

the true north sermon series

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## **Augustine on Love**

by

Aurelius Augustine

a resource of the Compass ministry of Camelback Bible Church

## True North Sermon #8

Brothers and sisters,

Do you know why you're here? Do you understand the purpose of your life? Sounds like a pretty complicated question doesn't it. In fact, it's very simple. Here's a clue: It has to do with the word 'commandment'. No, I'm not a closet legalist. But I am talking about obedience. Listen to what Jesus said:

*And one of them, a lawyer, asked [Jesus] a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40)*

He also said,

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34, 35)*

That just about covers everyone doesn't it?

One of our brothers from times past who thought deeply about this subject of love was Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo (modern Algeria), who lived from 354-430 AD. Augustine is one of the most important figures in church history, an influence in not only his own day, but also among those who would come later, including the Reformers.

I have gathered these selections from a variety of sources and have tried to put them in some sort of logical order. I pray that the thoughts and heart of this man will challenge you to fulfill your purpose more faithfully; to heed his words concerning love, "Take it, clasp it; there is nothing sweeter."

Seeking this love because of His love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryce", written in a cursive style.

Pastor Bryce

# Augustine on Love

Selections from the writings of Aurelius Augustine (354-430 AD)

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## A Passionate Love Inspired by God

(from *Confessions*, Book 10)

Late I have loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would not have been at all. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for you peace.

When I come to be united to you with all my being, then there will be no more pain and toil for me, and my life shall be a real life, being wholly filled by you. But since he whom you fill is the one you lift up, I am still a burden to myself because I am not yet filled by you. Joys of sorrow contend with sorrows of joy, and on which side the victory lies I do not know.

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## The Love of God in Christ

(from *Homilies on I John*; Homily 7)

*By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. (I John 4:9)*

“By this the love of God was manifested in us” Behold, in order that we may love God, we have exhortation. Could we love Him, unless He first loved

us? If we were slow to love, let us not be slow to love in return. He first loved us; not even so do we love. He loved the unrighteous, but He did away the unrighteousness: He loved the unrighteous, but not unto unrighteousness did He gather them together: He loved the sick, but He visited them to make them whole...As the Lord Himself says: "Greater love than this can no man have, that a man lay down his life for his friends:" and there was proved the love of Christ towards us, in that He died for us: how is the love of the Father towards us proved? In that He "sent His only Son" to die for us: so also the apostle Paul says: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how has He not with Him also freely given us all things?"

*"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another"* (I John 4:10, 11)

...We did not love Him first: for to this end loved He us, that we may love Him: "And sent His Son to be the Atoner for our sins...He sacrificed for our sins. Where did He find the sacrifice? Where did He find the victim which he would offer pure? Other He found none; His own self He offered. "Beloved, if God so loved us we ought also to love one another. "Peter," says He, "Do you love me?" And he said, "I love." "Feed my sheep."

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## **His Love for the Unlovely Makes Love Possible**

(from *Homilies on I John*, Homily 9:9)

*"We love, because He first loved us"* (I John 4:19)

"Let us love, because He first loved us." For how should we love, except He had first loved us? By loving we became friends: but He loved us as enemies, that we might be made friends. He first loved us, and gave us the gift of loving Him. We did not yet love Him: by loving we are made beautiful.

## Augustine on Love

If a man deformed and ill-featured love a beautiful woman, what shall he do? Or what shall a woman do, if, being deformed...she love a beautiful man? By loving can she become beautiful? Can he by loving become handsome? He loves a beautiful woman, and when he sees himself in a mirror, he is ashamed to lift up his face to her his lovely one of whom he is enamored. What shall he do that he may be beautiful? Does he wait for good looks to come? No rather, by waiting old age is added to him, and makes him uglier. There is nothing then to do, there is no way to advise him, but only that he should restrain himself, and not presume to love unequally: or if perhaps he does love her, and wishes to take her as his wife, in her let him love chastity, not the face of flesh. But our soul, my brethren, is unlovely by reason of iniquity: by loving God it becomes lovely. What a love must that be that makes the lover beautiful! But God is always lovely, never unlovely, never changeable. Who is always lovely first loved us; and what were we when He loved us but foul and unlovely? But not to leave us foul; no, but to change us, and from unlovely make us lovely. How shall we become lovely? By loving Him who is always lovely. As the love increases in you, so the loveliness increases: for love is itself the beauty of the soul. "Let us love, because He first loved us." Hear the apostle Paul: "But God showed His love in us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:" the just for the unjust, the beautiful for the foul. How do we find Jesus beautiful?...Because "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But in that He took flesh, He took upon Him, as it were, your foulness, that is, your mortality, that He might adapt Himself to you, and become suited to you, and stir you up to the love of the beautiful within...You are fair now: but stay not your regard upon yourself, lest you lose what you have received; let your regards terminate in Him by whom you were made fair. Be you fair only to the end He may love you. But do you direct your whole aim to Him, run you to Him, seek His embraces, fear to depart from Him; that there may be in you the chaste fear, which endures for ever. "Let us love, because He first loved us."

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## The Importance of Love, a Gift of the Holy Spirit

(from the *Enchiridion* (a handbook) on Faith, Hope, and Love, chapters 31 & 32)

And now as to love, which the apostle declares to be greater than the other two graces, that is, than faith and hope, the greater the measure in which it dwells in a man, the better is the man in whom it dwells. For when there is a question as to whether a man is good, one does not ask what he believes, or what he hopes, but what he loves. For the man who loves aright no doubt believes and hopes aright; whereas the man who has not love believes in vain, even though his beliefs are true; and hopes in vain, even though the objects of his hope are a real part of true happiness; unless, indeed, he believes and hopes for this, that he may obtain by prayer the blessing of love. For, although it is not possible to hope without love, it may yet happen that a man does not love that which is necessary to the attainment of his hope; as, for example, if he hopes for eternal life (and who is there that does not desire this?) and yet does not love righteousness, without which no one can attain to eternal life. Now this is the true faith of Christ which the apostle speaks of, "which works by love;" and if there is anything that it does not yet embrace in its love, asks that it may receive, seeks that it may find, and knocks that it may be opened unto it. For faith obtains through prayer that which the law commands. For without the gift of God, that is, without the Holy Spirit, through whom love is shed abroad in our hearts, the law can command, but it cannot assist; and, moreover, it makes a man a transgressor, for he can no longer excuse himself on the plea of ignorance. Now carnal lust reigns where there is not the love of God.

All the commandments of God, then, are embraced in love, of which the apostle says: "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Thus the end of every commandment is charity, that is, every commandment has love for its aim. But whatever is done either through fear of punishment or from some other carnal motive, and has not for its principle that love which the Spirit of God sheds abroad in the heart, is not done as it ought to be done, however it may appear to men. For this love embraces both the love of God and the

love of our neighbor, and “on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,” we may add the Gospel and the apostles. For it is from these that we hear this voice: The end of the commandment is charity, and God is love. Wherefore, all God’s commandments, one of which is, “You shall not commit adultery,” and all those precepts which are not commandments but special counsels, one of which is, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman,” are rightly carried out only when the motive principle of action is the love of God, and the love of our neighbor in God. And this applies both to the present and the future life. We love God now by faith, then we shall love Him through sight. Now we love even our neighbor by faith; for we who are ourselves mortal know not the hearts of mortal men. But in the future life, the Lord “both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God;” for every man shall love and praise in his neighbor the virtue which, that it may not be hid, the Lord Himself shall bring to light. Moreover, lust diminishes as love grows, till the latter grows to such a height that it can grow no higher here. For “greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Who then can tell how great love shall be in the future world, when there shall be no lust for it to restrain and conquer? for that will be the perfection of health when there shall be no struggle with death.

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### **The Great Commandment and the Second**

(from *On Christian Doctrine*, Book 1, chapter 22)

Among all these things, then, those only are the true objects of enjoyment which we have spoken of as eternal and unchangeable. The rest are for use, that we may be able to arrive at the full enjoyment of the former. We, however, who enjoy and use other things are things ourselves. For a great thing truly is man, made after the image and similitude of God, not as respects the mortal body in which he is clothed, but as respects the rational soul by which he is exalted in honor above the beasts. And so it becomes an important question, whether men ought to enjoy, or to use, themselves,

or to do both. For we are commanded to love one another: but it is a question whether man is to be loved by man for his own sake, or for the sake of something else. If it is for his own sake, we enjoy him; if it is for the sake of something else, we use him. It seems to me, then, that he is to be loved for the sake of something else. For if a thing is to be loved for its own sake, then in the enjoyment of it consists a happy life, the hope of which at least, if not yet the reality, is our comfort in the present time. But a curse is pronounced on him who places his hope in man.

Neither ought any one to have joy in himself, if you look at the matter clearly, because no one ought to love even himself for his own sake, but for the sake of Him who is the true object of enjoyment. For a man is never in so good a state as when his whole life is a journey towards the unchangeable life, and his affections are entirely fixed upon that. If, however, he loves himself for his own sake, he does not look at himself in relation to God, but turns his mind in upon himself, and so is not occupied with anything that is unchangeable. And thus he does not enjoy himself at his best, because he is better when his mind is fully fixed upon, and his affections wrapped up in, the unchangeable good, than when he turns from that to enjoy even himself. Wherefore if you ought not to love even yourself for your own sake, but for His, in whom your love finds its most worthy object, no other man has a right to be angry if you love him too for God's sake. For this is the law of love that has been laid down by Divine authority: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself;" but, "You shall love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind:" so that you are to concentrate all your thoughts, your whole life and your whole intelligence upon Him from whom you derive all that you bring. For when He says, "With all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," He means that no part of our life is to be unoccupied, and to afford room, as it were, for the wish to enjoy some other object, but that whatever else may suggest itself to us as an object worthy of love is to be borne into the same channel in which the whole current of our affections flows. Whoever, then, loves his neighbor aright, ought to urge upon him that he too should love God with his whole heart, and soul, and mind. For in this way, loving his neighbor as himself, a man turns the whole current of his love both for himself and his neighbor into the channel of the love of God, which suffers no stream to be drawn off

from itself by whose diversion its own volume would be diminished.

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### The Necessity of Love

(from *Homilies on I John*; Homily 7)

So is this world to all the faithful seeking their own country, as was the desert to the people Israel. They wandered indeed as yet, and were seeking their own country: but with God for their guide they could not wander astray. Their way was God's bidding. For where they went about during forty years, the journey itself is made up of a very few stations, and is known to all. They were retarded because they were in training, not because they were forsaken. That therefore which God promises us is ineffable sweetness and a good, as the Scripture says, and as you have often heard by us rehearsed, which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man." But by temporal labors we are exercised, and by temptations of this present life are trained. Howbeit, if you would not die of thirst in this wilderness, drink charity. It is the fountain which God has been pleased to place here that we faint not in the way: and we shall more abundantly drink thereof, when we are come to our own land. The Gospel has just been read; now to speak of the very words with which the lesson ended, what other thing heard you but concerning charity? For we have made an agreement with our God in prayer, that if we would that He should forgive us our sins, we also should forgive the sins which may have been committed against us. Now that which forgives is none other than charity. Take away charity from the heart; hatred possesses it, it knows not how to forgive. Let charity be there, and she fearlessly forgives, not being straitened. And this whole epistle which we have undertaken to expound to you, see whether it commends anything else than this one thing, charity. Nor need we fear lest by much speaking thereof it come to be hateful. For what is there to love, if charity come to be hateful? It is by charity that other things come to be rightly loved; then how must itself be loved! Let not that then which ought never to depart from the heart, depart from the tongue.

*We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (I John 4:6)*

“We are from God.” Let us see why; see whether it be for any other thing than charity. “We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error:” namely by this, that he that hears us has the spirit of truth; he that does not, has the spirit of error. Let us see what he advises, and let us choose rather to hear him advising in the spirit of truth, and not antichrists, not lovers of the world, not the world. If we are born of God, “beloved,” he goes on—see above from what: “We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth, and of error:” yes, now, he makes us eagerly attentive: to be told that he who knows God, hears; but he who knows not, hears not; and that this is the discerning between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error: well then, let us see what he is about to advise; in what we must hear him—“Beloved, let us love one another.” Why? Because a man advises? “Because love is of God.” Much has he commended love, in that he has said, “Is of God:” but he is going to say more; let us eagerly hear. At present he has said, “Love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that does not love does not know God.” Why? “For God is love”. What more could be said, brethren? If nothing were said in praise of love throughout the pages of this epistle, if nothing whatever throughout the other pages of the Scriptures, and this one only thing were all we were told by the voice of the Spirit of God, “For God is love;” nothing more ought we to require.

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### **The Love of Neighbor**

(from *The City of God*, Book 19, Chapter 14)

But as this divine Master inculcates two precepts—the love of God and the

love of our neighbor—and as in these precepts a man finds three things he has to love—God, himself, and his neighbor—and that he who loves God loves himself thereby, it follows that he must endeavor to get his neighbor to love God, since he is ordered to love his neighbor as himself. He ought to make this endeavor in behalf of his wife, his children, his household, all within his reach, even as he would wish his neighbor to do the same for him if he needed it; and consequently he will be at peace, or in well-ordered concord, with all men, as far as in him lies. And this is the order of this concord, that a man, in the first place, injure no one, and, in the second, do good to every one he can reach. Primarily, therefore, his own household are his care, for the law of nature and of society gives him readier access to them and greater opportunity of serving them. And hence the apostle says, "Now, if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (I Timothy 5:8) This is the origin of domestic peace, or the well-ordered concord of those in the family who rule and those who obey. For they who care for the rest rule—the husband the wife, the parents the children, the masters the servants; and they who are cared for obey—the women their husbands, the children their parents, the servants their masters. But in the family of the just man who lives by faith and is as you, a pilgrim journeying on to the celestial city, even those who rule serve those whom they seem to command; for they rule not from a love of power, but from a sense of the duty they owe to others—not because they are proud of authority, but because they love mercy.

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### **The Kingdom of Love**

(from *The City of God*, Book 14, Chapter 28)

Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience. The one lifts up its head in its own

glory; the other says to its God, "You are my glory, and the lifter up of mine head." (Psalm 3:3) In the one, the princes and the nations they subdue are ruled by the love of ruling; in the other, the princes and the subjects serve one another in love, the latter obeying, while the former take thought for all. The one delights in its own strength, represented in the persons of its rulers; the other says to its God, "I will love You, O Lord, my strength." (Psalm 18:1) And therefore the wise men of the one city, living according to man, have sought for profit to their own bodies or souls, or both, and those who have known God "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise,"-that is, glorying in their own wisdom, and being possessed by pride,-"they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:21-25) For they were either leaders or followers of the people in adoring images, "and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." But in the other city there is no human wisdom, but only godliness, which offers due worship to the true God, and looks for its reward in the society of the saints, of holy angels as well as holy men, "that God may be all in all." (I Corinthians 15:28)

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### The New Commandment

(from *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, 65; 83:2, 3; 84)

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34, 35)*

The Lord Jesus declares that He is giving His disciples a new commandment, that they should love one another. "A new commandment," He says, "I give unto you, that you love one another." But was not this

already commanded in the ancient law of God, where it is written, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"? Why, then, is it called a new one by the Lord, when it is proved to be so old? Is it on this account a new commandment, because He has divested us of the old, and clothed us with the new man? For it is not indeed every kind of love that renews him that listens to it, or rather yields it obedience, but that love regarding which the Lord, in order to distinguish it from all carnal affection, added, "as I have loved you." For husbands and wives love one another, and parents and children, and all other human relationships that bind men together: to say nothing of the blame-worthy and damnable love which is mutually felt by adulterers and adulteresses, by fornicators and prostitutes, and all others who are knit together by no human relationship, but by the mischievous depravity of human life. Christ, therefore, has given us a new commandment, that we should love one another, as He also has loved us. This is the love that renews us, making us new men, heirs of the New Testament, singers of the new song. It was this love, brethren beloved, that renewed also those of olden time, who were then the righteous, the patriarchs and prophets, as it did afterwards the blessed apostles: it is it, too, that is now renewing the nations, and from among the universal race of man, which overspreads the whole world, is making and gathering together a new people, the body of the newly-married spouse of the only-begotten Son of God, of whom it is said in the Song of Songs, "Who is she that ascends, made white?" Made white indeed, because renewed; and how, but by the new commandment? Because of this, the members thereof have a mutual interest in one another; and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; and one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. For this they hear and observe, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another:" not as those love one another who are corrupters, nor as men love one another in a human way; but they love one another as those who are God's, and all of them sons of the Highest, and brethren, therefore, of His only Son, with that mutual love wherewith He loved them, when about to lead them on to the goal were all sufficiency should be theirs, and where their every desire should be satisfied with good things. For then there will be nothing wanting they can desire, when God will be all in all.

Think not then, my brethren, that when the Lord says, "A new

commandment I give unto you, that you love one another,” there is any overlooking of that greater commandment, which requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind; for along with this seeming oversight, the words “that you love one another” appear also as if they had no reference to that second commandment, which says, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” For “on these two commandments,” He says, “hang all the law and the prophets.” But both commandments may be found in each of these by those who have good understanding. For, on the one hand, he that loves God cannot despise His commandment to love his neighbor; and on the other, he who in a holy and spiritual way loves his neighbor, what does he love in him but God? That is the love, distinguished from all mundane love, which the Lord specially characterized, when He added, “as I have loved you.” For what was it but God that He loved in us? Not because we had Him, but in order that we might have Him; and that He may lead us on, as I said a little ago, where God is all in all. It is in this way, also, that the physician is properly said to love the sick; and what is it he loves in them but their health, which at all events he desires to recall; not their sickness, which he comes to remove? Let us, then, also so love one another, that, as far as possible, we may by the solicitude of our love be winning one another to have God within us. And this love is bestowed on us by Him who said, “As I have loved you, that you also love one another.” For this very end, therefore, did He love us, that we also should love one another; bestowing this on us by His own love to us, that we should be bound to one another in mutual love, and, united together as members by so pleasant a bond, should be the body of so mighty a Head.

“By this,” He adds, “Shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another:” as if He said, “Other gifts of mine are possessed in common with you by those who are not mine,—not only nature, life, perception, reason, and that safety which is equally the privilege of men and beasts; but also languages, sacraments, prophecy, knowledge, faith, the bestowing of their goods upon the poor, and the giving of their body to the flames: but because destitute of charity, they only tinkle like cymbals; they are nothing, and by nothing are they profited. It is not, then, by such gifts of mine, however good, which may be alike possessed by those who are not

my disciples, but “by this it is that all men shall know that you are my disciples, that you have love one to another.””

*“This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)*

But when He said in this way here, “This is my commandment,” as if there were none else, what are we to think, my brethren? Is, then, the commandment about that love wherewith we love one another, His only one? Is there not also another that is still greater,—that we should love God? Or has God in very truth given us such a charge about love alone, that we have no need of searching for others? There are three things at least that the apostle commends when he says, “But now abide faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” And although in charity, that is, in love, are comprehended the two commandments; yet it is here declared to be the greatest only, and not the sole one. Accordingly, what a host of commandments are given us about faith, what a multitude about hope! Who is there that could collect them together, or suffice to number them? But let us ponder the words of the same apostle: “Love is the fullness of the law.” And so, where there is love, what can be wanting? And where it is not, what is there that can possibly be profitable? The devil believes, but does not love: no one loves who does not believe. One may, indeed, hope for pardon who does not love, but he hopes in vain; but no one can despair who loves. Therefore, where there is love, there of necessity will there be faith and hope; and where there is the love of our neighbor, there also of necessity will be the love of God. For he that loves not God, how loves he his neighbor as himself, seeing that he loves not even himself? Such an one is both impious and iniquitous; and he that loves iniquity, manifestly loves not, but hates his own soul. Let us, therefore, be holding fast to this precept of the Lord, to love one another; and then all else that is commanded we shall do, for all else we have contained in this. But this love is distinguished from that which men bear to one another as such; for in order to mark the distinction, it is added, “as I have loved you.” And wherefore is it that Christ loves us, but that we may be fitted to reign with Christ? With this aim, therefore, let us also be loving one another, that we

may manifest the difference of our love from that of others, who have no such motive in loving one another, because the love itself is wanting. But those whose mutual love has the possession of God Himself for its object, will truly love one another; and, therefore, even for the very purpose of loving one another, they love God. There is no such love as this in all men; for few have this motive for their love one to another, that God may be all in all.

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### The Enemies of Love

(from *Homilies on I John*; Homily 7)

*They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. (I John 4:5)*

“They are from the world.” Who? The antichrists. You have already heard who they are. And if you be not such, you know them, but whosoever is such, knows not. “They are from the world: therefore they speak as from the world, and the world hears them.” Who are they that “speak of the world”? Mark, it is they who are against charity. Behold, you have heard the Lord saying, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” It is the sentence of Truth: or if it be not Truth that speaks, gainsay it. If you are a Christian and believe Christ, He has said, “I am the truth.” This sentence is true, is firm. Now hear men that ‘speak of the world’: “And will you not avenge yourself? And will you let him say that he has done this to you? No, show him he is contending with a true man.” Every day are such things said, They that say such things, “of the world speak they, and the world hears them.” None say such things but those that love the world, and by none are such things heard but by those who love the world. And you have heard that to love the world and neglect charity is to deny that Jesus came in the flesh. Or say if the Lord Himself in the flesh did that? If, being buffeted, He willed to be avenged? If, hanging on the cross, He did not say, “Father, forgive them, for they know

not what they do"? But if He threatened not, who had power; why do you threaten, why are you inflated with anger, you who are under the power of another? He died because it was His will to die, you He threatened not; you know not when you shall die, and do you threaten?

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### **The Love of God and the Love of Self**

(from *On Christian Doctrine*, Book 1, chapter 23)

Those things which are objects of use are not all, however, to be loved, but those only which are either united with us in a common relation to God, such as a man or an angel, or are so related to us as to need the goodness of God through our instrumentality, such as the body. For assuredly the martyrs did not love the wickedness of their persecutors, although they used it to attain the favor of God. As, then, there are four kinds of things that are to be loved,—first, that which is above us; second, ourselves; third, that which is on a level with us; fourth, that which is beneath us,—no precepts need be given about the second and fourth of these. For, however far a man may fall away from the truth, he still continues to love himself, and to love his own body. The soul which flies away from the unchangeable Light, the Ruler of all things, does so that it may rule over itself and over its own body; and so it cannot but love both itself and its own body.

Moreover, it thinks it has attained something very great if it is able to lord it over its companions, that is, other men. For it is inherent in the sinful soul to desire above all things, and to claim as due to itself, that which is properly due to God only. Now such love of itself is more correctly called hate. For it is not just that it should desire what is beneath it to be obedient to it while itself will not obey its own superior; and most justly has it been said, "He who loves iniquity hates his own soul." And accordingly the soul becomes weak, and endures much suffering about the mortal body. For, of course, it must love the body, and be grieved at its corruption; and the immortality and incorruptibility of the body spring out of the health of the soul. Now the

health of the soul is to cling steadfastly to the better part, that is, to the unchangeable God. But when it aspires to lord it even over those who are by nature its equals—that is, its fellow-men—this is a reach of arrogance utterly intolerable.

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### Love is Transforming

(from *Homilies on I John*, Homily 9:10)

*If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one 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, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.*

(I John 4:20, 21)

“If someone says, I love God.” What God? Why do we love? “Because He first loved us,” and gave us to love. He loved us ungodly, to make us godly; loved us unrighteous, to make us righteous; loved us sick, to make us whole. Ask each several man; let him tell you if he love God. He cries out, he confesses: “I love, God knows.” There is another question to be asked. “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar.” How can you prove that he is a liar? Hear. “For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” What then? Does he that loves a brother, love God also? He must of necessity love God, must of necessity love Him that is Love itself.

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### Love is Not Tame

## Augustine on Love

(from *Homilies on I John*; Homily 7)

If any of you wish to keep charity, brethren, above all things do not imagine it to be an abject and sluggish thing; nor that charity is to be preserved by a sort of gentleness, no, not gentleness, but tameness and listlessness. It is not preserved in this way. Do not imagine that you then love your servant when you do not punish him, or that you then love your son when you do not discipline, or that you then love your neighbor when you do not rebuke him: this is not charity, but mere feebleness. Let charity be fervent to correct, to amend: but if there be good manners, let them delight you; if bad, let them be amended, let them be corrected. Love not in the man his error, but the man: for the man God made, the error the man himself made. Love that which God made, love not that which the man himself made. When you love that, you take away this: when you esteem that, you amend this. But even if you be severe at any time, let it be because of love, for correction.

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### Having Love, Seeing God

(from *Homilies on I John*; Homily 7)

*“No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us...”* (I John 4:12)

“No man has seen God at any time:” He is a thing invisible; not with the eye but with the heart must He be sought. But just as if we wished to see the sun, we should purge the eye of the body; wishing to see God, let us purge the eye by which God can be seen. Where is this eye? Hear the Gospel: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” But let no man imagine God to himself according to the lust of his eyes. For so he makes unto himself either a huge form, or a certain incalculable magnitude which, like the light which he sees with the bodily eyes, he makes extend through all directions; field after field of space he gives it all the bigness he can; or, he represents to himself like as it were an old man of venerable form. None

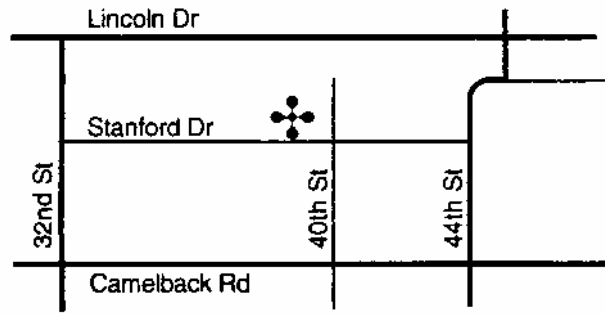
## Augustine on Love

of these things do you imagine. There is something you may imagine, if you would see God; "God is love." What sort of face has love? What form has it? What stature? What feet? What hands has it? No man can say. And yet it has feet, for these carry men to church: it has hands; for these reach forth to the poor: it has eyes; for thereby we consider the needy: "Blessed is the man," it is said, "who considers the needy and the poor." It has ears, of which the Lord says, "He that has ears to hear let him hear." These are not members distinct by place, but with the understanding he that has charity sees the whole at once. Inhabit, and you shall be inhabited; dwell, and you shall be dwelt in. For how say you, my brethren? Who loves what he does not see? Now why, when charity is praised, do you lift up your hands, make acclaim, praise? What have I shown you? What I produced, was it a gleam of colors? What I propounded, was it gold and silver? Have I dug out jewels from hid treasures? What of this sort have I shown to your eyes? Is my face changed while I speak? I am in the flesh; I am in the same form in which I came forth to you; you are in the same form in which you came here; charity is praised, and you shout applause. Certainly you see nothing. But as it pleases you when you praise, so let it please you that you may keep it in your heart. For mark well what I say brethren; I exhort you all, as God enables me, unto a great treasure. If there were shown you a beautiful little vase, embossed, inlaid with gold, curiously wrought, and it charmed your eyes, and drew towards it the eager desire of your heart, and you were pleased with the hand of the artificer, and the weight of the silver, and the splendor of the metal; would not each one of you say, "O, if I had that vase!" And to no purpose you would say it, for it would not rest with you to have it. Or if one should wish to have it, he might think of stealing it from another's house. Charity is praised to you; if it please you, have it, possess it; no need that you should rob any man, no need that you should think of buying it; it is to be had freely, without cost. Take it, clasp it; there is nothing sweeter. If such it be when it is but spoken of, what must it be when one has it?

Date I Finished Reading This Sermon: \_\_\_\_\_

# *PERSONAL NOTES & APPLICATION*

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# Camelback Bible Church

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Sunday School Classes for all ages – 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Morning Worship – 10:40 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Worship – 6:00 p.m.

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Life-transforming ...  
... serving in our world  
as Christ served in His.

In navigation, discovering 'true north' is about orienting one's self towards what is certain. In the journey of life, human beings find themselves doing this very thing: searching for a fixed point of reference that will guide them through the 'uncharted waters' of their existence. The Scriptures have revealed that God himself is our only certainty in an uncertain world. In all things, He desires that we look to Him, to Jesus Christ, in order to 'get our bearings'. The *True North Sermon Series* is intended to be a resource in pointing men and women towards the unchanging truths of God's word. May the message you hold in your hands, whether it comes from ten years ago or a thousand years ago, be used by God's Spirit to lead you towards life's only True North.

