

Why Evangelise? Because God loves us and wants us to live forever!

(Genesis 22:1-19, John 3:16-21 and John 5:24)

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Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham Tested

22 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

² Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

⁸ Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

¹² “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

¹⁵ The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

¹⁹ Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

John 3:16-21

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

John 5:24

²⁴ "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

Sermon: “Why Evangelise? Because God loves us and wants us to live forever!”

There is an outline if you would like to take some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

Intro

This morning, we are continuing our **five-part evangelism series**

Where we are looking at why we should do evangelism

[Slide-Evangelism]

[Explain evangelism by reading box below]

Evangelism is telling people the Good News

The Good News...

God sent His Son, Jesus, to this Earth on a rescue mission to fix the broken relationship between human beings and God.

*This relationship was broken because of **sin**!*

[Slide-Part 1/2/3]

In **part 1** – we said – we should evangelise – because – **sin entered the world** – through Adam and Eve

In **part 2** – we said – we should evangelise - because – **there is an answer to sin** – **Jesus is the Way** – in fact, the only way that **our sin and our death can be fixed!**

In **part 3** – we said – we should evangelise – because – **there is forgiveness** – and if we confess our sins God promises to forgive our sins because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross

[Slide-Part 4]

This week – **part 4** – why evangelise? Because **God loves us and wants us to live forever!**

Before we go any further, we’d better **define** what **love** is.

[Slide-Definition]

The dictionary says: *Love is a deep affection for someone.*

In the Bible – love is a lot more than that

In Hebrew [אהב ’**âhab**] –it means - to have affection for (sexually or otherwise) – also it means to be a friend or to like someone

There’s another Hebrew word –[חֶסֶד **cheṣed or hesed**] – which is lovingkindness – the kindness of humans towards humans – or it can mean mercy – or the affection of Israel towards God – or the lovingkindness of God in providing and caring for the needs of His creatures

In Greek – one word for love is [ἀγαπάω **agapáō**] – it means - to have a preference for - to wish well to someone - to have regard for the welfare of someone – to take

pleasure in someone – to prize someone above other things – to be unwilling to abandon or do without someone – to long for someone – and it's a selfless sacrificial love

A good definition of what love looks like from the Bible is – in 1 Corinthians 13:

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. [mention why, love my fail?]

(pause)

[Slide-Headings]

We have two major points this morning

1. God loves us
2. God wants us to live forever

God loves us (Psalm 136; Isaiah 54:10; Jeremiah 31:3; Isaiah 9:6-7 and Genesis 22)

1st point then – **God loves us**

But what does God's love look like?

[Slide-God's love looks like]

- In **Psalm 136** – it says repeatedly that God’s love **endures forever** [does our love endure forever – or only whilst things are going well?]
- In **Isaiah 54:10** – it says God’s love is **unfailing and unshakable** [is our love of others unfailing and unshakable – or only until we get shaky and things seem out of our control?]
- In **Jeremiah 31:3** – it says God’s love is **everlasting and unfailing kindness** [is our love everlasting or fleeting or temporary? Is our love full of unfailing kindness? What about if the person we love is not reciprocating our love or failing to love us back?]
- In **2 Peter 3:9** – it says that God **doesn’t want us to perish but to repent** [does our love for others – have a concern that people who don’t know Jesus are going to perish in Hell? Or are we just happy knowing we’re okay – who cares about anyone else?]
- In **Isaiah 9:6-7** – it says – God’s love is demonstrated in **His promise to sacrificially send His Son on a rescue mission**
- This **sacrificial love is foreshadowed** in our OT reading from **Genesis 22**
[Please turn to Genesis 22 now]

The context of Genesis 22 is that: God promised Abraham and Sarah a son. They had to wait 25 years for God’s promise to be fulfilled.

By then Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 – when Sarah finally gave birth to this promised son – whose name was Isaac!

As we pick up the story in Genesis 22

In v1 – God tested Abraham’s faith

And told Abraham – v2 – to take his son, his only son, Issac – and sacrifice him as a burnt offering to the Lord

I don’t know about you – but I couldn’t do that!

But Abraham simply trusted God and obeyed God – without questioning.

That’s what God wants us to do - isn’t it?

Trust Him no matter what?

Even when we don’t understand!

Even when we don’t agree!

Even when it seems crazy and impossible to us!

God says – trust me in all things – I know what’s best.

If we know God loves us – with a love that is far greater and more sincere than any human love – then we CAN trust Him with the impossible – can’t we?

(pause)

We’ve probably heard this story of Abraham and Isaac many times.

Abraham heads up the mountain with Isaac

When the penny drops for Isaac and he realizes they don’t have a lamb for the sacrifice (v7) – Isaac gets a bit edgy – he says ‘the fire and wood are here – but where is the lamb for the burnt offering’

Remarkably Abraham replies – v8 – ‘the Lord Himself will provide the lamb’

That’s amazing faith, isn’t it?

Can we say in every hopeless situation – ‘the Lord Himself will provide?’

Abraham is just about to sacrifice Isaac – when God intervenes and sends an angel to tell Abraham to stop (vv11-12)

And God does indeed provide the sacrifice – in v13 – a ram is provided for Abraham to use as the sacrifice instead of Isaac.

But there's much more to this story.

It foreshadows Jesus and foreshadows God's sacrifice of His Son, His only Son, Jesus on that cruel cross.

There are so many parallels to Jesus in this passage:

- God and Abraham **were willing to sacrifice their only Son**. Although Isaac was spared from being sacrificed – Jesus was not!
- Isaac carried the wood up the mountain (v6) for the sacrifice. Jesus carried His wooden cross up the Calvary hill for His sacrifice.
- Isaac was laid on the wood (v9) - Jesus was laid on a wooden cross!
- God provided the ram as a **substitute** for Isaac being sacrificed. God provided Jesus is our **substitute** – so we don't have to be punished for our sins.
- Abraham was **obedient** to God's request even though he thought he would lose his son. Jesus was obedient to God the Father's request, to die for the sin of the world, even though Jesus knew He would suffer and die!
- Abraham's **faith** was **counted to him as righteousness**; i.e., Abraham was seen as right with God and approved by God because he showed **obedient faith** and did exactly what God said without questioning. In the same way, **our obedient**

faith in Jesus' death and resurrection is counted to us as righteousness; i.e., we are seen as right with God and approved by God – because of Jesus.

- In verse 18 – God promised Abraham that through one of his offspring, all nations on Earth would be blessed. That offspring is Jesus – who offers to bless all people who come to Him
- The relationship between Abraham and Isaac reflected a deep **love** and **bond**. Similarly, God's **love** for the world is not just about emotions but is active and sacrificial.
- Abraham was tested in both faith and love. Does Abraham love God more than his son? Can Abraham trust God's goodness even when God's command to sacrifice Isaac seemed to contradict God's promise of giving Abraham a son, in the first place?

Similarly, our faith and love are tested in response to God's love. Will we trust God in all things or only in some things?

Will we love God above everyone and everything else?

Will we trust in God's provision through Jesus or will we continue in darkness and reject Jesus, the light of the world?

Going back to our definition of love

[Slide-Cross/Love]

Perhaps a good picture of God's love is simply – the Cross of Jesus!

(pause)

So, our first point is – **God loves us!** We see that plainly in Him sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death.

God wants us to live forever (John 3:16-21 and John 5:24)

Which brings us to our 2nd point - **God wants us to live forever**

[Please turn to our NT passage from John 3:16-21]

[Slide-God wants us to live forever]

Because God loves us - God lovingly and sacrificially gave His Son, His only Son, and allowed Him to suffer on a cruel cross and take the punishment for the sin of the world; so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish (in Hell) but instead have eternal life (in Heaven).

God lovingly did not condemn the world – but gave a way for the world to be saved through belief/faith in Jesus.

These verses give a clear choice – between believing and not believing – between not being condemned and standing condemned – between light and darkness.

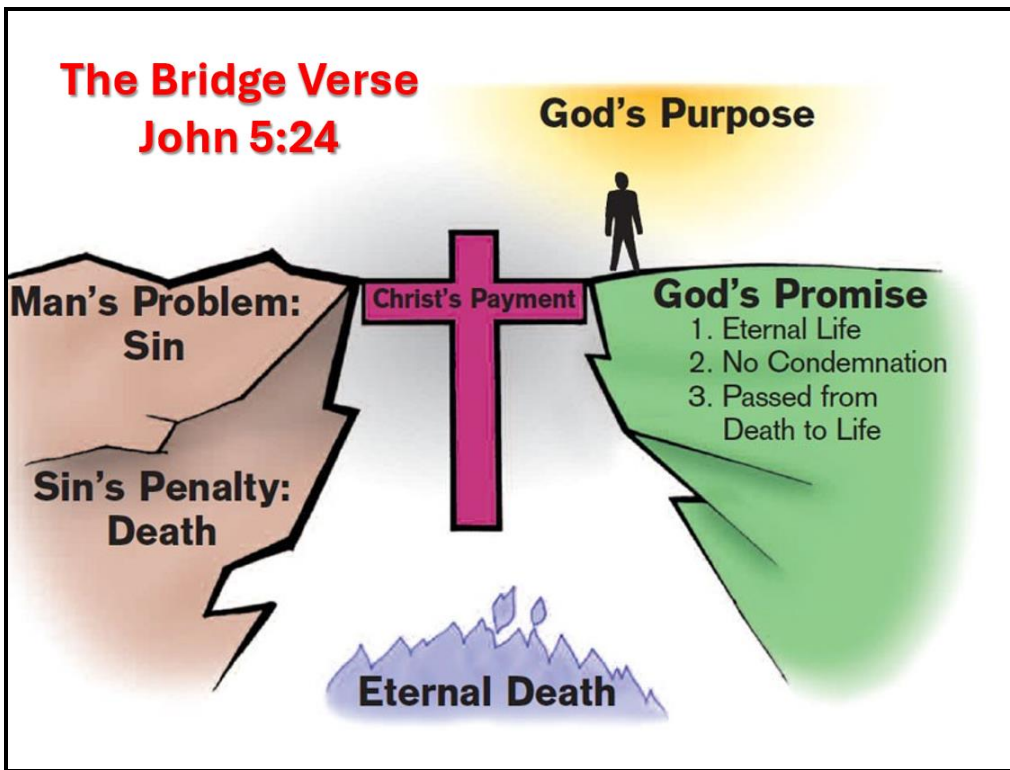
God loved the people of the world so much – He was even prepared to let His Son pay the price for sin – because God wants us to live forever!

(pause)

If we want a picture of what Jesus has done on the cross

It looks like this

[Slide-Bridge]



By default, we are all on the left – and we have the problem of sin – and sin’s penalty which is death – leading to eternal death – and separation from God forever!

But the Good News is – Jesus’ cross – is like a **bridge** – that brings us across to God’s side

If we believe Jesus’ death pays for all our sins – **we cross the bridge**

We get the gift of eternal life in Heaven

We are no longer condemned for our sins

And we pass from death to life

[Slide-Bridge verse]

As Jesus puts it in our other NT reading from John 5:24 – **the bridge verse**:

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over [the bridge] from death to life.

So, our 2nd point is – **God wants us to live forever!**

Our Response (John 13:34-35 and 2 Corinthians 5:13-14)

What will **our response** be to the truth that – God loves us – and – God wants us to live forever?

Well - Jesus gives us our response in His new commandment from John 13:34-35 [and there may be a hymn in this verse!]

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Jesus is saying our response is – to love people in the same way that Jesus loves people.

That’s sacrificially – to love people literally with – a “to die for” love!

Our love is to be both Christ-centred and other-person centred and not self-centred!

When we love like Jesus does – Jesus is saying that people will see the love of Jesus in us and flowing out of us – and they will KNOW we are followers of Jesus – and will want to be part of that – and they also will want to follow Jesus [mention this lines up with our Vision]

[Slide-Agape]

The word for **Love** in these verses is **agape** love

It is a different type of love:

- Agape love is **unconditional**. It is not based on the worthiness of the recipient
- Agape love has its **source and origin from God**
- Agape love is **selfless and sacrificial**
- Agape love is **everlasting** and **unchanging**; it's **consistent**
- Agape love is **motivated** to always **bring glory to God**; not for personal gain.
- Therefore, agape love **does not require anything in return**

Maybe there's someone in your life right now – who needs that agape love – remember it's unconditional, sacrificial, selfless love for their benefit – not ours.

Will you love them like that – and bring glory to God!

(pause)

Agape love is the **highest and purest form of love**, offering unconditional acceptance, grace and self-sacrifice.

And with that **agape love** in the forefront of our mind...

The most loving thing we can do is to **tell people** – that God loves us and wants us to live forever in Heaven – and this is only possible because of Jesus.

[Slide-2 Cor 5:14-15]

The Apostle Paul realized what agape love was like which is why he says this in 2 Cor 5:14-15 which we will finish with

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Christ's love compels us to tell people about how God loves us and wants us to live forever!

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you love us with an everlasting love and you want us to be saved for Heaven and live forever. Thank you that you sent your Son, your only Son, Jesus, to die for our sins to be forgiven and to offer eternal life to all who care to believe in His death for their sins. Help us to respond to this amazing love – by loving as Jesus loves – and by telling people – that following Jesus is the way to live forever, in Heaven. Amen