

The Love of God

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[0:00] John chapter 15, verse 12. John chapter 15, verse 12.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.! Greats a lot have no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

It's a scripture they sometimes quote around Anzac Day, isn't it? A greats a lot have no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. We think of veterans. I know there's some military, ex-military people amongst us.

And it makes you think of the great sacrifice they've made for our freedom, doesn't it? But even more so, the great sacrifice that our Lord has made for our freedom. It's the greatest love, isn't it? That he showed to us. So just some thoughts about the love of God today. Firstly, it's superhuman love, superhuman love. In John 15, verse 12, it says, This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.

[1:05] In 1 John 4, verse 19, it says, We love him because he first loved us. And then in Romans 5, verse 8, it says, That God commended his love towards us in that, While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

So we see superhuman love in all those verses. And he says, Love one another as I have loved you. That's a big thing, isn't it? To think that we should so love one another as brothers and sisters, as God's people.

And we love him because he first loved us. And that he commends his love towards us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Think of God's love, the superhuman love.

Really, Christ's love is superhuman, isn't it? But Christ's love, it was really extreme, undeserved, unmerited, and abundant. Superhuman love.

Here's what one preacher said, Charles Spurgeon. He said, Once while riding in the country, I saw on a farmer's barn a weathervane, you know, with those arrows where they turn.

[2:11] And on the arrow, it was inscribed, God is love. And I turned to the farmer and asked him, What do you mean by that?

Do you think God's love is changeable? That it veers about as that arrow turns in the wind? And the farmer said, No. No, no, not at all.

I mean that whichever way the wind blows, God is still love. His love is constant, isn't it? His love is enduring, it's forever. It doesn't change.

His unchanging love. Superhuman love. Really, God is love, isn't he? As the Bible tells us, God is love. What a definition of God. You can have all kinds of theological ideas, but just to get that, isn't it?

God is love. And Moody built a church, and it says we were very anxious to teach the people the love of God. We thought if we could not preach it into their hearts, we would try and burn it in.

[3:12] So right over the pulpit, they burnt these words, God is love, into the wooden pulpit. And a man going along the streets one night glanced through the door and saw the text.

He was a poor prodigal. And as he passed on, he thought to himself, God is love. No, he does not love me, for I am a poor, miserable sinner.

And he tried to get rid of the text, but it seemed to stand out right before him in letters of fire. He went on a little further, then turned around and went back and went into the meeting.

He did not hear the sermon, but those words were imprinted on his mind. The words of that short text, God is love. They deeply lodged in his heart, and that was enough.

It's of little account what men say if the word of God only gets an entrance into the sinner's heart. But he stayed after that first meeting was over. And the preacher says, I found him there weeping like a child.

[4:17] And as I unfolded the scriptures and told him how God had loved him all the time, although he had wandered so far away, and how God was waiting to receive him and forgive him, the light of the gospel broke into his mind, and he went away rejoicing.

Now those words, God is love, talk to that man that seemed so far, far away, thought himself too miserable a sinner, that God didn't love him. But no, God is love. God loves you, each one, each one of us.

Thank God for his love. Another story here, during the Korean War, a South Korean Christian civilian was arrested by the communist and ordered to be shot. But when the young communist leader learned that the prisoner was in charge of an orphanage, caring for small children, he decided to spare him and kill his son instead.

So they took his 19-year-old son and shot him right there in front of the Christian man. Later, the fortunes of war changed, and that same young communist leader was captured by the United Nations forces.

He was tried and condemned to death. But before the sentence could be carried out, the Christian, his boy had been killed, came and pleaded for the life of the killer.

[5:30] And he declared that this communist was young, that he really did not know what he was doing. And the Christian said, give him to me and I will train him. And so the United Nations forces granted the request, and the father took the murderer of his boy into his own home and cared for him.

And today, that young man, formerly a communist, is a Christian pastor serving Christ. So this is the power of forgiving love, isn't it? That he would so love, the one who killed his own son.

This is the power of forgiving love, that can only be described as superabundant. The kind of love that the dying Stephen reflected in the book of Acts. That love that took him to his own death. And really, it's undeserved love, isn't it? The love of God. Think of the love of God. It's radical love. Love divine, all love's excelling. Joy of heaven, to earth come down.

Fix in us, thy humble dwelling. All thy faithful, mercy's crowned. Love divine. It's all love's excelling, isn't it? So, firstly, it's superhuman love.

[6:35] Super human love. Secondly, it's supreme. Supreme love. Supreme love. The love of God. John 15, 13, it says, Greater love have no man.

No man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. There was a girl who said to their boyfriend, Do you love me?

And the boy said, Yes, dear. And she said to him, Would you die for me? And he said, No, mine is an undying love. We're not talking about that.

The thing of the love of God is truly, is truly, is supreme love, isn't it? It's the sweetest love. It's the supreme love. No greater love. It's beyond compare, isn't it?

It's absolute. It's total. It's complete. It's astonishing. It's matchless. It's overwhelming. Here's tender love. I think we've had a bit of brotherly love through this time of the camp.

[7:35] We've got to know each other a little better, I trust, and got to know a bit more about God's love and shared it with one another. When you think about the supreme love of God, it speaks to our hearts, doesn't it, every day.

Here's a quote. Christ laid down his life for his enemies. Christ laid down his life for his murderers. Christ laid down his life for them that hated him.

And the spirit of the cross, the spirit of Calvary, is love. Consider it. When they were mocking him and deriding him, what did he say? Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Luke 23, 34. To think that even at the cross, even as he was pinned there, that he loved even the ones who had nailed him, that pierced him, that scourged him, that hated him, that spat upon him. Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? It's superhuman, isn't it?

Superhuman, beyond human love. Supreme, no greater love.

[8:40] It's divine. So it's superhuman, it's supreme. And thirdly, it's saving love. This love is saving love. Think of that, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

It was deliberate that he laid down his life for you and me. That he laid down his life for such as we. It was sacrificial. It says in Romans 5, verse 6, Christ died for the ungodly.

So you can't think, I'm too ungodly, I'm too much a sinner, I'm outside of the scope of God's love. No. His saving love can reach to the uttermost.

It can reach to the lowest, the hardest. And I know, I've heard testimonies of people that consider themselves pretty hard that God's broke through. Amen. He's broken through even when we've had such a tragic past and we've made so many mistakes.

We've got so many regrets that God's love even reached you and me. Didn't it? It says that Christ died for the ungodly. So it's wide open, isn't it?

[9:41] I just love that to think that, you know, you might think of yourself as the worst of the worst. Even Paul, you know, he was a Christian killer in effect. He sided with the Christian killers, didn't he?

That were actually hauling out Christians, taking them to their death and stoning them to death like Stephen, that even Paul could get saved. And he said, I'm the chiefest of sinners.

But I think really, we can all think that, can't we? I'm just, why would God care for me? Why would God do anything for me? Why would Jesus die for me? But he did. He did.

Christ died for the ungodly. And it says in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 3 to 4, it says, Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures. And he was buried.

And he rose again the third day. Here's another little story about the hands of Christ. And we don't have communion here today, but we can, we've had lots of breaking of bread, haven't we, through our camp time, and we think how we shared bread together, and we've had that kind of communion, as in fellowship together.

[10:46] So we don't have a formal communion service this morning, but think of the hands of Christ. When our Lord was here on earth, he frequently ministered to man's needs with his hands.

He broke the loaves and the fishes to feed a hungry multitude. He made clay, and he rubbed it on the eyes of a blind man to give him sight. He touched an unclean leper, which was a no-no to touch them.

He touched an unclean leper in the act of cleansing him. And he said to Thomas, doubting Thomas, he said, Behold my hands. One day, too, we shall behold those hands.

Amen? One day we're going to hold his hands, be held by his hands. We're actually in his hand already, in effect, aren't we? But his hands, one day we'll see his hands.

We'll see the hands that we pierced, really, in effect, didn't we? The story is told of a young girl whose mother was very beautiful, all except her hands, which were shriveled and scarred and hideous.

[11:47] Although the child was long reluctant to speak about them, the time came when she asked her mother how her hands became so marred. And the mother told her how their house caught fire when this girl was very little.

And the mother had rushed upstairs to the room where the girl was sleeping in the crib. And with the help of the Lord, she was able to carry her baby downstairs and outside without being harmed. But in doing so, her hands were terribly burnt. And so she told the story. And this brought sobs to the child. She said, Oh, mother, you know I've always loved you, especially your face, your smile, your eyes.

But better than all now, I love your hands. Isn't it glorious to think? And think of the hands of our Lord. He suffered. He willingly laid down his hands for you, for me.

The one who left heaven's glory. He became flesh for us. And he bears in his compassionate hands the scars of his sacrifice for us. On our behalf, those scars are for us, for you and me.

[13:00] And his hands really are the eternal reminder of his love, aren't they? There was someone who, I guess it was a kind of a dream or a vision or something like that.

You know, he thought about the Lord. I asked Jesus how much he loved me. He stretched out his arms and said, this much. And he died. Of course, like that, this much.

I love you this much. In effect, as he laid down his hands on the cross, his arms were wide open, weren't they? On the cross. That's how much he loves you. He stretched out his arms and he died for you.

The love of God, so great, so marvelous. It's measureless, it's boundless, it's infinite love. And his arms are outstretched still, aren't they? His arms are outstretched, they're beckoning. He says, come unto me. It's a love that we can know. This is the love that we're talking about today. But Ephesians 3, it says this. Paul prayed a prayer and he said this.

[13:56] He said, he prayed that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height.

those dimensions, the breadth, the length, the depth, the height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

And someone's reflected how we think about those dimensions, the breadth, God so loved the world. Wow, that's wide, isn't it? The breadth of his love, the length that God gave his son, that he went to the length of giving his very son, the depth that no one should perish, that he would go to the lowest of the low that no one should perish that trusted him and then the height that shall have everlasting life.

The love of God is as high as the heavens, isn't it? How does it go? Deep, deep as the deepest sea, wide, wide as the ocean, as high as the heaven above.

It's the love of God, isn't it? Like the children's song that Christ may dwell in your hearts, that you might know the length, breadth, depth and height of his love today. So, to recap, it's superhuman love.

[15:20] We know human love, love of a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, but there's superhuman love, even beyond our dearest and fondest superhuman love.

It's supreme love. There's none greater, there's no love greater than this love. It's supreme and it's saving, saving love. Our Savior's love, it took him to death and beyond to save us from our sin to secure for us a heaven and eternal life and it's all a gift.

He gives it freely. This love, he gives it to the undeserving. That's me. That's all of us, isn't it? His love, it's everlasting, it's infinite, it's perfect.

Think of the wonder of it, the greatness of it. Don't miss this, don't miss this love. And he wants you to respond to his love and you can do that simply by faith and say, let's just take a moment.

You can say something to this effect. Lord God, I know I don't deserve your love, yet you would forgive me as I trust you. Lord, we pray that each one might have that, that assurance, that gift of eternal life that we would just simply say, yes Lord, you died on the cross for my sin and I believe that.

[16:45] I receive that. Thank you Lord for your love that took you to the length, the breadth, the depth, the height of the cross that superhuman, supreme, that saving love.

I want it. And Lord, as we would know that love, let's show it too to those in our circle, people we can love for you, to love as you love us, to love even the hard to love, the unloving.

Help us Lord to love, so love one another as you have loved us. In Jesus name, Amen. It's remarkable love, it's love that adopts us too, isn't it?

Think of that, I think, as I've got personal acquaintance of that, that they've adopted a child and there's that sense where we're adopted into God's family.

He's made that relationship possible, hasn't he? As a father would adopt a child, as a mother would adopt a child, God adopts us into his family.

[17:50] That's precious, isn't it? That he's chosen us. He's chosen us to be his child. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God.

Such love, isn't it? God bless you.