

Hilary: Hello Th-

Jen: Stop.

Hilary: Oh hello! I don't know if you know this, but you're actually in my way. You see, I have to go to all those GEMS. The Father has sent me.

Jen: You can't go in.

Hilary: Oh, I don't think you understand. Let me introduce myself to you. My name is Love. A little about me. I am patient. I am kind. I don't seek after things for myself. I'm overwhelming. Never-ending, and I even developed a reputation in the last couple years of being reckless. God, the Father, he sent me to the GEMS group of girls to fill their hearts. So, you will excuse me.

Jen: You can't go in.

Hilary: What? Are you kidding? Those girls need me. They need the Father's love. They can't possibly live a flourishing life unless they know me.

Hey girls! Hey!! Can you hear me?

Jen: They have heard of you. And they can hear you...from over there. Behind the screen. They can know you like that.

Hilary: That's not good enough! I don't want them to know me at a distance. I have been sent by the Father to lavish myself on them. To overwhelm them. To fill them. They can't do that if they keep me at a distance. They can't do that if they only hear of me. You have to let me in.

Jen: No.

Hilary: God. The King of creation. The Father. He sent me.

Jen: I don't answer to Him.

Hilary: What? Who even are you?

Jen: Guess.

Hilary: My first guess? You are a deceiver. A slanderer. A false accuser. Sent by the devil himself as the official opposition of God the Father. Only the most vile and evil beings would dare to keep me from the Father's dear children. His beloved.

Jen: Accurate.

Hilary: The Father is more powerful than you. I am more powerful than you. I should be able to get in.

(Try another way. Blocked)

Hilary: Girls! I'm over here! Oh no! If I can't get in there through his screen. Those girls will never know the Father's great love for them.

How come this being is so powerful? Ok, so I know now it's a deceiver... Now I know who sent you...but what exactly are you trying to tell these girls? Tell me, deceiver, what kind of messages are you sending? Tell me your lies.

**Jen: Lie #1. "You have done too many bad things. God could never love you."**

Hilary: Seriously? They can't fall for that weak sauce statement...can they?

Jen: You would be surprised. If I can speak the truth for a moment – people fall for that lie all of the time. The old the young. Male and female. All generations and all cultures throughout time fall for that. (mwahahaha – (evil giggle))

Hilary: You disgust me.

Jen: Do you know how I love to do it? I just say “See what great love the Father has lavished upon his children. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child.” So if the girls do too many bad things, then they believe they aren’t God’s child and therefore will fight you.

Hilary: So, you take scripture and twist it. Tell me what else you say.

**Jen: Lie #2: You are not beautiful enough. You are not worthy of love.**

Hilary: I know how you get this message across.

Jen: Yup. It's pretty easy too. The key is subtle messaging in all TV and movies so girls will never feel good enough.

Hilary: Gross. Anything else?

**Jen: Lie #3. “The world will give you everything...if you will only fall down and worship love.”**

Hilary: Hey...now. I have been sent by the Father. I am not the Father.

Jen: God is love.

Hilary: Taking scripture out of context again?

Lies. All lies. I suppose I shouldn't be surprised. Lying is your master's native language. That's all he does – he works to destroy the Father's dear children. His *beloved*. And I see your methods...twisting scripture.

I should tell you something else about me though. It's true my name is Love. My proper name is Agape, but Love is fine. And I have been sent by the Father to fill the hearts of his dear children so they may flourish. But I also go by another name. You may have heard of me or gotten to know me another way. I also go by the name Truth. It's not my second name. It's also my first name. Love and Truth cannot be separated. In other words – I cannot even exist as only Love or only Truth. Sometimes when I meet people they only really like to talk to me as Love. Or the opposite – they only like to talk to me as Truth. So I have to remind them that they can't just pick one. I'm both.

But I also want to be clear that Love and Truth are still different. Love and Truth always work together. Neither is compromised. Love is always the goal of truth.

So, deceiver, you do not intimidate me. It's not hard for me to take you down now. I will test what you say and put it up against the word of God. With every lie you dare tell to these girls I will counter it with something you might have heard of – the gospel...which has the power to bring deliverance to everyone who believes it.

Let's expose these lies 1 at a time. To make it easier to understand, I'm just going to pass this on to a human. Let me get my friend, Pastor Hilary.

Hilary: Thanks Love. Hi everyone. I'm Pastor Hilary. I've been listening to my friend Love's conversation. And Love - I would be so happy to proclaim that truth from right here and there will be no stopping you from getting to those girls.

Let's take down these lies.

**Lie #1. "You have done too many bad things. God could never love you."**

Scripture tells us that we were born sinners, and we all fall short of the glory of the God. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Did you hear that? God showed us what he thinks of people who do "too many bad things." He proved he loved us by sending Christ to die for us. The bible does not say, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were all fairly good, Christ died for us." The bible does not say, "God demonstrates his half-hearted love for us in this..."

The bible says this: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still doing bad things, Christ died for us."

Christ *died* for us. That happened in the past. Christ suffered once for our sins and that is enough to pay all the debt. A one time act. God *demonstrates* his own love. That is a reality for all Christians now. All those who confess with their mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in their heart that God raised him from the dead are saved. That justification, that declaration of righteousness, is a one-time act. Nothing and no one can ever take your salvation away from you. Immediately when

someone becomes a follower of Christ, the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, pours out God's love into your heart.

The Holy Spirit begins the process of sanctification. That means God is living in you and working to make you holy. Do Christians still sin? Of course.

A liar will tell you that if you sin then you are not God's child. That is a lie. The deceiver is twisting this passage. Scripture tells us that those who are not God's children make sin a practice. They don't care about sin. We might say that they sin on purpose. God's children still sin, but we hate our sin. The goal of every believer is holiness and righteousness. A good test is to ask yourself how you feel sin. If you don't care and have no desire to change, then I need to warn you. Contrast how you feel with how scripture says God's children respond:

How do children of God feel about sin? God's children are repentant. We are sorry and we desire to change. Are God's children sinless? By no means! God's beloved children still sin. We repent. We are reminded of the gospel – that Jesus Christ completely paid for our sins on the cross – and we believe it. And to all those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of blood, nor of the desire or will of man, but born of God.

God the Father lavishes love on his children. His love is in you and it overflows as his children love each other and our neighbors. This is also how we know we are his children – we love each other.

You are loved by God even when you don't obey. You are LOVED. Period.

**Lie #2: You are not beautiful enough. You are not worthy of love.**

I'm going to start this section with a question. I have a question for all the girls out there. Who defines your beauty?

Let's say for example that someone came up to me and said, "Taylor Swift is more beautiful than you." I'd probably laugh a bit. And I'd think two things. First thing I would think is:

1) According to the world's definition of beauty – yes, of course Taylor Swift is more beautiful than me. I could continue to think...there are a lot of people in the world that are more beautiful than me.

2) Then I need to do a mental shift. Then I would think. According to God's definition of beauty – no, she's not. That's actually impossible. God does not think someone is more beautiful than someone else.

Ladies. It's important that we feel beautiful, isn't it? It feels really nice when people find us attractive. I'd like to suggest that we are always looking to be affirmed for our beauty. We will never ever find the affirmation our hearts long for if we let world define our beauty.

Practice the mental shift. Train our brain. We ask the question – who are we letting define our beauty? According to God's definition of beauty – God thinks all his creatures are just stunning. Can you remember a time when you looked at a sunset or an ocean or the river valley and you felt so in awe of its beauty and it took your breath away? That's how God feels when he looks at you. He looks at us and all He sees is a masterpiece. And He has the final say in your life.

According to God our Father, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. His works are wonderful. Maybe some days we do not feel beautiful, but God says we are. Maybe some people think other women are prettier than us, but God says that's impossible. We look exactly the

way God intended. God wouldn't love us more if the world said we were the prettiest and He wouldn't love us less if the world said we were the ugliest. We are worthy of His love simply because we are his child.

You are LOVED. Period.

**Lie #3. "The world will give you everything...if you will only fall down and worship love.**

You might think that lie is silly. That you don't really believe it. Let me explain. As was alluded to earlier, love cannot exist without truth. In general, our culture loves to emphasize love. Which is wonderful. We love that. Christians love love. But love can never be at the expense of truth. And it is true that too many people emphasize truth at the expense of love. Love is always the goal of truth.

Love is wonderful. God lavishes his love upon his children. We love to talk about love. Love is something that has been given to us from the Father. That's key. Love is given to us from the Father.

Have you ever heard this statement:

Just love yourself – it's all about you...just love...

That statement and statements like those are pushing us away from worshipping God and pursuing love without him. God has to be one we are pursuing – love without God becomes an idol. Think about it.

Just love yourself.... what? Scripture says to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Worship Him only. The deceiver knows that the more you focus on yourself the less happy you will be.

The solution to everything is: Love! Just love. Love yourself. That's the answer. Everything will be ok if you love love. Worship love.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Worship Him only. Pursue God and there you will find bountiful love. Love comes from God. God loved us first and has given us the ability through the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, to love Him in return and to love one another – this is how his love is made complete in us.

You are LOVED. Period.

## **Gospel**

Maybe you're thinking. This is sort of a fun sermon. Pastor Hilary personifying love. But love isn't a real person.

I beg to differ. Love is very much a person. A very real one. His name is Jesus. He says something like this. "Hello. My name is Love. I also go by Jesus. I tell you the Truth because I am the Truth: I've been sent by the Father to lavish myself on you and fill your hearts with love. I will never stop. All those lies? The cross beats that. I have conquered that. I have overcome all the lies. And you – my dear children – you have also overcome them because through the Holy Spirit I am present in you and I am greater than what is in the world. Live into what you already are. Live like - You are LOVED. Period."

## **Mission:**

Therefore. We can also say that your name is also Love. We look at the life of Christ and we love how Christ has loved us. He ups the ante from

“love as we love ourselves” to “love as I have you loved you.” How did Christ love us? He sacrificed his life for us.

We are Christ’s ambassadors to spread his love and one of the ways we do this is by sacrificing. We show our love to God and our neighbors by giving away things that are valuable to us – like our money, our time, and gifts.

We are a community. Love is never alone. I can’t stress the importance of always being part of a church family. Church is a people, not a place. It is a people who have been called out by God to be his own dear children. We are people committed to pursuing God and loving him and loving our neighbor. Therefore, in the church, you will find people who love you. And will remind you over and over again – God loves you. We love you. You are LOVED. Period.

Amen.