

Gospel Partners Overflow with Love

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[0:00] All right, well, we are going to be in Philippians chapter 1 this morning, verses 9 through 11. Philippians chapter 1, verses 9 through 11. And if you're using one of the Blue Bibles our ushers handed out, that's going to be on page 980.

Philippians chapter 1, verses 9 through 11, page 980. And as you're turning there, I was thinking back to a simpler time when I didn't put cream in my coffee ever, and I just drank a black all the time.

And now I kind of do both, but I've noticed when I visit a coffee shop and I order just a regular drip coffee, I often get asked the question, do you need room for cream?

Do you need room for cream? And if I say yes, what happens is that this giver of life, the barista, they won't fill up the cup all the way to the top.

They fill it up and leave about that much room at the top. And the reason for that is that you need to leave a decent amount of room to add cream, because otherwise it's going to overflow and I'm going to get third degree burns and probably sue them or something like that.

[1:07] So this image that I've had in my mind this week as we've been talking about gospel partners overflowing with love, this image that I have in my mind is a coffee mug in which there is room for cream.

It's not overflowing. Most of us would say, you know, it's adequately full. It's obviously full enough that the barista can hand the coffee over to you and you're not going to complain at them.

It seems full enough. You'll accept it with a shrug, move on with your life. You know, I guess good enough. And I want us to hold on to that as a mental image because it's an image of the kind of love that we tend to settle for.

We tend to settle for this kind of love. Among us Christians, there's a sense in which we are content to be people who are adequately full of love. Just enough.

Just enough to get by. And I think we've adopted this mindset from the world around us. So let me explain what I mean when I say we've adopted this mindset from the world around us. When you hear people around you complaining about the state of our culture, about the state of our world, one of the things that I hear people single out is that there's just a lack of decency in our world.

[2:18] A lack of decency. Our world is filled with stories of indecent behavior. You have friends on Facebook complaining about how corrupt our political leaders are. You have newspaper editorials denouncing intolerance or discrimination.

You have news stories of gun violence, of mass murder. And the problem is there's just not enough decency in the world today. People just aren't decent to one another like they supposedly used to be. We need to learn to respect ourselves.

We need to learn to respect one another and their rights. We need to teach our kids good manners. Train them not to develop a sense of entitlement. We need to become nice and helpful people. Decent citizens who contribute to the order and stability of the society that we live in.

Now that's all well and good. There are many people out there who think that if just everybody were decent to one another, that would just solve pretty much all the problems we have in our culture. As Christians, we can't be content with that.

If we're content with just becoming friendly, decent citizens in our community, then we're being content with being a cup of coffee that's not quite full.

[3 : 27] We're settling. We're settling for far less than what Jesus Christ calls us to become. Let me give you an example of what Jesus has to say about true, genuine love, the kind that gospel partners have.

Jesus is not willing to settle for simply being a decent person. In Matthew chapter 5, we encountered these words a couple weeks ago in our journey class.

You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

[4 : 34] Jesus calls us to this radical commitment to love one another, in fact, to have love for everyone. Jesus doesn't want us to leave that room for cream.

Jesus wants us to turn on the spigot until our cup overflows with love for everyone in the church. And not only in the church, but even our worst enemies, even the people who hurt or insult or persecute us.

This is not that sort of tribalistic love which is common in our world today. I love people who think the way I do. I love the people who value the same things I do.

I love the people who I just get along well with. This is a love for everyone. It's a love that overflows so much that it even extends to those who are unlike us. Now, that's a difficult calling.

Understatement of the year, that is a difficult calling. It's an impossible calling, in fact. Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. The unbelieving world around us doesn't know the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

[5 : 42] It doesn't accept that when we repent of our sins, when we put our full confidence in the goodness, in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that then we are born again, then we are regenerated, then we are made new.

And because the people around us don't have that hope, because they don't have those relationships, because they don't have those resources, they can't reach that standard.

Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. So the solution is lower the standard. Lower the standard of love that Jesus has called us to. In the world's eyes, it's enough to be a pretty decent person, a decent citizen.

Do some good stuff. Be kind to everyone. Just kind enough that everyone thinks you're a pretty decent person. It's enough to fill your cup mostly full.

It's enough to settle for a good enough love. But Jesus calls you and me to so much more. Jesus calls us to radical devotion, complete self-denial, sacrificial love for one another, even love to the point of death.

[6 : 47] Because that's the kind of love that Jesus lived. Now maybe you're like me, this commandment to love one another, the second greatest command that Jesus gave, it seems, it might seem to you to be an incredible burden.

And to wait on your shoulders. And you know you're guilty because you know you don't live up to it. You're ashamed of your failure. Here's the beauty of the message that God has given us today through his word, through the Bible.

It's that this perfect love that you and I cannot achieve out of our own strength, this perfect love is something that God can give us, that God wants to give us.

God wants you to have that kind of love. And he wants to build that into you. Let me read to you the beginning of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians.

It's a first century letter to a little church founded in the city of Philippi. And this is Philippians chapter one. And I'll read starting in verse one and end through verse 11 because our focus is going to be on verses nine through 11.

[8 : 02] But for context, we'll start in verse one. Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all because I hold you in my heart.

For you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

[9 : 28] This is the word of the Lord. Now this morning, we are going to focus our attention on verses 9 through 11. We're going to focus our attention on the prayer that Paul has written, the prayer that Paul prays for his partners in advancing the gospel.

This is what gospel partnership looks like. This is how it shapes people. Paul has an overflowing hope.

Paul has great expectations for this little church. And if you're like me, if you want that overflowing cup, that love that abounds more and more, then here's our message of hope this morning.

God makes us gospel partners who overflow with love. God makes us gospel partners who overflow with love. That's important because being that decent citizen, that'll make people respect you.

But it won't fill them with wonder. It won't fill them with wonder. Overflowing love will do that. This love that overflows, this love that only God can grant to us, it is a powerful thing.

[10 : 50] When I was studying in seminary, I studied under a professor. He had been a missionary to Africa earlier in his life. And he and his wife and children had traveled to the country of Chad.

And they had been there strengthening, establishing a church among a local tribe there. And this missionary, when he went there, he thought that he was going to be the one ministering to them.

That this ministry, this blessing was going to flow from him to them. It was going to be a one-way ministry. But soon he discovered that most of the ministry and most of the blessing was coming from them to him.

And he told our class of how some of the people of the tribe, one time they would give him grain as a gift. You know, pretty straightforward. Just food.

This grain. But the thing about this was this grain was their supply of food for that day and for the next. And so even though he was well-fed already, they would give him two days' worth of meals.

[11 : 53] And as a result, they would go hungry for two days. Nothing to eat. Just so they could express their gratitude to him.

And then another time, he had worked with the villagers to store up a supply of food for the winter so they wouldn't go hungry. Good planning. Just the kind of wisdom that we see in the book of Proverbs.

But as their supply began to fill up, as they began to get prepared for the winter months, refugees from a nearby conflict started making their way past the village. People who had nothing at all. And so to this missionary's consternation, guess what the villagers did?

They gladly gave away all of their food. All the food that they had stored up. Everything they had to help the refugees. Then another time, this missionary, he became very sick and he had to return to the United States for several months for medical help.

And his wife and his young children stayed behind in Chad. And so the pastor of a church in a neighboring town, he took it on himself every single night to walk several hours to the missionary's village, eat dinner with his family, and then walk back every single night, night after night, for months just to make sure they were safe.

[13 : 13] And that experience changed him forever. God used these African tribesmen to open his eyes to the love that Jesus Christ had for him.

Because in many other ways, these villagers, they were, there were a lot of ways in which we would look at them and see them as imperfect and backwards compared to us. But they opened for him a window, a window that looked out on Calvary, that looked on the cross, that showed the overflowing, sacrificial love that Jesus Christ lived to perfection.

God was good enough to grant this man the gift, this gift of love, this picture of love, and he will do the same for us.

God makes us gospel partners who overflow with love, and he teaches this love to us. Are you content with the life of love you are living?

Let us not be content. Let us have a divine and godly discontent and a longing to learn the Father's love. What I want to do this morning is work my way through this prayer that Paul prayed to God the Father.

[14 : 24] And we're going to learn what this overflowing love looks like. We're going to identify the counterfeit loves that we often mistake for the real thing. And when our time together this morning has ended, I want us to come away with one impression.

I want us to come away with an ache, a hunger, a longing for a gospel partnership that overflows with love. I want us to be eager to plead with God, to grant this church a love for God, a love for one another, a love for our neighbors, a love that unites this church to set aside our minor and lesser differences and to advance the good news of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us.

Here's how Paul begins his prayer in verse 9. It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent.

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent. And so we learn here what the first characteristic of this overflowing love is.

The first characteristic of this overflowing love, it's a wise love that knows what is best. It's a wise love that knows what is best.

[16 : 01] Now have you ever stopped to consider that love without wisdom is actually a very dangerous thing. Love without wisdom is a very dangerous thing.

I once read a book, it's on my shelf in my office, it's titled Cross-Cultural Servanthood. And in this book, the author, Dwayne Elmer, he tells a fun little parable about a monkey and a fish.

And it goes like this, a typhoon had temporarily stranded a monkey on an island in a secure, protected place on the shore while waiting for the raging waters to recede.

He spotted a fish swimming against the current. It seemed obvious to the monkey that the fish was struggling and in need of assistance. Being of kind heart, the monkey resolved to help the fish.

A tree precariously dangled over the very spot where the fish seemed to be struggling. At considerable risk to himself, the monkey moved far out on a limb, reached down and snatched the fish from the threatening waters.

[17 : 09] Immediately scurrying back to the safety of his shelter, he carefully laid the fish on dry ground. For a few moments, the fish showed excitement, but soon settled into a peaceful rest.

Joy and satisfaction swelled inside the monkey. He had successfully helped another creature. Now, one positive lesson from the story is that, like the monkey, love always acts.

If the monkey does not act, if the monkey does not act, then he does not love. He might look at the fish and see that, oh, it's struggling, it's in trouble, who cares? Love always acts.

Love does. It isn't just a warm, fuzzy feeling that sits in your heart and makes you feel good that you had a warm and fuzzy feeling. Love acts. People who love are people who do things.

They aren't people who sit back and snipe at others who are doing things. But, we also learn from the story that we have to learn and be guided by biblical wisdom.

[18 : 18] It's not enough to act kindly. It's not enough to be willing even to lay down our lives for others as the monkey was willing to do for the fish. We must learn and be guided by biblical wisdom.

The monkey in the story was not wise. He didn't see that what he was doing was hurting the fish that he was trying to love and serve. Love without wisdom can actually be a very dangerous thing because this kind of defective love doesn't know what the best thing to do is.

And that's why Paul prays that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment. First, in verse 9, he wants the Philippian Christians to develop a love that is characterized by knowledge.

It's characterized by knowledge. He's not praying that God will help the Philippians win a trivial pursuit or memorize a Scrabble dictionary just to accumulate all sorts of information about the world.

No, when Paul talks about knowledge, he's talking about knowledge of God. Now, I want to make that distinction because I know plenty of people who have accumulated a lot of knowledge about God.

[19 : 32] They can quote systematic theologies left and right, backwards and forwards, but many of them are people who are not wise. It's not merely knowledge about God, it's knowledge of God, knowing God, knowing Him.

And you can see that in chapter 3, verse 10, where Paul is longing for this, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and may share His sufferings becoming like Him in His death.

It's not merely an academic knowledge that Paul is after, not the kind of thing that anybody can get by acquiring information from books or going to seminary classes, as helpful as that is.

Think about it, Satan himself is the best systematic theologian in the world. It's not memorizing the facts of the gospel, it's knowing, experientially, Jesus Christ, experiencing the power of His resurrection, suffering as He suffered, even to the point of dying as He died.

This knowledge does mean knowing information. You can't know somebody without knowing facts about them. That's part of it. But it's a deep relationship, the experience of knowing someone.

[20 : 57] It's in every way understanding the mind of Jesus Christ. Think about it as the way a loving husband understands the mind of his wife.

That is possible, men, by the way. I know you think it's not, but it takes a lot of work. A mother understanding the personality of her children.

You know them. You know them. It's an intimate knowing. Second, not only does gospel partnership require an overflowing love, characterized by knowledge, it requires a love characterized by discernment, knowledge and discernment.

If you want to really love God and if you want to really love other people, you have to be able to distinguish right from wrong. You have to be able to distinguish truth from error.

Now, why is that? Why can't you love, truly love, unless you can distinguish right from wrong and truth from error? Well, Paul explains it in his letter to the church in the nearby city of Corinth.

[22 : 11] 1 Corinthians 13 is a famous chapter, the chapter about love. It's read at weddings and so forth. And in this chapter, here's one remark Paul makes about love.

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. It does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. In other words, to genuinely love someone, it's not enough to strive for what that person thinks is best for them.

And to genuinely love someone, it's not enough to strive for what I think is best for that person. To genuinely love someone, I must strive for what actually is best for that person.

What is best in God's eyes according to God's standard. I have to steer that person away from sinning, away from doing what is wrong according to God's standard. I want to rejoice as my neighbor understands the truth of the gospel message.

I want to make sure that everyone around me understands the truth more and more and understands it in a way that transforms them, that produces a metamorphosis inside of us, that changes us from the inside out.

[23 : 31] Love seeks what is best for others. And because of that, love requires discernment. If you don't have discernment, if you can't tell apart right from wrong and truth from error, then you can't properly love other people.

Your love will be a counterfeit love. It'll feel loving the way the monkey felt warm and fuzzy for loving the fish, but it won't be the real deal.

A counterfeit love, the opposite of the wise love that Paul is asking God to grant this church. A counterfeit love, it's a foolish love.

It doesn't know how to love others properly. It doesn't know what is excellent and what is best. A person who doesn't know God will be foolish in the way that he or she acts in love.

Sometimes their love will be helpful, sometimes it won't be. Sometimes it'll be harmful. If I know God, I will know how great, how indescribably powerful, how awesome the Lord God is and I will fear him.

[24 : 43] And I will fear to disappoint him the way a young child fears to disappoint his father. I will tremble before his immense power and that will put everything in the right perspective, in the proper perspective.

It's something that we've talked about quite a bit over the last year. This phrase from the wisdom literature of the Old Testament that you find in Psalm 111, for example, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

All those who practice it have a good understanding. If I don't know God's character, if I don't fear him, if he doesn't seem to me to be great and awesome and significant more so than anyone or anything else that I know, then I don't know God's law.

If I don't know God's character, then I don't know God's law, which teaches me how to properly love him and how to properly love other people. So what ends up happening is that I love God in foolish ways.

I love other people in foolish ways. Out of compassion for people, I give them advice that ends up being very foolish. I'm in a dating relationship right now.

[26 : 01] Let me tell you, 90% of dating advice that you get from people is them projecting their own experiences onto you. Boy, I've heard some really foolish things over the last few months.

People saying things I'm like, I'm pretty sure that runs completely counter to what Scripture teaches. or I might be talking to a friend who's being neglected by her husband and I might encourage her to divorce him in complete contradiction of what Jesus taught.

I might discover a family member has an eating disorder and instead of lovingly confronting that person about it and urging them to get help, I may just go along with it because I don't want to lose the relationship.

I might be in conversation with an atheist friend about what the Bible teaches about hell and this friend might tell me this is a cruel and sadistic teaching and so I might end up backing down from the truth because I want to appear more kind and loving but in so doing I water down the sheer holiness of a God who hates evil in all of its forms and appearances.

We need wise love that can tell right from wrong and truth from error. But God provides us gospel partners and God makes us gospel partners who overflow with wise love.

[27 : 22] Wise love knows what is best. Wise love is able to make decisions not only when the choice is black and white it's also able to make careful and confident decisions in the gray areas.

It knows how to get counsel and to seek help to sort through complicated situations to sort through difficult people which is pretty much all people. Wise love always seeks what is best for God what is best for other people and that's why Paul writes in chapter 4 verse 8 finally brothers whatever is true whatever is honorable whatever is just whatever is pure whatever is lovely whatever is commendable if there is any excellence if there is anything worthy of praise think about these things.

Get these things into your mind chew on them mull over them. Paul knows that when we meditate on the wisdom and goodness of God is found in scripture when we listen to the teaching of wise believers who have gone before us and have learned from scripture and have known God then God will teach us to love wisely too and give us a heritage that we in turn can pass on to the next generation.

that's how God makes us into good partners in the gospel we become gospel partners who overflow with a love that knows what is best. So God makes us gospel partners that overflow with wise love but back in Paul's prayer in chapter 1 he continues asking God for a certain sort of love he calls it in verse 10 a love that is pure and blameless for the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

Pure and blameless for the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. That's the kind of love that God wants for us.

[29 : 18] This isn't just a wise love that knows what is best it is a righteous love that purifies us for Christ. It is a righteous love that purifies us for Christ. It's righteous in the sense that it meets God's right expectations that he has for us.

The expectations that we are meant to fulfill in all of our relationships with him and with one another. Now in verse 10 Paul is praying that the Philippians may overflow with love so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Now there's a logical progression there. There's two words and so be pure and blameless. And those two words and so are very important because they tell us that this overflowing love has a purpose.

This overflowing love has a purpose. As this love overflows in us it demonstrates that we are the children of God. It shows that we are the children of God.

It shows that we are his family. That's why Jesus commanded us in Matthew chapter 5. Be sons. Be sons of your father who is in heaven. Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

[30 : 35] Be a chip off the old block. The purpose of this overflowing love is not to earn God's favor. You're not doing this to earn God's favor.

We don't score points with God by loving him and loving others more. And so then he accepts us because we've done enough good things and maybe that outweighs the bad things we've done.

That's not it at all. We've already been accepted because Jesus Christ has perfectly loved God and he has perfectly loved other people. And his goodness, his righteousness is credited to us.

But we want to be like our father in heaven. This love, as we grow in this love, all these blemishes in our character begin to be cleared away.

And as other people look at us and as the angels in heaven look at us, they see that this shows that we are the real deal. That the Holy Spirit has really transformed you and me.

[31 : 44] That we really have been saved by the power of Christ. Because we have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, because we have been reconciled with him, we now prove that changed relationship by living a changed life.

Because genuine faith will always act. Genuine faith works. those who know real truth love.

I think it's helpful to think of it this way. Imagine that this past Christmas you bought a movie as a gift for a family member. Then imagine that you found out after you bought this movie for the family member that someone else had already bought the same movie for them first.

And this may or may not have happened to me. For the purposes of this illustration, let's say that the year is 1997 and you bought it from a local store in VHS or DVD format.

So we're going back to the dark ages, I know. But let's say you picked it up in the store and you bought this movie and now you realize that I can't give this as a gift anymore.

[33 : 07] So what do you do? You take the movie back to the store and you get your money back. But you bring your receipt with you. Why? Because that receipt proves that you bought the movie from that store.

Now the receipt, it does not change the fact of where you bought it. But it's simply the proof of where you bought it. It's the proof. That receipt wasn't what purchased your movie, but it's the proof that you bought it there.

In the same way, our overflowing love as gospel partners, it isn't the basis for our salvation. Your love did not purchase your salvation. It does not purchase your salvation.

It doesn't purchase eternal life with God. No, our overflowing love is the receipt. It's the proof of our salvation. It's the printed receipt, that outward evidence that we have been united with Jesus Christ so that his righteousness is accounted to us and our sin is accounted to him and dealt with on the cross.

Love is the proof. It purifies us in this way. In verse 10, it helps us approve what is excellent. It gives us a purified will.

[34 : 27] It gives us a purified wisdom. And this wisdom, it proves our acceptability before God. It proves that we are the real deal. In that way, righteous love purifies us for Christ.

And this love purifies us, how? By looking forward to the return of Christ. By looking forward to the return of Christ. We see in verse 10 that Paul is praying that the Philippians would be pure and blameless.

What for? For the day of Christ. For the day when Jesus Christ returns. They know what is best. They know what is excellent.

They're learning to live life in a way that pleases God. Their coffee cup, it's filling up, overflowing with love, more and more, spilling over because they're looking forward to the day when Jesus Christ returns.

The day when he returns to judge the earth and to set all things right. When God's kingdom comes and his will is done on earth as it already is in heaven.

[35 : 31] The reason they look forward to this day, it's given in chapter 3, verse 20. And Paul reminds the church there. Our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, from heaven, we await a savior.

The Lord Jesus Christ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. So it is that day.

It is the day when Jesus Christ returns. That's the day we're looking forward to. It will be the dividing line between this present age and the age that is to come.

And so as believers, we're in a position of tension. We're caught between these two ages, between the present age and the age to come. And in his book, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, Don Carson writes this.

Our proper citizenship is in heaven. Positionally, we have already been seated with Christ in the heavenlies. But until the consummation, that means until, until Christ's return and all things are brought to their final conclusion, until the consummation, we live out our lives down here, a heavenly missionary outpost in a lost, dying, and decaying world.

[36 : 53] We are to see ourselves as an outpost of a new heaven and a new earth in an old world that stands under the judgment of God. That's you.

You're an outpost of a kingdom that is to come. So we live in light of that day and we have great expectations for that day. We long for the day when we will be made perfect in body and spirit, when we will be raised from the dead, when we will be transformed by the power of Jesus Christ.

There's that expression, you know, someone who is so heavenly minded, they have no earthly good. The reality is about the exact opposite of that. When you have your mind set on eternity like that, it gives you a wise perspective and you become incredibly good and useful on earth.

You know what's a priority and what isn't a priority. you no longer think of the temporary pastimes of this world and activities of this world as all that's important.

Whether you ever get your dream job or you get your financial security or, you know, that perfect family or that perfect time on Strava, it's just not a big deal like it used to be. You long for better things.

[38 : 11] You long for the advance of the gospel of Jesus Christ and you ache for his return. To truly love God and truly love others, you and I must look forward to the return of Christ.

And so this righteous love, it not only purifies us by looking forward to the return of Christ, but it purifies us by making us fruitful through the power of Christ. By making us fruitful through the power of Christ.

Paul is pleading with God in verse 11 that the Philippian church may be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

So a pure and blameless life is a life that produces the fruit of good works. Righteous love will produce fruit for Jesus Christ. It's inevitable.

Orange trees produce, oranges, apple trees produce, donut trees produce, donuts. And righteous love produces the fruit of the Spirit.

[39 : 16] Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. In this fruitful life, it cannot be produced by gritting your teeth and doing it out of your own efforts and hard work.

You can't walk out the front door and go, all right, here we go, world, and then just run out and pour yourself out in fruitful love with a joyful attitude, making peace with others, being patient and kind with them, keeping your sinful passions in check.

You can't do that every day. Believe me, I've tried. Maybe not exactly like that. But you need the power of Christ.

You need the power of Christ. That's why Jesus told his disciples in John chapter 15, I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.

For apart from me, you can do nothing. Study the words of Scripture and through them, come to know and love our God.

[40 : 21] Pray to him, ask him to grant Squamish Baptist Church a righteous love that bears fruit. That bears fruit. Don't settle.

Don't settle for a counterfeit love or a defective love. The world around us, it offers various unrighteous counterfeits of genuine love. It approves of sexual relationships outside of marriage, outside of that one flesh relationship between a man and a woman, the one flesh relationship that Jesus himself affirmed as what genuinely is marriage.

The world calls that love, but it isn't love because it isn't righteous. The world also encourages us to form ourselves into factions, look down on others because their politics or their beliefs are different or because they come from a different culture or from another family or another generation or another church.

Those millennials. Remember that Jesus said, if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? What more are you doing than others?

Right? Just love strives for the good of everyone, not just those people that we get along with, not just those people who are part of your tribe or who think the way you think. Don't settle for that counterfeit.

- [41 : 43] Even the tax collectors can do that, Jesus said. The traitors, the collaborators, they do that. Righteous love looks past this world, looks past its temporary political alliances, past its temporary entertainment, past its temporary joys.

Righteous love has eternity in mind and this love is found in the church. God has granted us gospel partners that overflow with righteous love that purifies us for Christ.

It purifies us for Christ. And this love is not just a wise love, it's not just a righteous love. This love is a humble love that glorifies God. It is a humble love that glorifies God.

Verse 11, Paul reaches that final crescendo of his prayer. So let me read the whole thing and I'm going to emphasize at the very end the whole purpose for which Paul is praying.

It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

- [42 : 57] To the glory and praise of God. In other words, this prayer for gospel partners who love God, who love one another, it's motivated by this. Paul wants this love to overflow.

Why? So that God will be praised. So God will be recognized and honored as glorious. As the one being in existence who is worth our entire allegiance, our entire devotion, the one who is beautiful.

Paul wants all the glory to go not to himself. He just wants to disappear. He wants all the glory not to go to the church in Philippi. He wants all the glory to go to God.

The humble love of gospel partners, it glorifies God by demonstrating his wisdom. As we develop wisdom through the teaching of his word, the teaching of his message, we learn how to love him.

We learn how to love one another properly. And so we demonstrate that God's reign, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, it is just, it is good.

- [44 : 11] He is the one who brings order to the universe. His ways are what's best for us. He is the one who is worthy to be king. He knows what is good and evil, what is right and wrong, what is true and what's false.

The humble love of gospel partners glorifies God by demonstrating his righteousness. It demonstrates his righteousness. As we're purified in our attitudes and our thoughts and our words and our actions, we demonstrate through that purity that God himself is just and good, that God is the one true judge, that God is completely holy and right in all his judgments.

His law is what's best for us. He is the one who is worthy to be king. He is the one who is worthy of God. This humble love that glorifies God, there's a counterfeit to that too.

It's a proud love. It's a proud love that, to be frank, I see in myself. It's a love that wants to call attention and glorify myself or glorify my church or glorify my family.

It's a proud love that wants to demonstrate my wisdom, to demonstrate my purity. You see this counterfeit love and the attitudes of some people. I like to call them the doctrine police.

- [45 : 32] They're theological watchdogs, obsessed over finding the theological errors of others. They call it discernment. They imagine that it is love. It is not discernment.

It is not love. It's pride. It's arrogance. It's an attempt to prove their superior wisdom. This counterfeit love, you can also see it in people who are moralists.

Now, a moralist is someone who develops his or her own standards for right and wrong. You've got your own standards for right and wrong. Moralists take many form. The author, Jerry Bridges, talks about sad moralists who don't live up to their own standards.

But then there's also happy moralists. Someone who sets the bar low. They meet their own standards, right? You know, step over that bar really easily.

Wow, I'm a good and moral person, a decent human being. I'm content with my own goodness, with my ability to love God and other people. Look at all the other bad people who don't meet that standard I've set.

[46 : 34] They aren't as good and loving as I am. Someone like this thinks that they can love, but they cannot. There is no love here, only pride and arrogance.

And so whether you're a doctor and a policeman or whether you're a happy moralist, there are people who have created an inferior counterfeit of love. They've done this in an unconscious attempt to dethrone God to take his place to the glory and praise of themselves.

But the humble love of gospel partners, it glorifies God. We love God and we love one another in order to demonstrate the supremacy of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Our love is a reflection of his love and it is good and it is beautiful. And I want to whet your appetite for this love. I'll admit, I don't see it in my own life very often.

Only little glimpses here and there. Because I'm inclined to settle for that mostly full coffee cup. I'm inclined to just settle for being a decent person. It's much easier.

[47 : 44] much easier than being a person who overflows with love. But I'm hungry and I'm thirsting for that sort of love and I want the same for you.

I wish I could... ..