

As the Father has loved me

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[0 : 00] Refuge High The Apostle John was known in the early church as the Apostle of Love.

That was the way in which they viewed the Apostle John. And very early in the history of the church, the story went about of John's dealings with a young man in Ephesus.

In later life, the old John had a lot to do with the church in Ephesus. And one day he was there and he noticed a very promising young man in the congregation.

And I believe that that man was baptized as a convert under John. And John stressed to the elders there that they must look after this man.

And he went somewhere else and he came back a little later. And he asked the elders, he said, where is this young man? And they wept because they said, oh, he is gone and he has joined a band of brigands out in the mountainsides near the church.

[1 : 52] And he had forsaken Christ. And so John, it's recorded, I think, that John immediately demanded a horse. I think it was a horse.

And he rode straight out into the mountains and he went looking for the young man. And of course, that's where they robbed people. And so the gang of brigands found John.

And John walked straight into the middle of them. And he saw this young man there in the middle of them. And he stood in front of him and he just looked at him.

And the sight of John broke his heart. And he brought him back and restored him to the church. And it was one of those instances where the elders of Ephesus passed on this account of John and his love for the sheep.

But, you know, we need to think about how John became known as the apostle of love. And I think that we must recognize that it was the fact that he was loved that brought him to be that apostle of love.

[3 : 09] In his gospel, he doesn't name himself, but he speaks about himself as the disciple that Jesus loved. And we've looked earlier about the way in which the Lord Jesus brought John close to him.

When he called him from the fishing boat, he was one of the closest to our Lord. And our Lord showered upon John his own love. And I want you to see this connection today that John became a man of great love because he had been greatly loved.

And we have this connection in the Lord's Prayer. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. There's a connection.

We find it. We find the grace to forgive and to love because we have first been forgiven and first been loved.

And having said that, I want to look with you today just at verse 9 in chapter 15. Where we read, As the Father loved me, I also loved you.

[4 : 23] Abide in my love. This is in the middle of this teaching of Jesus. He comes to me and says, As the Father loved me, so I have loved you.

Abide in my love. We know that the Lord Jesus has given us the new commandment, the great commandment, that we should love one another.

And it may be that that's the only commandment that is actually recorded in John's Gospel. I need you to think about that. But Christ gave his disciples this new commandment.

And he said to them, Love one another as I have loved you. And so when he begins to call upon us to love one another, he immediately points us to his love for us.

And when he says, Love one another as I have loved you, we understand that he is especially thinking about his death for us on the cross. If there is anywhere where the love of Christ for his sheep is displayed to us, is paraded before us, it is in the cross.

[5 : 39] Whenever we think of his sufferings at Calvary, we say, There I know that my Saviour loved me. I learn his love at the cross. He even says here, Greater love has no one than this, than that a man lays down his life for his friends.

And so when we think of the commandment to love as Christians, we know that we must immediately go to the love that Christ has for us. But in verse 9 of this chapter, our Lord Jesus Christ takes us deeper than that.

You may say, How can we go deeper than the love which is shown for us at the cross? But he does. Do you notice how he begins? We've seen this earlier. Our Lord Jesus always begins with the Father.

And in this verse he says, As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Or actually it's past tense. As the Father loved me, so I loved you.

Abide in my love. And can you see there's a chain there? Our Lord Jesus is saying, That love must be found among us, because he has loved us, and his love is, well I can say because, because the Father has loved him.

[6 : 59] He's taking us right back, into the love of the Father for the Son. And I want you to see this today. If there's nothing else that you take away from this address, see this, that the Lord Jesus is thinking, he's going right back into eternity, and into the inner life of the Godhead, into the Trinity.

And he's taking us there, and he's saying, I want you to think about this, that the Father loved the Son. The Father loved me. As the Father loved me, so I have loved you.

And when we think about that, our minds are transported to the Father and the Son. And we can ask the question, how was the love of the Father expressed for his Son?

How can we, can we know more about this? Can we look into it, more deeply? How did it work out? In what way did the Father love the Son?

And that's an important question. Can we go back, and understand more of our God? I said to you, a couple of days ago, when John wrote these words, God is love.

[8 : 23] Three words, such a short sentence, but such depth. God is love. God is love. And we're transported all the time into the Godhead. We're made to think about that.

So I asked the question this morning, what, in what way did the love of the Father for the Son work out? And really, what I want to say this morning is that, if you want to understand more of the love of the Father for the Son, then there are two places you can go to in Scripture.

First of all, you can go to the promises of God's covenant with Abraham. The eternal counsel was revealed, at least partly, its structure was revealed, in his promises to Abraham.

And when we think of the promises to Abraham, we can begin to understand something of the way in which the love of the Father for the Son was expressed.

Because Paul tells us in Galatians, that God's promises were to Abraham and his seed, which is Christ. So that when we hear the promises declared to Abraham, we remember that these promises are God's, the Father's gift to his Son.

[9 : 45] That's what they express. And so we can go back to a place like Genesis 12, and part of Genesis, and we can look at the promises that God made there. But if we want to understand those promises more, then we can go forward in Scripture, to a book like Revelation, and places like Ephesians, and we can see how those promises would come to fulfilment.

So when we look at the covenantal promises, and when we look at their fulfilment, in those things, we are finding an expression of the Father's love for the Son.

So when Jesus says, as the Father loved me, we can explore this in the Scriptures, because the Scripture is teaching us what that immense fatherly love meant for the Son.

And for a moment, let me dwell on some of the promises that God made to Abraham, just for a moment. You see, he promised him a land.

Go to the land that I will show you. That means, go to the land that I will provide for you. And, you know, I've, when you think about the law of giving a land, that in itself is a great gift.

[11 : 06] A land flowing with milk and honey. This great land. But then, as we think about that promise of a land, we realise that even Abraham was looking for a heavenly country.

So, it was much more than the land of Canaan. And then, when we think of Abraham looking for the heavenly country, looking for the city, we know that the book of Revelation unpacks this, and it tells us that we are talking about new heavens and a new earth.

We're talking about the entire new, newly created universe. brothers. And, and God has given that to his son. That is the expression of his love.

If a man loves his wife, sometimes he will give her a gift. And because we, we don't have much money, sometimes the gift is a small gift. But it's a token of our love.

But, in this case, the father's immense love is displayed. I will give you these new heavens and the new earth. They are yours, my son. But not just that, he, he promised him a great nation.

[12:17] I will make you a great nation. And then we, we see, we see Abraham having the descendants of Israel. But we see our Lord Jesus Christ calling together his children, his flock from every tribe, nation and tongue.

Until we see a multitude that no man can number. Out of every nation, nation, kindred, tribe and tongue. And that great, that great body of the sheep, John tells us that the sheep were given to the son by the father.

The gift of the sheep, the gift of the people is another expression, another part of the father's love to the son. My son, I will give you this mighty church, this host of saved sinners.

These sheep are yours. And some of these things expressed as the father loved me. And again, he said to Abraham, he said, Abraham, I will, well, I think it's translated some places, I will make your name great.

Or, I will magnify your name. But remember, God was, yes, he was concerned about Abraham's name, but that is another of the promises that focus upon his son.

[13:43] This is to Abraham and his seed. And the great promise to the son of God here is, you will have a great name. And, you know, the way God expressed that covenant to Abraham and the way it is outworked, it means that every single individual whoever lives upon this earth is affected by Christ one way or another, for good or for ill.

Every single life is bound up with its relationship to him. Either we are his and his name is for our blessing or there are those who are against him.

And that being against him, that being without him, is a cause of great sorrow and loss for them. But whichever it is, every single person is affected by him.

The name of Jesus towers over our history. The history of this world is all about Jesus Christ. And the Father will glorify the Son.

You know what it says in Philippians. God has given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. Every eye will see him.

[15:02] Every eye will see him. Now, even, if I can say this, even the commandment concerning the cross was an expression of the Father's love to his Son.

everything that was set forth in the eternal councils, everything that was conveyed to our knowledge by the promises, everything that the book of Revelation speaks about, everything is designed to glorify Christ and it is an expression of the Father's love for him.

No wonder in Isaiah 53, towards the end, the prophet speaks for the Lord. He says, it was the will of the Lord to bruise him, but I will divide him a portion with the great.

In other words, yes, it was God's will that his Son should go humble through the dust of death, but God would raise him up. God would exalt him. God would raise him to his right hand.

God would see it that his Son was glorified and every knee would bow. Well, this is what is underneath verse 9 here.

[16:11] Jesus begins like this. Can you see why he begins like this? As the Father loved me, our Lord's consciousness was filled with the love of the Father.

If you read the Gospel of John, you will find this repeated. The Father loved the Son and has given all things into his hand. And it comes through time and time again.

Our Lord Jesus in his earthly ministry lived under the consciousness of the Father's love. And so when he speaks to them, he says, as the Father loved me, so I love you.

Abide in my love. And the point that he's making is this, that when we think about our calling to love one another, our minds have to travel to the cross.

Our minds have to travel to the Good Shepherd. Our minds must travel to the Saviour. But we must not stop there. We must see that the line of contact goes higher and further into the Godhead.

[17:16] And in one sense, this does certain things to us. For a start, it makes us realise that as the children of God, we are not merely, how can I say that, we are not only loved by Christ at the cross, but we are loved by God, the three persons in one, immensely.

Because Scripture says that we have been made fellow heirs with Christ. This great avalanche of the Father's love upon his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ brings us in it and says, you are going to share that with me.

You are going to sit with me in my throne. You are going to inherit all things by faith. Those who are my sons by faith, God says, they will inherit all things and I will be their God and they will be my children.

And so God has totally surrounded us and overwhelmed us by his love. It says in one place in Revelation or more than one, he has made us kings and priests to God.

And so as we think about these things we think about the love of God for us, yes, shown to us in Christ, but grounded in the eternal counsels, revealed in the promises and we are told how it will develop at the end of time.

[18 : 56] We are waiting to see that but we know that in Christ and in Christ alone we have been greatly, greatly loved. And it's when we think of that, on the one hand we realise the immensity of the new commandment.

You must love one another as I have loved you. As the Father loved me, so I have loved you. And we feel the weight of it.

God, but in the very weight of it, lies the power of it. And the power is in what I said to you this morning.

The more we know that we're loved, the more we will find the power to love. I stand before you as a complete hypocrite this morning because I know that my love to my brothers and sisters is abysmally poor.

it's nothing like the love of Christ for me. And I know that and that day by day that convicts me of sin. It makes me feel so small.

[20 : 09] But I also know that the Holy Spirit has shed abroad in my heart the love of God. And I have been taught that I am loved. A sinner saved by grace, a loved man.

And the more I think about that, the more I learn what I must be among my brothers and sisters. Well, God grant that each one of us may indeed know what it is to be loved.

Loved by God, loved by Christ, bought by his blood, heirs of the promises, with great hope. Amen. Shall we let's pray? Almighty God, our Father in heaven, we can hardly say much to you this morning, because your love is immense, overwhelming.

We thank you, O Lord, that it is eternal and unchangeable, that it is beyond measure. we thank you, O Lord, for the riches of your eternal plan.

We thank you for your love to your Son, and we thank you, O Lord, that we have been drawn in your mercy into that love. O Lord, our God, we thank you for the Lamb of God, who has taken our sin and nailed them to his tree.

[21 : 38] Lord, we ask you then that we may feed upon your love, and that you would change us into those who do love. Wipe away, O Lord, from our hearts our selfishness and our tendency to live for self and pleasure, and help us, O Lord, to be servants of one another in love.

We pray that we may indeed image Jesus Christ more and more. O Lord God, forgive our sins, we humbly confess them before you, and we pray, O Lord, that you would, we are your workmanship, Lord, we pray that you would continue to do that work in us and bring us to yourself in that way.

And, Lord, we would also bring before you, before we turn from your throne this morning, we would bring before you those who have been affected by death today, yesterday.

O our Father, when we grieve as your children, we know that you will comfort us. We pray for those who grieve and do not have the comfort of the faith. We pray, O Lord, that by your great mercy, the good news of the gospel may reach even them in their distress.

So we thank you for what we've sung just now, that the storms are stilled by your word, and men can thank you for your goodness and your mercy to the children of men.

[23 : 06] We would thank you this morning, O Lord, for your great covenant love to us. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.