

# Sermon Study Guide – December 21, 2025

Christmas Greetings!

Our family is very excited to be with the Yakima Grace family this weekend! The fourth Sunday of Advent is focused on the love of God sending His only son Jesus as the ultimate expression of love. As we come close to Christmas, it is so easy to see a very safe and sanitized picture of the nativity scene, but the reality of celebrating Christmas is we are celebrating a very real and raw reality of God's unconditional love for humanity. How do we take this real and raw love of God into our lives, into our family and into the world? We will explore this together this Sunday and my prayer is that God would give us all greater understanding and revelation of His love for us and our world.

See you on Sunday! Garth, Caroline, Lyla and Gunner Gustafson

Garth Gustafson was born and raised in Yakima, WA and grew up at Grace of Christ. He started working with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in 2002 and in 2005 founded the ministry of YWAM / University of the Nations Battambang, Cambodia, where he serves as the Executive Director. Garth also serves on the Global Eldership Team for the YWAM Global Movement in Asia helping support 25,000 missionaries in 170 nations. He has a Bachelor degree in Business Administration from Pacific Lutheran University, a Masters Degree in Biblical Studies from the University of the Nations and a Doctorate Degree of Ministry in Leadership and Ministry in the Asian Context from Fuller Theological Seminary. Garth and his wife Caroline have two children, Lyla and Gunner and reside in Battambang, Cambodia.

## What Are You Waiting For? Love

### OT Deuteronomy 6:4-6

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart."

### NT Luke 2:8-10

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

### 1 John 3:16-18

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth

## Outline

**Introduction:** The World is Waiting for Love in Action

**Foundation 1:** Christmas (and the Gospel) is God's Un-Sanitized Love Story for Humanity

**Foundation 2:** God created the Human Heart for Love — At times Love is painful

**Foundation 3:** Encountering God's Love Changes us Forever

**Implication (So what?):** What are the loves in my life that are trying to compete with Jesus being my #1 love? Am I "Shema-ing" in my life, being willing to do whatever God asks no matter what?

**Application (Now What?):** How can I apply John 3:16-18 in my life for Christmas and love others by laying down my life and sacrificing for them like Jesus did for me?

## Study Questions

### Foundations: What?

1. How do you see that we have sanitized the Christmas story and miss the purpose of God sending Jesus with real un-sanitized love?
2. How have you recognized that God has created you for love and that you need the love of God and others? Also how do you see that at times love is painful?
3. How have you encountered God's love and how has it transformed your forever?

### Implications: So What?

4. What areas compete with Jesus being my #1 love and priority? How can I be more intentional with "Shema-ing," listening and obeying God in all things?

### Applications: Now What?

5. How is God calling me to respond during Christmas with is the sacrificial love?

## Prayer

Lord, in this Christmas season may you give us revelation of your love in action as you sent your son Jesus to come to earth and die in our place. May we encounter your un-sanitized love like the shepherds did two thousand years ago. May we be convinced and sacrifice like the wisemen in response to this extravagant love. May we live out & Shema-ing with God to listen, obey and represent God's love in this Christmas season. And may we live out this Christmas love this Christmas through real sacrifice that shines the love of Jesus in this season!