

Purposes of God

Love, identity, and the real test of spiritual maturity

SPEAKER	Jayson Knox
DATE	Sunday, March 8, 2026
PASSAGES	John 13; John 15; Matthew 5; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 5; Colossians 1; Colossians 3; Ephesians 3
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:05:09 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

The central purpose of God for his people is love—lived out in community, rooted in our identity in Christ, and made visible through unity, forgiveness, and Christlike character. This is not sentimental or vague: it is the real substance of Christian maturity, and it is the mark by which the world recognizes Jesus' disciples.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ Christian faith cannot be inherited or coerced; it is always a personal response to Jesus' invitation: "Follow me."
- ◆ Love is the defining mark of Jesus' disciples—unity, forgiveness, and sacrificial care are the proof of genuine faith.
- ◆ The early church was a countercultural community, marked by both persecution and very real divisions that required ongoing forgiveness and reconciliation.
- ◆ Spiritual maturity is not measured by giftedness or knowledge, but by Christlike love—patient, kind, humble, and forgiving.
- ◆ Our new identity in Christ ("chosen, holy, and beloved") is the foundation for putting off old habits and putting on compassion, humility, and love.
- ◆ We are called to see one another not by old patterns or failures, but as new creations—calling forth what Christ is doing in each person.

- ◆ All true spiritual formation is rooted in God's initiative, enabled by his Spirit, and results in a community where Christ dwells richly.

► 1:05:09

Jayson began with a story about a friend whose daughter, after encountering toxic church experiences and personal disappointments, drifted away from the faith she grew up with. Many in the room, he noted, know this story from their own families or friends. Faith, he reminded, is never inherited or forced; it is always a personal invitation from Jesus: "Follow me."

Longing for a safe and influential community

► 1:08:04

Jayson shared his hope that Hope Chapel will be "a safe place for those whom God would join to us." He pointed to things like Alpha as doors for people to encounter Christ through real relationships. Safety, he said, means both a welcome for people to bring their whole selves and the kind of community where maturing in Christ is possible. He prayed that Hope would be a place of light—"a city set on a hill," as Jesus put it, giving light in a dark world and bringing glory to God ([Matthew 5:14–16](#)).

The real vision, he said, is not just safety but influence: a church shaped by the kingdom of God, "sometimes opposing the spirit of the age, owning our own deviations from it, and leaning into spiritual formation." He quoted John Foreman—"Love is the rebel song"—and described Christian love as a "counterculture rebellion."

Jesus' command: Love one another

► 1:08:58

The heart of the message was straightforward: love is the core of Christian life, and Jesus was insistent about it. "Don't tune out because I said love," Jayson urged, "I hope you can hear it in a fresh way." He focused first on Jesus' words in the Gospel of John, where love is a recurring theme.

“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

JOHN 15:8–12 ↗

Jayson pointed out that Jesus stacks command after command in this passage, but all of them “crescendo into the purpose of all of this... so that you will love one another.” The proof of discipleship, he said, is not words or titles but love lived out.

What love looks like—Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount

► 1:10:23

Jayson turned to the Sermon on the Mount for specifics. Jesus' teaching is not just theory; it is practical and sometimes uncomfortable. He noted that commands like reconciling with someone before worship ([Matthew 5:23–24](#)) are not metaphors but real instructions—a call to forgiveness and relationship over ritual.

Jesus presses further: “pray for those who persecute you,” “forgive those who hurt you,” “greet those outside your comfort zone.” These are not suggestions, but the shape of the kingdom, often at odds with what is natural or easy.

Community in the early church—persecution and division

► 1:12:48

The earliest churches, Jayson reminded, longed for the vibrant life of [Acts 2:42](#) (“they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”). But he was candid about two realities: the early church suffered real persecution, and it was also plagued by divisions and broken relationships. “If it wasn't for those problems,” he observed, “we wouldn't have near the scriptures that we have”—since so many of Paul's letters address conflict, reconciliation, and the real work of loving one another in hard situations.

He pointed to Paul's public conflict with Peter in Galatians ([Galatians 2:11–14](#)), the disputes in Philippi, and the deep dysfunction in Corinth. The call for unity is not theoretical; it had to be hammered out in real life.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”

GALATIANS 5:6 ↗

In Philippians, Paul pleads with two women by name—“I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord”—and appeals for unity as a sign to the world ([Philippians 4:2–3](#)).

How Paul measures spiritual maturity

► 1:14:49

In Corinth, Paul faces a church that equates maturity with giftedness, knowledge, or visible success. Jayson read through [1 Corinthians 13](#) and asked the room to use it as a “diagnostic tool” for daily life:

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ... If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ... Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1–7 ↗

“Love is the right promotion,” he said. He warned that churches and society both tend to promote people for their gifts or charisma, but “character development” is what lasts.

How we see each other—new creations in Christ

► 1:16:43

Jayson then walked through [2 Corinthians 5:14–21](#), where Paul calls the church “ambassadors for Christ,” tasked with the ministry of reconciliation. Jayson emphasized that verse 17—“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation”—is in context about how we see others, not just ourselves. “Behold, see it. See the new that has come. Don't see the old that they're behaving with now and hope that new will come. Look at the new that is being born in them and call it forth. Pray for it, protect it, encourage it. That's what we do as a body.”

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 ↗

Putting off the old, putting on the new—Colossians 3

► 1:17:31

Jayson turned to Colossians, reflecting on Paul’s pastoral heart: “He prayed churches into existence. He also exhorted them. And he teaches them songs and poetry to remind us what God is doing and what Jesus is like.” He noted that Colossians 3 is “one of the best passages in the Bible about discipleship and how we participate with the Holy Spirit in his transforming work of becoming like Christ, more spiritual maturity.” He encouraged everyone, “If you want to live for the next decade in a passage that will never cease to bear fruit in your life, this is a passage to do it.”

“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

COLOSSIANS 3:1–4 ↗

Jayson explained, “We set our minds on Jesus—at least we set our minds on how he lived and how he lived on earth. We don't set our mind on our own sin. When he convicts us of sin, we repent of it, we confess it. Jesus stands with us and looks at our sin. He's not like on the other side of our sin looking at us through our sin, going, 'Gosh, you really stunk it up this time. I don't know if I can do anything with you now.' He stands with us looking at our sin. Takes it upon himself because we were not created to sin. Sin kills. So Jesus deals with our sin. So he says, 'Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth.'”

Paul lists things to put off—internal and external habits: “Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ... Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Don't lie to one another.” Jayson noted, “Those are all things we do outside that are much more visible. If you can't grasp anything else I've been hammering on today, these verses are the gold that you can take home and live with.”

“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

COLOSSIANS 3:9–10 ↗

He emphasized, “Putting on the new self is not a one-time event. It's a renewing of your mind. It's a setting these things before you. This is why worship is so important. Why dwelling on the truth and songs get stuck in your head. ... Whatever you meditate on, whatever you think about, affects everything—who you are, what you become, how you treat others.”

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

COLOSSIANS 3:12–14 ↗

Jayson stressed these words: “You are chosen. You are holy. You are beloved. That's who you are, whether you feel like it or not, whether your resume reflects it. You are holy because of what Christ has done. ... The prerequisite to moving on in spiritual maturity and putting on Christ is to understand who you are: chosen, holy, and beloved.” He invited the church to bear with and forgive one another, “not because we're really special and smart and spiritual, but because God forgave us—even ahead of time, knowing you're going to be in a room with somebody who you don't like, who rubs you the wrong way, who gets on your nerves. Preparing yourself in advance by putting these things on. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... because you were called in one body. You are a reflection of Christ, his body. And then the magic word: be thankful.”

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

COLOSSIANS 3:15–17 ↗

Summary, practical counsel, and Paul's prayer

► 1:20:19

As a summary, Jayson urged the church: “Put off the old self with its practices, the habits. Quit filling in the ruts that are carved in our souls by repeated sins. Starve it. Think differently about it. Confess it. Do some practical house cleaning.” He shared a personal illustration: “If chips and hot sauce are really an issue for me, I sin less—I do less anxiety eating—when they're not in the house. That's a silly example, but there are also places we go, things we read, things we watch, things we listen to and entertain ourselves with that put us down the wrong road and keep those ruts getting deeper. Just deal with your addictions. Let Jesus deal with your addictions.”

“And above all, remember: the prerequisite is your identity. Above all, put on love, which binds it all together.”

Jayson then led the church in Paul’s prayer from [Ephesians 3:14–21](#), standing together as a congregation:

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

[EPHESIANS 3:14–19](#) ↗

Jayson concluded with Paul’s blessing:

“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

[EPHESIANS 3:20–21](#) ↗

As the service ended, Jayson invited those needing prayer to come forward and encouraged the church, “Go in peace. Be Christ to the world waiting to encounter you this week.”

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- Matthew 5:14–16
- John 15:8–12
- Matthew 5:23–24
- Galatians 5:6
- Philippians 4:2–3
- 1 Corinthians 13:1–7
- 2 Corinthians 5:14–21
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Colossians 3:1–4
- Colossians 3:9–10
- Colossians 3:12–14
- Colossians 3:15–17
- Ephesians 3:14–19
- Ephesians 3:14–21
- Ephesians 3:20–21

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Where have you seen the difference between inherited faith and personal response to Jesus' invitation? How does this affect your relationships?
2. Jayson described Hope Chapel's vision as being "a safe place" and "a city set on a hill." What makes a church truly safe and influential for outsiders and insiders alike?
3. Consider 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 as a "diagnostic tool." Which of its marks of love comes most easily to you, and which one is a challenge right now?
4. Paul calls us to see one another as "new creations." How could this change the way you approach conflict or disappointment with others in the church?
5. What is one old habit or "rut" you sense the Lord inviting you to put off this week—and what would it look like to "put on love" in its place?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Jayson Knox is a longtime member of Hope Chapel who is regularly entrusted with Sunday teaching. In this message, he was asked to address the biblical foundation for community life, love, and spiritual maturity, drawing from both the teachings of Jesus and the letters of Paul. Jayson is known for connecting scripture to the lived experience of the congregation and for his candor about Hope Chapel's history and vision.

Watch the full message:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5T_luGvhP8&t=3909s

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.