



Message Series -

“...By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you **love** one another.” John 13:35

OVERALL QUESTION: What does **Love** “**LOOK**” like from the outside?
How will someone **see** that you “love one another”?

Today - # 3: **Mature** Love

Colossians 3 / Ephesians 4

 Get your Journal out or you phone to take notes!

Opening Prayer

- Take us on a journey
- Open our ears and hearts
- Stop us from being offended
- Convict us to align with you
- Help us to grow!
- Expand your kingdom, thy will be done!

Every message in the Series will land the same way

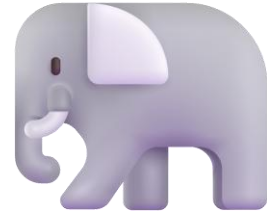
Gospel, application, accountability.



- A reference to Jesus and His good news
- One clear practical **application**
- One **action** to take this week
- One person to **share** it with that was not here today
- One close friend to **spur** you on and **support** each other in this task
- **Each will only help you grow stronger – no condemnation intended.**
(If you are struggling let me know.)
- But... **get comfortable with being uncomfortable**

Review Previous Messages

- Who can remember what they were about?



Review: Message 1 - Speech

Speech is a 2-Sided Coin: **Heads** - Build people up, **Tails** - Tame the tongue, stop gossip.

**Every word you speak is either
building the 'Church'...
or burning it down. (Eph 4/James 3)**

Challenge: Have you started outdoing one
another in giving others honour? (Rom 12)

Review: Message 2 Wise Love

Wise Love is a 2-Sided Coin: **Heads** – Carry your own Loads, **Tails** – Help Carry what is impossible for others to carry themselves (team sport).

**“Don’t do for someone what God is expecting them to do!
But always help with what they cannot do alone.”**

Challenge: Did you find one load to start carrying, one burden to help someone with, and someone to share this with? (Gal 6)

Something Beautiful is Happening!!!...

- We were going to preach: Week 3 - “Serve One Another” Acts 2-4
- But many of you... are just doing it!
- People stepping in Helping quietly Checking on each other with Practical care
 - Meals
 - Furniture
 - Repairs
 - Transport
 - Support
 - Encouragement
 - Prayer
- 👉 That is what healthy love looks like Keep it up – OUT DO EACH OTHER -- “By this everyone will know...”

But...

- As people get closer... friction increases.
- Real community is messy.
- The closer the family, the more opportunities for offence.
- 👉 Love is easy at a distance. Love is tested up close.
- As stated last time REAL LOVE COSTS!

Today: We Must Have **Mature** Love

- The Three Coins
- One truth – One coin with two sides

(In your small groups go over this again
SOS: Say Obey Share & Use Your Coin)

Forgiveness & Bearing With One Another

- Colossians 3:12–14
Ephesians 4:31–32
- “Love **does not** keep score.
- Love **absorbs** cost.
- Love **chooses** to preserve the relationship.”

Colossians 3:12-14

- ¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ **bearing with one another** and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other**; **as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.** ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Ephesians 4:31–32

- ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

One Coin – **Mature** Love - with Two Commands

Heads - Command 1

- **Bear With Each Other**
- (Patience / Endurance / Long-suffering)
- **But...** You can put up with someone *without* forgiving them!

Tails - Command 2

- **Forgive Each Other**
- (Release / Cancel Debt / Reconciliation, **Let Go**)
- **But...** Some people “forgive” but *walk away* from the relationship as it is just easier

Only together do they form mature love.
The Holy Spirit can help you pursue reconciliation
where possible.

Heads: To Bear with One Another

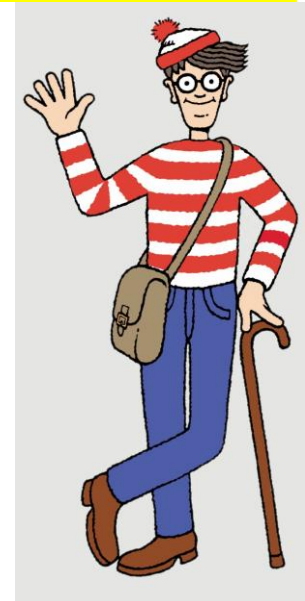
- Endures (Put up with) their weakness
- Stays relational
- Opens up conversation not shut it down
- Helps them to grow in Christ
- **Model Assist Watch and Launch** is discipleship. (MAWL)
- First **model** what you want them to do!
- Don't quit quickly
- Make room for immaturity
- Remain patient
- ***Bearing with weakness is not the same as tolerating ongoing destructive sin***

Tails: Forgive One Another

- Graciously Release debt
- Refuse scorekeeping
- Absorb cost
- Cancel revenge
- Let bitterness die. (It's a pill that will only kill you.)
- **Forgiveness is an ongoing choice not a feeling or eliminating the problem by walking away!**
- 👉 “Love absorbs the cost instead of keeping score.”

Best Example: Good News of Jesus Christ

- For **all** have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23)
- For the **wages** of sin is **death**, but the **free gift** of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 6:23)
- ...but God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)
- Here's the catch....
- **Col 3:12 & Eph 4:32**
- **“As the Lord forgave you, so you also **must** forgive!”**



- You offended God infinitely more than anyone has offended you.
- Yet Christ:
 - Moved toward you
 - Absorbed your debt
 - Paid your cost
 - Offered reconciliation (a way back to God)
- 🙌 The cross is forgiveness with nails in it.

As stated, Real Love always costs you something

- The three coins...
- Why is money valuable?
- Because someone absorbs the cost.
- **A shiny coin** fresh from the mint has never been through circulation.
- But **a worn coin**?
- That coin has bumped into thousands of other coins.
- Handled. Scratched. Slightly Bent. Dented. Dropped. Lost and found.
- Yet it still has value!

Christian community is like that

- If you stay close to people long enough, there will be friction.
- Churches are full of broken sinful people. That includes you and me! (“Stuck in Traffic”)
- But **mature love** does not throw people away because of scratches and dents.

- As people get closer...
friction increases.
- Real community is messy.
- The closer the family,
the more opportunities for offence.
- 👉 Love is easy at a distance.
Love is tested up close.

These verses assume:

- People **will** -
 - annoy you
 - Misunderstand you
 - Fail you
 - Disappoint you
 - Sometimes wound you
 - 👉 **Friction is not proof love failed.**
It is proof people are involved.

Two real coins... and one counterfeit.

- Some relationships look like love on the outside...
- ...but are counterfeit underneath.
- 😊 Smiling outwardly
- 😡 Bitter inwardly
- 🤝 Polite publicly
- 🗣️ **Gossip** privately
- 🕊️ Avoiding conflict
- ❄️ Building distance
- 👉 Fake peace is not real peace.
- Real love forgives honestly.

The Danger

- **Unresolved Offence Becomes Poison**
- Small offences become:
 - Bitterness
 - Distance
 - Coldness
 - Suspicion
 - Gossip**
 - Division
- Many churches do not explode overnight.
- They slowly freeze.
- “Mature love deals with wounds — it does not hide them.”

Forgiveness Is NOT:

- **Pretending** nothing happened
- **Calling** evil good
- **Avoiding** healthy boundaries
- **Instant** trust restoration
- **Excusing** abuse or sin
- **Enabling** people to continue to sin or not grow in Christ.
- 👉 Forgiveness releases revenge. It hands judgment to God.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation Are Not Always the Same

- Forgiveness can happen in the heart immediately.
- But reconciliation requires:
 - Repentance
 - Truth
 - Safety
 - Trust rebuilding
 - Change over time
- Some relationships become healthy again.
- Some require distance, boundaries, or leadership involvement.
- 👉 Forgiveness releases revenge. Wisdom determines access.

What Love Does

- **Love Absorbs Cost**
- Forgiveness always costs someone.
- Jesus absorbed OUR debt.
- Now we are called to:
Absorb offence
Release bitterness
Refuse scorekeeping
- 👉 “Love keeps no record of wrongs.”
(1 Corinthians 13)

Keeping it Real: Some People Are **Hard** To Love

- Some are **immature**, regardless of their actual age
- Some are **wounded**
- Some are **exhausting**
- Some **repeatedly fail (As I do! I'm just better at hiding it.)**
- And yet...
- God has had to “bear with” us too.
- 👉 Humility changes everything.

- “For if you **love** those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the **tax collectors** do the same?”
- And if you greet only your **brothers**, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” (Matt 5:46-48)
- I want to say: ‘Take a teaspoon of cement and harden up’ but my wife tells me I can’t say that.
- **Not** every discomfort is a **crisis**. Sometimes we need **support**. Sometimes we need **resilience**. Ask for both! (In prayer and from your brothers and sisters.)
- **Start being self-aware**, look at yourself as others may see you. Continue to grow and become more like Christ so you are easier to love and have the capacity to love others more.
- 🙌 Forgiven people **learn** to forgive people. To bear with others as God bears with you.

What does the scriptures mean by 'offense'?

Many churches confuse:

- discomfort
- personality clash
- preference disagreement
- conviction
- immaturity
- Disagreement with Hate Speech
- actual sin/abuse
- **...and treat them all equally.**
- That creates either:
 - **hypersensitive churches**
OR
 - **abusive churches.**
- We are aiming for mature ***discerning*** love.

Scratch or Wound? (This is **NOT** two sides of a coin!)

Some things are:

- **Scratches**
- Just irritating friction
- Others are:
- **Wounds**
- (real sin/damage)
- Both matter...
but they are handled differently.

Scratches (“Bear With One Another”)

- These are usually:
 - personality friction
 - preferences
 - immaturity
 - misunderstandings
 - annoyances
 - style differences
- These require:
 - Patience
 - Humility
 - Conversation
 - Perspective
 - Grace

Examples of “Scratches”

- **Preferences**
- “They changed the music.”
“I don’t like that style.”
- **Personality**
- “They are loud/blunt/quiet/emotional.”
- “They were insensitive.”
- **Minor Social Friction**
- “They forgot to include me.”
“They interrupted me.”
“They didn’t say hello.”
- **Ministry Differences**
- “They organise differently than me.”
“They lead differently than I would.”
- “I don’t like the songs”
- **Maturity Differences**
- “They are still growing.”
“They say awkward things sometimes.”
- 👉 These are usually “bear with one another” moments.

Wounds (“Forgive / Confront / Protect”)

- These involve:
 - real sin
 - damage
 - abuse
 - betrayal
 - destruction
 - ongoing unrepentance
- These require:
 - Truth
 - Repentance
 - Forgiveness
 - Sometimes boundaries
 - Sometimes leadership involvement

Examples of Real Wounds

- **Hate Speech / Slander**
- Public humiliation
 - Racist abuse
 - Malicious gossip
 - Character assassination
- **Betrayal**
- Affair
 - Deep deception
 - Financial dishonesty
- **Abuse**
- Manipulation
 - Control
 - Spiritual intimidation
 - Violence
 - Predatory behaviour
- **Ongoing Destructive Sin**
- Repeated unrepentant behaviour harming others
- **Serious Division**
- Deliberately splitting relationships
 - Creating factions
- 🙅 These are NOT “just bear with it” situations.

Very Important Distinction

- “Not every irritation is abuse.
- But not every wound is merely irritation either.”
- Balance and wisdom are gained during our walk with God.
- “Love covers many irritations... but love does not protect evil.”
- “Some things require patience. Some things require repentance.”

Before Acting, Ask Yourself:

Side	Theme	Question
Bear With	Daily friction	“Will I stay?”
Forgive	Real wounds	“Will I release?”

Lord, what does love require here?

One Pastoral Warning

- Some Christians misuse:
- “Bear with one another” ...to silence wounded people.
- Paul NEVER meant:
 - tolerate abuse
 - ignore evil
 - protect predators
 - avoid accountability
- Biblical love includes:
 - truth
 - safety
 - repentance
 - restoration
 - Wisdom &
 - GRACE

Practical Grid For Your Guidance

Situation	Mostly “Bear With”?	Needs Confrontation?
Different personality	YES	Usually no
Awkward social moment	YES	Usually no
Ministry preference	YES	Usually no
Immaturity	YES	Sometimes gentle correction
Gossip	NO	YES
Slander	NO	YES
Manipulation	NO	YES
Abuse	NO	YES immediately
Racism/hate speech	NO	YES
Adultery/deception	NO	YES

The Two Extremes to Avoid

- **Ditch 1 — Avoidance**

- Withdraw

- Ghost people

- Stay offended

- Silent punishment

- **Ditch 2 — Fake Peace**

- Smile outwardly

- Resent inwardly

- Never address issues honestly

- 🙌 Biblical love tells the truth WITH grace.

“Practical Wisdom”

- **How To Bear With One Another:**
- **Slow** down
- **Ask** questions first
- **Assume** less
- **Listen** longer
- **Pray** before reacting
- **Speak** privately first (Matt 18)
- **Refuse gossip** – (talking about or listening to)
- 👉 Most conflict grows in the dark.

Diagnostic Questions

- Who am I still holding?
- Who do I avoid?
- Whose name changes my attitude immediately?
- What offence am I replaying?
- Have I asked God to forgive me more than this?

Call to Action This Week

- Pray for one person you struggle with;
Refuse gossip or scorekeeping;
Start one hard conversation gently;
Release one offence to God.
- And:
Who will you share this with
that was not here today?
- Who will ask you if you did it?

Conclusion

- Mature love:
Stays soft
Tells the truth
Lets go of bitterness
Keeps showing up
- 👉 “Bear with one another... forgive one another... and above all these put on love.”
- **“Bearing with, can give relationships room to grow. Forgiveness, heals the relationship when it is wounded.”**



Prayer:

- “Lord, teach us to love each other like You loved us.”