

The Love of God

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[0:00] 1 John 3.16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.

You know, someone asked me, they wanted me to speak on the subject of the love of God. The love of God. I've got a secret note. I don't even know who wrote it. And then I actually got an email saying, we want to hear about the love of God too.

So it seemed, well, it must be something God wants me to talk about. We can't talk about it enough really, can we? The love of God. The love of God. How can we understand it? It's fathomless, isn't it?

It's amazing love. Undeserved. How can God, so utterly holy, so absolutely perfect love, such undeserving ones as we, what have we got to offer him, other than our lack of life, our lack of godliness, fallen creatures as we are.

[1:42] And yet God, God in his amazing love, extends his reach to even us, to even we. So us here tonight, his amazing love.

How was it demonstrated? We see in Romans 5 verse 8, But God commanded his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

God commends his love. He shows it. He paints it in neon lights. He shows it in that rich red blood that was spilled, that was willfully, deliberately shed for you, for me.

We see love when we look at the Lord Jesus Christ. We see love when we look into his eyes, when we look at Christ on the cross. We see love.

1 John 4 verse 9 it says, In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

[2:51] In this was manifested the love of God towards us, in that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Think of that love. The love of God. It was the love that held him to that tree. It was the love that held him there, more than the nails. The love he shows, still shows to you.

To you. To you. His love. He's tender-hearted. He does not hold back his love. He pours it out. He expends it. He wastes it.

On such as we. Think of his love. Think of his love. His love is generous. He does not hold it back. There's so many scriptures.

The Bible's jam-packed. It's a love letter, isn't it? From woe to go. The love of God. The love of God. Right through the pages. We see his love.

[3:51] Psalm 145 verse 8 it says, The Lord is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy. So what is the love of God?

How do we see it? We see it at the cross. We see it at the cross. We see it at the empty tomb. We see his love. We see in Ephesians 2 verse 4.

Great love. Ephesians 2 verse 4. But God who is rich in mercy. For his great love.

Wherewith he loved us. Rich in mercy. Great love. Even when we were dead in sins.

Great love. He poured it out. His full love. In full measure. It's sacrificial love. It's sacrificial love. And the wonder of Calvary.

[4:56] He has made us accepted in the beloved. He's made you accepted in the beloved. In Christ we made accepted. We made his own possession.

In Romans 8.32 we read. That God spared not his son. I know I'm covering a lot of different scriptures here. But there's so many little facets to this diamond of his love. It's right through the scriptures. There's such a rich canvas of the description of his love. And Romans 8.32 it says. He that spared not his own son. But delivered him up for all. For us all. How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? He that spared not his son. Delivered him up for us all. The love of God. How do we put it into human language?

[5:59] How can the tongue describe it? You know there's a scripture. Sorry. A hymn. In our book. The love of God.

So rich. So pure. So measureless. How can the tongue describe it? How can an author write it? How can we put it into human language? God did that. He put it into human language. When he came in Christ. God's love.

What kind of love is this? I put it to you that God's love is constant love. It's constant love. It's not a love that to take it or leave it when I feel like it kind of love.

It's a constant love. That's God's love for you. It's enduring. It's everlasting. It's forever. It's love that goes on for eternity.

[6:54] He's loved you with an everlasting love. If you're his today, you can know that love. You can know that love. If you're not his today, I trust you can.

Still come to know that love. I pray you will. Everlasting love. It's constant love. And this isn't the kind of love that our world would say.

It's not the kind of love that the movie stars flippantly say. I love you. It's not that kind of love. It's constant love. Constant love.

His love is without end. He's faithful. In Lamentations 3.22 it says, It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. Because his compassions fail not.

That's the kind of love our God has for his own. His compassions fail not. Unfailing love. It's love that goes on and on and on.

[7:53] Constant. In Psalm 86 verse 15 it says, But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion. Full of compassion.

And gracious, long-suffering. And plenteous in mercy and truth. Full of compassion. If we could just step back in time.

If we could just step back. Some 2,000 odd years and come face to face with our Lord Jesus. And see the one full of compassion.

I wonder if we could do that. In our minds alone. If we could just step back and think of that constant love. He's loved you with an everlasting love. In Psalm 103 verse 17 it says, But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

From everlasting to everlasting. Upon them that fear him. That's the kind of love our God has. Constant love.

[8:59] And his love gives and ever gives and keeps on giving. And friends, the love of God will not let you go. It will not let you go.

In Romans 8 verse 35. Romans 8 verse 35. It's a familiar one. What can separate us from the love of God?

Who shall separate us from the love of God? Love. His love is eternal. It's not changing with the winds of feelings. It's constant.

Who shall separate us from the love of God? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

As it is written for thy sake. We are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things. We are more than conquerors.

[10:03] Through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor any such thing. Neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come.

Nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God. Which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing can take you away from his love. Nothing. And the context here is of people getting killed all the day long.

We don't have that in Australia just now. Not yet. People, get ready. Amen. Amen. Amen. I was talking in passing this morning of graphic images of our brothers and sisters in other lands. Piles of burnt bodies in Africa. Amen. It's happening. It's happening right now. But they know this scripture.

[11:13] What shall separate us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors. Through him that loved us.

How do we see God's love today? It's in Christ. It's in Christ Jesus our Lord. And I believe God displays his love through us.

He displays his love through you. There's different containers here tonight. There's different containers.

Different vessels. Vessels. Some, the Bible says, are vessels of wrath. But thank God, he says some are vessels of mercy.

Vessels of mercy. In Romans 9.23 it says, And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had aforeprepared unto glory.

[12:11] Vessels of mercy. It's interesting the word mercy, it's also translated compassion. Vessels of compassion. So if you're a vessel of mercy, you're a vessel of his compassion.

You're a vessel on which he has lavished his love. He's lavished his compassion upon you. And he's made you a vessel of compassion. He's made you a vessel of mercy.

Oughtn't we to live like that? To be vessels of mercy. To be vessels of his compassion. In Romans 5.5 it says, In part, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. You're vessels of his love. Vessels of his mercy. He's shown his love to you that you might show it to others too.

How can we see the love of God today? What does it look like? I'll put it to you that you as vessels of mercy, as vessels of his compassion, can be displaying that love to those that come into your circle.

[13:22] Constant love. God's love. You as vessels of his mercy, of his compassion, are called to display considerate love.

Considerate love. Now I know on the weekend we heard a preacher talk of consider him. Consider him. Consider Christ.

We need to consider him. Another scripture here in Hebrews 10.24, the same book that a preacher spoke from, Hebrews 10.24 it says, And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

So not just consider him, consider Christ, but consider one another. That's what we're meant to be, as vessels of his mercy, of his compassion. Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

Do we do that? I don't think we do enough of it, people. I don't think we do enough of it, brothers and sisters, to consider one another. I know I don't. Consider one another.

[14:32] In 1 Corinthians 13, that ultimate, full description of God's love, it says, Love seeketh not her own.

Love isn't selfish. Doesn't seek her own theme. Consider one another. In Romans 12.10 it says, Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.

Now I'd like to think that we're a church like that. That we are kindly affectioned one to another, that we care about one another, with brotherly love, preferring one another.

You know, sometimes churches can be fraught with all kinds of conflict and trouble. After all, we're human, aren't we? We're human beings, unfortunately.

We always will be. Human. And there's human error. And sometimes, especially in gatherings of people, there's all kinds of views.

[15:34] All kinds of views. And we're a pretty mixed bag in this church. I don't know if you've struck that, but it's a pretty mixed bag. You know? But hopefully we're more and more like Christ every day.

That's what we want to be, isn't it? We want to be like him, don't we? Don't you want to be like Jesus? And we need to consider one another. You know, there's a statement, In essentials, unity.

In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity. It's a bit of truth there, isn't it? Love one another. 1 John 4, 7. It says, Beloved, let us love one another.

For love is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God. For God is love.

In this was manifested, the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him.

[16:36] Herein is love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation. In other words, the full satisfaction.

The absolute substitute. The one dying in our place, on whom God's wrath was fully vented, and poured out, and the payment was fully made, in that one, Christ Jesus, for our sins.

And verse 11, Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. It's considerate love. Do we consider one another? Firstly, consider him.

It goes on. Consider one another. I'd like to think that we can all be stirred, to be provoked, unto more good works, unto more love.

You know, sometimes life is very busy, and we all can neglect to consider one another. I know that I, for one, can be very selfish.

[17:43] I don't know. I'm sure none of you are at any time. But we all can be selfish, I'm sure. I'm sure we can. All be selfish. When it really boils down to it, I suppose there's a lot of self still in every one of us.

Considerate love. Love that considers one another. You know, there's a story of some busy people. They were salesmen.

They had a big conference, and they were rushing home from where they'd gone to this conference. They were down at the airport. They wanted to get home to their wives and families, rushing to get their tickets and briefcases.

And one of the salesmen knocked over a display of apples. Someone had a little display selling some apples. And they flew everywhere, apples all over the place.

And without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane. They didn't want to get late for that plane to get home. All but one.

[18:50] All but one. He paused. He took a deep breath. He got in touch with his feelings. And he had a twinge of compassion about this girl that was manning this stall.

There was a girl there at the display. And he thought, look, I've got to do something here. He told his buddies to go ahead without him. He waved them goodbye. He said to ask them to call his wife to let her know that he's going to be on a later plane.

And he went back to the terminal where the apples were all over the floor. And he was glad that he did. The 16-year-old girl was crying. She was crying.

She was totally blind. She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks. in frustration. And at the same time helplessly groping on the floor for these apples that were all over the place.

And no one was stopping. No one cared for her plight. And the salesman knelt on the floor with her. He gathered up the apples, put them back on the display.

[20:00] And as he noticed, as he was doing this, he noticed some of the apples were bruised and damaged. And he put them to one side. They wouldn't be fit to sell. And when he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, please take this \$40 for the damage we did.

Are you okay? She nodded through her tears. He continued on, I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly. And as the salesman started to walk away, the bewildered blind girl called out to him, Mister! He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, Are you Jesus? He stopped mid-stride and he wondered and he slowly made his way to catch the later flight.

That question bouncing around in his soul, Are you Jesus? Do people mistake you for Jesus? Are you Jesus to this world?

It ought to be our goal to be like him, ordinary. We ought to be like him. I know I've got a long way to go, but we ought to be like him.

[21:11] When we're going about our daily lives, consider it love. Stop to consider. Now, in the context it's talking about consider one another, it's talking about the saints.

It talks about do good to the household of faith, but do good to all men. And think of those who are outside the family of God.

And think of his love to them. Think about, we thought about the considering love, of considering one another, considering our brothers and sisters. Think about those outside of Christ now. And what should our love be to them? In 2 Corinthians 5.14 it says, For the love of Christ constraineth us. It's the sense of mission.

It's the sense of witness. It's that sense of a message that we must impart. A message that compels us. A story that we must tell. We cannot contain it.

[22:17] It constrains us. That love. We've got the message of love. The ultimate message. Not some sappy Hollywood make-believe, but the real thing. Real love.

Real love. Constant love. God's love. Calvary love. And it prompts us to share his love. To be constrained. To be compelled. In Matthew 5.44, love your enemies even.

You know, that's out of the box, isn't it? That's out of the, what we would think is, what we would count as appropriate.

love for the lost. Love for the Christless ones. Friends, we need that kind of love, don't we? That's the kind of love that our Saviour had.

He came to seek and to save that which was lost. And I've got, it was at 5.30 I got this out, and on the way to church. Love for the lost. What are you doing to tell them?

[23:16] I don't really have time to fully digest it, but some extracts, it says, the heartbeat of God is to save men and women.

And when his heartbeat is echoed in our souls, we will hear the cry of the lost. We will love them. We will lay aside our lives for them. They will be touched with the sacrifice that we express in our love for them.

What compassion have we for the lost? Have we compassion enough to hear the cry of the damned? He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

His life was saturated with tears. We see him weeping over the sinful city in Luke chapter 19. Love for the lost.

Do we have it? Or do we just go about our rat race? It's like I heard it said, in the rat race, it's only the rats that win. It's the kind of world we live in, isn't it?

[24:19] Dog eat dog, look out for number one. Do we have that kind of love that Christ would prompt us to have? Love them with Christ's heart.

See them with Christ's eyes. Touch them with Christ's scars. Paul was scarred. He bore in his body the marks. I don't know what they were.

We know that Paul had lots of beatings and bashings. He didn't exactly have the prosperity gospel. He was in fastings often, in other words, hungry. He was sleepless.

He was shipwrecked. He was bruised and battered and beaten with rods, stoned, thrown outside the city. Read the life of Paul. Do we care?

Love them with Christ's heart. Think of the travail. Paul wrote of a travail for souls. He was broken up for souls. In chapter 9 of Romans he says, I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

[25:28] He didn't have great sorrow and continual heaviness because of the day by day life that we all have. He had a travail for souls. He cared about souls.

That's what drove him to love the unlovely. And that's the constraining love that God calls us to. In Jude 1 it says, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Friends, are you filled with that constraining love? I know there's some here that just can't stop. It's a bit like that kind of battery.

They just keep on keeping on. What's it called? Do an effort for it. Duracell or whatever it is, the energizer. They're like a little bunny. They've got people here, just can't stop them.

But one day it says that night is coming. Night is coming when no man can work.

[26:34] Let's make the most of the now that we have. I'm preaching to myself too here. Night is coming when no man can work.

So our constraining life should be driving us now, doing what we are able, not hanging on our own strength, but being his vessels of mercy, his vessels of compassion.

And a little story here further about the love of God. It's the absolute ultimate message, isn't it? Of course we know, and I'm not meaning to tone it down such that God is love and that's all there is to it.

God is angry at the wicked every day. God hates sin. He hates sin. And he doesn't want us to miss it. He doesn't want us to miss his gift.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. there's a balance there, isn't there?

[27:40] We could talk on and on about God's love and miss the fact that his justice, his justice must be satisfied. And the wonder of it is that his love satisfied his justice.

His love demonstrated at Calvary is the total message. It's all wrapped up in Calvary.

Calvary. And there was a man one day who stumbled across a church. It happened to be open, this church building. It was Moody's Tabernacle.

And this man, he was drunk. You know, he was swaying on his feet, you know, probably hicking and hiccuping or whatever they do. And he was staggering up the front steps of this building.

And he saw a motto behind the pulpit. And it said, God is love. love. And the man slammed the door, staggered down the steps and he muttered to himself, God is love.

[28:47] God is not love. 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 that image was burnt in his mind.

God is love. God is love. And people started to come to a meeting and he was drawn in. He was drawn into the tabernacle and Mr. Moody was preaching.

And Moody came over to him to shake his hands as people left. But this man didn't leave. He continued to sit in his seat weeping. And Moody came over to him. He put his arm on the man's shoulder.

He said, is there something that I can do for you? What was it in my sermon that touched your heart? Oh, Mr. Moody, I didn't hear a word you spoke tonight.

It's those words, those words. God is love. Those words. God is love. And he gave his heart in surrender.

[29:54] God came to that man when he saw God, his love. Friends, it says, Paul writes, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Think of that love tonight.

It's constant. From everlasting to everlasting. Constant. He'll never let you go. It's forever.

His love. Have you trusted him? Do you know God is love? Do you know that? Do you know that tonight? Personally know that? God is love.

He's the lover of your soul. Of your soul. The forever part of you is the lover of that. And he calls to you tonight. He still speaks to men and women tonight.

[31:08] And friends, keep yourselves in the love of God. Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And if some have compassion, making a difference, others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.

Consider one another in love, your brothers and sisters, and have that kind of constraining love that moves you. It moves you.

You cannot rest. You must compel them and be compelled. Let us pray. Lord, we praise your wonderful, glorious name.

Lord, that we can reflect on your unfailing love from everlasting to everlasting.

We pray, Lord, that these vessels here tonight would be vessels that you pour out your love upon, your compassion, your mercy.

[32:21] You fill us with that, Lord, and overflow us with it, that we might impart it, that we might consider one another, that we might have a constraining to tell those outside of you, Lord, of that message of love, that message of hope, of everlasting life, of Calvary love, of blood shed for sinful man, for the wonder of it.

help us, Lord, personally, to grasp it in some small measure tonight. Lord, if there's any present here tonight, they're yet to trust you.

They're still astray, they're still in darkness. Lord, that they would see the light tonight. Lord, help us to see the love, the love that will not let us go, the love that draws us, that is like a magnet.

As you are lifted up, you'll draw all men unto yourself tonight. We pray if there's any here who have yet to trust you, that they'll seek counsel, they'll speak to somebody about their soul tonight, that they might find that wonderful truth of your love, and know it personally tonight.

We praise you, Lord, in Jesus' name. God