



**POPLAR SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH**  
est. 1794

**The Lord's Day, February 19th, 2023**  
**Transfiguration Sunday**

**Rev. Danny Settle, Interim Pastor**  
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## CALL TO WORSHIP

*THE STRIKING OF THE HOUR*

*MEDITATION AND PREPARATION*

Prelude

*WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS*

*CALL TO WORSHIP*

Psalm 63:1-2

"O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So, I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power, and Your glory."

*Minister:* Lift up your hearts unto the Lord!

*Congregation:* **We lift them up!**

*HYMN*

I Stand Amazed in the Presence  
Celebration Hymnal #348

## CONFESSION OF SIN

*THE LAW OF GOD*

Revelation 21:8

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

*Private Confession*

*Corporate Confession*

*Minister:* We make this, our corporate confession, unto God:

***All:* Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON*

Revelation 21:6-7

"And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

*Minister:* Your sins are forgiven through Christ.

*Congregation:* **Thanks be to God!**

*DOXOLOGY*

Doxology  
Celebration Hymnal #815

**CONSECRATION**

*PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION*

*SCRIPTURE READING*

*Minister:* The Word of the Lord.

Ruth 4:1-17

John 2:1-12

Ephesians 5:21-33

*Minister:* May God bless the reading of His Word.

*Congregation:* **Amen.**

*PASTORAL PRAYER*

*HYMN*

O The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus  
Celebration Hymnal #352

*SERMON*

Love is the Theme – Part 2  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13

*HYMN*

O Love that Will Not Let Me Go  
Celebration Hymnal #606

**COMMISSIONING**

*BENEDICTION*

*Minister:* "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus  
Christ in sincerity. Amen." (Ephesians 6:24)

*Congregation:* **Amen.**

Postlude

*In the foyer, a plate is designated for tithes and offerings.*

# **If We Love God Most, We Will Love Others Best**

by Jon Bloom  
desiringGod.org

The most loving thing we can do for others is love God more than we love them. For if we love God most, we will love others best.

I know this sounds like preposterous gobbledygook to an unbeliever. How can you love someone best by loving someone else most? But those who have encountered the living Christ understand what I mean. They know the depth of love and breadth of grace that flows out from them toward others when they themselves are filled with love for God and all he is for them and means to them in Jesus. And they know the comparatively shallow and narrow love they feel toward others when their affection for God is ebbing.

There's a reason why Jesus said the second greatest commandment is like the first: if we love God with all our heart, we will love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37–39). It functions like faith and works; if we truly have the first, the second naturally follows.

But if God is not the love of our life, there is no way that we will truly love our neighbor as ourselves. For we will love ourselves supremely.

## **He First Loved Us**

The reason we will love others best when we love God most is that love in its truest, purest form only comes from God, because God is love (1 John 4:7–8). Love is a fundamental part of his nature. We are only able to love him or anyone else because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). We are only able to give freely to others what we have received freely from him.

And as God's image-bearers (Genesis 1:26), we are designed to love God and others in the same way that God loves God and others. God, being the most pure, perfect, powerful, and precious entity in existence, must love himself most in order to love everything else best, since everything else is "from him and through him and to him" (Romans 11:36). If God loved something or someone else more than himself, he would be violating the first commandment (Exodus 20:3) and the foremost commandment (Matthew 22:37–38). For God to love something or someone more than himself would be inappropriate, perverted, immoral. Like God, we must love him supremely in order to love everything else best.

## **The Horrible Result of Not Loving God Most**

When we (or anything else, if that's possible) become our supreme love instead of God, love becomes distorted and diseased. Love ends up devolving into whatever we wish for it to mean.

This is a great evil, greater than we often realize. This is the world as we know it: everyone loves in the way that is right in his own eyes. Which of course means that everyone hates in the way that is right in his own eyes. They become supreme "lovers of self" (2 Timothy 3:2) and live "in the passions of [their] flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind," since they were "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). It is not hard to understand why there is so much

confusion and conflict and heartbreak and violence in the world. We live in an anarchy of love resulting in much of the horrifying things we hear in the news.

## **The Greatest Love Ever Shown**

But God, being rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4), “so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). The author and perfecter of love, Love himself, stepped into our horrible evil anarchy to redeem us (Romans 5:8), his people, and give us new life (Ephesians 2:5), and transform us from children of wrath back into children of God (John 1:12) who are able to love him supremely and therefore love each other rightly – the way he has loved us.

And how has he loved us? With the greatest love there is, the love that moves one to lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). But this doesn’t mean that Jesus loved us, his friends, more than his Father. It means that Jesus loved us best because he loved his Father most (John 17:26; Mark 14:36). And “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

## **What May Be Our Most Loving Act Today**

So we see that if we love God most, we will love others best.

I find this to be a convicting and uncomfortable truth: How we love others, particularly other Christians, reveals how we love God. The apostle John puts it bluntly: “He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 John 4:20). Our love for each other is an indicator of the place God is holding in our hearts.

God is very good at designing things this way: our faith is revealed by our works (James 2:18), our creeds are revealed by our deeds (Luke 6:46), and our love for him is revealed by our love for others (1 John 4:20). He makes it very hard for us to fake it. And this is a great kindness (Romans 2:4).

Since the greatest and second greatest commandments are involved in these things, we know they are important to God. So perhaps the best thing we can do today is take an honest, lingering look at the way we love others, allow what we see to have its Philippians 2:12 effect on us, and ask God what he would have us do in response.

We may find that this is the most loving thing we will do for everyone else today.

# SERVICES

## THE LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship 10:00 AM

Evening Worship 7:00 PM

Children's Ministry 7:00 PM

Deacons Meeting 7:45 PM

## WEDNESDAY

BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM

# LEADERSHIP

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