

Advent Devotional (Week 4): Love



Week Four focuses on what love really is — Christ coming to earth because of His love for us.

by **Matt Tullos**

SCRIPTURE READING:

"I will tend My flock and let them lie down.' [This is] the declaration of the Lord GOD. 'I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.'"

Ezekiel 34:15-16

"For the Lord will not reject [us] forever. Even if He causes suffering, He will show compassion according to His abundant, faithful love. For He does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering on mankind."

Lamentations 3:31-33

"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

DEVOTIONAL: A LOVE LIKE THAT

He couldn't do anything for himself. Born with cerebral palsy, he sat in the wheel chair loving every second of the Christmas musical. He faces challenges that I can't even imagine. His body wrecked by a disease with no cure. He sat in the back of the auditorium, perhaps wanting not to distract. And sitting next to him was a proud mother, I couldn't help stealing a glance throughout that evening, to see her stroking his hair, wiping his mouth and smiling all the while. She adored him.

I had to meet this amazing mother. She was a single mom who had just moved to Tennessee from Kansas.

"How do you do this all by yourself?" I asked.

"He's my life. He's the greatest blessing that ever happened to me," she said.

This two-person family had an eternal affect on me. I received a glimpse of the love God has for me. Despite my constant battles with sin and personal rebellion, God loves me like that.

APPLICATION: HE TAUGHT US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Amazingly, you are God's treasure and if you follow Him, He will be yours.

"Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10). "But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us!" (Romans 5:8). No doubt you've already heard the familiar words of "O Holy Night" this year. Don't miss the truth of the final verse: *Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace.*

If you want to know how to love one another, look at the love that sent Jesus to earth to live a life of love and pay the price for all of our sins. It's all about love. This isn't a love of fancy words and impossible tasks. This is a love that says, "I am willing to love you no matter what." We can love because He first loved us.

TODAY: LIVING A LIFE OF LOVE

Share: Share a time in your life when you felt most loved by God.

Encourage: Invite a friend to your church's Christmas worship service or event. Most people become a part of a church because they're invited by a friend.

Evaluate: Are you striving to love people the same way Christ loved you?

Pray: *Father, I realize that your mission is all about love. You love us so much that you gave us the most precious One in the universe, your Son Jesus Christ. This season is the season of giving, but it can also be tainted by selfishness, greed, and despair. Keep us away from the thieves that would steal the message and joy of Christmas. Surely you taught us to love one another!*

Explore: Watch a movie that depicts the life of Christ, such as "Jesus of Nazareth," "The Nativity Story," or "The JESUS Film." Consider the difference in the fictional tales of Christmas and the true story of Jesus Birth. You might also consider "The Star of Bethlehem" documentary or "A Case for Christ." Both present powerful apologetics for the historical Christ.