

# Authentic LOVE

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## Sermon Synopsis

In a stirring message delivered from the stark beauty of the Judean wilderness, the site of Jesus' temptations and the parable of the Good Samaritan, the sermon on 'Authentic Love' implores Christians to embody the love of God in a world rife with suffering and injustice. Here, Dr. Wilson draws on the stark contrast between the elevation of the Holy City and the depths to which a man fell victim to thieves, only to be rescued by a Samaritan's selfless love.

The sermon delves into the narrative of the Good Samaritan, a tale that transcends time and culture, urging believers to become agents of divine love. The Samaritan's actions are dissected, revealing the essence of true compassion: a willingness to see the need, to be moved by it, and to respond regardless of personal cost or societal boundaries. In the heart of the Judean wilderness, the preacher challenges the congregation to not only walk in the footsteps of the Good Samaritan but to also extend their hands in service, mirroring the love that God has for each of His children.

Amidst the sermon's call to love, the preacher introduces the work of King of Kings Community in Jerusalem, a beacon of hope and love in action. Senior Pastor Chad Holland speaks of tangible love through service, emphasizing that the gospel's power is magnified when paired with acts of kindness and humanitarian aid. The narrative weaves through the Manna Soup Kitchen, the King's Kindness distribution center, and the Redeemed in Zion ministry, all facets of King of Kings' mission to demonstrate God's love through practical support and kindness.

The sermon then transitions to the Hatikva Project, an embodiment of the sermon's message in the modern context, where Evan Levine, the executive director, outlines their multifaceted mission. From providing financial aid to believers, facilitating adoptions and foster care, to offering affordable dental care, Hatikva Project exemplifies authentic love by addressing the

physical and spiritual needs of the community. It is a testament to the sermon's core message: love in action can transform lives and bear witness to the reconciling power of Christ.

Concluding with a powerful exhortation, the preacher offers ten practical steps to live out authentic love, urging believers to pray with compassion, listen to God's voice, and act both personally and systemically in response to the needs around them. The sermon closes with a reminder that in a world where many are left wounded by the wayside, the followers of Christ are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to love authentically, and to change the world one act of kindness at a time.

## Sermon Highlights

- Authentic love acts selflessly and intervenes in the lives of the hurting, as demonstrated by the Good Samaritan, who went out of his way to aid a man beaten by thieves.
- Our faith calls us to express love not only in words but through our actions and truth, loving our neighbors as ourselves, which fulfills the commandments of God.
- The ministry of Jesus is exemplified by meeting people's tangible needs, just as various ministries in Jerusalem like King of Kings Community and Hatikva Project reach out in service to their neighbors.
- Authentic love compels us to pray for compassion, listen to the Holy Spirit, see the need as our call, and respond both personally and systematically to the needs around us.
- We are challenged to exemplify Christ to others by living out the ten practical points of authentic love, which include
  - praying for others
  - listening to God regarding others
  - making others' needs our call
  - acting intentionally and spontaneously
  - practicing hidden generosity
  - walking in when others walk out
  - responding personally and systemically
  - checking back with people
  - following what love demands
  - being Jesus to the world

## Scripture Verses

### 1 John 3:18

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

### Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

### Luke 10:25-29

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal would like?' 'What is written in the Law?' he replied. 'How do you read it?' He answered, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.' But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

### James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

### 1 John 4:16-17

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among and so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

### Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

## Quotes

- "We're not here to impress you on Sunday. We're here to help you on Monday." - Chad Holland
- "Pray for people until you have compassion on them." - Dr. Billy Wilson
- "Make their need your call." - Dr. Billy Wilson
- "Walk in when others walk out or when others walk away." - Dr. Billy Wilson
- "Do whatever love demands." - Dr. Billy Wilson

# Bible Study

## Objectives

- To deepen understanding of authentic Christian love through examination of the Good Samaritan parable.
- To identify instances where we can exhibit Christ-like compassion in our daily lives.
- To develop a practical action plan that reflects the love of God in tangible ways.

## Reading and Reflections

- Luke 10:25-37 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan as a clear illustration of authentic love.
- 1 John 3:18 - The call to love not only in words but in truth and action.
- Matthew 22:37-40 - The greatest commandments highlighting the importance of love.

## Key Observations

- Authentic love is active and sacrificial, not passive or self-serving.
- The Samaritan's actions were countercultural, reflecting God's love to those who were not 'expected' to receive it.
- Jesus challenges conventional understanding of 'neighbor,' expanding it to all of humanity.

## Personal Reflections

- How often do I cross the road to avoid involvement in someone else's suffering?
- When have I last shown spontaneous generosity without seeking recognition or reward?
- How does my life reflect the two greatest commandments in practical ways?

## Lessons for Daily Life

- Love requires action, often demanding personal sacrifice or inconvenience.
- Authentic love sees beyond social, ethnic, and religious barriers.
- Our definition of 'neighbor' should not be limited by proximity, but by compassion.

## Practical Applications

- Offer help to someone outside your normal circle of friends or community.
- Volunteer time at local shelters, soup kitchens or in community services.
- Be intentional in listening and responding to the Holy Spirit's guidance to love in unexpected moments.

## Challenges for the Week

- Identify one person or family in need and take concrete steps to assist them.
- Spend time in prayer each day for the compassion that leads to action.
- Commit to one act of hidden generosity this week.

## Further Study

- Read and meditate on the book of 1 John, focusing on the practical outworking of love.
- Study the life of Jesus in the Gospels to see how he exemplified love in action.
- Consider how the early Church in Acts demonstrated love to one another and their community.

## Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the truth of Your Word that guides us to love not only in speech but in deed and in truth. Grant us the courage to be Your hands and feet to a world so in need of Your compassion. Strengthen us this week to be mindful of those around us who are hurting, and give us the wisdom to know how to minister Your love to them effectively. May our lives reflect the love of Christ in all that we do, and may Your Holy Spirit guide us in authenticity and purpose. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

# Daily Devotionals

## Day 1

### Scripture Verse

Luke 10:33-34 - 'But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.'

### Reflection

In the vast expanse of our daily encounters, we often cross paths with souls bruised by life's relentless beatings. The parable of the Good Samaritan is not just a tale from the past, but a present-day call to embody Christ's love in action. Consider the Samaritan, a man whose very identity was a barrier, yet he crossed societal divides to tend to wounds not his own. He poured out oil and wine, symbolic of healing and sacrifice, and placed the man upon his own means of transport, elevating the injured above himself. Reflect upon your journey. Are there not many lying by the wayside, robbed of joy, stripped of dignity, and left to languish in despair? You are called not to pass by. The Samaritan's actions were not convenient; they were costly. Yet, he chose mercy over comfort, action over apathy. Let this narrative ignite within you a fervent desire to seek out the wounded, to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to love not just in word but indeed. As you go about this day, be vigilant, for your Jericho road awaits, and on it, someone in need of the love you can give.

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, grant me the eyes to see the wounded and the heart to care for them. May Your love flow through me as I seek to be a vessel of Your healing and peace. Amen.

## Day 2

### Scripture Verse

1 John 3:18 - 'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'

### Reflection

The essence of our faith is authenticated by the love we demonstrate. John admonishes us to transcend the boundaries of mere lip service and to venture into the tangible expression of love. Reflect on the last time your actions spoke louder than your words. In the simplicity of a shared meal, the warmth of a given coat, or the comfort of presence in a time of sorrow, love is made manifest. It is the silent prayer with a friend, the unexpected help to a stranger, the dedicated service to those in need. Consider the widow or the single parent in your community. How can your hands serve as an extension of God's provision for them? Love in action is not a grandiose display but often a quiet, consistent giving of oneself. It is in these acts that truth is revealed, and the love of Christ is made known. As you go about your day, be intentional in your actions. Seek out opportunities to embody the truth of the Gospel through practical means. Let your life be a testament to the love that speaks, acts, and lives through you.

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, inspire me to express Your love in practical ways today. May my actions reflect Your heart and Your truth to everyone I encounter. Amen.



## Day 3

### Scripture Verse

Matthew 22:37-40 - Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

### Reflection

At the heart of our existence is the call to a love that encompasses every facet of our being. It is a love that starts with an upward adoration for our Creator and flows outward in selfless affection towards our neighbors. As you meditate on these commandments, consider how they are interwoven. Your love for God is incomplete if it does not spill over into love for others. Reflect on how you have loved yourself and how that measure extends to those around you. It is in the mundane moments, the everyday interactions, that we often find the proving ground for this love. It is choosing patience in the face of frustration, kindness in the midst of hostility, and forgiveness when wronged. As you journey through today, challenge yourself to view every person as a neighbor, a fellow image-bearer of the Divine. Love them with the same fervor and dedication with which you pursue your own well-being. In doing so, you fulfill the greatest commandments and reflect the very nature of Christ to the world.

### Prayer

Gracious God, help me to love You with my whole being and to extend that love to every neighbor I meet. May my life be a living echo of Your love. Amen.

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