



Christmas Hope: A Radically Different Way to Live and Love 1 Peter 3:8–12

God has designed His church to be a display of His love to the world.

- When we love like God has designed us to love, we will enjoy the good life and experience the blessing of God.
- If we don't love like God has designed us to love, we will miss the good life and experience the opposition of God.

The living hope of another world produces a radical love for people in this world. This brings--

1. A radical **unity** around God's Word.
2. A radical **sympathy** with each other.
3. A radical **sense of family** that transcends biology.
4. A radical **tenderness** toward each other.
5. A radical **humility** before each other.
6. A radical **resolve to bless** those who insult or harm us.

Sermon Discussion Questions – December 6, 2020

1. Thinking back on last week's message on marriage, how was your approach to relationships helped or changed in light of what we learned and discussed?
2. God has designed His church to live and love in a way that is radically different from the world. Considering the radical differences highlighted in this week's sermon, in what ways have you seen these differences demonstrated in and through the McLean Bible Church family (especially in and through your small group) in this uniquely challenging season? Take time to praise God for His presence and work in and through our church family.
3. Unity around God's word begins with a surrender to the Spirit of God and a personal commitment to consistent Bible study. How has your time in the word of God been in recent weeks? What, if any, passages you have meditated on or clung to amid all that's happening in your life and the world? This week, what steps would you like to take to grow in your commitment to studying the word?
4. Have you ever experienced the radical sympathy of another person in the midst of a crisis or a particularly challenging circumstance? If so, what about that experience made you feel valued, supported and cared for? In what ways did their sincere compassion reflect the character, life, and heart of the Lord (Psalm 23:4; John 11:34-36, 17:20-23; Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 12:24-27; Galatians 6:2)? In what ways did it impact you, either during or after the circumstance?

5. Read Romans 12:9-21, which describes God's instructions for life and interactions in the family of faith. If our sense of family (which transcends biology) is to look like this, what personal preferences or inclinations must we be willing to set aside? Have you witnessed these characteristics in other members of your group? Which of these commands do you feel you need to grow in?
6. Based on Galatians 6:2 and Romans 12:9-21, what (if any) burdens can your group members help you or your family bear in the days ahead? How could your group members practically extend radical love toward you and your family as you navigate your specific challenge?
7. Read Luke 6:43-45. What might tenderness toward one another look like in our speech (e.g., in conversations; online posts; when people are absent)? On a scale of 1-10 (1 meaning "Not at all", 10 meaning "Perfectly"), how well did your words/thoughts toward or about others reflect tenderness, humility, and compassion over the past month?
8. When you discover ways in which you differ from another person, what is your instinctive reaction? What thoughts begin to form in you about the other person? About yourself? Are these thoughts more reflective of the world's mindset or of the Spirit of God within you (Romans 8:6-16)? If they are more reflective of the world's thoughts, what change of mind is needed in order for you to reflect the Spirit and will of God (Romans 12:1-2)?
9. Read Philippians 2:1-13. What truths should motivate our humility towards others? With whom do you find it difficult to carry out this command? How might you look at that person/people through a different lens?
10. The world universally promotes a focus on loving, serving, and preferring oneself. In what Biblically countercultural ways might you radically reflect the opposite bearing, especially toward those who have intentionally offended you (Psalm 34:12-20; Matthew 16:24-26; Acts 7:55-60; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 3:8-11)?
11. How well do the people closest to you (e.g., family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers) see radical love, tenderness, and sympathy in you? Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (1 meaning "Not at all", 10 meaning "Perfectly"). How might you grow in this area?
12. How well do people in the church see radical love in you, particularly those who are not like you? Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (1 meaning "Not at all", 10 meaning "Perfectly"). What are some creative ways you can show this kind of radical love to others in our church family and in your small group?
13. What are 1-2 practical ways that you can show radical love to those in and around your life this week? To become more aware of ways you can grow along these lines, ask the following question to a trusted accountability partner in the family of faith: *"How can I grow in sympathy, or tenderness, or humility?"*