

WELCOME TO  
**THE ROAD.TV LIVE**  
**CHURCH**  
**WHERE YOU ARE**

**8.2.20**

**THE CHANGE QUESTION**

**I John 4: 7 - 13**

Brother Rick begins his message explaining the nicknames applied to the apostle John, author of the book of I John. The "son of thunder" and the "beloved disciple."

Rick then asks, "So how do you go from being a "son of thunder" to the "beloved disciple"?  
Answer: You change.

Rick : One of the great recurring themes in this book is the theme of love. God's love for us and our love for each other. There would be no better person to guide us through a study of love than the guy whose life was changed so much by that love.

Ask a group member to read: I John 4:7-13

Ask and discuss: From where does love come?

Answer: Love doesn't start with you, love starts with God.

Rick: Skip down to verse 19 for just a moment—We love him because he first loved us. Love did not start with me, it started with God. The truth is God's love for me started long before I was even born. Before I was born God knew me, loved me and had a plan for my life. Even if I never love God back, God still loves me. Love would not exist without God!

Ask and discuss: How do we learn to love?

Rick: We learn to love by being loved. Step out of the spiritual for a moment - where did you learn to be husband/wife? From watching your parents. For most of us love the way we were loved. If you were never hugged when you were a kid, you have a harder time hugging when you become an adult. If your family never said "I love you" then you probably have a hard time saying "I love you." We learn to love by being loved. That is why how you love your mate is important, because your kids are learning how to love their future mates.

Love begins with God. God is Love. We learn to love by observing how God loves.

Ask and discuss: How does God demonstrate His love for us?

Answer: Three ways...

**GOD LOVES IN LIFE**

Ask a group member to read: I JOHN 4:9

Rick: God's love is not an idea, it is not an intangible. There was a moment in time when God's love became real. When God's love was born in a manger. When God's love walked on this earth. When God's love ate, slept and laughed as a man. He was alive. He healed, He loved, He served, He gave. He lived for us. The life He lived eventually led to the second way God loves

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**GOD LOVES IN DEATH**

Ask a group member to read: I JOHN 4:10

Rick: So, John, who is completely overwhelmed by the love of God, takes it to the next level. God not only sent His Son in the flesh as a great demonstration of His love, God allowed His Son to be put to death for your sins. Sins He Himself never committed.

Ask a group member to read: John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

Rick: The Son of Thunder, the guy who would wipe out an entire city because they ticked him off, that guy came to be loved and now he is overwhelmed by this love. Look at I John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God."

John is beginning to understand what love really is when he begins to look at how much God loves him. Let that sink in. You and I will begin to understand real love when we study how much God loves us. Have you ever really understood that the Bible is a book about God creating you and pursuing you!

This is not just John, it is also Paul also.

Ask a group member to read: Ephesians 3:17-19 "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."

Rick: The great people of Christianity did not understand love until they understood how God saw them. This is the main point of this message...

**GOD LOVES THROUGH US**

Read I JOHN 4:11

The incredible simplicity of the gospel - Love God, love each other.

Ask group members: What did Jesus say was the greatest two commandments?

Ask a group member to read: Matthew 22 : 34-40

Rick: While the truth is simple the practical living of that truth is one of the hardest things we ever do—because at our core we are incredibly selfish creatures. So where do we start? We start with what we have already covered in this message....

If you want to love others well, take a long look at how God loves you.

Rick: This is why it is so important for you and me to spend time in God's Word. It is through God's word that we learn how much God really loves us. Start there. How much does God love me? Realize that what God has called us to is to love others like He loves us. You can't love others like God loves you if you don't know how God loves you.



Ask group members: Why is loving others often so difficult?

The main reason we run into difficulties in loving others is sin, both ours and that of those we try to love. Humans are fallen creatures. Apart from God and His power, we are selfish, and loving ourselves comes much more naturally than loving others. But love is not selfish; it seeks the best for others (1 Corinthians 13:5; Philippians 2:3).

Another reason it can be difficult for us to love others is that we sometimes misunderstand what true love is. We tend to think of love as primarily an emotional response. The problem is that we cannot always control our emotions. We can certainly control what we do because of the emotions, but too often the emotions themselves just happen. But the kind of love God calls us to have for others is the same kind that He has for us. It is agape love, the essence of which is sacrifice. God's love for us is a sacrificial love, the kind that sent Him to the cross for our sins. He didn't save us because we were lovable; He saved us because His love caused Him to sacrifice Himself for us. Do we love others enough to sacrifice for them, even when they are not lovable? Loving others is a matter of the will and the volition, not the emotions.

Ask group members: How does Jesus love?

So let's stop for a moment and think of all the pictures God gave us of His love.

The picture of creation - God created us. That's pretty big! God gave us life.

The picture of God sustaining us.

Acts 17:28 "In Him we live and move and have our being."

The picture of God choosing us through adoption

Romans 8:15 "We have received adoption as sons by which we cry out - Abba Father."

So watch this progression—I created you, sustain you and choose you through adoption. And, I will show you even further how much I love you...

4. I will purchase you.

1 Corinthians 6:20 "For you have been bought with a price."

Ask group members: What other pictures could God give us?

How about a father waiting on his prodigal son to return, or a shepherd desperately seeking for a single sheep?

The better we understand God's love for us, the better we will love those around us.

Love means I have responsibility to my family.

Ask group members: What is Brother Rick saying when he says love is not so much about passion as it is about responsibility?

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Rick: We have allowed our culture to redefine what love actually looks like to us. Our culture makes love look like passion and desire. That is a relatively new perspective on love. Throughout history love has looked like responsibility. Parents arranged marriages. People married someone who was part of a small community to help meet the needs of the family. To help run the farm. I love my mate because that is what I am supposed to do. I feed my family because that is what I am supposed to do.

Love means I provide for the family. I Timothy 5:8 "If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." True again on every level - we provide because we love. For our biological families, but also our spiritual families.

Love means I protect the family. Philippians 2:4 "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also the interests of others."

We have a responsibility to each other. Because I love you I care what is happening in your life. I refuse to turn my back or ignore something that needs to be addressed.

Ask group members: What are my responsibilities to my spiritual family?

Love means I serve the family. You serve your family at home because you love them. If you don't serve them there is a genuine question about whether you love them. Because Jesus loves us He came as a servant. If you love other Christians, you serve them. If you love the church, you serve the church.

God loves the worst you as much as the best you.

Ask group members: Do you love others like this? Who do you have in your life that is living their worst life right now? Do you love the worst them as much as the best them?

God died for us at our worst, in the midst of our sin, when we were totally unlovable. Romans 5:8

In John 13:34 Jesus taught, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Then He added, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (verse 35).

In giving this command, Jesus did something the world had never seen before - He created a group identified by one thing: love. There are many groups in the world, and they identify themselves in any number of ways: by skin color, by uniform, by shared interest, by alma mater, etc. One group has tattoos and piercings; another group abstains from meat; yet another group wears fezzes - the ways people categorize themselves are endless. But the church is unique. For the first and only time in history, Jesus created a group whose identifying factor is love. Skin color doesn't matter. Native language doesn't matter. There are no rules about diet or uniforms or wearing funny hats. Followers of Christ are identified by their love for each other.

Final question: Am I changing? Can I look at my relationship with others and see an absolute change in how I love?