

Experiencing God's Love, Part 2

Ephesians 3:14-21

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, July 7th 2024

I. The character of God's love (last week)

Today we are going to finish off the mini-series on the practical application of God's attributes. And as you can tell we are taking two Sundays on God's attribute of love. I actually feel bad that I couldn't fit everything into one sermon last week because last week's sermon was really the *foundation* for what we will be looking at today. So if you weren't here, you will be missing out on a lot. Last week we looked at fourteen aspects of God's love and how each of those aspects, when properly understood and applied, hugely strengthen our experience of God's presence in our lives.

Though we delved deep into the doctrine of God's love, we also applied that doctrine in fourteen different ways. So don't see Roman numeral I as the theoretical and points II and III as the practical. They both deal with doctrine and they both deal with how that is practically lived out. But point I shows the *character* of God's love and its comfort and challenges. It was really the heart of the sermon. We are now going to look at some of the results of experiencing God's love.

II. The Practical Results Of Experiencing God's Love

A. His love casts out fear and gives security (1 John 4:18). Five ways in which love and fear are incompatible.

And the first result I want to look at is the effect it has upon our fears. I was a very fearful person until I began experiencing God's love powerfully shed abroad in my heart (as Paul words it). And that love of God for me and the growth of my love for God completely cast out fear.

And by the way, even human love can do this on a certain level. I once watched a video on the worlds most dangerous creatures. One of the incidents was a reenacted attack of a Grizzly bear on a couple. And they said in the video that you're not supposed to fight back when attacked by grizzlies because that makes the grizzly bear even more vicious. Instead you are supposed to play dead by curling up in a ball and lying still on the ground, even if they hit you or bite you. And that's what the couple did, but it didn't work. And the grizzly was mauling the man and dragging him off into the woods (even though the man was *trying* to play dead). And when his wife saw what was happening, she charged the grizzly and hit him on the nose over and over again with her camera, and succeeded in chasing him off. She later said it was an irrational thing to do, but her love for her husband made her lose all fear and be concerned for one thing - her husband's safety.

Now if that is true in the realm of *human* love, how much more so in the realm of the *supernatural* love that God pours out in our hearts? Look at 1 John 4:17. This is one of several Scriptures that speak of perfect love casting out fear. I think I will back up a little bit and read the context, starting at 1 John 4:12.

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. [God's presence abiding in us is key to a perfected or mature love. And notice this is not just a *belief* in God's love. Like we saw last week, it is also the *presence* of God's love within us. And I can't repeat what I said last week. We saw last week that both the doctrine and the experience are important. Look at verse 13:] By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. [Again, His presence is key to entering into this *experiential* knowledge that we talked about last week. Doctrine and experience are not divided. So he continues in verse 14] And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. [So the context of this love is God's presence in our lives and *experiencing* His love. Look at verses 17-18] Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear; because fear has torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Supernatural agape love and fear are incompatible - the love drives out the fear. Why? Well, let me suggest five reasons why this may be true:

1. We saw last week that agape love is self-giving whereas fear is self-protecting. They are complete opposites. You can think on a lower plane of how that woman's preoccupation with saving her husband removed fear because she was so focused on self-giving rather than self-protecting. God's agape love can produce that to a *much* higher degree in our lives, where God's love is felt so strongly that we pray for those who persecute us, we bless those who curse, we forgive those who have killed our loved ones, we minister to those very people who have hurt us. Richard Wurmbrand tells about how the heavy fear of torture was washed away when God's presence came upon him and produced a supernatural love for God and even for his enemies.
2. A second way in which they are incompatible is that love moves us *towards* others even when there is pain, whereas fear tends to make us avoid those who give us pain or even the potential of pain.
3. Third, love asks, "What can I do for my enemy?" whereas fear asks, "What will my enemy do to me?" Love produces an entirely different *focus*.
4. Fourth, love thinks no evil (1 Cor 13) whereas fear thinks of and focuses on the evil. Fear concentrates on everything that could go wrong rather than focusing on the promises of God.

5. Fifth, love is so focused on *today's* tasks and responsibilities that it has little time to worry about tomorrow. In contrast, fear focuses on *tomorrow* so much that it fails to undertake responsibilities today.

And so one of the reasons I urge you to seek the love that I described in great detail last week is that it can have the powerful affect of removing fear from our hearts. This is not just theory. In fact, some of the stories I shared last week illustrate this in such a powerful way. But *I* have experienced this too. An ever-increasing love for God and for others has hugely helped me to get rid of fear.

B. His love draws our hearts out to Him (1 John 4:8,19)

The second result of tangibly experiencing God's supernatural love is that the more we experience it, the more our hearts are drawn out to Him. If you have ever longed to enter into a closer walk with God, then putting on last week's fourteen characteristics of love is a key. 1 John 4:8 says, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." To know God is automatically to grow in love and vice versa. You can't help but grow in love to the degree that you have experienced God's presence and grace. The Puritan writer, Thomas Manton said this:

"We love him because he first loved us. Love is like an echo, it returneth what it receiveth: there is no echo till the sound is heard. Our love to God is a reflex, a reverberation, or a casting back of God's beam and flame upon himself. The cold wall sendeth back no reflex of heat till the sun shines upon it, and warms it first; so neither do we love God till our soul is first filled with a sense of his love."¹

He was saying that if you want to grow in love, you must first become familiar with God's love for you. And we have seen in this mini-series that that can't happen without practicing the presence.

C. Experiencing God's love washes away hate or apathy toward others and makes us love others sacrificially (1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-12; Rom. 5:3-5; Matt. 5:38-48)

The third reason why I want you to pursue what we looked at last week is that experiencing God's love washes away hate, apathy, and bitterness that we might feel toward others. I should have put bitterness into your outline because that's what I am going to focus on. Bitterness always harms us. On Monday Gary sent out a wonderful RW360 article titled *The Stupidity of Bitterness*. He likened it to being stabbed by someone in the arm, then taking that knife out of our arm and continuing to stab ourselves with it. You wouldn't ever do that, right? Yet with bitterness we do. It said,

¹ As quoted by Spurgeon in C. H. Spurgeon, *Flowers from a Puritan's Garden, Distilled and Dispensed* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), 120.

All too often, rather than turning to God for grace to respond to the wrong with wisdom and forgiveness, we choose to indulge bitterness. We keep thinking about that wrong. We play it like a video in our mind over and over. We stab ourselves with the sharp memory of the incident, feeling the pain again and again.²

Bitterness is a vile weed which Hebrews says we must pluck up lest many become defiled by it. If you hang around a bitter person too long, his or her bitterness can begin to rub off on you. In your social relationships and in your children's social relationships you need to keep that in mind. Hebrews says that one person's bitterness unchecked can lead to more and more people being defiled.

But how do we uproot bitterness and throw it away? That seems impossible to some people. Well, the Sermon on the Mount calls us to appropriate God's conquering love. It calls us to not be overcome by evil but to overcome evil with good. That is not something that comes from the natural man. Christ said,

...if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? [He says, "You're no different than unbelievers if you only love those who are lovable. Where's the evidence of grace when you never exhibit love for those who have hurt you? It goes on:] And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

Christ's point was that our lives should show the supernatural presence of God, who reproduces His communicable attributes within us - love being one of those communicable attributes. And Christ's gauge of whether God's love resides within us is if we can love those who spitefully use us and persecute us, and do all manner of evil against us.

For many Christians, the words that Christ gives in the Sermon on the Mount are crazy because they have not fully experienced God's love shed abroad in their hearts. They shake their heads and say, "Nah, I'm skeptical of that." Christ said, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad." Is that how you respond when people say all kinds of false things about you? Phil Kayser doesn't. Not the *natural* Phil anyway. But I *have* experienced God's supernatural love enabling me to do *exactly that* through a power that is not my own, and *you* can as well. There is no need to be controlled by bitterness, anger, resentment, frustration, inward seething. 1 John says agape love and hate are incompatible in the same heart. If we open ourselves to God's gift of love (and that's a hard thing - because it requires us to relinquish bitterness and humans tend to want to nurse that bitterness; they feel like they have a right to bitterness; but if we open ourselves to God's gift of love), we will perceptibly find the bitterness being washed away.

This has been one of the things that has frustrated persecutors to no end. They try to make Christians hate like they hate, and sometimes succeed. But when they see the supernatural love of the very ones they are torturing, it is sometimes more than they can take. And I read

² <https://rw360.org/2024/06/30/stupidity-of-bitterness-2/>

you some testimonies of that last week. Here's another testimony. A former communist told of how he (as a secret service agent who had been involved in the torture of a Christian) witnessed that Christian man weirdly loving them despite being tortured. It initially frustrated him because he knew he wasn't getting through to the Christian. So as a final act of spite, he threatened to kill the man in front of his wife to cause her pain and hopefully to make him break through that threat. He thought maybe his love for his wife would make him cave in. He later recorded the man's words to his wife - words which ended up converting the secret service agent. The husband told his wife.

"You must know that I die loving those who kill me. They don't know what they do and my last request of you is to love them, too. Don't have bitterness in your heart because they kill your beloved one. We will meet in heaven."³

This makes no sense if you have not experienced the supernatural love that we looked at last week. It makes no sense to the natural man, but it makes perfect sense to those of us who have experienced God's supernatural love shed abroad in our hearts. Richard Wurmbrand said in one of his books,

"Several Christians have asked me how we could resist brainwashing. There is only one method of resistance to brainwashing. This is 'heartwashing.' If the heart is cleansed by the love of Jesus Christ, and if the heart loves Him, you can resist all tortures.... God will judge us not according to how much we endured, but how much we could love. I am a witness for the Christians in communist prisons that they could love. They could love God and men."

If they could do that in prisons, you can certainly do it with the lesser persecutions that you face.

D. God's love causes us to want to know His will (Phil. 1:9; 1 Cor. 13:6)

Point D says that God's love causes us to *want to know God's will*. What do I mean by that? Well, I have known Christians who don't want to find out what the Bible says about a particular issue because they are afraid that God will ask them to do something that is difficult to do or that they don't like. They are not open to knowing the truth. 1 Corinthians 13 says, "love rejoices in the truth." If you don't want to find out about God's law, it is evidence that your love is either counterfeit or weak. And you need to examine your heart on this very point. I don't need to name the issues. You can name the issue that you have avoided studying because you might be embarrassed or inconvenienced and that issue reveals an immature love. Philippians 1:9 says, "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment." Where love abounds, knowledge and discernment abounds because love rejoices in the truth. Love will tell the Lord, "I am willing to do whatever you call me to do, even before I know what that is. So open the Scriptures to me and give me truth. I want the truth because I love You." Some of you need

³ Michael G. Moriarty, *The Perfect 10: The Blessings of Following God's Commandments in a Post Modern World*, pp. 141-142

to examine your heart. If I brought up the issue to you, you would just argue with me, but I want you to wrestle with that issue with God alone.

E. God's love causes us to want to do His will (1 John 2:5; 3:18; 5:3; Gal. 5:13; 2 Cor. 8:7; John 14:15; 15:10; Matt. 22:37-40; 1 Cor. 13:4-8)

But God's love goes beyond merely wanting to *know* about God's will. It desires to *do* God's will. An old Latin Proverb says that love cannot be commanded. But that is blatantly false. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." To those who have tasted of God's love, receiving commands from God is not offensive in the least. We know His commands are for our good and so we delight in them. Like David we should all be able to say, "my soul longs after your commandments." Have you experienced that longing? or do you need to cry out to God to give you His supernatural love that we looked at last week? 1 John 5:3 says, "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." If you love God, none of His commandments are burdensome. Christ said "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

You see, that's what distinguishes human love from agape love. Human love is often offended by commands. Human love bristles at commands. Agape love delights in them. And holiness just increases the experience of love. Christ said, "If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." (John 15:10) If your attitude towards God's law is a smorgasboard approach where you pick and choose what you want, then you may have the *phileo* love for the Lord, but you do not have that God-given *agape* love, and you need it. Each of these points is motivating you to take seriously last week's sermon.

F. God's love gives us a deep burden for the lost (Ezek. 9:4; Luke 19:41; Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1)

I think one of the verses that convicted me of my need to cry out to God for His supernatural *agape* love was Romans 9:1-3. Please turn there. Like Moses of old, God's love gave Paul such a burden for the lost that he actually desired to be cut off from God and sent to hell if it could mean the salvation of the unsaved. No one (I guarantee you, no one) has that kind of love in themselves. It is God-given. And that is why Paul remonstrates that he really is telling the truth and is not exaggerating. What he says seems false, because apart from grace we are self-seeking - we don't say such things. Look at Romans 9:1-3:

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Agape love is so self-erasing and self-giving that it produced that kind of compassion in Paul, as it did in Christ and in Moses. I don't pretend to be anywhere near having that deep of a love for my enemies. The Lord has given me a great measure of that love, but I don't have anywhere near Paul's measure of love for his enemies But if you have difficulty being

burdened for the lost, God's love is a solution. Are you beginning to see that a mere doctrine does not produce these results? The beautiful doctrine of God's love that we looked at last week points to an *experiential reality* that can be communicated to our hearts and that gives us a totally new perspective and a totally new burden.

G. Experiencing God's love is the highest and strongest motivation to service (2 Cor. 5:14; see 1 John 5:3-4; Gal. 5:13; 2 Cor. 8:7)

Point G. Experiencing God's love is the highest and strongest motivation to service. Let me tell you a story. There were a bunch of people who had applied to the mission board that had been established by Hudson Taylor, and the candidates were telling their motives for service on the mission field. Some spoke of burden for the lost; others of the need, others of a sense of duty, others wanting to have consciences that were void of men's blood. And after hearing the different motives, Hudson Taylor said,

"All of your motives are good, but I fear they will fail you in times of severe testing and tribulation - especially if you are confronted with the possibility of having to face death for your testimony. The only motive that will enable you to remain true is stated in 2 Corinthians 5:14. ["For the love of Christ compels us."] Christ's love constraining you will keep you faithful in every situation."

And I will admit that I have from time to time served from motivations of guilt, fear, duty, and the expectations of others, and I can assure you that those are lousy motivators. It is like the difference between running with 40 pound weights on your feet and skiing down a mountain slope. You could do both, but the one would be a burden and the other would be a privilege. To serve compelled by the love of God gives joy, freedom, enthusiasm, and perseverance. In fact, 2 Corinthians 8:7 says that our love is actually tested by the diligence that it produces.

H. Experiencing God's love produces strength to conquer (Rom. 8:35-39; 1 John 5:3-4a)

The next point shows that experiencing God's love produces strength to conquer sin, and Satan, and anything anything else that enemies might throw at us. If you are constantly defeated, it can be another motivation to seek the love that we looked at last week. 1 John 5:3-4 says this:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For [here comes the reason why God's commandments are not burdensome and why we can serve without 50 pound weights on our feet: For] whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

God's love produces conquering strength. Where men have struggled and struggled with a sin before, once they experience the presence of God's love internally, their obedience is now a joy and they have found victory. What makes us more than conquerors in Romans 8? It is that nothing in creation can separate us from God's love. That is what enables us to face

tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword. It's the love of God. Let me read Romans 8:35-39.

Rom. 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 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.

I. Knowing God's love protects us from embracing error (1 Cor. 13:6; Ps. 26:3; Eph. 4:15; 1 John 3:18; 2 John 1; 3 John 1)

Finally, experiencing God's love in a tangible way protects us from embracing theological errors. Why? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:6 that love "rejoices in the truth." David said in Psalm 26:3 that as long as God's lovingkindness was before his eyes, he was motivated to walk in the truth of God's Word. But if we have more love for the praises of men or if social pressure dominates, we will be tempted to compromise our doctrine. And in our woke culture, evangelical pastors are compromising doctrines left and right because of the pressures to please men. And the outline has other examples of love motivating us to embrace the truth.

III. Steps In Entering Into The Enjoyment Of God's Love

But I want to finish off this sermon by going through the steps needed to be able to fully enter into the enjoyment of God's love that we looked at last week.

A. Believe that He loves you (1 John 4:16) and that He has initiated the love relationship (John 6:44,45,65; 15:16; Luke 10:22; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 3:20; 1 John 4:7,19; 5:1)

The first, and most basic step is *believing* that God this is even possible. Maybe some of you were skeptical last week that He is willing to pour that love into our hearts. The outline last week should give you all the ammo you need to shore up your faith that God is indeed willing to *manifest* His love to us in a *tangible* way. Hebrews 11 says that without faith it is impossible to please God, and we can't have faith apart from God's grace. Spurgeon said that it is impossible for us to produce love while under a legal spirit. It comes from God and must be received from God by faith.

Over and over in John 6 Christ repeats that no one can come to Him unless the Father first draws him. That was true before we were saved, that is also true *after* we are saved. "We love Him because He first loved us." Hosea says that we are drawn to God with the cords of love. Luke 10:22 says that we can't know the Father unless the Son reveals Him to us.

But I love the picture given to us in Revelation 3:20. You probably all have this one memorized. It pictures Jesus in a strained relationship with the church of Laodicea. He is outside the church, and they are inside worshipping. And it appears that this seeker sensitive church was having a blast. Maybe they think they are having fantastic worship, but there is no presence of Christ in what they do. God says they *profess* love, but they are really a loveless church. Only the presence of Christ can supply that lack. And Jesus invites them to believe that He can be present and to invite Him to commune with them. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me." They were already Christians, but they were not experiencing a close walk with Jesus. He promises His closeness as the solution to their lack of love. But it takes an invitation. It takes faith.

B. Keep your appointments with God in devotions (Gen. 3:9; Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42; Ps. 5:3; 55:17; 57:8; 119:147)

A second thing that needs to be present if we are to prevent these constant ups and downs in our Christian walk is daily devotions. Just think of what would happen to a couple in a courtship if 6 times out of seven, the other person broke their dates; broke their appointments, and showed little interest in being with you. I don't think that courtship would last very long, would it? Yet how often do we break our appointments with God every morning? God had daily appointments with his people all through the Old Testament, but I think of the appointment in the cool of the day, when God was accustomed to walk with Adam and Eve, and they were not present on *that* day. God said simply, "Where are you?" And I think that is His haunting cry to us today as well. Where are you? We cannot expect to grow in love if we are not in devotional times with God. It's impossible. And it's irrational to expect love when you break your dates with Him.

C. Have a passion to know Him (Deut. 4:29-40; Jer. 29:13; 2 Chron. 15:12; Ps. 27:8; 119:2,10)

The third essential is to have a *passion* for God. Deuteronomy 4 tells us *how* we are to seek Him. It says, "you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." And you might think, "Ahhh! That's just too hard." And yet you are passionate about other things. I think this is many times *the* missing step. God communicates the greatest passion of love to those who are the most passionate in seeking Him. Matthew 7:7-11 tells us that God gives good gifts to His children. But He does it when we ask, seek and knock. And then He went on to say, "For everyone [there are no exceptions; there are no elite. everyone] who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." That is a promise. Do you have a passion for God in the way you seek Him? One book wrote this,

"Are you on fire for God, or are you an ice cube? If we took a survey, I believe the average evangelical Christian would answer, 'Well, I'm not exactly on fire for God. But I'm not an ice cube either!' Where does that leave us? About lukewarm? [And then the article quotes Revelation 3 that describes Christ's attitude toward lukewarm Christians.] 'So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth' (Rev. 3:16)."

What was it that Laodicea, the loveless church, needed to repent of? Jesus said that they needed to repent of a loss of passion. That's how they fell from their first love. They were neither hot nor cold. Passion is essential if this personal relationship is to be developed. In the introduction to the service I pointed out that Moses longed to see more and more of God's glory. Psalm 42 speaks of longing for God as a thirsty deer pants for the water brooks. That's a pretty strong longing for God. Laodicea had no passion, and God felt like spitting them out. Jeremiah 29:13 says, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Again, God expects there to be some passion, even as a spouse desires passion.

D. Practice walking in God's presence (see notes on sermon outline 2)

Another important step for growth in this area is practicing walking in God's presence. And I won't get into this point because I covered it quite well in my #2 sermon on God's omnipresence. It contains key aspects of what it means to practice the presence of God, and through that to grow in our love for God.

E. Obey Him and determine to love Him and please Him at each step that He leads you (John 14:21,23; 1 John 2:3-5,15; 3:24)

Fifth, the Bible calls us to *obey* God. If you have an obedience problem, you will soon begin to have a love problem. This is actually misleading because it is not a *step* to having a relationship, but it is part of *maintaining* a relationship. John 14:21 says, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." We want Jesus to manifest Himself to us, but it is through a loving obedience, not just a formal obedience that this happens. It's in relating to Him that He manifests Himself to us. Verse 23 says,

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

And let me encourage you that Christ does not call us to perfection, but to the *pursuit* of holiness. Christ said, "If anyone *wants* to do His will, he shall know..." No one will be perfect, but if we *want* to keep growing closer to the Lord, the Lord will honor that desire by drawing closer to us and manifesting His love to us. And that in turn will reinforce our desire to please Him. It's a growth process.

F. Be quick to repent when you grieve the Spirit (Rev. 2:4-5; Heb. 10:19-22)

And that leads us to point F. David was not a man after God's own heart because he was perfect but because he wanted to do right, and because he quickly got right with the Lord when he sinned. He couldn't stand it when the relationship was gone. So he constantly went back to God asking God to cleanse him with hyssop.

G. Put yourself in ministry opportunities where God's supernatural love can work through you (1 John 4:12,20; 5:1; Matt. 5:38-48; Ezek. 9:4; Luke 19:41; Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1; 1 Cor. 13:4-8)

But the last point deals with the context in which love flourishes. God delights to give us love when we are faced with unlovable people. It's in our weakness that His strength is made perfect. Over and over in 1 John we find John saying that you have no excuse for exhibiting hate just because the other person is hateful. That is precisely the situation where God's love can be exhibited the best.

We will never have Paul's burden for the lost in Romans 9 and 10 if we never witness to the lost, or never hang around the lost. We will never grow in our love for the brethren if we do not minister in their lives and spend time with them. We must put ourselves in ministry opportunities where the greatness of God's love can be manifested. One of my favorite lines from William Shakespear is, "Love sought is good, but given unsought is better." It is in *those* situations where it shines the most brightly. But that requires your personal presence in the lives of other people. God is not going to give you love for your children if you aren't spending time with them. He won't give you love for your wife if you are not serving her and laying down your life for her. He will not give you love for Him if you never practice living in His presence.

So, may each of us not only glory in God's love to us, but by faith lay claim to the same love to be lived out *through* us. Christ said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you, continue in my love." May it be so, Lord Jesus. Amen.