How The Love of Jesus Abounds For You

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[0:00] Philippians is a letter from Paul the Apostle to one of the churches in the city of Philippi, which was called Little Rome.

And he begins this letter by addressing them and then letting them know his prayer for the church. So today we'll read our sermon text, which is really verses 7 through 11, but I'd like to read the entire prayer.
Philippians 1, verses 3 through 11. And I read this trusting that it is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word.
It's God's very own word for you, his people. When I'm done reading, I'll say this is the word of the Lord and you can respond, thanks be to God. Paul prays this way in verse 3.
I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, making request for you all with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.
[1:07] being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, in as much as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.

For God is my witness how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. in this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness that are by Jesus Christ, blessed to the glory and praise of God.
The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.
Let's pray. Lord, it's truly a mystery.
How much you love us. If it weren't for your word telling us so plainly, so clearly, of the abounding love of Jesus for his church, we would have no way of even receiving this glorious truth.
[3:16] We thank you, Lord, that you are so loving and in your love you have not been silent, but you have been clear and you have spoken a strong word of assurance and abounding affection that Jesus puts in his people.

And we pray today, Lord, that by the power of your Holy Spirit, ministering your word in the Bible to every true believer, Lord, that you will strengthen our faith, that you will help us to receive even more of your love today.
Lord, for those here today who are still in darkness, who know nothing but emptiness on the inside, I pray, Lord, that your abounding love will break through and capture them, Lord.
For your glory we ask. Amen. Amen. Well, last week, the word was Philippians 1.6.
I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. And I stood up there and I told you that quote by Robert Murray Machine about assurance.
[4:32] For every look you give to yourself, take ten looks at Christ. And I need to confess that as I was preparing for this sermon today, I was struggling to do that.

Because I read this prayer of Paul and I just was so convicted. I don't have this kind of affection for the church. I don't have this longing in my heart.
I don't have this abounding love. And I feel like I'm just the opposite. So how am I going to not be a hypocrite and minister the truth of this prayer?
And very late last night, the Lord, again, washed over me with his grace. I'm taking ten looks at myself and my shortcomings. And with his help, I just need to receive the abounding love of Jesus

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once again myself.
And that's been my prayer for you as well, that you can receive it today. If you look at Philippians 1.8, Paul says this love that fills his heart, notice who is the source of it.
[5:55] In verse 8, it's the affection of Jesus Christ himself. Paul didn't muster up or generate more love for the church. It's the love that Jesus has had all along that he puts into Paul.

It's the affection of Jesus Christ. And with that love in his heart, he prays, verse 9, this I pray that your love may abound still more and more.
You and I love because he first loved us and gave his son for us. So, beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, I want to show you today six glorious truths about how the love of Jesus abounds for you.
How the love of Jesus abounds for you. First, the love of Jesus strengthens your faith beyond sight. The love of Jesus is what strengthens our faith beyond our sight. Christians are told to sharpen one another as iron sharpens iron.
[7:11] And I want to talk to you about the love of Jesus strengthening and sharpening your faith like iron. I know nothing about science, so I had to look this up.

How is iron even made? I know that if you're driving toward Aspen, there's a place called Carbondale. And just after that is Redstone. And you can see old iron furnaces. And what they do is they take the iron ore and they apply extreme heat to it, a heat furnace.
They just blast it with heat. And that puts all the particles in motion. But then they have to hammer the iron. And the hammering, it makes those particles separate. And it's removing the impurities that are mixed in.
So how do you make strong iron? It's heat and hammering. And look at what Paul in his life is experiencing.
You could say he's experiencing extreme heat spiritually. And extreme hammering. And as a result, it strengthens the faith and the love inside of him.
[8:21] Why do we say spiritual heat? Well, notice he talks about the chains he's wearing. He's a man under persecution. He's been arrested for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And in verse 7, he says, I have you in my heart. And verse 8, he says, it's how greatly I long for you. I long for you all.
So here's a man in chains, in prison. Neglected, abandoned by the church in Rome. Because people were preaching Christ for very selfish motives. Neglecting Paul.
And he feels the heat of persecution. A longing to be with the people of God. You've been through a time without a church. You've been through those seasons.
And it's one of the worst things to go through. Growing up, my parents were missionaries in a very remote part of the world, in northern Brazil. We didn't really ever have a church from when I was 10 years old to 16.
[9:23] And I just remember getting to Oklahoma where I met my wife. And I didn't really care what church it was. It's a church. There are Christians here that believe in Jesus Christ. I'm with my family.

And I remember that feeling of, this is what I've been missing out on for all these years. And Paul longs for that because he's isolated. It's the worst kind of imprisonment.
It's solitary confinement. And he's in chains longing to be with the church. That's the heat that God is lovingly applying to Paul's life. What about the hammering?
Paul's getting hammered. He's got the Praetorian Guard, the elite Roman guards all around him. And even in this position of being a prisoner, he is having to defend the gospel.
He's getting accused. He's getting attacked. He's having his own faith questioned and challenged, not to mention the spiritual hammering he's receiving. Satan accusing him.
[10:23] Satan provoking him. He's missing out on taking the Lord's Supper with God's people. He's missing out on someone else ministering the Word of God to remind him and to help him rest in the truth of the gospel.

He's under extreme hammering. I told you I want to encourage you that the love of Jesus strengthens your faith beyond your sight.
This was true for Paul. It's against all visible evidence. There's no earthly reason that Paul had to hope. And yet he says, I pray for you with confidence that God will finish what he started in his church.

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He says that this heat and hammering, so to speak, it produced two things. A confirmation in verse 7 and confidence in verse 6.
So as he's being attacked and having to defend the gospel, God is giving him confirmations that this gospel prevails. In verse 7, it reminds me of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4.18.
[11:31] We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

And God is building this strong faith into him on the world that is unseen. Jesus Christ on the throne, extending his kingdom over all the earth, through all the cities, through all the peoples, nations, tribes, and tongues, from the islands to the coastlands, believing in the advance of Jesus and his gospel.
And he wrote, you are partakers with me of grace. In his chains, longing to be with the church, he's reminded, this is what we have in common.
This is what I truly long for. It's not just the friendship. It's not just the softball, or these other things that are wonderful blessings, or the hobbies, or the great food.
It's not just that. It's the partaking of Christ's grace together. Father, that's what I really long for and miss. James Montgomery Boyce, a wonderful pastor, he had shared this thing he got to witness at a conference for a lot of pastors from all over the world that was held in Europe years ago, decades ago.
[12:56] And he just remembered, you know, as people are coming into this conference center, there is this guy from Africa that looked very distinctive. He had the tattoos on his face, and he had scars from being in wars.

And he was a partaker of this grace that Paul's talking about, sitting there with all these other pastors from all these other nations. Well, at one point in the conference, these two believers from Central America came up and told their testimony.
One of them shared how he was one with a spear in his hand who had killed innocent people, including missionaries, who had come to bring them the gospel. And God broke him down, tore his heart open, and flooded him with grace.
And as these men from Central America are telling their story, when that session ended, everybody's going off for the next event. This man, before it was even announced that you are dismissed, from Africa, who had the scars on his face, came running down the stairs, running down the aisle, and he wrapped his arms around this brother from Central America.
And he said something to the effect that I am you. He means, I know this grace you're talking about. I'm an enemy of God. I'm a partaker of grace with you.
[14:15] And he wouldn't let him go, and he hugged him for so long. That's what it means to be a partaker of grace. You know, just like Paul, I'm the chief of sinners. And we have Christ, Jesus, as our Savior.

And He is the King. We serve willingly in His army. And it's such a joy. And that's why Paul writes, it's correct. It's in alignment with God's moral law.
It's righteous. Verse 6, for me to be confident that God will complete His work. Romans 5, 9-11 says, much more will we, having now been justified by His blood, we can know that we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
For if we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Much more than having been reconciled, shall we be saved by His life.
And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. The love of Jesus strengthens your faith beyond sight.
[15:39] Do you see, church, how the love of Jesus abounds for you too, you who are a partaker of His grace? I don't know what you're going through, what's in your sight right now.

Maybe some of you feel like God is putting you through heat and hammering. And I pray that you will not bear that burden alone. Paul's laying out his heart to the church here, so they can also pray for him.
And that you will remember, God is working in you an iron-strong faith, because it's not rooted in anything you bring to God.
It's rooted in the covenant faithfulness, the steadfast love of the Lord for you, His people. His abounding love through Jesus Christ to His church.

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Well, the second truth in this passage is that though your outer man is crumbling, the love of Jesus sustains your inner man. Though the outer man is crumbling, the love of Jesus sustains your inner man.
[16:49] Now, this point, it has to be inferred, but I want you to look at verse 8. In verse 8, Paul says, God is my witness how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

In verse 7, he says, I have you in my heart. The Greek word here for heart, it really refers to the seat of reflection and thought. So God has put the church in my reflection.
And when he says next in verse 8, that I long for you with all the affection of Jesus Christ, the word here is the inner words of Jesus. The inner parts, the seat of emotions are stirred up in Paul.
So he's very in tune with his inner man, his heart, his affections, his inner being. It's being sustained by the abounding love of Jesus. And we do know from the book of Acts and especially 2 Corinthians, what was going on in Paul's outer man because this is a prison epistle.
Paul by this time would be a very old man, most likely in his, well, I won't even say it because I just said very old so I don't want to make anyone feel bad, but probably early 60s, which today it's a little different than back then.
[18:05] But you know, the life expectancy in the first century Roman society was age 25. If anyone's around 25 here, you'd be middle-aged in Rome. And so for Paul to be in his early 60s, he was called, in Philippians 1, 9, he actually called himself aged.

We know that he wrote the letter to the Galatians with large letters so that it could be proof it was his own handwriting because he had failing eyesight. And that was an early book. How bad are his eyes now?
In 2 Corinthians, we read that Paul was beaten with rods three times. Some of us have gotten injured brushing your teeth or something like that you throw out a part of your back.
Imagine the ligaments and the muscles without physical therapy, without medicine that we have today. A beating like that three times with rods on the body of an old minister.
On top of that, his skin and muscles and tendons were lashed five times. He wrote of having an ongoing thorn in the flesh. Most likely, according to his letter to the Corinthians, the second one, he said that he fought with wild beasts.
[19:18] Maybe like you'd picture a gladiator, but here it's an old minister with bad eyesight being thrown to the wild beasts and God sparing his life. He summarized it as, I daily face death.

That's what's going on with Paul and the outer man. But to the Philippians, they don't need him to rehearse any of those credentials. They know, they respect him, they love him. He simply says, in two words, my chains.
That's how I'm doing physically. And still, in verse 8, because of the affection of Jesus Christ for me and in me, in my inner man, I long for you, church, in my heart.
It's the affection of Jesus Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Revelation 1.5. Paul's confidence is in the inner man sustained by the affection of Jesus Christ, according to Romans 8.38.
He says, I'm persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
[20:41] That's what sustains us in the inner being. And his message to all the churches and to you and me today, 2 Corinthians 4.16, therefore, we who are partakers of grace, we do not lose heart.

Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.
Though your outer man is crumbling, the love of Jesus sustains the inner being of every true believer. Some of you are living with chronic pain and all the problems that raises.
When you don't get enough sleep, it affects everything in your life, doesn't it? The inner man will be sustained by Jesus Christ. and one day you'll receive a glorified body just as Jesus in his glorified body will never perish.
You'll receive this same body that's crumbling all around you. It will be resurrected and made perfect and you'll get a walk with Jesus Christ and follow the Lamb wherever he leads you one day.

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[21:58] So trust him. By faith, he will sustain your soul, your inner being until that day. Oh, how the love of Jesus, it abounds for you and me just as it did for Paul.

The third truth I see in this passage is that the love of Jesus, it flows through you, through Paul, through a Christian to his church.
The love of Jesus doesn't come to a life and stay like a pond that gets stale and stagnant. The love of Jesus, it's living waters that flow through a believer like Paul and like you and like me.
It flows through you to his church and to everyone who believe. Notice in verse 9 he says, this I pray that your love, the affection of Jesus in you may abound still more and more.
Do you remember how John the Baptist spoke of Jesus Christ? He said, He, Jesus Christ, must increase. How does that happen? As I decrease.
[23:10] What Paul is saying is the love of Jesus increasing in you abounds more and more and more. It goes from good to better to great.

Excellent. The love of Jesus is not decreasing. It's not a diminishing returns. It's a never ending supply of the affection, the love of Jesus poured through his believers.
And it increases still more and still more and still more every day by his grace. I've had to think a lot about this relationship of how the love of Jesus flows through us in such a way that God gets all the glory and we don't touch any of the glory.
but yet it's through his people. I don't know that I'll get it quite right today but what was helpful as an illustration to me came from one of the commentaries. All good works depend on God filling you with his love.
So the love of God is like the pressure behind anything loving that you will do. And the love of God flowing through a life that is increasingly free of two things evidences itself for God's glory as fruit, the fruits of righteousness.
[24:35] So the illustration it's from the field of electricity. Something I also don't know anything about. But he says that when you're running an electrical current through a wire or through a system you can have two things.

You can have resistors and condensers. Resistors impede the flow. They're blocks that are blocking the flow of electricity.
And then condensers are holding on to the flow of electricity for their own use. So if the pressure or the currency flowing through this channel is the love of God, as God sanctifies me, he's removing things in my life that are resistors to his love flowing through me to his church.
And he's also convicting me and causing me to repent and give up other things that might be condensers where I'm holding on and some of the love he's shown me that's intended for his church but I was holding on to it for my own purposes.
He says, I pray that your love may abound still more and more and more and more so the Spirit's making you a better and better channel of his love flowing through you for his church.
[25:55] He says that this is a type of love that flows through you that abounds more and more in knowledge and all discernment. Verse 10, that you may approve the things that are excellent.

So it's a love that is a discerning love. It's a love that is informed and given by the Holy Spirit to help you understand how God designed for love to operate.
The word discern is used also for testing money or a currency to see if it's counterfeit. It was used in the ancient world to describe political testing to see if a candidate is credible and commendable for a political office.
So this love of Christ is a divine love governed by biblical principles based on the knowledge of God's word. It's a love that is according to knowledge.
It's a knowledge that describes a spiritual, relational knowing of God. Knowing truth. Knowing sound doctrine. And you only can do that through the study of God's word with his people by the help of the Holy Spirit.
[27:08] It reminds me of what he wrote in Romans 12, verse 2. The purpose of God's ministry of the word and growing us in knowledge is that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can test and approve what is God's will.

His good, pleasing, and perfect will. So the love of Jesus, it flows through true believers to his church.
And it does so as we grow in our knowledge of God through his word by the help of the Spirit. You see how loving Jesus is that he transforms you and me.

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He makes his love to abound. He removes resistors and condensers so that we can be an even more suitable vessel of his love as it flows.
The fourth truth I see here in verse 10 is that the love of Jesus in you proclaims he is your king. The love of Jesus in you proclaims he is your king.
[28:15] In verse 10 he says, I pray that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Jesus Christ. And all of this in verse 11 is for the glory and the praise of God.

So, as God purifies his church, as the church is sincere without offense, God is praised and glorified.
Right now the kingdom of God is ministered over his people spiritually by faith, not by sight. And so it's through the lives and through the love of Christ in his church that he shows here's my kingdom. Here's a place where I rule. And when Jesus Christ comes on that great day, his church bears witness in word and in our lives his transforming us that he is the king of kings.
He says, I pray that you may be sincere. The word sincere, it means that it's not been patched together by your own efforts.
[29:24] Sincere, even in the English, the root here is without wax. Sin means without and then sire is wax. And so if you go to a museum you can see these pieces of pottery from all over the world in all different time periods.

The ones that last were cheaper because they're very thick. The most expensive pottery is very thin pottery and it's very rare to find a piece that didn't just crumble over the decades and centuries. And the thinner a piece of pottery was the more likely it would be to break. So when a very expensive thin piece of pottery was made and it would accidentally break or crack they would take it and fill wax in to make it as smooth as they could and then paint over it and still try to sell it at full price.
So to be sincere is to be hiding something that when it gets exposed in the heat the wax would melt away and you can see what it was or they would hold it up to the light and you can see the light coming through the wax.
And he's saying that I pray that you may be sincere that when your life gets held up to the light of Christ yes you're a broken vessel but it won't be an offense to the name of Jesus.
[30:36] It'll be a testament that God took those parts of you that are cracks and broken and he filled them solid. There's nothing man's trying to put in there and cover up.

This is a true work of God. You're bearing witness he is your king. It reminds me of Jude 1.21 where he prays that they will keep themselves in the love of God looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
So your love of Jesus in you proclaims that he is your king. Here's where I want to try to be extra careful.
Jesus was the king of the criminal on the cross. He met the one condition to have eternal life which was to believe.
Do you see your good works they add nothing to your standing with God. I love how our confession makes really careful statements that clarify errors we could go in numerous directions.
[31:51] listen to these words about the good works that God does in the life of his people making us sincere without offense. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith and by them believers manifest their thankfulness strengthen their assurance edify their brethren adorn the profession of the gospel stop the mouths of adversaries and glorify God whose workmanship they are created in Christ Jesus thereunto that having their fruit unto holiness they may have the end eternal life.

this is a summary of what scripture teaches for example Ephesians 2.10 for we are his workmanship he is the one beginning the work and completing the work in his people we are created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them we don't go out trying to find good works to do to make ourselves more good you are in Christ you are a new creation he already has prepared those things you will do so then when you when you realize look God used me as a channel of his love you give him all the glory God already knew this was going to be a way he would use me praise the Lord he gets all the glory I get none as it should be Hebrews 6.11 we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end so that you may not be sluggish but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises well where does the patience and where does the faith and

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the strength and the energy to endure where does that even come from that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ it's his abounding love that he puts in his people so the love of Jesus in you it proclaims he is working in my life oh how the love of Jesus abounds for you and me the fifth truth here is that the abounding love of Jesus it does fill his people with the fruits of righteousness look at verse 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God notice he says in verse 11 you Christian are being filled with it's happening to you in the passive tense in the fruits of righteousness it's not something you make up or I make up it's what God has already shown in the Bible to be pleasing to him our confession says again in another paragraph our ability to do good works is not at all of ourselves but wholly from the spirit of Christ who enables you to do good work besides the graces you have already received there is also necessary an actual influence of the same
Holy Spirit to work in you to make you to will and to do of his good pleasure yet you are not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the spirit he will stir you up he will he will cause you to be overflowing with the love of Christ to do that thing he is calling you to do he will sustain you in obedience not under the principle of works adding anything to your salvation but all Christians ought to be diligent in the stirring up of the grace of God that is in you you bring yourself to be with God's people you sit under the ministry of his word you come by faith week after week to take the Lord's supper and you trust he will stir up this love inside of you it begins with him and he will use the means he's ordained to sustain it in his people as well 2 Corinthians 3 5 in ourselves we are not able to claim anything for ourselves the power to do what we do comes from God the best summary of all it's really it's really the kernel that everything else is opening up and fleshing out it's from the words of Jesus himself
John 15 5 whoever abides in me and I in him he it is that bears much fruit apart from me you can do nothing not even a little but as the abounding love of Jesus dwells in you and teaches you to abide in him he does bring into your life fruits of righteousness well the sixth and final truth here is back to verse 9 and it's that the love of Jesus it abounds still more and more in you verse 9 says this I pray that your love the same love Paul has the affection of Jesus Christ may abound still more and more Paul has used that phrase in other places one is Romans 5 20 God gave his law that your sins might abound in other words it needs to be abundantly clear that you fall short of God's glory your sins need to be heavy upon you to drive you to the Savior in repentance and faith again and again and again his law exposes your need of the Savior but Paul wrote in Romans 5 20 where sin abounded grace abounded much more the love of Jesus abounds more and more in you
I read of Lawrence of Arabia and this story illustrates so perfectly the abounding love of Jesus for his people these folks he had met in Arabia in the Middle East they had the opportunity to travel back with him and they went to Paris and in Paris he tried to take them to see all these tourist sites you know the great feats of architecture and culture but the thing that they were most impressed by was in the hotel room how you can turn on a faucet and water just continues to flow endlessly and the shower the sink the water just with a faucet never stops flowing and so when it was time for these visitors from Arabia to travel back to their country he was waiting for them and he couldn't find them so he went up to check in their room and they were trying to unscrew the faucet out of the wall they wanted to take this magic faucet back with them to Arabia they say we live in the desert and what we lack is water and finally we found an invention from this little invention flows water without end if we think about that that's often how we try to live the Christian life isn't it
[39:10] I'm just going to carry the faucet around with me and the supply of water that will come endlessly out of this faucet in this illustration it begins with the rainfall and the snow on the Alps the glorious green mountains and from there it fills the rivers and it flows to the ocean and that cycle will never end the rain and the snow covering these mountains flowing keeping these rivers full it will always supply so that every faucet that is tied into this entire system of water without end it will never run dry the love of Jesus abounds still more and more in you it will never run out the supply is endless why do you think God made the rain cycle why do you think he made our bodies to need water many times a day it's to teach us he is the living water and he abounds to you and to me still more and more tomorrow than today and even more the next day than today if that's possible and for all eternity his love abounds because God is love you see church how the love of Jesus it abounds for you and me let's rest in this truth let's soak him up and praise him for his all sufficient love for his people again today oh Lord we praise you we are such broken vessels

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Lord but inside these vessels you put the most glorious treasure you've allowed us to have fellowship and communion and be partakers of grace and to abide with Jesus Christ and God the holy God our creator Lord may your love produce in us the fruits of righteousness so that you will be glorified and that as a congregation you will find us to be sincere without offense to your name until the day of Christ for each one of us please preserve us Lord in holiness for your sake we ask amen

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