SERMON NOTES

Walking in the Way of Love

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Nexus Church
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Ephesians 4:22 - 5:2

opening prayer

Invite Holy Spirit to guide our conversation and transform us from the inside out. Forgive us for trying to manufacture love through our own effort, or waiting for grand, spectacular moments to make a difference.

ice breaker

When you were a child, what is one thing you did or believed that reflected a kind of fearless, unlimited love or generosity? What changed as you got older?

overview

- **Identity fuels love.** Love stems from being a dearly loved child of God, not from trying harder.
- **Love is a walk, not a backflip.** It is found in quiet, daily, consistent choices rather than dramatic gestures.
- **Speech reflects the heart.** Gossip, slander and secondhand offence quietly erode community; our words show where our hearts truly lie.
- **We are recreated beings, not just improved.** Encountering God's love creates a real transformation within us.
- **Surrender your brokenness.** Handing our flaws to God—rather than hiding them—allows His love to flow to others. Unresolved brokenness can block the flow of love.

go deeper

Bernard of Clairvaux's four degrees of love outline the spiritual journey of the human soul as it matures in its relationship with God.

1. The first degree, loving oneself for one's own sake, is the most natural and instinctive starting point, where we seek God primarily for personal benefit, comfort, and meeting our own needs.

2. As faith deepens, the soul progresses to the second degree: loving God for what you get from Him. At this stage, God is still valued largely as a provider of blessings, protection, and grace, but our focus begins to shift upward toward the Giver rather than just the gifts.

3. In the third degree, the believer moves into loving God for God's sake. This is a profound turning point where love becomes truly selfless; God is loved simply for His own infinite goodness, beauty, and character, independent of what He provides for us.

4. Finally, the fourth and highest degree is loving oneself only for God's sake. In this ultimate state of redemption, even self-love is completely reoriented, and we see ourselves entirely through God's eyes—fully loved, redeemed, and recreated to reflect His glory.

application 01

The Direct Words Experiment

Make a conscious decision not to let secondhand reports about what someone thinks or said about you affect how you treat that person. Notice what shifts in your relationships and bring your observations back to the group.

application 02

If there is a part of your story, your struggle, or your brokenness that you have been keeping at arm's length from God because you assumed he could not use it, bring it to him in prayer this week. You do not need to have it resolved -- just hand it over and ask him what he wants to do with it.

closing prayer

Help us to rest securely in our identity as your dearly loved children. Teach us what it means to simply walk in love—steady, daily, and right in the middle of our ordinary routines, our neighborhoods, and our relationships. Guard our speech, heal our hidden brokenness, and let your grace flow naturally through our everyday words and steps.