

# ARTICLE 1: LOVE

## Summary

Love is at the center of the universe and at the center of Redemption Church.

## Detail

From eternity past, the One God exists in three persons as an eternal communion of perfect love. Out of the overflow of that love he created the world we inhabit, such that relationship is woven into the fabric of all that exists. This relational vision for creation implicates our understanding of sin; at the heart of humanity's rebellion, there is relational discord with God which reverberates through the whole of the universe. Sin is, among other things, the obstruction of love. God's instruction to his covenant people, the Law, was designed to teach fallen people how to love; the end, or purpose, of the law is love. God, in Christ, does what the Law has failed to do, showing us in the flesh what the fulfillment of the Law looks like. Love is not merely revealed in ink on a page but in the person of Jesus.

Jesus shows us how love is truth-telling, humble, sacrificial, considerate, hospitable, hostility-absorbing, non-reactive, lower-place-taking, honest, initiative-taking, thoughtful, serving, forgiving, and, ultimately, substitutionary. Love necessarily spills out into public life; justice is what love looks like when it moves through a society. Where people love their neighbors as themselves, there will be a society that is moving towards justice. Love pursues the other; we must have connection with people who are not like us in order to love like Jesus. Love is not blind; it enables us to see and empathize with the perspectives of others. Love is not in a hurry; it is pleased to take the time to cultivate relationships rooted in trust and respect.

The Lord, who is love, defines love. If we are to follow Jesus, love is the only way. This relational lens shapes our approach to doctrine and practice as Redemption Church.

## Scripture

- 1 John 4:7-11 / Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have 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.
- Matthew 22:37-40 / 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 first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."
- John 15:12-14 / "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.
- Philippians 2:3-7 / Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
- Romans 8:3-4 / For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.