John Piper defines love as, “Love is doing whatever you have to do at whatever cost to yourself in order to help another person stop finding pleasure in being made much of and help them get to the mature, God-exalting, Christ-besotted, joyfully self-sacrificing, self-forgetting delight in making much of God for the sake of others.”

1. Even if we were able to speak in every known language ever spoken so that we could communicate with every person, it would all be just noise if we could not love people by pointing them to Jesus.
2. Even if we were able to understand and explain the message of God’s Word by perfectly interpreting every bit of knowledge that He gives us, but lacked love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, it would be useless.
3. And even if we had the strongest faith and trust in everything Jesus has taught us, so that we could be able to move mountains with the sheer power of it, but had not love for one another, it would as nothing, a waste of time.
4. Even if we had the greatest sacrifice by giving away everything we had to the poor, and gave up our body as a physical sacrifice in the name of Christ, but have no love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, we would gain nothing.
5. But what might surprise some people us is that the Scripture defines patience as an endurance for the sake of pointing people to Christ.
6. When we speak to others, we must not tear them down. Unrighteous anger and slander have no place in love. Words are meant for building up and giving grace to others.
7. Jesus came not to serve Himself, even though He deserved it more than any other person, but to serve others by laying down His life for us.
8. Love includes gently but lovingly warning those who are not showing fruit of salvation about the possibility of God’s judgment. It is not loving to see someone in danger of Hell and not warn them about it.

Application

1. Love is not just one possible outcome of salvation in Christ; it is an essential fruit of the work of the Spirit in our hearts. Examine yourself to see if you are truly loving your brothers and sisters in Christ every day. Are you counting the needs of those in the body of Berkeley Crossroads as more significant than your own needs?