

A WALK THROUGH LENT with 1 John

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|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1) Walking in the light | 1:1 - 2:2 | Week beginning | 23 rd Feb |
| 2) Walking in fellowship | 2:3-17 | Week beginning | 2 nd Mar |
| 3) Walking in the truth | 2:18-29 | Week beginning | 9 th Mar |
| 4) Walking in love (1) | 3:1 - 4:6 | Week beginning | 16 th Mar |

5) Walking in love (2)

1 John 4:7-21 week beginning **23rd Mar**

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| 6) Walking in life | 5:1-21 | Joint Service | 2 nd April |
| | | <i>Maundy Thursday</i> | 7.30pm St Andrew's |



READ: 1John 4:7-21 (The Message)

⁷⁻¹⁰ My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love—so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

¹¹⁻¹² My dear, dear friends, if God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!

¹³⁻¹⁶ This is how we know we're living steadily and deeply in him, and he in us: He's given us life from his life, from his very own Spirit. Also, we've seen for ourselves and continue to state openly that the Father sent his Son as Saviour of the world. Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God's Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God. We know it so well, we've embraced it heart and soul, this love that comes from God.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.

¹⁹ We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.

²⁰⁻²¹ If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

REFLECT:

1. What difference does it make to you to know you are loved—by people and by God?
2. John had a few lessons to learn about love in those first days when he started following Jesus. Look at these texts and see what characterised him and how he grew:
 - a) Mark 3:17 What characterised John (and James) that made Jesus give them this name?
 - b) What might the following texts tell us about John's character and how did Jesus react to it?
Mark 9:38-39
Mark 10:35-39
Luke 9:54
 - c) John 20:21 What might this tell us?
 - d) Possibly John was a loud/angry man—he wanted to be in control, to have power and glory; he could be impulsive and judgmental. Yet Jesus changed him and he became one of the three who were closest to Jesus. What does this tell you about Jesus?

1 John 4:7-10

3. So John had learned about love—through the school of experience. Why is love THE defining characteristic of those born of God?
4. What characterises God's love for us?

1 John 4:11-16

5. Which is more important: love or correct doctrine?

What sometimes characterises those who become ‘hot’ on doctrine? Might it have been the same for John (Mark 9 above)?

1 John 4:17-18

6. God is love—not ‘love is God’. Is there a critical difference?
7. How do you understand the connection between love and fear?

1 John 4:19-21

8. If we want people to see God in us, what needs to happen?

RESPOND:

9. v21: “The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You’ve got to love both.”
 - a) When people think about you, how much do you think they would say, “Oh, that person is such a loving person”?

Marks out of 10 _____

- b) In your life, where are the specific opportunities to show love to others? Name three of them:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- c) What barriers stand in the way of your growth in love?

Pray: Spend some time quietly reflecting upon the study; then ask for a fresh outpouring of the love of God into your heart by the Holy Spirit (see Romans 5:5 and Galatians 5:22).