SAMPLE: Passion

**Week 1: Fueled by Love**

**Big Idea:** God so loves the entire world and does not want to condemn it, he sends Jesus as an atoning sacrifice. God’s motivation to send Jesus was fueled by love. And Jesus’ ministry here on earth, all the way up to His death on the cross, was fueled by the same unconditional and all-powerful love.

**Prayer:** *“Lord Jesus, thank you for setting the example of love for us all to learn from and follow. Thank you for trading your life so that we might have eternal life. Grant us the courage to be more like you; humble, obedient, and kind… So that we may have the opportunity to share the gospel with others.”*

**Scripture:** John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; John 13:34; Matt. 21:33-42; Matt. 18:21-22

(All Scripture quotations are from the NIV unless otherwise noted)

### Introduction

Welcome church. We are counting down the days to one of my favorite days of the year: Easter! This is a time each year that we as believers come together specifically to celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, I know what you’re thinking: “Pastor, don’t we celebrate those events *every* Sunday?” This, indeed, is true. So, I thought it would be fitting for us to spend the next few weeks, leading up to Easter, looking more intently at the Passion narrative, as it’s often called, that leads to resurrection Sunday.

If you grew up in the church, chances are you’ve heard the story of Jesus told many times. Maybe some of you today are new to the narrative. Either way, it’s extremely important and powerful. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He was paying the penalty for our sin that we ourselves could not pay. When this happened, many of those standing around the cross believed it was the nails that held Him there. However, we are going to see over the next few weeks that it was His passion for humanity instead.

Jesus *loved* others, and His instruction to those early disciples was for them to love others as well. In the gospel of John, Jesus says, *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”* - John 13:34. And even as he was giving this instruction, they were still learning from, following, and watching Jesus and the way He loved others.

Over the next few weeks, we are going to do the same. Just like the early disciples, we are going to learn from Jesus, through the word, how to love others. What was Jesus’ motivation and mission? What kept Him engaged through the difficulty of His mission?

Why did He trade His life for ours?

### Main Teaching

As we get started please open your Bible or Bible app up to one of the most well known verses of all time, *John 3:16.*

**Read John 3:16**

Today, I want us to focus on the beginning of this verse. There are two crucial statements made by Jesus in the opening segment of this verse, both of which have implications for us. Let’s take a look…

**God so loved the world**

If you were to ask any Christian how to describe God, most of them would say something about love. It is clear to see, all throughout the Bible, that God is a God of love, compassion, and care. In fact, 1 John 4:8 tells us that “God *is* love.” His very being is love. What a powerful statement, right?

The word for “love” used in verse 3:16 by John is the Greek word “agape.” Of the 4 different words in the Greek language for love, this is the one that is willful, pure, and sacrificial. Sound familiar?

This is the type of love God has for His people, including you and me. This love fueled God to send His son in the first place. And this is the love that fueled Jesus throughout His ministry.

And this is the kind of love God wants to pass onto all those who believe in Him through Jesus.

**Read John 13:34**

As I mentioned earlier, we are commanded by Jesus to love one another in the same manner that He loved. This leads us into a conversation about sacrifice. The key to loving people well is often found in sacrifice, when we lay aside what we want for others…

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