

The Love Of God Shed Abroad In The Heart By The Holy Ghost

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 August 2024

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] According to thy faithful word, the hope can establish me that I may live and all my hope as in and never be.
- Hold thou me up, so shall I be in peace and safety still and to thy status of respect of tenderly I will.
- Thou takes the law of love to stay, of thirty sheep of fruit.
- Good men like drugs shall with our boots that for thy love I love.
- For fear of thee is my very friend that never know this made.
- [2 : 04] And all thy righteous judgment, Lord, my soul is my charade.
- Amen.
- We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope, and hope maketh not a shame, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.
- Particularly these words of verse 5, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.
- I'm sure every one of us here is familiar with the statement, God is love.
- [3 : 49] And not only are you familiar with it, I'm sure you appreciate the meaning of it.
- But notwithstanding that, it is highlighted as being a statement concerning God that is much misunderstood.
- that many believe more than the Bible permits us to believe. Many attribute to God what cannot possibly be true often, on the basis of their understanding of what it means to be loved by God.
- The Apostle John states in his first epistle, We have known the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. And when we read these words, they seem plain enough to us, but it's always dangerous to interpret them out of the context in which they are first uttered.
- [5 : 21] In that particular section of the epistle, the first epistle of John, the subject matter under discussion is the mutual indwelling by God, by the people of God, by God, and him of them.
- there is a relationship that is clearly described to us. And those who are believers can believe themselves to have that true of them, that God dwells in them, and they dwell in God.
- however difficult it is for us to understand that. When we think of God, we know that the Bible describes him to us as spirit.

And in that respect, our mind, our understanding, suggests to us that the God, who is spirit, can occupy this frail tabernacle.

but for us to dwell in God, it requires a greater leap of faith.

[6 : 58] It requires a greater measure of spiritual understanding that God alone can give to us. We are asked as we read of the love of God to understand that we can appreciate the love of God as the love of God who is a father to his children.

We can also appreciate through a reading of scripture that we are loved by God the Son. There are various passages which stand out when we analyse the scripture like that.

God loved the world in giving his Son. The Son loved the world in giving of himself on the cross.

But we are not so much used to encountering passages of scripture that speak to us of the love of the passion of the Holy Spirit.

And we are familiar with the teachings we all grew up with them teachings of the Shorter Catechism for example that tells us that God is a triune God he is Father Son and Holy Spirit.

[8 : 40] There are three persons in the Godhead the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost. These three we are taught are one God the same in substance equal in power and glory.

So even with that limited understanding based upon that teaching of the Shorter Catechism if we are to understand God loving we are to understand that God the Father loves God the Son loves and God the Holy Spirit loves.

Of course when we say that we can appreciate how this love is expressed how this love is described but the number of statements that allow us to reflect upon the love of the Holy Spirit to those who are to be recipients of that love is not as often highlighted to us but we are confident in asserting as we recently considered Paul's epistle to the Galatians that the Holy Spirit is responsible for various spiritual fruits that are identified as fruit that belong to the church of

God and fruit that identifies the church of God for what it is in Galatians chapter 5 we saw there how various fruits of the Spirit are described joy patience kindness goodness long suffering and so on but the first fruit that's spoken of us the fruit of the Spirit is love no so at the same thing that the Spirit is love if the Spirit is God and he is then he too must be spoken of as being love love but because it is not illustrated for us in the same way as we find these illustrations of the

Father and the Son then we may query that but when we look at the particular words of our text which we wish to consider with you briefly this evening it suggests to us that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us and you either understand that statement to mean that the Holy Spirit is the channel of that love the Father's love or the Son's love or he himself is the source of that love and why would we object to that if we believe the Holy Ghost to be divine he can equally be considered to be the source as well as the channel of that love but looking at the verse we're focusing on in particular the first thing

[12 : 54] I would like us to understand is that what is described to us here this act of the Holy Spirit in God's people is to be understood based upon how it is found or the context in which these words are found as creating in this people a knowledge of God as a God of love love which is quite true in a sense but that's not the meaning of the verse while we may understand that

God creates in his people a reciprocal love what we see described for us here is God as the God who is the source of that love for his people read it again the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us if we read it as a sentence the shedding abroad in our heart of this love seems to suggest and some have believed that to be the case that this is the love created in us that we love God by but rather than it to be understood like that what the context demands of us is that we believe that what is stated here is this that

God loves his people and it is God's love for his people that is spoken about let me quote to you the words of John Murray the theologian what we have he says is a striking example of the combination in a few words of the objective grounds and the subjective certainty of the believer hope what is it that gives solidity to the believer hope and guarantees its validity it is the love of God to believers a love that suffers no fluctuation or reverse in other words when you take on board what is being emphasized by the apostle in this opening few verses where there is the hope of the believer that is not put to shame it is the grounds upon which that hope remains fixed and changeable is the grounds upon which it builds that is that

God loves that God loves you not that you love God but that God loves you and that is the reason why the certainty that belongs to the status of the believer is founded upon this certainty we inevitably introspectively search our own hearts into which we believe the spirit has poured out this love and the reciprocal action of that love we believe to be the evidence and the certainty for our belief in our being saved but it's much more secure than that although we can say well I can argue that my salvation is secure based upon my feeling of love towards

God but if all you are basing your security on is how you feel or even what you believe then your salvation is not at all secure so the second thing that we can draw attention to is this the words Paul uses speaks of the fullness of the love because he says the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost and that description of God's love to us corresponds with the description that is given to us of God's promise in the Old Testament being fulfilled in the New when at Pentecost the Spirit of God was poured out the fullness of

[18 : 46] God's Holy Spirit as promised by the Old Testament prophets and it is the word that is used here is a note pouring this shed abroad means that a note pouring and it corresponds with the fullness of the Spirit being given and the fullness of the Spirit who has been given there is no limit to it it is a fullness well what does the word full mean if a vessel is full then it means that it's full it's not nearly full sometimes we say you know you hear people who want to express themselves by by their industry that they gave 110% well that's not strictly accurate you can only give 100% because to go beyond that is to go beyond the limit of the percentage figure and the fullness of the

Spirit being outpoured corresponds with the person that is poured out into this world but the expression is used here to describe God's love this love that God has for his own is poured out into the heart of his own God has through the Spirit showed us that love that he has for his own if we read on from verse 5 when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly for scarcely for a righteous man will one die yet peradventure for the good man some would even dare to die but God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us that again speaks of the effulgence of the love that

God loved his people with his complete love the passion of the Holy Spirit has this specific part to play to reveal Christ to us to reveal Christ in us but at the same time to demonstrate or to reveal that salvation is all of grace that it is God's doing and that the source is God and the love is God's and it is focused on the people who will benefit from it one of the divines has put it very simply he says it doesn't come down upon us like drops of dew it is a steady stream which spreads itself throughout the whole soul filling it with the consciousness of his presence and favour it brings with the inward persuasion that we are the children of

God and again you read on into this epistle where Paul speaks of the effect of his love remember these words in Romans 8 the spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God if children and they are so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together this is part of it God loves his people he has poured his love into his people by way of the Holy Spirit and he has done that to ensure that his people can rely upon something that remains certain that remains unchangeable and we have a tendency to look beyond that or outside of that to seek our assurance but where can you find a greater assurance than what

God has already done and not only has he already done it it is something that he does for every single sinner saved by grace it's not you know when it comes to thinking about the assurance of faith we might look to a select few and believe that only they have a right to have this assurance that there is something about them some power of intellect some greater understanding some special dispensation of the Holy Spirit that is not shared with others that they have an exclusive right to this certainty that is not the teaching of God's word this is for all who are

[25 : 05] God's people it doesn't say here this is for the Moses of this world this is for the Abraham this is for the Peters of this world he is talking here about those who have the graces that he himself bestows his people with hope make it not a shame because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to us is there such a thing as a Christian who does not have the Holy Spirit is there such an entity well there isn't every believer is somebody who has been born again by the Spirit of God they at that moment are in doubt with the Spirit you might say oh there are different measures well that's something entirely different but as far as the life from

God is concerned every believer possesses the Holy Spirit and the Spirit interacts with him let me ask you a question and I'm not expecting you to answer out loud it's a great privilege to love somebody is it not to love a spouse to love a child to love a parent to love a friend even do you think it's a greater privilege to be loved by them even using these examples which is the greater privilege to love or to be loved is that a fair question to ask no Christian exists without the love of

God no Christian exists without the love of God being poured out into their heart the fullness of it suffering or where it distracts them it takes their mind away from their time of suffering but I think I don't think I'm wrong in saying this that they appreciate the visit of somebody that they know loves them that appreciation is a minor experience in comparison to understanding the love that

God has for his own John Stort speaks of God forming shaping our character by way of suffering and in this passage here we understand how that comes into it we glory in tribulations also knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience experience and experience hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart the inner experience of God's sustained love in the believer is what helps them to persevere in their troubles in their suffering in the

Greek language here there there's a slight difference in the way this sentence is formed the Holy Spirit was given to us there the Greek tense is the Aorist tense it is a past event it is something that has happened the believer has received the Holy Spirit but God's love has been poured out into our hearts and the tense there changes to the perfect tense it is a past event with continued effect continuing or abiding results so that when we think of the pouring out of God's love into our hearts we know that this is something that has happened when you might ask the question when did this happen well it says here that it is through the

[30 : 43] Holy Spirit and him being given to us that this takes place so I assume that that means that this took place at the moment of our regeneration at the moment of our coming to faith in Christ begins the chapter with that therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ that's the setting for this and if the assumption is right that the spirit filling our heart with the love of God God its source then we understand that that has happened but the effect of it continues it's important for us to remember that might be a trivial example to use but it has to be underlined that what has taken place at the very outset of our

Christian experience will not evaporate will not be counter mined will not be in any way done away with because the effect of God's love in our heart remains God's love for his people is not something that they are able to suppress they are able to take away by their actions which is what many of us seem to think that if we do this or that that God is offended by then we are in some way stemming the flow of this love of his for his own and diverting it away from our heart away from our lives altogether that is not possible it is not something that the scripture teaches it continues the flood remains

God's love does not abate no isn't that not something incredible that we need to dwell upon for our own well being for our own spiritual encouragement because very often what we are guilty of we we imagine that by doing something or not doing something this truth is changed this truth is made to mean something different now Paul follows what he says in verse 5 when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly and so on even that itself is a further reason for the believer to understand that they had nothing by which to generate this flood to create this outpouring in first instance this was all entirely of

God's own doing and I hope it's obvious to you I hope it's something that you are convicted by because very often we are very guilty in our thinking oh I wish I was sure and I wish I was certain and yet at some point many of us if not all of us have made a profession of saying that we have come to faith and believing that we have come to faith and that the basis of that profession is something that we will not contradict at the point that we made it but we will contradict further down the line as if either we are saying it didn't happen at all or that we have worse still done something that negates the effect of that profession which we have made hope make it not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the

Holy Ghost which is given unto us God alone is the source of the love that saves God alone through the Holy Spirit directs that love towards us we may reciprocate it and we should and we do but that's not what is spoken of here it is a declaration of what God has done and he does it through through the passion of his son no doubt he does it by the decree that is his own to save some and to bring them to a state of eternal salvation and may God help us to appreciate what is being taught by the apostle here let us pray oh lord of god as we read these words we may find reasons of plenty in our own lives for contradicting these words but these reasons are not substantive they are not foundational they are not reasons that stand bear scrutiny because they are contradictions of what your word says concerning your own love for your people a love that is declared for the church that you bought with a price that you so loved the world that you gave your son that whosoever would believe in him should not perish but have eternal life a love that he himself declared by embracing the mission that you gave to him and we give thanks for the way in which his life declares that to us help us to trust that this love is a greater love because there is no greater than that someone would give us life for his friends we pray for your blessing upon your church upon all who form part we remember in your presence those who are unwell we remember those of our congregation who are hospitalized or being cared for in a terminal situation we pray for those who are grieving or sorrowing even within our community this evening our loved ones that have entered into eternity hear out prayers pardon our sins in

[38 : 35] Jesus name amen we're going to conclude by singing to God's praise from psalm 116 verse 17 verse 17 psalm 116 psalm 116 psalm 116 psalm 116

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you. Amen.