



Sermon Discussion Guide

12.18.22 Message | Steven Mayfield | Psalm 77:1-20

Key Scriptures:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 8:31-39

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

- 1 John 4:16-21

Message Highlights:

- Obedience flows out of affection, not fear.
- We live in a culture that creates fear that drives out love, when really we should be partnering with the power of God in our lives to love people the way he loves us.



- The love of God was made known through Jesus; recognizing his love for us solidifies our confidence that he is for us.

Conversation Starter:

Think of a school teacher you had growing up who won the respect and affections of his/her students. What was it about that teacher that caused such a healthy relationship with their students? Reflect on that relationship, and even any teachers who you may have had the opposite experience with.

Discuss the Message:

1. Read through 1 John 4:7-15; recount some of the attributes of God that magnify his personification of “love”.
 - a. How does our culture define love? How does that differ from God’s love?
2. Do you agree with Steven’s statement that obedience flows out of affection and not threat or fear? Why or why not?
 - a. Make 1 John 4:18 personal to you; how has God’s perfect love cast out fear in your life, even in situations where others may not have understood why?
 - b. How can you partner with God’s power to create a culture of love rather than fear in the place you spend your days (home, office, etc)?
3. How do you personally relate to the list Paul compiles in Romans 8:37-39 of things of which “we are more than conquerors through him”?
 - a. When it seems like something or someone in your life may be trying to separate you from the love of Christ, how can you reframe your perspective to remember that God himself is love?
 - b. Why can we say, with confidence, that, “if God is for us, who can be against us?”

Pray:

Father God, we come before you today, the author of love! There aren’t sufficient words to express our thanks and adoration for the gift of your son, Jesus, the revelation of your passion for your people. We pray your holy spirit would help us to lean into love and not fear. May we truly live by the truth that if you are for us, nothing and nobody can be against us! We love you, and we thank you for loving us first. In your Son’s name we pray. Amen.