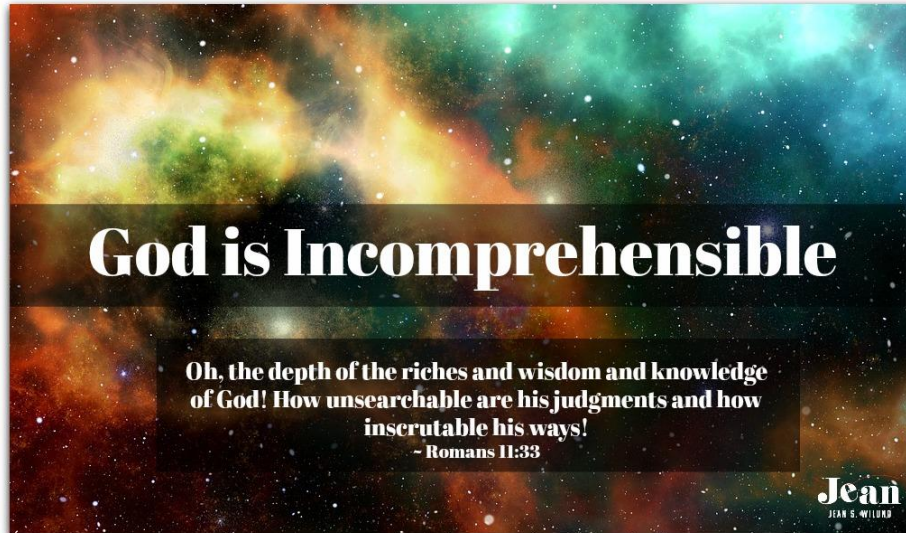




Welcome back to our Winter preaching series entitled **THIS IS US: The Beloved Community!** For six weeks, including Black History Month, we are exploring the ancient-future articulations of God's dream for a **NEW HUMANTIY** summarized in Ephesians 2. We are affirming the **CONTINUOUS STREAMING CONTINUITY** of the prophets of old, of Jesus the Son of God and our Savior, of the Apostles of the NT, and thousands of brave saints throughout the centuries leading up to MLK and beyond, who have all lifted their voices in one accord for a world, and a people, that will...

***"...do justly, to love mercy,  
and to walk humbly with your God"***  
***Micah 6:8 NKJV***

People who chose to live this way have chosen the way of Jesus and are forming with others what **MLK** called "**THE BELOVED COMMUNITY,**" what the **Bible** refers to as "**The Kingdom of God.**" It is heaven's greatest aspiration: it is the reason Jesus came to live and die among us: It is the hope of our tomorrow: and this vision is paramount to humanity moving from surviving and suffering to thriving and uniting. It is very much, in human terms, an **INCOMPREHENSIBLE** vision.



<https://jeanwilund.com/god-is-incomprehensible/>

When you hear the word – **INCOMPREHENSIBLE** – what comes to mind? Not understood; unexplainable; impossible; unfathomable, far outside the scope of reality/possibility. Unintelligible; unsolvable; doesn't make sense or add up. For most of us, we could say that would be true for the worlds way above our pay grade: worlds like Nuclear Physics, Astrophysical Fluid Dynamics, DNA genome sequencing, and the brave new world of Artificial Intelligence quantum learning algorithms.

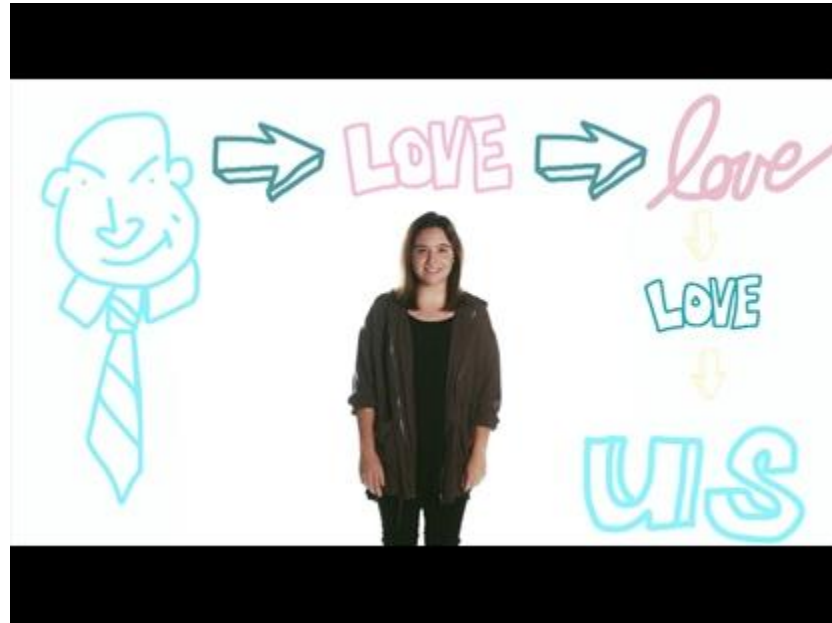
Some would rightly say that **GOD IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE**. The Apostle Paul essentially did: (read quote -Romans 11:33). But there is also another realm closer to home that is equally baffling when applied correctly: That is the **INCOMPREHENSIBLE LIFE** that is based upon what the Bible calls **Agape LOVE**. It is both the engine and the foundation of this new family God is recreating---The Beloved Community---The Kingdom of God. That will be our focus today.

If we are to become the "Beloved" community envisioned in scripture, we must die to self and live through the unimaginable, inconceivable, incomprehensible LOVE of Jesus Christ. ***How many of you already know that PERFECTION is rather impossible to emulate?*** The only way we can love as God does, is to be "born of God" and "know God." It is only by receiving and experiencing His sacrificial love to us, that we can then learn to live with, and express, the same sacrificial, gracious love to others.

But where will we learn of this love? Who can reinforce its life-giving message? The people at **YOUTHMINISTRY360 Video production team**

**remind us that** our society sends us a radically different message on love than does scripture: Let's lift our eyes to the screen and listen in.

**Roll video: This Is Love**



<https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/94209/this-is-love>

And now we know ***the secret-sauce recipe***: "***Because of His love, we can truly love others!***" The elderly church statesman, the Apostle John, makes this perfectly clear. Love is so much deeper than the infatuating and fizzling drizzle we find in culture.

**Read 1 John 4:7-8 NIV**

**7 Dear friends, *let us -- love -- one another*, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been *born of God* and *knows God*. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.**

The **Apostle John is in his 90's** when he writes these reflections and admonitions. By that time, your high-mileage unit has learned a lot of life-lessons, even as your body withers. The famous **Christian entrepreneur, J.C. Penny** once said of his decrepit age, "***My eyesight is diminishing, but my vision is increasing.***" Turns out, there's a **different way of "SEEING"** just like there's a **different way of "LOVING!"** John was never

clearer about what mattered most when he penned these words to Christians everywhere in the ancient world. When it came to God, there was really only one thing on his mind. Famous **American Theologian, A.W. Tozer** once said,

***"What comes to mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you."***

**A.W. Tozer**

So, what comes to mind when you think about God? The world has many responses: Tyrant? Legend? Myth? Lord? Creator? Detached? Uncaring? Aloof? Shepherd? Lover? Healer? Hope bringer? For the Apostle John, that one thing was **LOVE!** It was his deepest association with God and his clearest admonition for human discipleship. In our short, two-verse text today, we heard that word played over five times. Like a redundant note in a song, there are **five key points** that John makes here (about love) that I want to lift up before us today. Five points that are foundational for **CREDIBLE DISCIPLESHIP (=people who not only say they believe in and follow Jesus---but actually do)!**



**THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE **CALL****

**"Let us" = the pressing, urgent, and unending cry for all Jesus followers in joint, united action.**

Theologians and Koine Greek linguistic teachers call this grammar the "Hortatory subjunctive." This means the force of a very **STRONG EXHORTATION**. It is the **Bible's version of an "ALL-HANDS-ON-DECK"** clarion call to engage in something profoundly important.



**THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE **COMMITMENT****

**“Love” = The non-emotive-dependent,  
unconditional, engaged demonstration  
of adding value into other people’s lives.**

As we shared last week, love is a verb in action, and not a feeling that surfaces when times and circumstances are good and pleasant. Love is a deferential orientate of my life towards the other, with the goal of spending my attentive and affirming energy to enhance their personhood. It’s never easy putting others before yourself, but this is the way of Jesus. This is a non-partisan commitment to be applied across the board of human life, no matter what!



**THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE *COMMUNITY***

**“One another” = The Body of Christ, the household  
of faith, your spiritual siblings.**

**MUTUALITY** is the **MAGIC SAUCE** of Kingdom life in God’s vision of the new humanity. One another means a PLURAL application where everybody is ALL-IN on role-modeling this way of life. Paul reminds the Galatian Christians; “let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10). Jesus reminds us, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35 NIV).



**THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE *CAUSE***

**“Born of God” = Empowered into a new way of  
living by God’s Spirit and strength.**

God’s righteous ways are foreign and alien to us. Heaven’s love is not native to the soils of our hearts. A transplant is necessary for new life to emerge. Ezekiel says, “And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in

you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart" (Ezekiel 36:26 NLT). Nothing inside of the old me is ready for, and capable of, such radical love. Only with a new heart and spirit from God, can we love as he loves. This is precisely why Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born again!" (John 3:3)



## THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE **CHARACTER**

**"Knows God" = Familiar with God's character, nature, and essential attributes through relationship and shared experience.**

To Know God is to get that every action, intention, demonstration, and every occasion and apparent circumvention are all expressions of nothing but **LOVE** from Heaven. His discipline and His delights; His comfort and His correction; His plenty and His puny; His lightning speed and His long-suffering. Everything from the throne of Heaven is all an expression of **LOVE** since that is all God is, has ever been, and will ever be. **LOVE** is not merely the **ACTIVITY** of God, but rather the **UNCHANGABLE NATURE** of God. He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

Most people are **no longer interested in apologetic and rational explanations** as to the existence of God. People want to see it, taste it, feel it, touch it! The **most indestructible proof** people can have and witness today is the ***incomprehensible and unlikely love Jesus followers can have*** for one another in their diversity. Dr. Tony Evans is spot on here:

**"All of the praying, preaching, worship, or bible studies in the world can never bring about the fullest possible manifestation of God's presence like functioning in a spirit of oneness in the body of Christ"**

**Dr. Tony Evans**



Pastor Heather Zempel, from National Community Church, when speaking about the incredible, irresistible nature of God's love, as the source of **IRRESISTABLE, compelling change** reminds us with this metaphor:

Many years ago, as a parent, if I wanted you to fall in love with our daughter Caitlin, I wouldn't talk so much about her accomplishments, her grades, achievements and unique personality and creative interests. I probably would have pulled out one of our thousands of pictures like these:



A lifetime of story could be written from these images. I would hope that when you see what I see, you too will be convinced! Adorable, feisty, strong, confident, and in charge, living larger than life! This has always been our daughter from day one! Images you can't really explain, but pictures nonetheless that soften your heart and draw you into a compelling story. Pastor Heather Zempel then asks this penetrating and provocative question:

## **“What pictures of God are we showing to the world?”**

**Pastor Heather Zempel**

The Bride of Christ, the family of Jesus followers, are supposed to be living together in a way that shows pictures to the world of God and His love that are **IRRESISTABLE, INCOMPREHENSIBLE, INCONCEIVABLE, and UNCONTAINABLE** about the love of God through Jesus Christ. Francis Schaffer, renowned theologian and philosopher, spoke on the foundational importance of our unity as the manifest proof of god's love. He said:

# “Our oneness is the final apologetic”

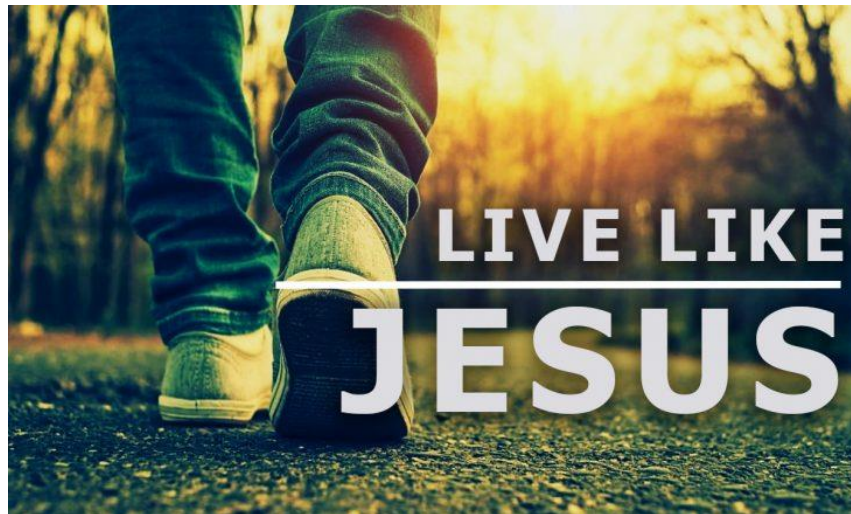
Francis Schaffer

*Rational, logical, indestructible proof of God*

There is no argument or rational explanation that can even hold a candle to that which is visually and experientially unexplainable and unbelievable except to say that -- God must be in this. ***That’s why Jesus challenges his disciples as he prepares to depart them and leave His mission of barrier-breaking and people—unifying in their hands:***

## “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”

John 13:35 NIV



<https://forestparkchurch.org/sermons/walking-with-jesus/>

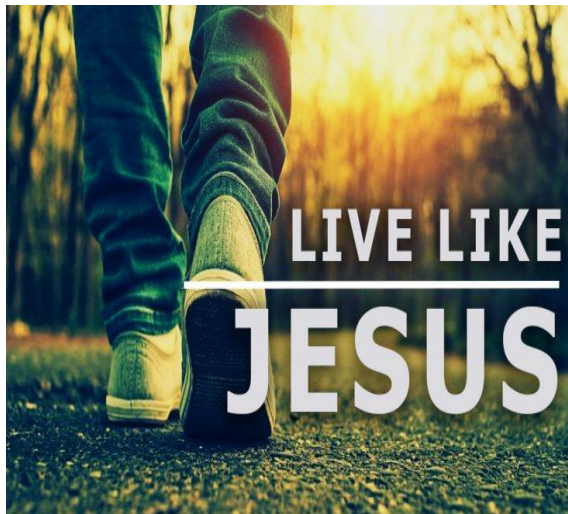
Let me close with these thoughts: ***People fall in love with Jesus because of an irresistible vision or experience with Him through others!*** We are supposed to be those “OTHERS” today! Can we (together) give PICTURES of God’s love to the world that are Incomprehensible?



Unexplainable? Astonishing? And Compelling? Can we do life together in a way that says we've learned how to transcend our differences and to live as ONE? Can we live in such a way that the LOVE OF JESUS becomes the ONLY explanation for why and how we are all still together? Here's how we can love each other well:



- **Show attentive interest in them**
- **Validate their personhood and story**
- **Share time and experience together**
- **Listen to and learn about each other**
- **Befriend and prayer for each other**



- **Identify what bothers you about this person**
- **Rise above this difference and stay in the story**
- **Agape Love knows no bounds**
- **Agape Love measures no cost**

Let's pray!