

I Love The Lord

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[0 : 01] Let's turn again to Psalm 116 in the book of Psalms, Psalm 116, and reading at the beginning of the psalm.

I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.

I love the Lord. I'm sure this is one of the great declarations in the Bible. It's a declaration that is echoed over and over and over again.

Every person in here today who is a believer will make exactly the same statement. And today, without any dubiety, without having to reason it out, without having to work out and say, well, do I or don't I?

Very clearly, very definitely, you will say, I love the Lord. And it is something that you will say every day. I love the Lord.

[1 : 13] Now, the psalmist here, in this particular instance, while he loves the Lord, he goes on to tell us that that love in his thanksgiving is because the Lord has heard his voice.

I love the Lord because he has heard my voice. And when the Lord hears, it is with the idea of answering his cry. I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my plea for mercy.

Now, as we read on in the psalm, the psalmist was going through terrible difficulties, real fears, real distress. He felt the pains of hell had taken hold on him and he had been in terrible turmoil, terrible distress.

But the Lord had heard him. And he begins by making this great declaration, I love the Lord because he has heard my voice.

And it is a wonderful thing to know that the Lord hears us. If we are in trouble, if we are in difficulties, it is wonderful to have somebody that you can go to and you can pour out your heart.

[2 : 17] I am sure it is one of the most frustrating things and one of the most disappointing things. If you are in agony of heart and you are trying to tell somebody something of how you feel and they are not listening, you can see that not only they are not listening, but they don't really care.

And that can really hurt. But it is wonderful to know that when you go to the Lord and if you are in distress and if you are in agony of heart, that he has an ear that is open to your cry.

The Lord hears. And it is a wonderful thing to have this privilege and this opportunity. And so we find the psalmist saying, I love the Lord because he has heard my voice.

But I want us just to think of that opening statement, one which characterizes God's people right throughout the ages, that I love the Lord.

And I would go as far as to say you cannot be a Christian without making that statement. It is really at the very heart of Christianity. There might be many things in the Bible you don't understand.

[3 : 29] Let us be quite clear on that. You can be a Christian and find that there are things you don't understand. You can be a Christian and discover that there are doctrines that you are not altogether clear on.

But on this you are absolutely clear that you love the Lord. That is not something that is open to debate. It is not something that you are unclear about.

It is an absolute certainty. And I would go as far as to say that you cannot be a believer and say, I don't love the Lord.

Every believer will say, I love the Lord. It is as clear as that. A person may have many problems in life, many difficulties.

Some, like Lot, may fall into terrible sin, but they still love the Lord. Some people, like Peter, may lose their courage terribly, but they still love the Lord.

[4 : 30] And if a person has a trust and a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that person will love the Lord.

Now, of course, we must have faith in Christ in order to be a Christian. And as we know, it is by grace that we are saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast.

But we have also got to remember that the faith that we have is a faith that works by love. And in order to love, we must first be loved.

This is the amazing thing. Our love to God is a love that is born of himself. And we've got to remember that.

It's not something that a person can naturally work up in his heart and her heart. When a person is born again, it is they are born from above.

[5 : 29] And when they are born from above, they are born by love. Because God so loved the world that he gave us only begotten Son. And it is because of what Jesus has done and the work of Jesus applied to the heart by the Spirit that this love is born within a person's heart.

And so we've got to remember that while we do say we need to have faith in Jesus Christ, we've got to remember that that faith works by love.

And love is the great evidence that we are truly Christians. You remember the Apostle Peter. When Peter had fallen, remember how Peter denied the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Peter really thought that through his denial that he had made such a mess of things that it was over.

And he talks about going back fishing because Peter felt that really his life had just collapsed and fallen apart. Remember how Peter was met by Jesus on the shores of Galilee?

[6 : 41] And Jesus was going to restore Peter and bring him back to greater usefulness and greater service than ever before. And how did Jesus go about that?

Well, Jesus was going to get a confession from Peter. What was that confession? Did Jesus begin questioning Peter and say, Right, Peter, before I restore you, before you're going to go back out and work for me, I want a confession from you that you're really, really sorry that you denied me publicly in front of all these people.

Is that what Jesus asks? No. Does Jesus say to Peter, Have you got faith, Peter? No. He doesn't even ask that. He doesn't say to Peter, Are you really soundly converted or not?

No. He just asks the one question over and over and over again. Peter, do you love me? That was it.

Do you love me? Because love encapsulates everything. And if the response was one where Peter was able to affirm his love and state his love, then that was going to involve and show that all the other things were there as well.

[8 : 09] That the sorrow would be there. There's always, if we love the Lord, there is always going to be sorrow for our sin. And as we said, this love is a love that works and governs everything within our Christian life.

And we love him because he has loved us. So, when we love him, let us think of some of the reasons why we love him. We love him, of course, because of what he has done for us.

Jesus, now again, historically we know these truths, but they are more than facts of history. They are facts of history that are personal for us.

For you and for me today, the great fact of history that Jesus Christ came into this world is really quite awesome, isn't it? Jesus Christ came into this world like nobody else came into this world.

Jesus Christ came into this world on a mission. He came straight from heaven to earth. For you and for me and for hundreds and thousands and millions of people.

[9 : 23] Isn't that amazing? Let us think of the personal nature of Christ's mission. That is something we often say that we ought to think about Scripture and meditate upon Scripture.

Well, that is an area that we ought to meditate upon. The personal nature of Christ's mission. This is what he did for you. You see, it's very easy to think about it in abstract terms and to think about it in great general terms.

But it's important for us to think of it in personal terms. He tasted death for every man. See how unique and personal it is? And we've got to think upon these things.

Dwell upon these things. Meditate upon these things. And when we do, we cannot but respond by saying, I love the Lord because.

Because of what he did for me. Because of his life. Because of his death. Because of his rising again. All these things. I love the Lord because of what he is doing for me.

[10:35] Even today he is interceding on your behalf. He makes continual intercession. That's what the Bible tells us. He ever lives to make intercession for us.

He is supplying all our needs. He is there as the great supplier. The great protector. The great provider.

The great guide of our life. The shepherd of the sheep. When you think of all the things. That this very day. This very hour. That Jesus Christ.

Is doing for you. It's quite amazing. It's little wonder that you will have to say. I love the Lord. And of course.

This love. That we have for the Lord. Is a great motivation. In working for him. You see. There are people who can do things. Just out of duty. People can do things to.

[11:37] Quieten their conscience. We can do lots of things. For lots of different reasons. But if we do things. Out of our love. For the Lord. There will be a reality.

And a power. And a motivation. And an effect in them. That won't be. In any other work. And those who are most used.

By the Lord. In his service. In whatever service it is. Are those. Who are motivated. By this great love. Who are driven.

By the Lord. Out of an absolute love. For him. And a commitment. In service. For his name. His honor. And his glory. And so.

This is what we. Find that love. Does. Love has a. Love has a. Passion. For people's souls. Love has a. Has a concern.

[12:33] That won't give up. That's what love does. That's why people will pray. And pray. And pray. And continue to pray. And continue to do. And continue to work.

Even when everything appears to be going against. Because out of a heart. Of love. Love. And love. For Christ. Is a great.

Unify. It's a great. Uniting together. Now we know that the Christian church. In its. Scope. In its breadth. Is.

A very. Very wide. Church. And there are. I suppose. Might even be hundreds. I don't know. Denominations. People from different backgrounds.

Different cultures. People who. Who look at things. In different ways. People who worship. In very different ways. And yet. In. Christ.

[13:29] There is. A wonderful. Unifying. A wonderful. Binding. And bonding. There is an identification. With other believers. Even although.

They may have a different. Style of worship. Even although. They may come from. A totally different. Background. And different culture. There is still. This identification. Here is.

A brother. Here is. A sister. In Christ. And it is love. It is love. That works. That within our heart. This sense of love. This sense of oneness. This sense of togetherness.

So I want us just to think. Just for a moment. Here. About this. Love. For Christ. Because some people. May be saying to themselves. Well. I hear you. Talking about this.

Love for Christ. How do I know. If I. Love the Lord. Or not. Well. If we could. Think about it. In natural ways.

[14:28] And try and apply it. In spiritual terms. It may help us. To understand a little. When we. Love. Someone. And I am talking about. In natural ways.

If we love someone. Naturally. We will often. Think. About that person. It's not true. You love your family.

You will. Often. Think about them. You won't find yourself. Going and saying. Oh. Well. Three weeks. Three weeks. Since I thought about. This person.

Of my family. It's three weeks. Since I thought about. My husband. My wife. My son. My daughter. My father. My mother. That doesn't happen. Three weeks. Since I thought about.

My best friend. Doesn't happen. When we love somebody. We think about that person. Frequently. And that is true.

[15:23] Spiritually. If we love the Lord. We will find. That it is. Something. He is someone. That we are often. Thinking about. That the Lord.

His ways. His passion. That so much. That is revealed to us. In scripture. Even these. The very sentiments. That the psalmist. Is expressing.

I love the Lord. Because my voice. And prayers. He did hear. All that. It is so often. Part and partial. Of our life. We are so often. Thinking. About the Lord.

Our vision of him. May be dimmed. Our understanding. Of him. May at times. Be darkened. There are times. That we may say. I wish I could see. More of him.

But the fact is. We still think about him. And we do so. Because we love him. Again. If we love someone. We want to talk. To that person.

[16:18] Isn't that true? If you love somebody. You want to be. Talking to that person. And. If you love somebody. You are not looking for. Struggling to try.

And find something to say. Conversation is spontaneous. It is natural. Because you love that person. And similarly. It. We will find that.

With the Lord. That if we love the Lord. He is somebody. That we will be going to. You. Because we want to talk to him. That's natural.

If you are away. If you are away. From your loved ones. You want to phone them. You want to text them. And if you can't do that. You would want to write them. That's one of the great things.

About communication today. How many areas. How diverse it is. The way that we can communicate. But when we are away. That's what we do. We communicate. Because we love.

[17:14] And so it is true spiritually. We are always wanting to communicate. With the Lord. Because we love him. We want to hear what he says. That's one of the reasons.

We have come together today. Isn't it? We have come to worship the Lord. But we have come also to hear. What God the Lord will speak. We want to read his word together. We want to sing his word together.

We want to meditate upon. What his word is saying. And we want to hear the Lord. So we gather. The first day of the week. It's a wonderful. Wonderful way to begin the week.

Speaking to the Lord. Publicly speaking to the Lord. In a public gathering like this. And hearing. What the Lord will say to us. Again.

Not only do you talk to those. That you love. You want to talk about them. Isn't that true? You love to talk.

[18:11] About those. That you love. It's. These things. The things that I'm saying. Are natural. But they are also. To be applied. Spiritually.

And if you love the Lord. You want to talk about him. And you take opportunities. To tell other people. About the Lord. Not in a way. Love doesn't.

Grab someone. And ram something. Down the throat. Lord. But when opportunities open. When doors are opened. When the opportunity presents itself. You want to talk about those that you love. And so. When the opportunity arises. You want to tell people. About the Lord Jesus. And we all. Get opportunities. You know. People say.

Oh. I never get an opportunity. You do. If you're here today. As a believer. The Lord. Opens doors. The problem is. That often. We don't recognize.

[19:06] The opportunities. Or we don't take. The opportunities. But the Lord. Is always. Providing. Opportunities. For us. And. When we pray. That the Lord.

Will provide opportunities. Let us also. Pray. That the Lord. Will. Give us. The discernment. To see. These as opportunities. And to use. These opportunities.

For his glory. Again. When. You. Love somebody. You want to be. With that person. You don't just want to talk about them.

You don't want to just. To think about them. You want. To be. With them. You miss them. When they're away. And. You long. For the time. When you will be with them.

And that is true as well. We long. For the Lord's presence. Again. So. Our life here. And that.

[19:59] This is sometimes. What makes a Christian faith. So difficult. Sometimes. So difficult. For the believing Christian. And sometimes. So difficult. For the world.

Who may be interested. In being a Christian. Because it's by faith. We live in a very visual age. We live in an age. Where people. Want to see.

And people want to hear. And people want to touch. It's an age that. That isn't just satisfied. With. With faith. They want to see. And that's partly. What makes it so difficult.

In trying to convey to people. The reality of the Christian faith. But it's. The difficulty. The reality. Even of the believer. Because if you're here today.

As a believer. You want. Isn't it true? You want. To have an awareness. Of Christ's presence. With you. You want that.

[20 : 59] You want that. And you say. Oh Lord. Please. Give me a greater. A greater. Insight. Give me a greater. Awareness. Open my eyes.

Lord. That I might see you better. Now you see. This. Why are you praying like that? It's because of the love. That you have in your heart.

For the Lord. A person who doesn't have that love. Won't be praying like that. But it's because of your love. For the Lord. And your desire. To see more of them. That you pray that way.

You might only have the tiniest. You might have no glimpse at all. You're just clinging on. By bare faith. That's it.

And you're saying to yourself. Oh. I'm looking around. I'm seeing all these other Christians. And I'm sure today. They've got a great sight of the Lord. Maybe they're not. Maybe they're even in greater darkness.

[21 : 56] Than you are. We've said it so often. Before. And we need to. Say it over and over again. The words of Jesus. To Thomas. Blessed. Remember what he says. Blessed are those.

Whom having not seen. Yet believe. But your desire. To see the Lord. And to see more of him. Is a desire.

That comes from love. And it is a desire. That will be fulfilled. Eternally. Because it won't be very long. Till you leave this world. And you will be in his presence.

And there will be nothing. Throughout an endless eternity. That will hinder. Your sight. There will come a day. When you will see him. As he is. Isn't that a wonderful thought.

And that is part of what you're longing for. That is part of the great. Prospect. That the Christian. Has. In life. And again.

[22 : 54] Although it's not true. Always. Naturally. It is often. True. That. A person. If you love somebody. You will often find that.

Their circle of friends. Begins to become. Your circle of friends. Doesn't always happen. Maybe not every one of. Their friends. Becomes your friends.

Your friend. But. There is often. A. A widening of the circle. And that is true. Again. Spiritually. Because. We.

Love. Christ's. Friends. We love them. Jesus said. The greatest. Witness. In this world. Is love. I want us to remember that. That is the greatest witness. In this world. Our love. For one another. And that is why the devil. Wants to divide.

[23 : 49] The Christian church. And not just. Divide them. In. Ways. Where. A friendship. Remains. But divide them. In such a way.

Where there will be hostility. And where there will be. Divisions. That hurt. Because the devil knows. That there is nothing. That will. Hamper.

Christian growth. Christian. Outreach. As it were. Like that. Because Jesus said. The importance. Of our love. For one another.

And he says. By this. All men. Will know. That you are my disciples. It's not amazing. Everybody. The whole community.

Will know. You are a disciple. Of mine. If you love. The brethren. If you love. One another. Another. And that is why.

[24 : 45] Satan is always at work. Because he knows. Satan is saying. Let me hit there. Let me hit there. I've got to hit there. This will hinder the work.

Like little else. This will hinder the witness. Like little else. And we need to pray. That love.

Will always be in our heart. And again. Finally. We would say. If we love someone.

We love to see. What they've written. If somebody writes. If somebody emails you. If somebody texts you. If somebody writes to you. And you love them. You want to read it. And so it is.

With the word of God. It is something. That we want to read. It's not a good sign. If we never open the Bible. This is God's love letter to us. Yes.

[25 : 41] There are things of judgment. There are things. That are difficult. There are things. That have set out. The issues of life and death. But it is. All come to us. From God's heart of love.

The God who sent his son. Into this world. Is the God who has revealed himself. To us. In his word. Out of love. And if we love the Lord.

We want to read. What he's written to us. My dear friend. If you're here today. And you're listening to this. And you're saying. Well you know. I can't identify with any of that.

Then I would say to you. You're in a very precarious place. A. I thank the Lord. You're here. And. If we would say.

Say it. Carefully. I believe. The Lord. Also. Is pleased. That you are here. Because it's a wonderful thing.

[26 : 43] To come. To God's house. To come. Under the word. To come. Where God's people meet. And there's a blessing. In it. And I would pray.

That even if you do not know. The Lord Jesus Christ. As your own savior. That even today. It might be the beginning. Of being drawn. And realize.

That this is really. What life is about. That without the Lord. There is an emptiness. And let me assure you. That without the Lord. There will be an eternal emptiness.

Which this world. Will never indicate to you. How awful that will be. So I would urge you today. While you hear his voice. That you will seek him.

And say. Lord. Visit me. With that love. Love. So that I. May come to know. What it is. To truly. Love the Lord. Let us pray.

[27 : 43] Oh Lord. Our God. We pray. That today. We may hear. The voice of God. That our souls. May live. We pray. Lord. That there might be.

A desire. Within our heart. To follow the Lord. With all our heart. With all our soul. With all our mind. With all our strength. And we pray. Lord. To bless us.

And to guide us. As we go through life. Be our shield. And our shelter. Be our light. And our lamp. Guide us. Then. Throughout this week. And indeed.

Throughout all the days. Of our life. Take us home safely. And pardon our sin. In Jesus name. We ask it all. Amen. Amen.