

# Love

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[0:00] See how these Christians love one another.

So said historian Tertullian, who witnessed this firsthand! It was the third century. See how these Christians love one another. This was something different, it was something unique, it was something out of the ordinary, something was special about this new community, this community of believers, of godly Christians.

It was love! Love! But we as followers of the Lord Jesus, shouldn't we not be surprised? Why? Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. Romans 5 verse 5. The Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God. The love of God should be overflowing, bubbling out of us, flowing out of us to others.

It should be that major identifying mark of the true people of God, that they love God and they love one another. And it's manifest through them, in them, to others.

[1:19] It's been said that there was a devastating plague that swept the ancient world around the third century. And Christians, Christians were the only ones who cared for the sick, which they did at the risk of contracting the plague themselves.

Meantime, the pagans threw their infected members of their own families into the streets before they died, lest they catch the plague themselves, in order to protect themselves.

But it was the Christians who cared. It was the Christians who showed love. And our Lord tells of a time when, on this planet that we live, there will come a time when sin will so prevail and love will grow cold.

In Matthew 24 verse 12. And because iniquity or sin shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Many's love will grow cold.

See how these Christians love one another. Would Tertullian say that of us today? Would he say that of the Church of God? We are always being influenced, brothers and sisters.

[2:28] We are always being influenced by this pagan world. By this world's culture. By its values so called. Values contrary often to God.

What is happening? What is going on? Man has turned his back on God. And the values that matter to God. And it's the ugly power of sin.

That's what it is. Man's rebellion against God. It's taken hold. Sin. It deforms. It moulds us. It wounds us. And it separates people from the everlasting God.

It separates people from relationship with God and His care. But in a wonderful contrast, God extends His love. He extends His love still.

God's love that brings healing and wholeness. God's love that brings relationship and nurture.

God's love that brings a new sense of hope and family. And it's a love that keeps on loving.

[3:28] A love that loves the difficult people. A love that loves the unlovely. That loves the downcast. That loves the rejects. That loves the outcasts. After all, He loves us.

He loves us, brothers and sisters. I read this in a book just a short while ago. And it spoke to me. It says, of the early disciples and of how they acted.

And whether we could put ourselves in some of these shoes. The disciples. The disciples were greedy. A thief was among their number. They were sectarian. When they saw someone else doing something in the name of Jesus, they ran over and said, Lord, call down fire from heaven and burn them to a crisp.

They were politically motivated. They always jockeyed for position. Who was going to be the greatest? They wondered. They were nationalistic. They did not really care for the Gentiles or the Samaritans.

All they wanted to know was, Are you going to set up the kingdom in Israel at this time? Who's going to have the lead positions? Who's going to sit at your right and left when you're on your throne?

[4:39] And then when the children came, the disciples rebuked them. They had no time for the little people. Get out of here, you brats, they said. This is the Messiah.

When a man in rags said, Help me, Lord. Help me. All they could say was, Shut up, you dirty beggar. Don't you know who this is?

You must have done something wrong or you wouldn't be in this mess. And when the crowd was hungry, they advised Jesus, Tell them to get out of here. We're not going to do anything about it. Love. Love. We don't see a lot of love in the church today. Turn with me to John 13. What are the core values of God for his people?

At the centre of it all is his love. What is it that comes out of the lips of our Saviour when he issues an order, a command, a directive? It is his love.

[5:36] His tender heart. The God who is love. The heart of God that is that his people, his disciples be marked by love. It's important to our Lord.

And so much so that he commanded love. In John 13, 34. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

That ye also love one another. By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

And he commanded again, just a few pages later, John 15, 12 to 13. It says, This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. He commanded it, and he commanded it again.

[6:42] Think of our mediator, our friend, the friend of sinners, our redeemer. His love is so boundless. And he says we should love like he does.

When the living God, the flesh clothed God, God manifest in the flesh, says something, when he commands something, we ought to sit up and take notice.

Are we hearing from God, or are we living in disobedience? God's desire is that we be a community with that striking atmosphere of love.

Are we in the love zone? The love zone. That is what our assembling together should be known by. The church, the assembling of God's people together.

God's kind of faith is linked with God's kind of love. As we read in Colossians 1 verse 4 it says, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.

[7:41] Faith and love, hand in hand. The business of the church is love. Our action is to be love. For us to be effective, we need to be loving, tending to others.

In Romans 12 verse 9 to 10 it says, Let love be without dissimulation. Or in other words, let it be real. Make it real. Not hypocritical.

Let your love be real. Abhor that which is evil. Cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.

In honour, preferring one another. I was just reading as we were sitting earlier. It says, Love the brotherhood. Love one another. Love the brethren.

Love. We need that kind of love. The 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love. I know I need to get a bigger dose of that love in my life. Real love. I look back to years ago.

[8:40] I spent some seven months writing to my sweetheart. Seven months. She heard all about me. I wrote down all kinds of lies. Oh no. I wrote all kinds of loving words to her.

To say how wonderful I was. And we ended up hitching up together. And love was the theme of those letters to my wife-to-be.

And there's a story about a young man. He wrote to his girlfriend. He said, Sweetheart, if this world was as hot as the Sahara Desert, I would crawl on my knees through the burning sand to come to you.

If the world would be like the Atlantic Ocean, I would swim through shark-infested waters to come to you. I would fight the most fiercest dragon to be by your side.

I would see you on Thursday if it does not rain. You know, love. Love that goes the distance. That's the kind of love that we need, brothers and sisters. A love for one another.

[9:41] Obviously not a sweetheart love to one another, but a brotherly love to one another. A brotherly and sisterly love. And where the Spirit of God is, truly, they will be that kindly affection one to another.

They'll be that nature, that spirit of love. It's not so much as to go to church, but to be the church. To be his body. To be that people.

And it says in Galatians 5, But the fruit of the Spirit is love. Joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law, but the fruit of the Spirit is love. It's as if from love springs all the rest of them. It's as if from love springs all the other fruit of the Spirit.

It's the start of it. The spring of it all. As Spurgeon puts it, Joy is love enjoying itself. Peace is love resting.

[10:46] Patience is love reacting. Sorry, I said that wrong. Patience is love waiting. Kindness is love reacting.

Goodness is love choosing. Faithfulness is love keeping its word. Gentleness is love empathizing. And self-control is love resisting temptation.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. And God is love. God is love. There was a preacher long ago. Moody was preaching in Chicago. And a man was there, obviously under the influence of alcohol.

And he saw the lights of the tabernacle, the meeting place. And he staggered up the steps and into the meeting place. And he opened the door and he saw within. And he saw a motto hanging above the pulpit.

God is love. The man slammed the door. And he staggered down the steps. He muttered to himself, God is love. God is not love.

[11:47] If God were love, he would love me. And he hates me. He continued his uneven walk around the block, still muttering to himself. But those words were like a burning image in his mind.

And the power seemed to draw him back to the meeting place. And the throngs were now making their way in. And he found himself sitting inside, listening to Mr Moody preaching.

And the sermon was over. Moody made his way to the door to shake hands as people left. But this man didn't leave. He continued to sit in his seat, weeping.

Moody came over to him, put his arm on his shoulder and said, Is there something that I can do for you? Was it something in my message that touched your heart? Oh, Mr Moody, I didn't hear a word that you spoke tonight.

It's those words up there over your pulpit. God is love. God is love. God is love. God is love. God is love. God is love. God is love.

[12:48] God is love. God is love. God is love. That unconditional love should be a feature that marks you and me as his people. Love as I have loved.

It's a sacred thing. It's a real thing. It's a real thing. Ephesians 4.2 it says, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

You know there's times in church you've got to do that. There's times in the workplace you've got to do that. There's times in the home place we've got to forbear one another in love.

It means going the extra mile. It means going the distance. And at the heart of it all is love. The kingdom of God has citizens who speak the language of love.

Love one another as he loved us. He says, learn of me. He cares about people. He cares, friends.

[13:47] Think as you would walk with the Lord Jesus. As he travels the streets. As he takes time for people. As he cares for needs. As he listens. As he responds.

And when he stops. When the Lord Jesus stops. There is healing. When the Lord Jesus stops.

There's refuge and safety. When he reaches out. There's life. Can we do likewise?

Can we do likewise on these streets? In this community. Can we be that people that he wants us to be? Even in this toxic culture of our godless world.

Even in a world pervaded by the spirit of the age. In a community that's godless and self-centered. Yes, we can. We can. By God's grace and help.

Through his enabling power. Indeed, we must. We must be that people. Because our world needs this message. I've read this before.

[14:44] But I'll read it again. Others. Lord, help me to live from day to day. In such a self-forgetful way. That even when I pray. My prayers will be for others.

Help me in all the work I do. To ever be sincere and true. And know that all I do for you. Must be done for others. Let self be crucified and slain.

And buried deep. And all in vain. May efforts be to rise again. Unless to live for others. And when my work on earth is done. And my new work in heaven's begun.

May I forget the crown I've won. While thinking still of others. Others, Lord, yes. Others. Let this, my motto be. Help me to live for others.

That I may live like thee. Our world needs this message. And you are the messengers. We can be that community. A different kind of community.

[15:44] See how they love one another. We can be marked by this love. By this relationship with our Lord. And with one another. And we can exercise that obedience to his word.

To go that second mile. And beyond. To be that fellowship. That would stir one another. To love one another. To love and keep on loving. To shun the counterfeit.

The fake. And to find the real. To know the real. And we can raise that banner. The banner of his love. And the world will see. The world will see, friends.

Moody again was in Chicago. There was a Sunday school there. And there was a little child heading off to Sunday school. You know, the street children would go to this Sunday school.

Where they would be ministered to. The young people. The children. And someone asked this youngster, where are you going? He said to Mr Moody's Sunday school. Why that is many, many blocks away.

[16:45] Come into my class in this Sunday school nearby. The boy said no. And the teacher reached him further. He asked the boy why he would go so far. Why he would travel so far.

To that Sunday school. And the young fellow said. Because they love a fellow over there. Lost souls are looking for love. They're longing for love.

And if they find it not in our hearts. And the atmosphere we create. In our churches. Then they'll miss out. Friends, we want to give that clear message.

Clear message. Of love. Of Christ's love. Ephesians 4.32 I be ye kind to one another. Tender hearted. Forgiving one another. Even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.

Tender hearted. Are we? What Tertullians say. See how they love one another. Christ's love and passion should be in us. Flowing out of us.

[17:44] Birth by his love. Fire begets fire. Fire. If we know the love of God. The love of God will be manifest in us. The preacher Ravenhill said.

This is an hour in need of burning hearts. Bursting lips. And brimming eyes. We need love. That will motivate us. To hear his heartbeat. To be his hands and feet.

To communicate his love for sinful man. And now this message on love. Is not to water down the standards. I just want to balance this. It's not to settle for the weak.

And watered down gospel. It's one of the problems of our day. A weak and watered down gospel. A theology that's watered down. That's diluted. So that everything is in a fluid state.

You know. This word fluid. Someone has defined. Fluid means a substance that has no fixed shape. And yields easily to external pressure. Able to flow easily.

[18:44] Not settled or stable. It's as if blown about with every wind of doctrine. With every newfound idea. This love is not to condone error. But the truth drives us to communicate it.

We want to be a strongly Bible believing. Bible preaching church. And so our witness springs from the love. Our witness comes because we love.

Perfect love casts out all fear. His love gives us that courage to speak out. We can be that assembly of God's people. Compelled by his love.

Compelled to persuade men. To conscious of the terror of the Lord. For the love of Christ constrains us. It says. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 14.

So our witness springs out of that love. Our worship springs from this love. It should be evident in our gathering together. In our interchange with one another. In Galatians 5 verse 13 it says in part. [19:46] By love serve one another. By love serve one another. It's quite opposite to the way the world would think. And it's counter cultural isn't it?

In this world where the world is so self-obsessed. It's so self-centred. The mantra is self-interest, self-gratification. That we will be marked by this bond of love.

That will be knitted together in love. That will be that love that edifies, that builds up, that blesses. And the world will notice that. Love.

Love leads us to care for one another. Friends, there's hurting ones in our circle. There's folk that need our care.

Our love. And it's about taking time to care. For those still held, blinded, bound, bruised, captured. [20:45] In the devil's clutches. The lost. Enslaved and struggling in his strongholds. In the devil's domain. We need to rescue the ones hurting.

To see the heartache of those Christless ones. To see their pain, their brokenness. And be tender-hearted to one another. And tender-hearted to the lost.

When we understand that we were once there. He rescued you. He rescued you. In loving kindness, Jesus came. And he rescued you.

And we need that genuine tender-heartedness for those who are yet to know him. So we can be that real people who will make God real to others. God real to others around us.

But God commended his love towards us. In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While you were sinful in all your sin, he died for you.

[21:44] Love as I have loved you. For love to happen, we need that humility. That softening of our heart. That compassion to be more Christ-like.

God is love. And to love is to be like God. John 13 to repeat. A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another as I have loved you.

That ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples. If ye have love one to another. A commandment.

You know, don't gloss over that word. Commandment. Command. This is a directive. It's your marching orders. Soldiers of the army of God.

Love as I have loved you. And I just want to urge you to close to a greater obedience to the Lord. He says love.

[22:41] He commands love. He commands love. And someone wrote this. You only have now. Use it wisely. You only have now.

Use it wisely. You know, the past has happened. Things have not been done. But you can make now count. Make the future count. Make the days ahead count.

To love as he has loved you. And if we lack love, we dishonour our Lord. We disobey him. We need to repent of our lack of love. If we have such.

Let's make that a corporate thing. As it were. Certainly, individually. Check your love level today. Check it. You know, get that measuring tape of God's word.

As I have loved you. Does it measure up? I'm sure it doesn't. For me, I know it does not. And we need to replant. Repent. Of our neglect. Repent.

[23:40] Of our lack of love. And where it's a respect to persons. Sometimes we're measured with our love. We decide who we're going to love. And who we're not going to love. God is no respecter of persons.

We should love regardless. And 1 Corinthians 13. Charity or love. Never fail. Love never fails. And now abideth these.

Faith, hope, charity. No charity. These three. But the greatest of these is love. As God's people, let us grow in that.

Grow in our faith. Yes. Know the book and make it live. Know sound doctrine. The truth of the gospel. Know faith. Know hope.

The blessed hope is coming again. For a people prepared. They're working. Watching. Waiting. Not ashamed before them. But those that have the hope in them.

[24:37] And the hope they want to share. The reason of the hope that they know. And love. Love. Love one another. As I have loved you. Let us pray. Dear Lord.

We know. We know. That you are. So great. And awesome. Your heart is so tender.

Compassionate. Your love is so boundless.

And unbelievable. Lord. That it would love such as we. Such as me. Lord. That your love should extend. While we were yet sinners. That in our sin.

You saw. That we could be saved. Lord. You saw us saved. By the blood that you shed for us. We pray if there's any present. They've yet to know you.

They've yet to trust you. They've yet to know the love of God. They've yet to know that wonderful love. That they'll know it today. They'll see God is love. In all of our unworthiness.

[25:35] You are love to us. In all of our neglect. You are love. And your word says that. In your love. You came. You were nailed.

Your body was battered. You were hurt for our sin. And killed for it. Lord. Help us to recognize that love. Help us to love. As you have loved us.

To help us have more that measure of love. That goes beyond our own limited kind of love. That we'll love the unlovely. That we'll love the difficult to love.

That we'll love the enemies. That we have even. Help us Lord to have that Christ-like love. That love that drives us to witness.

It compels us to love of Christ. It constrains us. That love to worship. To be a people of God. Help us to love one another.

[26:34] Help us to look out for one another. So that it's not just a Sunday thing. But it's a everyday. Everyday thing. We love you Lord. And thank you for.

Your great love. With which you have loved us. The great grace. With which you have claimed us. Out of the. Out of the. Scrap heap. That we. That we who deserve nothing. Have been given everything. We praise you Lord.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.