



WEEK 3 – “Go Tell It” Series  
**Share the Story**  
Forest Park Church  
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Christmas is often described as a season of love—and that's true. But the danger is that we reduce love to a *feeling* we enjoy instead of a *gift* we carry.

We sing about love.  
We decorate with love.  
We talk about love.

But Scripture reminds us of something deeper:  
The greatest gift we have ever been given was never meant to stop with us.

God's love didn't stay in heaven.  
It came down.  
And because it came down, it must now go out.

## I. The Incarnation Is God's Ultimate Act of Love

**(1 John 4:9–10; John 3:16)**

“This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.” (1 John 4:9)

God did not love us from a distance.

- He did not send a message.



- He did not shout instructions from heaven.
- He did not offer advice and wait for us to figure it out.
- He did not wait for us to get our act together.

He came.

Love didn't stay safe and removed—love put on flesh.

Jesus stepped into our world.

- Into our weakness.
- Into our pain.
- Into our brokenness.

Not to be served—but to serve.

Not to condemn—but to save.

Think about the difference between saying you care and showing you care.

If someone you love is in the hospital, you can send a text that says,  
“Thinking about you. Praying for you.”

And that matters.

But when you show up—

- when you sit in the room,
- when you bring a meal,
- when you stay through the long hours—
- that kind of love costs something.

**Presence always costs more than words.**

That's what God did in Christ.

God didn't send a note from heaven.

- He didn't send a rulebook and say, “Figure it out.”
- He stepped into the room with us.



The Incarnation is God saying,  
“I will not love you from afar.”

**John 3:16** reminds us that God’s love is not vague or sentimental.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son...”*

Biblical love is:

- Intentional – God chose this.
- Costly – It required sacrifice.
- Giving – Love moves outward.

Love isn’t just something God feels— it’s something God does.

**1 John 4:10** makes it even clearer:

*“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

God’s love moved first.

God’s love moved toward us.

God’s love entered our story.

## (Communion Meditation)

*Romans 5:9–11*

At Christmas, we celebrate a gift.

We celebrate the moment when God stepped into our world—when eternity entered time and heaven touched earth. We picture a baby wrapped in cloth, lying in a manger. Gentle. Humble. Small.

But Christmas doesn’t make sense unless we remember *why* He came.

- Jesus was not born simply to teach.



- He was not born merely to inspire.
- He was born to die.

From the very beginning, the shadow of the cross stretched across the manger.

- The hands Mary held would one day be pierced.
- The blood that flowed through this newborn child would one day be poured out.
- The gift wrapped in swaddling cloth would become the sacrifice wrapped in our sin.

The apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 5:

*“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

*(Romans 5:9–10)*

The greatest gift God ever gave was not comfort or safety—it was reconciliation.

- Through the blood of Jesus,
- enemies of God were made His family.
- Sinners were made Holy.
- The separated were brought near.

At this table, we remember that God's love did not stop at Bethlehem. It carried Jesus all the way to Calvary.

- The bread reminds us of a body willingly given.
- The cup reminds us of blood willingly shed.

Paul goes on to say:

*“We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”*

*(Romans 5:11)*



So today, we don't just remember—we rejoice.

As we take communion, we remember that the greatest gift we have ever received was not placed under a tree. It was placed on the tree (Cross).

And because Jesus was born to die, and His blood was poured out, we now live in peace with God.

Let us take the bread and the cup together, rejoicing in the Child who came to die, and the Savior whose blood has reconciled us to God.

And here's where this becomes personal:

If God's love moved toward us, then our love cannot remain distant.

- We cannot love in theory only.
- We cannot love safely.
- We cannot love selectively.

Incarnational love shows up.

- It steps into hard conversations.
- It enters uncomfortable spaces.
- It moves toward people who are hurting, messy, or overlooked.

**For some of us, that means:**

- Showing up instead of scrolling past.
- Listening instead of fixing.
- Serving instead of staying comfortable.
- Loving people not when they've earned it— but when they need it.

Christmas reminds us that love is not proven by what we say—  
But by where we are willing to go.



## II. Christlike Love Changes How We See People

### **Philippians 2:3–5**

*"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,."*

### A: The Incarnation changes how we see people.

The Incarnation doesn't just change what we believe about God— it changes how we see people.

When the love of Christ truly settles into our hearts, it reshapes our vision. We stop looking at people primarily in terms of inconvenience or usefulness.

Instead:

- We see image-bearers, not irritations.
- We notice needs, not nuisances.
- We value people not for what they can give us, but because they matter deeply to God.

Think about how your vision changes when you put on the right pair of glasses.

- Before, everything is blurry.
- Shapes are there—but details are missing.
- People look like obstacles instead of individuals.

**But once the lenses are adjusted, suddenly you can see clearly.**

The Incarnation is like that for the soul.



## B: Before Christ, we often see people through the lens of self:

- How do they affect my schedule?
- How do they impact my comfort?
- Are they helping me—or slowing me down?

But when we take on the mind of Christ, our focus shifts.

People are no longer interruptions to our lives—they are the very purpose of our lives.

Paul tells us why this matters in Philippians 2.

- Jesus did not cling to His status.
- He did not hold tightly to His rights.
- He did not leverage His position for His own advantage.
- Instead, He humbled Himself.
- He stepped down.
- He took the posture of a servant.

The One who deserved the highest place chose the lowest position.

And Paul says, “Have this same mindset among yourselves.”

That's the heart of Christlike love.

## C: God's love moves us from:

1. self-protection → to self-giving
2. entitlement → to humility
3. convenience → to compassion

And let's be honest—this is hardest during the holidays.



- Crowded stores.
- Full calendars.
- Long family gatherings.
- Short patience.

This is when people feel more like obstacles than opportunities.

But this is also when Christlike love shines the brightest.

#### **What would it look like this season to:**

- Slow down for the person in front of you instead of pushing past them?
- Listen without defending yourself?
- Serve without being noticed?
- Assume the best instead of the worst?

Because humility isn't thinking less of yourself— it's thinking of yourself less.

When we choose to see people the way Jesus sees them,

- our homes change,
- our churches change,
- and our witness changes.

The Incarnation reminds us that God stepped down for us.

And now, empowered by His love, we are called to step toward others.

### **III. Love Becomes Our Witness to the World**

**(1 John 4:11; John 13:35)**

**1 John 4:11**



*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

John is very clear here.

- Love is not optional for the follower of Jesus.
- It's not an added feature of the Christian life.
- It's the natural outcome of receiving Christ.
- If God's love has truly taken root in us,
- it will inevitably grow outward from us.

When you Flip on a light

- You don't have to announce that a room is lit.
- You don't have to argue for it.
- You don't have to convince anyone.

Light simply reveals itself.

In the same way, Christlike love doesn't need a marketing campaign.  
It doesn't rely on clever arguments or perfect explanations.

- It shows up.
- And when it does, people notice.

## Conclusion:

Jesus said it plainly in **John 13:35**

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

Notice what He didn't say.

He didn't say people would know us by:



- how loudly we argue,
- how precisely we explain theology,
- or how well we win debates.

Those things have their place—but they are not our primary witness.

- People may question our beliefs.
- They may resist our convictions.
- They may disagree with our worldview.

But it is very hard to ignore genuine, Christlike love.

- Love disarms defensiveness.
- Love opens doors.
- Love builds bridges where arguments often fail.

When believers live with generosity, patience, hospitality, and mercy, the gospel becomes visible.

Love gives credibility to the message we proclaim.

It turns abstract truth into lived reality.

For many people, the first sermon they will ever hear is not preached from a pulpit— it's preached through how we treat them.

Especially during the Christmas season.

When the church loves well:

- lonely people feel seen,
- wounded people feel safe,
- skeptical people lean in.

The story of God's Love doesn't just get told— it gets shown.

God's love came down to us in Christ.



Now that love is meant to move through us  
into a watching world.

And when it does,

Christmas becomes more than a story we celebrate— it becomes  
a Savior we reflect.

### **Candlelight Close:**

