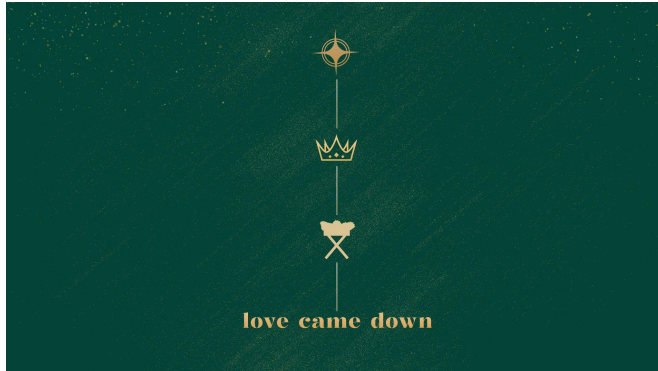




November 30, 2025

Kevin Sneed

1 John 4:7-10

Introduction

This week's message invites us to reconsider what comes to mind when we think about God. Kevin Sneed reminds us of the intimate scene from John's Gospel where the beloved disciple reclines against Jesus, hearing His very heartbeat. Rather than viewing God as distant, angry, or litigious, John distills the essence of God's character into three profound words: "God is love." As we enter the Advent season, we're challenged to move beyond intellectual understanding and cultivate actual experiences of resting in God's love—leaning in close enough to hear the heartbeat of Jesus through prayer, beholding Him rather than the distractions around us, and creating margin to rest in His presence.

Key Texts: 1 John 4:7-10; John 13:21-25; Ephesians 3:14-19

Icebreaker

What's one thing that consistently distracts you during the Christmas season—whether it's busyness, shopping, social obligations, or something else?

Discussion Questions

1. A.W. Tozer said, "What comes into our mind when we think of God is the most important thing about us." What honestly comes to mind when you think about God? Is it closer to a loving Father or something else (distant judge, angry authority, demanding taskmaster)? How might this perception shape how you approach Him?

2. **Read 1 John 4:7-10 together.** John emphasizes that "love is not that we loved God, but that He loved us." Why is this order so important? How does starting with God's initiative toward us change our understanding of relationship with Him?
3. **Read John 13:21-25 together.** Picture the scene: John leaning against Jesus' chest, hearing His heartbeat. What do you think John experienced in that moment that shaped how he later wrote "God is love"? What would it look like for you to cultivate that kind of closeness with Jesus?
4. Kevin said, "Whatever you are beholding, you become." What are you spending the most time beholding right now—whether social media, news, entertainment, or work? How might this be shaping who you're becoming? What would need to shift to behold God more consistently?
5. Kevin identified three obstacles to resting in God's love: distraction, busyness, and distress. Which of these resonates most with your current season? What's one practical step you could take this Advent to create margin for resting in God's presence?
6. **Read Ephesians 3:14-19 together.** Paul prays that we would "know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge." How do we come to know something that surpasses knowledge? What's the difference between knowing about God's love and experiencing it?

Key Takeaways

- What we believe about God is the most important thing about us
- God's very nature is love—rooted in the Trinity's eternal relationship
- Love begins with God's initiative toward us, not ours toward Him
- We become what we behold—so we must intentionally behold God
- Experiencing God's love requires cultivating space to lean in close through prayer
- Advent calls us to remember that Love came down and drew near

Notes