LEGACY CODE / MESSAGE FOUR

Love That Lasts

How to Stop Being So Busy and Focus on What Matters Most
Chris Fluitt | November 22, 2026 | First Christian Church of Allen

> **BIG IDEA: LOVE GIVES YOUR NO A REASON. LOVE GIVES YOUR YES A PURPOSE.**

Key passages: 2 Corinthians 5:14–15; Hebrews 12:2; John 13; Mark 5; Luke 7; 1 Corinthians 13:13. Scripture wording: NIV unless marked KJV.

The cost of every yes

Have you ever thought about what you would want written on your tombstone? That sounds like an unusual way to begin talking about love, but it raises a question we rarely stop to ask: When my life is over, what will actually be remembered?

I could imagine a few silly epitaphs for myself. ‘Pastor of two churches. Father of five. Husband of one. Finally found a day off.’ Or, ‘Promised twenty minutes. Even his funeral ran long.’ Maybe the most painfully honest version would be: ‘Did it all himself. Final words: I CAN PROBABLY DO THAT MYSELF.’ They're funny because busyness has a way of becoming our identity, and sometimes we don't notice how much it is costing us.

Work needs our attention. Families need our attention. The holidays bring gatherings, shopping, travel, expectations and extra commitments. Sometimes we say yes so often that we never stop to consider what those yeses are taking from us. We tell ourselves we are building a career, managing a schedule or growing a bank account. Those things may have a place, but are we building a life worth remembering?

EVERY YES COSTS SOMETHING. Every yes uses time, energy, focus, rest and sometimes the attention we should have given to a relationship. The issue is not simply whether we can fit another commitment on the calendar. The issue is whether the people and purposes that matter most are receiving what they need from us.

Over the last few weeks of Legacy Code, we've talked about faith, character and generosity. Now the series comes to a close with something that gives those other qualities meaning: **love that lasts**. What if the legacy we want doesn't require saying yes to more? What if it requires saying yes to what matters?

1. Love constrains and compels

To decide what really deserves our yes, we begin with 2 Corinthians 5:14–15. Paul gives us language that sounds different across English translations. The King James Version says, ‘the love of Christ constraineth us.’ The NIV says, ‘Christ’s love compels us.’ Those words may sound opposite at first. One sounds as if it holds us back; the other sounds as if it moves us forward. Both help describe what Christ's love does in a person.

> *2 Corinthians 5:14: KJV, “the love of Christ constraineth us”; NIV, “Christ’s love compels us.” The same love both governs and moves us.*

The Greek word is **synechō** (συνέχω), a word with the sense of holding, pressing, governing or compelling. Here is the point for everyday life: **Christ’s love governs what I choose.** His love begins to influence both what I refuse and what I pursue.

LOVE CONSTRAINS MY SELFISHNESS. LOVE COMPELS MY SACRIFICE. There are things love tells me to stop. It can restrain anger, bitterness, pride, the habit of always getting my way and the impulse to put myself first. At the same time, love urges me toward serving, protecting, sharing and caring for someone who needs me. Love doesn't merely add one more thing to our schedule. It changes the reasons behind our decisions.

LOVE GIVES YOUR NO A REASON. LOVE GIVES YOUR YES A PURPOSE. Saying no does not have to mean we are uncaring. Sometimes it is exactly how we protect a greater yes. If I say no to an unnecessary commitment because I need to be present with my family, love is directing that choice. If I say yes to helping someone even when it costs me convenience, love is directing that choice too.

Paul goes further in verse 15. Christ died for all so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised again. Notice the change in who we are living for. It is possible to organize our whole life around my plans, my comfort, my happiness and my way, and still feel miserable. Jesus offers a different center.

> *2 Corinthians 5:15 (NIV): “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”*

THE LOVE OF CHRIST CHANGES WHO I’M LIVING FOR, AND WHAT CONSTRAINS ME AND WHAT COMPELS ME. If you want a different kind of life, don't begin only with a longer checklist of good behavior. Begin with the love of Christ. And if you want to know what that love looks like, look at Jesus.

2. Jesus shows us sacrificial love

The greatest example of a lasting legacy is Jesus Himself. We can talk about priorities, serving and loving people, but Jesus demonstrates what those words mean when love becomes costly. He didn't simply announce that people mattered. He gave Himself for them.

Hebrews 12:2 tells us to look to Jesus, who endured the cross for the joy set before Him. Joy and a cross seem like they do not belong in the same sentence. The cross involved pain, shame and suffering. Yet Jesus looked beyond the suffering to what His sacrifice would accomplish: salvation, restored relationship with God and resurrection victory.

> *Hebrews 12:2 (NIV), excerpt: "For the joy set before him he endured the cross."*

We need to understand this in the right order. **WE DON'T EARN HIS LOVE BY OUR SACRIFICE. HIS SACRIFICE SHOWS HIS LOVE TO US.** Jesus didn't wait for us to become worthy, productive or impressive. He loved us first. His death for our sins and His resurrection are the foundation of the good news. We are not trying to purchase God's affection through a busier religious life. We respond to His love because He has already shown us His love.

Now consider John 13. Jesus is with His disciples, and He takes the position of a servant. He gets down with a towel and washes their feet. The One with all authority chooses a humble act of love. That picture matters. Love is not only what we feel or what we say. Sometimes it is the ordinary, inconvenient thing we are willing to do for the person in front of us.

The cross and the towel belong together in the example of Jesus. The cross shows the depth of His saving sacrifice. The towel shows how love can take on the shape of service. When we serve another person, we are not adding anything to what Jesus accomplished. We are showing our gratitude by becoming more like Him.

Ask yourself: Who in my life needs something more than a promise that I care? What would love look like if it became a decision, an interruption, a practical act of help or a willingness to put someone else's need ahead of my convenience? That is one way the love of Jesus begins to shape what we leave behind.

3. Jesus loved wider and deeper

Look at the people Jesus welcomed into His life. His circle included fishermen, a tax collector and a zealot. He engaged people others avoided: Pharisees, Samaritans, people with leprosy and those who did not fit comfortably into someone else's group. He wasn't limited to loving people who thought, lived or looked like Him. His love reached across the lines that often divide us.

But the love of Jesus was not only wide. It was also deep. In Mark 5 we see Him respond to a man living among tombs, tormented and isolated. In that same chapter we see Him address the anguish surrounding Jairus's daughter. In Luke 7 He notices a grieving widow at Nain and responds with compassion. These are not simply groups or categories of people. They are individuals with pain, faces, families and stories.

> *John 13:14 (NIV), excerpt: "you also should wash one another's feet."*

WIDE ENOUGH TO REACH THE WORLD. DEEP ENOUGH TO STOP FOR ONE. Jesus shows us a kind of love that doesn't force us to choose between caring about people far away and caring about people close to us. He shows us how to love both wider and deeper.

That becomes a personal question: **DOES YOUR LOVE NEED TO GO WIDER OR DEEPER?** Some of us are quick to help everybody. We volunteer, answer calls, make ourselves available and say yes to almost everything. But the people at home receive the leftovers of our time and attention. If that is us, Christ's love may constrain us. We might need to say no to one extra thing so we can say yes to a spouse, child, parent or close friend.

Others of us are devoted to our own inner circle, which is good, but our world has grown too small. We may not notice the lonely person, the hurting neighbor, the newcomer or the person who doesn't already belong. Christ's love can compel us to go wider, beyond those who are already comfortable and familiar.

MAKE GOD'S LOVE VISIBLE. This does not need to begin with an elaborate plan. Around Thanksgiving, love can go deeper: put down the phone, listen without rushing, forgive, speak encouragement and pray together. Sometimes the most meaningful gift is undivided attention. Don't wait for a eulogy to tell somebody what they need to hear today.

Around Christmas, love can go wider. In this message we are highlighting opportunities connected to Toys for Texans and Mike's kids. The practical invitations are to give, serve and invite. The exact activities may belong to this particular season, but the principle belongs to every season: look for people who need to experience God's love and find a way to make that love visible.

What will they remember?

Let's return to that tombstone for a moment. If your life could be summarized in a few lines, what would you want those lines to say? That you accomplished a lot? That you always showed up at work? Those things may matter. But wouldn't it be better to be remembered as someone who loved deeply, cared widely, was present with family and noticed people who were hurting?

First Corinthians 13:13 reminds us that faith, hope and love remain, and that the greatest of these is love. This is a fitting way to finish Legacy Code. Faith, character and generosity are not

isolated achievements we display. At their best, they express a life transformed by the love of Jesus.

> *1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV): “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”*

THE LOVE OF JESUS IS A LEGACY WORTH LEAVING. YOU CAN'T LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE IF YOU'RE NOT LIVING A LIFE OF LOVE. We won't build that legacy accidentally. The decisions we make now, the people we notice now and the love we show now become part of what we leave for the next generation.

So here is the question we bring into the invitation: **WHAT WILL YOU SAY YES TO?** Not another yes for the sake of being busy, and not another activity to make us feel important. A yes to Jesus and a yes directed by His love.

Three responses to the love of Jesus

1. RECEIVE HIS LOVE. The invitation begins with what Jesus has already done. He died for our sins and rose again. He offers forgiveness, new life and a real relationship with Him. You cannot manufacture that by working harder or proving you are worthy. Receive His grace. If you need to turn toward Jesus, ask for prayer and take a real next step of faith. We would love to pray with you and talk about following Him.

2. LET LOVE GO DEEPER. Who in your life needs to hear or experience your love more clearly? The original invitation called people to bring a spouse, child, parent or friend for prayer together. That is not only a church moment. It is a picture of what comes next: choose presence, conversation, reconciliation and prayer with somebody close to you. If you came alone, the church family is here to welcome you. You do not have to take that step by yourself.

3. LET LOVE GO WIDER. There are children and families who need to experience God's love, especially during the Christmas season. We invited people to choose an outreach table and sign up to serve through Toys for Texans or Mike's kids. That is one immediate way to act. You can also look around your neighborhood or workplace and ask who needs practical care, friendship, encouragement or help.

Let love compel you. Let it also constrain the things that keep you from what matters most. When you leave this message, take one clear yes with you. Make God's love visible.

Make it personal this week

Reflect: what is my yes costing?

Write down one commitment that has been draining time, attention or patience from someone important to you. Is that commitment truly necessary right now? If the answer is no, what might you change?

Go deeper with one person

Before the week ends, choose one specific action: give someone undivided attention, have a difficult but loving conversation, say what you appreciate about them or pray together.

Go wider with one person

Identify someone outside your usual circle. Invite them, check in, meet a real need or encourage them. Keep the action practical, specific and respectful.

Talk about legacy together

Ask your household or a close friend: What do we hope people will remember about the way we loved? What one change could help us live that way now?

A simple family conversation

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14–15 and 1 Corinthians 13:13 together. Talk about one thing your family wants to say no to and one expression of love you want to say yes to. Invite every person to name a realistic next step.

A prayer for a lasting love

Jesus, thank You for loving us before we could ever earn it. Forgive us for the ways we have centered our lives on ourselves. Teach us when to say no and when to say yes. Help us give our closest relationships the attention they need, and open our eyes to people outside our circle. Let our faith, character and generosity reveal Your love. Make Your love visible through us. Amen.

KEEP THE LOVE GOING

Build a life that outlives you.

Missed the message? Want to share it with someone who feels too busy for what matters most? Return to **Love That Lasts** and the Legacy Code series.



Explore the message and the free Legacy Code family workbook.

Use the resources to talk about faith, character, generosity and love with the people you care about.

SCAN FOR THE LEGACY CODE HUB + FREE WORKBOOK

https://allenchristianchurch.com/legacy-code/

Find Jesus. Follow Purpose. Go Change the World. | Church website