**God’s Love Completed in Us**

**The Word**

Read together 1 John 4:7-21

**The Big Idea**

God’s extravagant love for us wants to find its fulfilment in us as we love others with the love we’ve received from him. As we become more rooted and grounded in his love, we are then able to offer that love to others from a place of fullness.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Much was said about God’s love on Sunday, both in terms of its nature and its purpose. What was most impactful to you regarding the love of God?

2. In light of the inherent connection John is making between experiencing God’s love and loving others, consider these two questions. 1) Can a non-Christian be genuinely loving? 2) Are there “jerks” who are, despite their jerkiness, still authentic Christians? If so, how can that be?

3. On Sunday a slightly different interpretation of v. 18 was offered that suggests “completed love” is a better translation than “perfect love.” What was being suggested there, and how does that add to or change your previous understanding of that verse?

4. Consider the image of a tree with its roots deeply grounded in the soil, enabling it to produce healthy fruit. How “rooted and grounded” in God’s love to you currently experience yourself, and what is one proactive thing you could do to more regularly be rooted and grounded in his love?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. God’s love for us

 A. “God is love” (v. 8, 16)

 B. God has demonstrated his love in a concrete historical event

 1. God gave his “one and only” son as an atoning sacrifice for us (v. 9-10)

2. Every time we see a cross, we should be reminded that we are loved with an extravagant, sacrificial love

II. Coming to know and rely on God’s love for us (v. 16)

A. The idea is we come to trust in God’s love over time through experience

B. There’s a big difference between being loved and actually knowing and relying on that love (consider the story of Josie)

C. Faith sends roots down into the foundation of God’s love

1. Paul prays that we would be “rooted and grounded” in Christ’s love (Eph 3)

2. John reminds us that we are the “beloved” (v. 7, 11). He wants us to find our identity in God’s love. He referred to himself as the “beloved disciple”

III. God’s love completed in our love for one another

A. John’s main point is that God’s love wants to be “made complete” in our love for others (v. 12, 17, 18, 19)

 1. Made complete = “telos” = the end or goal for which something was made

2. So God’s love for us has a specific telos in mind: that we then offer that love to others with the love with which we’ve been loved

3. “No one has ever seen God” (v. 12), and the invisible God wants to make himself visible through our acts of love towards each other

 B. This is why love is the litmus test of authentic faith

1. Everyone who doesn’t love doesn’t know God no matter what they claim (v. 8, 20). They may simply love something other than God (theology, spiritual feelings, morality, self actualization and personal growth)

2. Everyone who does love knows God (v. 7, 12)

a. Seeing the fruit of love in our lives gives us great confidence regarding the day of judgment (v. 17)

b. Seeing the fruit of love in our lives removes fear of punishment (v. 18)

IV. Conclusion

 A. Loving others is very difficult when we are not grounded in God’s love

1. When not grounded, we become needy, and when needy we pursue our own personal agendas (I need to avoid, please, control, impress, be right, be respected, be successful, etc)

2. When I pursue my own personal agenda, I am not free to love and consider what someone else needs

 B. Our first and primary task each day is to ground ourselves in God’s love

 1. How can you do that this week?

2. Scripture, worship, creation, silent reflection, etc.