the most patient roommate you ever had more patient than your spouse mom and dad he's the one who when you screw up and you do when you mess up when you sin he doesn't throw you out the family doesn't turn his back and say I'm done with you doesn't leave you he's he says come here I love you come here I've been waiting for centuries to have you come here think about it he's waited centuries to have you millennia to have you you can't get more patient than that so he's not going to turn his back on you now because you're messed up he's patient and kind we didn't get to kind we'll get there next week but and kind he cares for you he's a great roommate but he's more than that he's a soulmate he has lovingly actively invaded your soul by his spirit so he so that he not only does for you with patience he is doing in you and through you it is through you that he wants to show his patience to the world it is through you as you relate to others and you are long suffering and forgiving that that goes along with long suffering and forgiving that you don't write people off right away because they blew it that you're not so easily moved to abandon people to I mean

Christian marriages when we divorce we're saying I've lost my patience with you that's not the way he wants to display his long suffering through you that's his doing in you and through you he is changing you into his image every day so that you grow in patience with those around you is this what you're seeking with all your heart this kind of love not just his love for you because you got that the question is are you are you seeking for his love to flow through you to others in patience who is Jesus calling you to show loving patience to right now can I ask you that can I can I just be honest who is he right now you know it's somebody or somebody's who is he calling you right now to display patience

[36 : 24] I'm not saying I'm not saying that if you're in a situation where you're being beat up just wait no call the cops get the authorities I'm talking about relationally maybe even your job don't be so quick to quit your job I've seen Christians do this for many many years quit their jobs don't have a job to go to don't do that he's calling you to walk to patience making hair trigger split second decisions out of anger will ruin you and ruin relationships and ruin people he's working in this to bring you to patience where is your hope and are you praying and are you calling upon the love of Christ to work in you to transform you do it today find that person pray for that person how's your love life father in

Jesus name we recognize that patience is not our virtue we struggle with patience or we we see it in our driving lord we see it in the holidays in the long lines we have to suffer through in the traffic and we we see it in the frustrations that we go through around this season because we take on to do too much forgive us lord for our lack of patience and work in us such a love for those around us for our family for our church for our friends for our neighbors even for our enemies work in us your patience so that Christ might be seen in us in Jesus name amen