

Sermon Title: God's love never runs dry
(John 13:31–35)

- **Alpha Course Reflection:**

A discussion on why Jesus died on the cross led to the simple yet profound statement from a participant: "God is love, and we're just meant to love each other." This was affirmed as a core truth of the gospel.

- **The Centrality of Love:**

- St. Paul's words (1 Cor 13) remind us that without love, all spiritual gifts are hollow.
- Across philosophy, culture, and literature, love is recognised as essential (e.g., *Forrest Gump*, John McMurray, The Beatles).

- **Jesus' New Commandment:**

- Jesus commands his disciples to love one another as *he* has loved them.
- Love is not a sentimental idea but a recognisable marker of discipleship.

- **The Challenge of Love:**

- Love is difficult, especially in a fractured world full of division, war, and dehumanisation.
- Douglas Coupland's *Life After God* captures the deep human need for divine help in loving.

- **Jesus' Example of Love:**

- His love was generous, indiscriminate, and boundary-crossing.
- Examples include: forgiving the outcast, dining with sinners, engaging with children, and extending mercy to the undeserving — culminating in the cross.

- **The Context of Jesus' Words:**

- Jesus speaks of love just after Judas leaves to betray him — showing love even amid rejection.
- The contrast between Jesus' radical love and our often limited, self-protective love is humbling.

- **Love Flows From Being Loved:**

- We must first *receive* the love of God before we can *reflect* it to others.
- Jesus washes the disciples' feet before instructing them to do the same.

- **Grace Before Duty:**

- Like the children's chorus says: "Freely, freely you have received, freely, freely give."
- We don't conjure love from effort, but from receiving God's grace.

- **The Dam Metaphor:**

- A trickling stream represents our feeble love; the vast reservoir behind the dam represents God's infinite, abundant love.
- God's love is the unending source that sustains and empowers our love.

- **God's Love Transforms:**

- God loves us with the full weight of his being — not in rationed measure but to fullness.
- His love draws us out of self-protection and into freedom, confidence, and generosity.

- **A Eucharistic Invitation:**

- As we come to the Lord's Table, we bring our emptiness and are filled anew from the reservoir of grace.
- God's love becomes the torrent, flowing through us to others — even the hard to love.

- **Final Prayerful Hope:**

- That the trickle of love in us may become a torrent;
- That others may see in us that God's love is real, present, and inexhaustible.

Questions:

1. What does Jesus mean when he commands, “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another”?
2. Why is it difficult to love others, especially those who are unlike us or hard to love?
3. How can we receive and experience the love of God more fully so that we can reflect it to others?
4. What does it mean that love is the mark of true discipleship?
5. What role does humility and service play in the way Jesus loves, and how are we called to imitate that?
6. The sermon used the image of a dam and a reservoir to describe God's love. What does this teach us about dependence on God rather than our own strength?

Go Deeper:

1. What does Jesus mean when he commands, “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another”?

- *Bible focus:* John 13:34–35
- *Exploration:* What is distinctive about Jesus’ love? How does it challenge the way we usually understand love?

2. Why is it difficult to love others, especially those who are unlike us or hard to love?

- *Bible focus:* Romans 7:18–19; Matthew 5:43–48
- *Exploration:* What inner or outer barriers do we face? How might grace help overcome them?

3. How can we receive and experience the love of God more fully so that we can reflect it to others?

- *Bible focus:* 1 John 4:7–12; Ephesians 3:17–19
- *Exploration:* What spiritual practices help us live more deeply in the awareness of God's love?

4. What does it mean that love is the mark of true discipleship?

- *Bible focus:* John 13:35; Galatians 5:22–23
- *Exploration:* How does love make the church's witness visible and credible in the world?

5. What role does humility and service play in the way Jesus loves, and how are we called to imitate that?

- *Bible focus:* John 13:1–17; Philippians 2:5–8
- *Exploration:* How might practical, humble acts of love speak louder than words?

6. The sermon used the image of a dam and a reservoir to describe God's love. What does this teach us about dependence on God rather than our own strength?

- *Bible focus:* Isaiah 55:1–3; 2 Corinthians 12:9
- *Exploration:* How can we shift from feeling spiritually dry to drawing from God's abundance?