

# Love The Greatest ?

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[ 0 : 00 ] well good evening to you all if you are here in the morning welcome back and if you're out today for the first time welcome to god's house we pray that we worship together once again with no god's presence and god's blessing with us here to see you let's begin our service by singing to his praise some verses from the psalm number 84. psalm 84 and we're going to sing from verse 1 down to the end of the verse mark six how lovely is thy dwelling place o lord of course to me the tabernacles of thy grace a pleasant lordly be and down to the end of the verse marked six through passing thorough bakers bail therein do dig up wells also the rain that falleth down the pools with water fills psalm 84 verses 1 to 6 to god's praise the this

Because of thy grace, how pleasant, Lord, may be.

My thirsty soul longs even thee, it faints thy course to see.

My very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee.

Behold the spot, O findeth thou, and how sweet unto rest.

[ 2 : 16 ] The swallow also for herself, a purchase in a nest.

In thine own altars, where she stayed, our young was forfeiting.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Blessed are thee in thy house that dwells, they ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man whose strength of art, in whose heart are thy ways.

[ 3 : 49 ] Who passing thought, O beg us, will, let it in due day of wells.

Calls all the rain that fall and down, not a boat with water hills.

We're now going to join together in a word of prayer. Let's all pray. Lord, I mean, and now, gracious God, as we're gathered here this evening, I hope that we would echo the words of the psalmist when he said, How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, the tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant, Lord, to be.

And our heavenly Father, it is good for us to be gathered together as a fellowship of believers this evening and hour, and to come into the presence of a great and holy and mighty God, and to offer him our prayers and our praise.

And heavenly Father, we thank you that as we come, even though we change from hour to hour, day to day, you are the unchanging God. You are the God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

[ 5 : 19 ] And we thank you, Lord, that we can look to you, and we can realize, Lord, that you are a stabling influence in our lives. We bless you, and we praise you that you are the same God, even at this moment in time, as who spoke to Moses all these years ago, and who called him, Lord, to take your people, Israel, out of captivity.

We thank you, Father, for the fact that you are the God who spoke to the prophets, and the prophets, Lord, recorded your will and your word, and, Lord, they're related to others. And, Lord, we praise you for that. We praise you for your word written that we have in our hands here.

We thank you, Lord, that it's true, from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation. And, O, Heavenly Father, we pray that we would hold fast to these truths each and every day of our lives.

O, Heavenly Father, we thank you that your word tells us of your amazing grace. We thank you, Lord, for your dealings of men throughout history. We thank you, Lord, for the way that you led your people the way that you kept your people safe, the way that you saved your people from troubles.

But yet, Lord, we read so often how they turned away from you. They turned their back on you, Lord, and they followed the idols of this world. O, Heavenly Father, help us to be steadfast in our faith, to learn the lessons, Lord, that they learned the hard way.

[ 6 : 37 ] Help us, Lord, to keep looking to you and trusting in you and following you each and every day, to walk the path that is set before us, to run that race, Lord, looking unto Jesus, the one who is the author and the finisher of our faith.

O, Heavenly Father, we thank you that you know each one of us intimately. Lord, we're told in the Psalms that you even know our thoughts from afar. And O, Heavenly Father, we pray this night that as we come before you, we realize that truth and that we be, Lord, like open books before you, that we would lay, Lord, any sin that is in us at the foot of the cross and ask you, Lord, for forgiveness.

And O, Lord, we know that when we come to you in faith, trusting in you and looking to your promises, you will answer, Lord, even far beyond our asking. And how often, Lord, we can testify to that truth, because you are a God who gives and gives and gives again.

And, Lord, help us to be thankful for these things. Again, the Psalmist tells us it's good to render thanks unto the Lord. And, Lord, indeed, we do thank you for all you've given us and all you've done for us in our life's journey.

And even this day itself, Lord, we thank you for the blessings, for the privilege, Lord, of being able to sit under your word. We thank you, Lord, for all that we enjoyed in this day, for food and drink and health and strength.

[ 8 : 01 ] And, Lord, we know that there are many this night who are maybe not so thankful because they're troubled within their souls. They're troubled, Lord, in their bodies. And they're ill and they're laid down. And, Lord, as we prayed this morning, so we commit them to your care and to your keeping once again and ask you, our gracious God, to bless them and to restore them, whether you will.

We thank you, Heavenly Father, that you are the great physician, the one with whom nothing is impossible. Lord, we thank you that you're the God who has given us all the good things in our societies round about us.

We thank you for the NHS. We thank you, Lord, for the firemen. We thank you for the coasters and for the police and for all of us, Lord, who seek to look after us and to help us and keep us safe in our life's journey.

And we pray, Father, that they'd be blessed and cared for in what they do. But how we pray, Lord, that each one of them would come to know and to realise that there is a God who also watches over them.

But, Heavenly Father, we do ask you to remember once again those in our communities who are bereaved, those who are cast down and sad and heavy-hearted. And, O Heavenly Father, we know that there's hardly a day goes by, but we see one ushered from time into eternity.

[ 9 : 11 ] And we remind, Lord, so often at the expense of others that here we have no continuing city. And, Lord, that there is a preparation that must be made. So help us, Lord, to be diligent and look to Jesus.

And, Lord, to ask him into our hearts and lives and so prepare us for that day which gets ever closer. Lord, eternal God, we thank you this night for the Church of Jesus Christ.

We thank you for every branch and every denomination, Lord, where Jesus Christ is preached in truth and sincerity. And we pray, O Father, that the preaching of the word, even this day itself, will bear fruit for your glory.

And, Lord, that there'll be numbers added to your kingdom. That the evil one, Lord, be thwarted and held back. And those who are held in the captivity of sin would be released. And that the wood, Lord, as their brothers of old and the mares would, go on their way rejoicing.

O eternal God, we do pray for the congregations around our island, around our nation, and ask you to bless and to encourage each and every one. Remember the ministers of the Gospel, Lord. And, Lord, theirs is a hard calling at times.

[ 10 : 15 ] And we know, Lord, they have so much to put up with. And, Lord, we know that the devil is at and continually trying to dissuade and discourage. So, Father, we pray that you'd be as a wall of fire around these good men whom you have called into service.

And, Lord, we pray, too, for the vacancies on and around our island. There are some churches vacant, Lord, and some of the congregations. And so we pray in Jesus' name that you would prepare even now, Lord, men to fulfill these positions.

And, Lord, that the work of the Gospel would indeed continue. And, Lord, we do ask you, and we pray, Lord, that even this night itself, you would work a good work in the hearts of men in preparation.

Eternal God, as we pray for the church, so, too, we pray for our nation. And we ask you, Lord, to be mindful of all that's going on this time. We see so much unrest, Lord, and uncertainty in our land in these days.

But, Lord, in heaven, we also see people turning away from you, Lord. They don't give you thought. They don't give you time. And, Lord, in heaven, they choose not to believe. But, O Heavenly Father, one day we know the truth will be revealed to them.

[ 11 : 20 ] But we pray, Lord, you would listen and learn of that truth before then. Remember those in authority over us, Lord. Remember the royal household. We pray for them, Lord. And how we pray that they would look to Jesus and set an example to our nation.

Remember to our politicians, Lord. They've come through a time of uncertainty. And, Lord, as our new government has taken post, we just pray, Lord, that you would lead them, guide them, and help them. Lord, above all, how we pray that they would turn to you and look to you, Lord, for wise counsel.

Because you are the God who knows what's best for us. So, Heavenly Father, speak to them, we pray, and work in them. Lord, in heaven, we do pray for other countries in this world. America's got its own problems just now with their election.

And, Lord, we pray that the man, the right man of you choosing, Lord, will be put in charge of that great country. Heavenly Father, it's so important that they choose the right man.

But, eternal God, we do ask you also to be mindful, Lord, of the situations that are going on around this world. Situations beyond our control. But yet, Lord, we know that you're the God who is in control of all things.

[ 12 : 28 ] And these things are taking place, Lord, because it's your purpose at this time. And one day we will understand why. So, remember, Lord, the war in Ukraine. We've been trundling on now for a number of years.

So many lives lost, Lord. It's so sad to see. And we just pray a return of God that one day soon this would cease and peace would return. Remember, too, the trouble in Gaza.

We pray, Lord, for you people Israel and for all that's going on there. And, Lord, how we pray a solution will be arrived at. Not through the gun and the bullet, Lord, but through the pen and diplomacy.

And, Lord, in heaven of that nation and these countries over there would once again be able to pick up and get on with their lives. But, Lord, we know that for so, so many families it will never be the same again.

And we know, Lord, the hurt will never go away. So, Lord, reveal yourself to the people in these lands. And show them, Lord, that Jesus is the way, the better way. He is the truth.

[ 13 : 26 ] He is the life. And, Lord, that through him peace can return and resume in these lands. O eternal God, we just ask you now to bless us here this evening. To move amongst us.

To minister to each one of us, Lord, according to our needs. And help us, Lord, just to realize that you are the God who delights in worship, praise and adoration. And you indeed are the God who is worthy of it all.

So, please, Father, now, in your mercy, accept our thanks for your goodness, for your grace, for your love. And pardon our many sins and shortcomings. For even this day itself, Lord, we've fallen short in so many ways.

But yet, Lord, with thee, forgiveness is to be found. And we bless you and praise you for that. In Jesus' precious and glorious name. Amen. Amen. So, we're going to sing again.

And this time, we're going to sing some verses from the Psalm number 116. Psalm 116, from verse 1 down to the end of verse 8. I love the Lord, because my voice and prayer he did hear, while I live on calling him, who bowed to me his ear.

[ 14 : 34 ] And down to the end of verse 8. For my distressed soul from death delivered was by thee. Thou didst my warning eyes from tears, my feet from falling free.

We sing again to God's praise in Psalm 116, verses 1 to the end. I love the Lord, because my voice and prayer he did hear.

I love the Lord, because my voice and prayer he did hear.

The Lord, because my voice and prayer he did hear.

Then did I call and say, In the heart of my soul, O Lord, Thy duty, I'm rebranded.

[ 16 : 30 ] God merciful and righteousness, Yea, righteousness, our Lord.

God is the need I was brought, Lord. O Lord, because my voice and prayer he did hear me.

Like God world is recognized, for my name is open to your eyes. I pray to heart to open your mind, and share in my heart... Be near the heart to them in God of spirit. He lived he held up for me. O thou, my soul through God of mind, I act the heart to come on for you.

return unto thy quiet rest. For our kingdom the Lord to thee is bound to God express.

For my distresses so strong that it ever was by thee.

[ 17 : 58 ] Thou is my morning eyes from tears. My feet from falling free.

We're now going to turn to God's word and the reading this evening is taken from 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

I'm going to read that whole chapter. In fact, we'll begin our reading from verse 31 of chapter 12. So that's 1 Corinthians chapter 13, but we'll begin from the last verse of chapter 12.

1 Corinthians chapter 13. Let's read and hear God's word together. 2 Corinthians chapter 13.

chapter 13. 2 Corinthians chapter 13. 3 Corinthians chapter 13. Read chapter 14. 4  
Corinthians chapter 14. 5.

[ 19 : 38 ] 5 Corinthians chapter 15. 5. 5. 6. 6. 6. 6. 7. 7. 7.

8. 8. 9. 8. 9. 9. 10. 10. 10. 11. 11.

11. 11. in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease. Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a dark, lastly, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three. But the greatest of these is charity. Amen.

I trust that the Lord would add a blessing to that reading of his own holy and inspired word. Let's sing again before we turn to God's word. And this time we're going to sing some verses from Psalm number 42. Psalm 42, I'm going to sing from verse 1 down to the end of the verse 5.

[ 21 : 21 ] Psalm 45, 1-5 to God's face and glory.

Like as the heart for war uttered you, in search of hands and raise, so pass my longing soul.

Oh God, that come to thee like me. My soul for God, the living God, the fire slams child I hear.

I hear unto thy covenant of God, and in what sight of fear. My tears of love to me be both in the night and day. Why will I long to be continually? Where is thy God, they say?

my soul is poured out in me? Where is thy faith upon? The Lord I'm with, my multitude.

[ 24 : 00 ] I'm here to turn for, my Lord, I'm here to turn for, my Lord. With them in two God's hours I went. With voice of joy and praise, here in the heart of the Lord, I'm here to turn for, my Lord.

I'm here to turn for, my Lord. And this time we're going to sing from verse 1. voice of joy and praise. voice of joy and praise. Here is the heart of the Lord, I'm here to turn for, my Lord. And this time we're going to sing from verse 1. voice of joy and praise. Here is the heart of the Lord, I'm here to turn for, my Lord. And this time we're going to sing from verse 1. voice of joy and praise. Here is the heart of the Lord, I'm here to turn for, my Lord. And this time we're going to sing from verse 1.

voice of joy and praise. Here is the heart of the Lord, I'm here to turn for, my Lord. And this time we're going to sing from verse 1. voice of joy and praise.

Oh, why are thou cast out, my soul? Why every soul gives me, the soul of my soul? Why every soul gives me, the soul of my soul?

God for I shall bring here His God runs in my name Just before we turn to God's word, let's just bow our heads briefly for a moment.

[ 25 : 31 ] Lord Jesus God and loving Heavenly Father, how we thank you that you have put a new song in our mouths, Lord, that you've enabled us to lift up our voices in praise and adoration, Lord, to a God who is indeed worthy.

And our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the privilege of being able to open your word and to read from it freely, Lord. And we pray, our Father, as we did, Lord, that our hearts would be receptive to it, that you give us that hearing ear, that receptive heart, Lord, that we might ponder and consider what it is you say to us from your word this night.

And again, Lord, we pray that we'd not just be hearers of that word, but that we'd be doers. Lord, it doesn't avail us of anything if we would listen and go away and not share or tell of what we heard.

What a great story we have to tell. A story of love that is unsurpassed. A story of a Savior to come into this world willingly to suffer and to die on Calvary's true cross for our sins.

That through faith in him, Lord, we would have that opportunity and hope of eternal life. So help us, Lord, to value these truths and to show them forth in our lives.

[ 26 : 41 ] That others still in darkness would see them and would seek to know what's behind it all and seek Jesus, Lord, for himself. Heavenly Father, just help us now to focus, not to think of what we did earlier or what we have to do later.

Help us, Lord, to bear in mind that we're not promised the next day or the next hour or the next minute. So, Lord, help us in the night of these truths to focus upon you, the God of all salvation, God, in whom we live, move, and have our being.

Father, we ask this now in Jesus' precious and glorious name. Amen. Amen. So that passage I read from 1 Corinthians in chapter 13 is a beautiful passage.

A passage which talks of a more excellent way. And what better way is there in our life's journey than a way of love?

That we could show love to those all around us. That we could indeed receive love from one another. And above all, that we look to and love our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[ 27 : 50 ] I wonder how many couples over the year have had this chapter read at their wedding ceremony. Because it's a beautiful chapter. And their hope is that such love that we read of there in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians would shine forth in their lives together.

There's so much in this passage that we read to consider. But tonight, I just want to focus on one verse and to explore what we find there.

And that verse is 13. Verse 13. The last verse where we read So when you look briefly at these three qualities are virtues.

Faith, hope, and love. So firstly, what is faith? What is faith? Well, according to the dictionary, the Merriam-Webster dictionary, faith has multiple definitions.

Including something that is believed especially with strong conviction. Also, it could mean complete trust.

[ 29 : 14 ] Also, belief and trust and loyalty to God. As well as a firm belief in something for which there is no proof.

Hebrews 11 tells us regarding faith. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen.

So these are some of the definitions of faith. And you know, we can have faith in a variety of things. We can have faith in our own ability to do certain things.

God has given each one of his gifts to do. Whether it be to use them temporarily or to use them in the service or whatever. So we can have faith in our ability to do certain things. We can have faith in a political party.

Although that's questionable nowadays. We can have faith in a husband. We can have faith in a wife. And so on. There are many, many things that we can have faith in.

[ 30 : 17 ] However, faith as the believer understands it quite simply put is a belief in and a devotion to God.

A belief in and a devotion to God. There's plenty examples of faith in scripture. Faith in action. You can see it throughout scripture. Not of least, of course, there's Abraham.

And I assume we all know that story. But we'll just briefly have a short look at it. One day, God tested Abraham. He wanted to see if he took first place in Abraham's life.

So he said to him, Abraham. And he said, Here I am. He said, Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.

What was Abraham's reaction to that? Well, he rose early in the morning. He saddled his donkey and he took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac.

[ 31 : 30 ] No question. No complaint. No whys. No what ifs. Nothing. Abraham rose up and off he went.

And you know, we might wonder what kind of man was he? Off he goes to sacrifice his son without so much as a question. And apparently, he doesn't even mention it to his wife Sarah.

He just takes off with the son, the donkey, the servants, and some firewood. What was he thinking? Was he crazy? And you know, we might think that. Well, on the surface, maybe that's what it looks like.

But when we look into the situation a little further, it becomes evident that this is not the case at all. Because we see that Abraham was far from crazy. Abraham was on a different plane to us spiritually.

because Abraham's faith was such that he believed that God would provide an alternative sacrifice for his son.

[ 32 : 32 ] And we read there in Hebrews 11, chapter 17, chapter 11, sorry, verse 17 to 19. We read there, By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac.

And he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

Now you've got to take note of that promise. Through Isaac shall your offspring be named. That was a promise that God gave to Abraham. And Abraham considered that God was able even to raise Isaac from the dead, which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

God gave a promise. Abraham had the faith that God would keep it. And that's what happened. We saw that when he went to sacrifice Isaac, he was told to stop.

And there in the thicket there was a ram caught by the thorns. Abraham took the ram and offered it to God. So God was good to his promise. Abraham was faithful.

[ 33 : 44 ] He knew that God would keep his promise. And so his faith was rewarded. There are, of course, many other examples. And if we look at Hebrews 11, it records for us true faith in action.

Faith even unto the point of death. We need that people there were sown asunder for their faith and yet they would not recant that faith.

And that's the kind of faith that pleases God. And if you read that chapter in its entirety, you will read a list of those who were commended for their faith. A list which consists of men and women from the Old Testament, both named and alluded to.

The heroes of the faith. And it's a great chapter to read through, Hebrews 11. It's well worth looking through it. But you may well wonder, what about New Testament times? Do we find such faith there?

Or is it all in the Old Testament days? Well, no, of course, we do find faith in the New Testament in an abundance and even up to this very day we find faith in this world.

[ 34 : 54 ] But in the New Testament there were those who were noted for their great faith. And for example, in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 8, verses 5 to 13, we read of the faith of the centurion of whom Jesus said, Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.

The faith of centurion was commended by Jesus. And then again there's the Canaanite woman in chapter 15 of the same Gospel of whom Jesus said, O woman, great is your faith.

Be it done for you as you desire. What a blessing and what a reward be it done for you as you desire.

And to this very day in countries around the world there are those who belong to Jesus Christ who exercise great faith and indeed who suffer for their faith.

Many are being tried and even martyred in this world today because they trust and they believe in Jesus Christ and wicked and evil men are willing to put them to death because of that.

[ 36 : 11 ] And yet the Christian believer again does not recant on their faith. They trust in the Lord Jesus Christ the one who called them and took them from the sin of this world and saved their souls and they hold past them and they will not let them go.

And why is that? Because they love and trust in Jesus Christ the risen saviour of mankind. They accept that all that is written about him in the Bible in God's word is true and trustworthy and that through faith in him all his promises belong to them.

And through faith in him tonight all his promises belong to us as well. To those who profess faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ all his promises brothers and sisters and friends are for you and for I.

All of us are blessed in that we have the scriptures which reveal to us the truth of Jesus and these promises. So I just want to ask what about your faith here tonight?

What about my faith? Do we possess such faith? Do we possess such faith that we would hold fast to our God and saviour regardless of what comes our way?

[ 37 : 44 ] In verse 2 of the reading we read these words and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains and you know when we read that we tend to think now that's faith.

Imagine having faith that would move a mountain. Well I would venture to say that this is a figurative illustration and that the mountain may well be some insurmountable problem that is right there in our face and we can't seem to be able to get round it or over it or even through it.

This problem is always there and it could be anything. It could be nothing to someone else although it's a great problem to you but the fact is that it's there and you know what faith can help us in a situation like that.

It can enable us to work through it or around it by seeking God's guidance and God's wisdom and he will help us in ways we couldn't even imagine and even if he doesn't totally remove the problem he will help us to cope with it.

What does he say? My grace is sufficient for you. His grace is sufficient for each and every one of us. The truth is it doesn't take such great faith as Abraham possessed and Jesus himself tells us that.

[ 39 : 13 ] He says in scripture he said truly I say to you if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed. A tiny tiny seed.

Jesus said if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed you will say to this mountain move from here to there and it will move and nothing will be impossible for you.



Jesus said of the mustard seed it's the smallest of all seeds but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes like a tree so the birds of the air come and make their nests in its branches.

So if you or I are here tonight and we're thinking well that's the kind of faith I have small as a mustard seed then be encouraged by Jesus' words.

Be encouraged by Jesus' words. Someone once said little faith is better than no faith. but we have to nurture that little faith.

[ 40 : 22 ] Feed that little faith. And how do we do that? Through God's word and fellowship with his people. Through God's word and fellowship with his people.

Work at it and it too will grow and flourish and grow into a faith that is beneficial both to ourselves and to others.

So work at your faith. And you know what Hebrews 11 and 6 tells us? It gives us a warning. It says without faith it is impossible to please him.

Without faith it's impossible to please God. Faith is an absolute requirement. It's an absolute requirement.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

[ 41 : 23 ] Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase. Have you my friend taken that first step?

Have you launched out in faith? Have you begun your faith journey? with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? If not I would urge you to do it.

Remember every journey of any type begins with the first step. You have to get up and out and take the first step.

I pray that God would bless you if you've begun your faith journey or if you haven't begun. I pray that you would take that step. So secondly there's hope.

Again what is hope? Well it's defined in the dictionary as to want something to happen or to be true and usually have a good reason to think that it might.

[ 42 : 32 ] You know you get countless numbers of people, thousands, millions even every week who think to themselves well I hope I win the lottery this week. Well deep down they know the odds are against that happening but still they hope because someone might win it and it could be them and that's their reason for their hope.

You know there's more chance of me getting to heaven than winning the lottery. Not that I do it, I don't, but there's more chance of me getting to heaven than winning the lottery and it's not that I deserve to go to heaven because I don't.

I'm a sinner who deserves nothing but God's wrath and condemnation. Yet through his grace, his love, his mercy and his forgiveness and by his grace I have that hope that I as a believer will get to heaven.

And that's a hope that every Christian in this place and indeed anywhere and everywhere should have. Because God died for my sins, because I believe in him and trust in him, I have that hope that I will get to heaven.

And that hope comes from the promises of God rooted in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. hope. You know there's an obvious difference between, if I can use the term, worldly hope and the Christian hope.

[ 44 : 11 ] But what is the difference? How do we see that difference? Well, John Piper, a man much wiser than me, writes, what's the difference between a Christian definition of hope and the way it is usually used?

He continues, the word hope in ordinary English vocabulary is generally distinguished from certainty. We would say, I don't know if it's going to happen, but I hope it happens.

When you read the word hope in the Bible, it is not wishful thinking. It's not, I don't know if it's going to happen, but I hope it happens.

That's absolutely not what is meant by Christian hope. Christian hope is when God has promised that something is going to happen and you put your trust in that promise.

Christian hope is a confidence that something will come to pass because God has promised it will come to pass.

[ 45 : 18 ] The difference between worldly hope and Christian hope. God is the difference. hope and hope. How do we build our hope in God?

Well, Christian hope is a portion or a part of faith. So hope, like faith, is also strengthened by the word of God. Hope, like faith, comes from meeting his precious and very great promises and looking to Christ who purchased them for us.

So look to Christ, look to his promises, and hold fast to them. Hold fast. Don't let go of these promises.

Now I said a moment ago there was more chance of me getting to heaven than winning the lottery. You know the lottery is approximately a one in 45 million chance of winning.

The Christian getting to heaven is a 100% chance. but there is a long shot and a wide shot.

[ 46 : 24 ] The Christian getting to heaven is a certainty. It's a certainty and don't doubt that. Why or how? Because we read in 1 Peter 1 and 3, according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

that's where our hope lies. It lies in our risen saviour, the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Had Jesus not risen from the grave, we would have no hope.

He would have been like anyone else who ever walked the face of this earth. But praise God, he rose again triumphant. And in that resurrection lies our hope.

you might be sitting there and you might be thinking, well it's easy for him to say that, but I don't know how to go about it. I'm not a Christian. What must I do to attain this hope? Again, God's word tells us.

For example, Romans 10.10, it says to us, for with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

[ 47 : 45 ] Believe in the heart and tell with the mouth. Believe and tell, believe and confess and you will be saved. And again in Acts 16, when the Philippian jailers asked Paul and Silas, sir, what must I do to be saved?

They said, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. No doubt about it, you will be saved and you a household. He was given that sure hope and we're all given that sure hope through faith in Jesus Christ.

So if you're serious about Jesus, search the word, look for guidance and you will find it there. God will reveal it to you. Desmond Tutu once said, hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

That's a great quote. Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. And is that not something we all need? We all need to see the light.

We all need that living hope, a hope that this world can neither give nor take away from us. for in this hope we are saved.

[ 49 : 01 ] Noted, we are saved. The question is, do we possess such a hope? It's my prayer that we all do.

That we all do. And now finally, that leads us on to love. And the question again, what is love?

And in the Oxford Dictionary, it's defined as an intense feeling of deep affection. An intense feeling of deep affection.

While in another dictionary, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, again it says, it's a quality or feeling of strong or constant affection for and dedication to another.

That's the definition of love. However, a Benedictine nun by the name of Catherine Weyburn wrote, love is more easily experienced than defined.

[ 50 : 00 ] Love is more easily experienced than defined. As a theological virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbours as ourselves for his sake, it seems remote until we encounter it enfleshed.

That is to say, in the life of another. In acts of kindness, generosity, and self-sacrifice, love, she says, is the one thing that can never hurt anyone, although it may cost dearly.

The paradox of love is that it is supremely free, yet attaches us with bonds stronger than death. It cannot be bought or sold.

There is nothing it cannot face. Love, she wrote, is life's greatest blessing. I like that definition. It's really, really good.

Now, we've all experienced the emotion of love in some degree or other, and indeed there are many ways through which we can experience love. But, you know, we use the term of love in so many different ways, sometimes without thinking about it.

[ 51 : 14 ] And in this day and age, we seem to be living in a time when everyone seems to love everything. They love this, that, and the next thing. They love this TV program.

They love this car. They love this fashion. They love donuts. They love everything. And, you know, perhaps we're a little gloom on occasion with our use of the word love. And yet again, perhaps too, we're a little reluctant to use it as we should.

Perhaps we husbands don't tell our wives as often as we should how we love them. and vice versa. Perhaps we don't tell our children or family or those closest to us how much we love them as often as we should.

Perhaps we're a little bashful or reserved when it comes to expressing our love. And, you know, many forms of love have been identified through the ages by a variety of philosophers and experts.

And the ancient Greeks, for example, identified several. love. And, you know, if we were to go through them all, one by one we'd be here for a very long time this evening. So, instead, what I want to do is look very briefly at four types of love mentioned in the Bible, and all derived from the Greek language.

[ 52 : 32 ] So, first, we have storge love. Storge love. And this is the type of love that I alluded to a moment ago, the type of love found within a family, a type of natural affection.

For example, it's the love that parents would have for their children, and vice versa. It's also found between siblings, as well as the extended family. And also, a husband and wife can display this type of love for one another.

That's storge love. Secondly, there's eros love, and that's named after the Greek god of fertility. And this is the erotic love between men and women, which is a sensual love.

And while this level of love is necessary and healthy within marriage, outside or before marriage, it is against the will of God.

Look at the seventh commandment. This type of erotic love is the love that ancient Rome, amongst others, were infamous for.

[ 53 : 41 ] They had their orgies and everything else that went with it. There are many examples of eros love in the Bible, but two of perhaps the well or better known examples are Samson and Delilah and David and Bathsheba.

And we all know where that led to. love. So we must exercise caution and discipline in the area of eros love.

Be cautious in that area. Then thirdly, we have philia love. And that's a platonic love, a love without physical attraction. This is the type of love that David and Jonathan had for one another.

And these two would have died for each other if neither eros. And this is the type of love that we have for our closest friends, for our oldest friends, for those who we perhaps grew up with and travelled through our life's journey.

It's a love that stems from a closeness and a familiarity. It's a love that many comrades in arms have in the armed fortress. They love each other and they look out for each other and they care for each other.

[ 54 : 53 ] It's like a brotherhood. A love that at the very least, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ should have for one another.

Although there is, and finally, a greater love. And that love is agape love. Agape love. It's the most supreme love of all.

There is no other love like it. It's a supernatural love. It's the love that God displayed in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It's the love that we read of in John 3, 16. For God so loved the world. Agape love. It's an unconditional love.

It's a love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstances. It's the covenant love of God for all mankind. kind.

[ 55 : 51 ] This is the love which the Christian as God's children should seek to emulate. It's a deeper love that we should have for one another. It's a love we should have towards our God and Saviour.

A love that we should strive to show to our fellow man. A love others should see in us and consider and desire to know its source and then to claim it and possess it for themselves.

a love which attracts others to the Saviour. Indeed it is a love that Jesus Christ commands that we should have for he says in John 13 and 34 a new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

Agape love. What a love. What a love. Yet we're so aware of our failings in this respect. We know we fall short and we may never fully attain this perfect love on this side of eternity.

[ 57 : 13 ] A love which is patient. A love which is kind. A love which does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, does not dishonor others, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs.

A love which does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. A love which always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

A love which never fails. Wow. What a love. This is a love which Paul wrote of in this chapter that we read.

It's a love that Paul desired for the Corinthian church. They had their troubles and Paul desired that they would have this love. And this is a love that God the Father longs not only to lavish in us but also to see in us all.

He wants to see us show forth that love. No exceptions. No matter how unworthy you may feel. No matter how great you're burdened of sin. No matter how big that mountain you feel is right there in front of you.

[ 58 : 29 ] Bring it all to him. Seek forgiveness and accept the risen Lord Jesus Christ in faith and you too will bask in that agape love for all time and for all eternity.

Someone once said many things are possible for the person who has hope. Even more is possible for the person who has faith.

And still more is possible for the person he knows how to love. But everything is possible for the person who practices all three bridges.

Someone may well ask but why is love the greatest of them all? Well one day the day will come when we will pass all of us no exceptions from time into eternity.

Then for those of us who believe in and trust in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ for those of us who have faith in him that faith will be rewarded when we see him face to face.

[ 59 : 45 ] Then faith as we know it will be unnecessary because we stand before the object of our faith. We will see him as he is.

Our faith will be rewarded. So do with hope that for which we hoped we will receive. What does a believer hope for?

Eternal life in the presence of the blessed Lord in that heavenly city whose builder and maker is God. Hope then ceases for who would hope for that which they have now received.

They've received that hope. You no longer hope for it. It's yours. But love is different because love will never cease.

And verse 8 of this very chapter tells us love never ends. If anything love will go stronger every moment you gaze upon Jesus when all the mysteries of the gospel are revealed to you.

[ 60 : 56 ] When all the unanswered questions will be answered and when more and more of his glory will be revealed that love will grow stronger and then we will love God and each other with that perfect love through all eternity.

Wow. Isn't that incredible? love that's for us for those who believe and trust in Jesus. It's for everyone if only they would come and receive it.

So we have faith hope and love the greatest of these is love. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us and may we strive to know such love in our experience.

Amen. We're going to sing a concluding praise now and the praise is from Psalm number 133.

Psalm 133, a short psalm. Behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well. Together such are brethren in unity to dwell. Psalm 133 in closing to God's praise.

[ 62 : 22 ] Behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well.

together together so must brethren are in unity to dwell.

Like this Minuten will Amen.

For there the blessing God commands, life that shall never end.

Amen. Amen.