

The Love of God

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Romans 8, beginning in verse 28 through to the end of the chapter. Please stand together with me for the reading from God's Word. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called.

Those He called, He also justified. Those He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?

It is God who justifies. Who is He that condemns? Christ Jesus who died. More than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

[1:08] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

As it is written, For your sake we face death all day long. We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, neither angels, nor demons, neither the present, nor the future, nor any powers, neither height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God is love. Say it with me. God is love.

The words of the Apostle John, the first epistle, chapter 4 and verse 8. And never was more comfort packed into three words. And yet, perhaps no words have ever been misunderstood more than those three words.

[2:20] Seems everyone has their own idea about God's love. And sadly, many of those ideas are far from the truth. And there's a reason for that.

Satan is the great enemy of God's love. He does not share in it himself. He hates the fact that God is love. And since he does not share in that love, he wants no one else to share in that love.

And so he does all he can to blind people to this glorious reality that God is love. Brothers and sisters, he doesn't want you to think much about the love of God.

He doesn't want you to bask in the wonder of it, to glory in it. He knows how much it would increase your love for God. He knows how much it would give you a song in your heart.

He knows how much it would move you to tell others about this love. He knows what peace and joy that would come as you feasted upon God's love for you.

[3:26] And unconverted friends, he doesn't want you either to think about God's love, lest you should be drawn with the cords of love, to taste and see that love, and experience it yourself, lest you should seek him and be saved by him.

So, the devil does all he can to distort, to twist, God's love in the minds of men. During World War II, the Nazis not only carried on a war against the world, against the United States with bullets, but they carried on an economic war as well with the United States.

And they had intricate plans to devalue our currency by flooding the world with counterfeit dollars.

And so, they had plates made and they produced counterfeit American money.

And every counterfeit dollar bill in circulation weakened the buying power of a true dollar bill. Each counterfeit dollar devalued the true dollar.

And even so, the enemy of God's love would devalue God's love by circulating lies and counterfeit ideas about God's love.

[4:52] So, we have a busy devil spreading lies about God's love. And on top of that, man, with his fallen mind, is more prone to believe the lie than the truth.

And man is prone to think of God's love after the order of his own love. Isn't that the charge that God makes of man that you've brought me down?

You thought I was like you. And man has this tendency to think of God's love in terms of the way he loves. And so, when we come to this topic, we must remember that in so many ways, God is not like us.

There is none like him. And so, therefore, there is no love like his love. So, as we begin our study this morning, not sure how many weeks, but we're settling in on this glorious reality, the love of God.

We want to stick close to the Bible and let God himself tell us about his love. And as he describes his love to us in the pages of Holy Scripture, the lies about his love will be exposed.

[6:00] And so, may God help us this morning to identify and to destroy all of our unworthy thoughts about God's love. That we might replace them then with the truth of God's amazing love.

So, this morning, six characteristics of God's love. First of all, God's love is self-initiated.

Self-initiated.

That means it's not started or caused by anything in us. It wasn't because we were so lovely and lovable that God loved us.

We were unlovely. There was nothing in us that attracted God's love toward us. There was nothing in us that moved him and influenced him to love us.

His love doesn't operate in that way and we must realize this. His love does not operate in that way. He's not looking for something in us to spark love in him.

[7:13] For when he came to us, when he saw us, he didn't see anything to attract his love to us, but rather he saw everything to repel his love. Romans 5 and verse 8.

God demonstrates his love for us in this. In that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. So he didn't look and say, oh wow, she loves me.

I'm going to love her back. She obeys me. She's submitting to me. She's living the way I've told her to. I'm going to love her. No, he saw her and she was sinful.

Sinful throughout and he loved her anyway. It was while we were yet powerless that he loved us. Romans 5 6. Morally impotent to do anything good in God's sight. It was then that he loved us. It was when we were enemies verse 10 that he loved us.

[8:17] Oh, he is for me. I'm going to love him. No, he was against me. I'm going to love him anyway.

The love of God is self initiated. We were going our own way. We had thumbed God. We had turned our back on him. That's offensive to God. He saw in us that which is an abomination to him, our sin, that which is a deformity, an ugly thing, and yet he loved us still.

So there was nothing in us to make us lovely in his sight, and yet he loved us. Now, this love of God is foreign to us then, isn't it?

It's not like our love. Our love depends upon something in the one we love. And every one of you, husbands and wives, can think back to the time when you first realized you were in love.

and there was something in that other person that attracted you to them. Something that sparked your love. Maybe it was their kindness to you, and you loved them.

[9:28] Maybe it was their holiness. Maybe it was their beauty, their strength, their money, their popularity. Maybe it was just the fact that they showered you with affection and attention, and so you loved them.

But there was something in them that drew out your heart to love them. It's not so with God's initial love for us. There was nothing, absolutely nothing in us to attract his love, everything to repel that love, and yet he loved us.

You see, if God was only to love us once he found us attractive, he would never love us. we sing it in that hymn, if he were to not love us until cleansed from our sins, if he was not to save us until cleansed from our sins, well, you see, it would never happen.

Rather, he loved us when we were still sinners. He speaks in Deuteronomy 7, Moses tells Israel that people that God loved, Deuteronomy 7, 7 and 8, the Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples.

For you were the fewest of all peoples, but it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers. You see his point?

[10:55] Israel, don't go strutting around because of the fact that God loved you as if it was because of something in you. If God is to have a people, what kind of people should he have?

Well, they should be a numerous people. That would be to his great glory, wouldn't it? Well, he didn't set his love on you because you were a numerous people. You were fewer people than anyone else.

So you're looking in the wrong place if you're trying to figure out why has God set his love upon me? Don't look in yourself. No, he set his love upon you because he loved you.

See, that's kind of doublespeak. He set his love upon you because he loved you, because he was pleased to love you. Nothing from within you was the cause of his love.

His love was not drawn out by us. It was rather set upon us is the language of the text. Now, this is the wonder, then, of his love.

[11:58] It inspires awe. It inspires amazement. It inspires worship. God loves me. Love and that love is just because he chose to love me.

We love him because he first loved us. You see, this love was self-initiating love. If he waited till we loved him, he never loved us. No, his love is first.

It's prior. It comes before our love for him. He didn't love us because we loved him. He loved us even when we hated him. And we now love him because he first loved us.

First John 4:19. So this exposes a lie that we can do something to earn his love, that we need to work our way into his love, that if we're good enough, God will love us.

And that lie feeds the pride that's inherent in natural man. That we like to think, you know, the reason God loves me is because I was lovable. I had something in me that attracted his love.

[13:01] And this is why the world can't sing. Amazing love. Amazing love. Dumbfounding, stupendous love. How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? The world can't sing that.

Amazing love? No. How can it be? Why wouldn't he love me? I'm a pretty good guy. Nothing amazing about the fact that God loves me.

I'm not as bad as him or her. Sure, God loves me. He's love. Remember, God is love. Love. It shoots that lie out of the water, the idea that we deserve God's love.

On the other hand, it not only destroys any pride, but can you see the futility of this lie that you must make yourself attractive enough to God so that he will love you?

Maybe some of you have known the torment of loving someone who did not return the love. And so you did everything you could. You sent chocolates and cards and changed many things about you, but for all that you did, you did not receive the love back.

[14:15] That's not God. That's not the way we try to work our way into his love by doing enough things. No, he sets his love upon us when there was nothing attractive and lovable about us.

And so we come just as we are, undeserving of God's love. Just as I am, thy love unknown has broken every barrier down. Now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come.

So that's the first thing we need to take out of our minds, that God's love is like ours, that it's sparked by something it sees in its objects. No, God's love is self-initiated.

Secondly, God's love is sovereign. This is perhaps just another way of saying what we've just said, but there's something different about it as well. Because another one of the lies about God's love is that God must love everyone and love them all equally.

You see, man has placed his rules upon God's love. If God is to love, then he must love everyone equally. He can't love one and not love another.

[15:32] But God is absolutely sovereign in his love. He's not bound by any of man's rules. And he says in Romans 9, 13, quoting the Old Testament, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

And that's found in Romans 9 because it's demonstrating the sovereignty of God's love and grace. You can't do that. You're a God of love.

You must love everyone and love them equally. And God says in the teeth of man's rules, I love Jacob, but I've hated Esau.

And he goes on to say, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. I love whom I choose to love.

Romans 9 and verse 15. So God doesn't owe love to anybody. He's not under obligation to love even one. His love is absolutely sovereign.

[16:36] He loves whoever he pleases. Turn to Ephesians 1 and verse 5. Notice this sovereign love in action. Ephesians 1 and verse 5.

The last two words dangling over in verse 4. in love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will.

Now notice that. It was predestinating love. In love he predestined us to be his sons, adopted sons. Why? Why? Why did he love me?

Why did he in love predestine me to be his son? Notice because it pleased him to do so in accordance with the pleasure of his will.

His pleasure in will. He did so because he chose to. He did so for his own pleasure. That's why he predestined you in love to be an adopted son.

[17:44] That is sovereign love. And that's what makes worshipers of this God of sovereign love. Men also place their rules on God's love saying, well, he can't love one more than the other.

He must love everyone and he must love them all equally. Oh, but God is not only sovereign over who he loves, he's also sovereign in how much he loves.

There is a sense in which God has love for everyone, indeed, all his creatures. Psalm 145, twice in that psalm, verses 13 and 17, God says, the Lord is loving toward all he has made.

The Lord is loving toward all he has made. Well, that's pretty all-encompassing, isn't it? Because there's not anything that was made that was not made without him. So he is loving toward all he's made.

Burkhoff calls this a cosmic generosity and affection for his creatures that prompts him to deal bountifully and kindly with him. It's what Jesus says, means when he says he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good.

[18:56] And he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous because he loves all his creatures and desires to do them good. So he sends them sunshine and rain and feeds them and fills their hearts with gladness.

But then we read in the very next psalm, Psalm 146, 8, that the Lord loves the righteous. We memorized that, didn't we? the Lord loves the righteous.

The Lord, Psalm 145, the Lord is loving toward all he's made. Now Psalm 146, the Lord loves the righteous. Proverbs 15, 9, the Lord detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

We come to the New Testament, Paul writes a letter to the Romans, chapter 1 and verse 7, to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.

Isn't that an interesting way to write a letter? Who's this letter being sent to? Who should it be delivered to? Whose box should it be put in? Well, it's being sent to all in Rome who are loved by God.

[20:07] It clearly is not being meant for all who are in Rome because not all in Rome are loved by God. There are a people in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.

Clearly, there is a special love that God has for his own people. And you know, you have that special love too.

Husbands, you don't love all women the same. You have a special love for your woman, your wife. Now, you love all people, but you have a special love for your wife.

mothers, you love all children, but you have a special love for your children. And that's not sinful. And God has a general love for all of his creation.

He has a special love for his treasured possession, his people. You see, it's one thing to send the sunshine and rain upon all his creatures.

[21:12] It's another thing to send his one and only son to be damned in the place of his bride and then to send his spirit to live within them.

That's taking love to another level. He is sovereign in who he loves. He is sovereign in how he loves. As the Lord Jesus sovereignly set his love on you, then be amazed and worship him.

Amazing love. God's love is self-initiated. God's love is sovereign. Thirdly, God's love is holy. God's love is holy love. The Bible says God is love.

We started with that, didn't we? But that's not all the Bible says. And that's not all that God is. And that's why we've spent many, many weeks before studying who God is, before we've come to God is love.

God, the Bible also tells us that he is righteous, that he is just, that he is holy, that he has wrath and anger and perfect hatred, that he'll not let the wicked go unpunished.

[22 : 17] Indeed, that every sin in the universe must be paid for. This is God. This is the God who is love. Many people come to these statements on the love of God and act like they just trump every other attribute in God.

Well, God is righteous and holy. Yes, but God is love as if that just undoes everything else that is true of God. And so they turn the love of God into an indulgent love that never punishes like an indulgent parent whose kids are going crazy and they never punish them.

That's not love. The Bible calls it hatred. And yet people have that view of God that he's just this indulgent grandfather figure who's indifferent to sin, apathetic about what people do with his commandments.

Doesn't care. He just loves them so much anyway. And he loves them so much that he would never send anyone to hell. Indeed, everyone who dies goes to heaven. After all, God is love.

Now, that is a very prevalent view of the love of God. And it's one of the most popular lies about God's love. And it's not difficult to see why I can have my sin in heaven too, because God is love, you see.

[23 : 37] But God's love is a holy love. And it's never exercised in a way that dismisses his holiness. God is never loving in a way that violates his wrath for sin.

He never exercises love in a way that sets aside his justice. No, it is always exercised in a way that is in perfect harmony with all his other attributes.

He is of two pure eyes to look on evil, just to wink at sin. So God can't love like an indulgent grandfather who just turns a blind eye to sin, to disobedience.

No, he can't do that. His love is holy. Now put your thinking caps on and follow me through this next section. Many people like to speak of God's love as unconditional love.

And I suppose in some senses that's what I meant when I said it was self-initiated. It's not conditioned by anything in the object of it.

[24 : 39] So there is a sense in which it could be explained in a proper way, but we need to know that this phrase is not found in the Bible and it really opens God's love up to great misunderstandings and its misuse in our day renders it unhelpful in most situations.

things. It's used to support this lie that God just loves us all unconditionally. No matter what we do, He just loves and accepts us just the way we are.

And people who cling to this view of God's love usually want you to treat them with the same quote unconditional love. Not to say anything to them about their sin.

Just accept me the way I am mom. This is the way I am. Just unconditional love. So stop judging me. Stop rebuking me.

Stop correcting me. Instead just accept me. Leave me alone. Leave me in my sin. Don't give me any grief over it.

[25 : 45] What they're after is an indulgent God who's apathetic toward their sin. An undisciplined love. But the reality is that outside of Jesus Christ nothing but eternal wrath awaits sinners for their sin.

This God loves righteousness. This God of love loves righteousness and hates iniquity. And only those who pursue holiness will see him. And if you're in Christ he doesn't love and accept you just the way you are as if it doesn't matter to him.

And so he just leaves you where you are in your sin. That too often is the idea when people speak of God's unconditional love. I'm going my own way in my sin but God loves me unconditionally.

Doesn't care what I am how I live. Know the reality if you're a Christian is that God loves you so much he's not going to let you go on in your sin.

He's going to change you. He's going to correct you. He's going to rebuke you. He's going to discipline you. Because he is committed in his love to seeing you transformed into the image of his son.

[27 : 00] And God's love can be stern. And if you don't heed the disciplines of his word he's got bigger sticks to get your attention. This is the love of God. He loves you that much that he will not let you go on in your sin.

Revelation 3.19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline so be earnest and repent. Hebrews 12.6 The Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.

If you're not disciplined and everyone undergoes discipline then you are illegitimate children and not true sons because God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

No discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful later on however it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Jeremiah 12.7 I will give the one I love into the hands of her enemies.

How many times did God do that? His beloved Israel he loved them and it was because of his love that he handed her over to her enemies to be disciplined to be taught not to go after idols to be brought back to repentance yes God is love but his love is holy and it's committed love committed absolutely to the holiness of all his children and he will go to great lengths to see us changed into his likeness so great is his love aren't you thankful that God loves you that much he's not going to let you stretch he's going to bring you back in the path what a comfort what a security to any child to know that I do whatever he needs to do to produce holiness in us even sending pain God's love is holy love fourthly

[29:03] God's love is unchanging God's love is unchanging it is constant it is changeless here's a young lady and she's sitting out in the meadow and she has a daisy in her lap and she's pulling plucking the petals off of that daisy and making her way right around the circle he loves me he loves me not he loves me he loves me not and she's hoping like mad that when she gets around to that last petal it will be he loves me!

You see she's not very secure in his love that she has to resort to the daisy method to discern whether or not he loves her but there are some believers who do much the same Things are going well financially this month he loves me We're having a hard time making ends meet this month loves me not I had good devotions this morning read my bible and prayed he loves me woke up late ran out the door without reading and praying blew an opportunity for witness at work loves me not healthy this week the whole family's healthy loves me we're all sick loves me not we're all sick loves me not back and forth as if God's love is something that fluctuates and it can be there one day and gone the next strong one week and weak the next behind it is that lie that lie of the devil that God can fall out of love with us that though he loves me today he may lose his love tomorrow the lie that our circumstances are the indicators of God's love or lack of it that our performance is the gauge of his love or the lack of it and again our thoughts about God are far too human we see half the marriages that start at the altar with a kiss and a confession of love ending because

I just don't love her anymore just don't love him anymore and so we see the fickleness of man's love and and we start to think God's love is like that and we start to think how we feel when someone offends us and someone sins against us and our love for that person goes down and we think God must love me less today because of what I've said or done or not said or done God is not like man fickle fluctuating changing if God has set his love upon you you will never be out from under his love 30 times in the Bible God speaks of his own unfailing love what a phrase for our hearts there's no need to say he loves me loves me not if God has set his love upon you it is unfailing love Exodus 15 13 in your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed

Psalms 36 7 how priceless is your unfailing love Proverbs 20 in verse 6 says many a man claims to have unfailing love but a faithful man who can find and so when we see all the unfaithfulness of love on the horizontal scale what a wonderful thing to know that God is not like that but his love is unfailing love with the Lord is unfailing love Psalm 130 verse 7 Psalm 32 10 many are the woes of the wicked but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him you see over and over 30 times God is convincing us that his love is not like man's love his love is changeless it's constant it's faithful a friend loves at all times Proverbs 17 17 God is that kind of friend he loves at all times times of sickness times of sin times of sadness times of loneliness times of hardship he loves at all times and the lie we Christians believe too often is to think that our sin causes him to stop loving us or to love us less and that's the way our love is and so we think that's the way his love works and it may cause us to be slow and sheepish about coming back to him after we've sinned because we think oh he loves me less and so we've got to wait a while till we prove our obedience and our love for him and then we can come to him that's a lie from the pit rather let us cast ourselves like David upon his unfailing love here's David crawling out of bed with Bathsheba crawling out of murder with Uriah her husband and with all that guilt and weight of his sin what does he what does he say I've got to wait until I clean up my act Psalm 51 1 have mercy on me oh God according to your unfailing love according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions he's broken but he's willing to hang his confession upon the hook of God's unfailing love have mercy upon me Lord

according to your unfailing love and Christian that means that as you come out of your sin you can go straight to this Savior he loves you it's unfailing love confess fully and freely openly no playing games with this Savior his love is unfailing love oh discipline us he might as he did David but remember this too is love never buy into the lie of the devil discipline is a lack of love it's the proof of love it's no less love when he takes us to the woodshed to discipline us and when he's causing us to bask in success and prosperity so don't read it misread it as a lack of love he disciplines those he loves in the furnace God may prove thee thence to bring thee forth more bright but can never cease to love thee thou art precious in his sight surely goodness and mercy surely goodness and unfailing love another translation our translation of that word mercy surely goodness and unfailing love will follow me all the days of my life follow me on my bad days follow me on my good days because it's unfailing love where do you find love like that there's security in his love and he keeps telling us it over and over that we might live confidently under it that we might be thankful for it so keep your guns loaded against these lies of the devil that his love fluctuates like man's who shall separate us from the love of Christ we read come on who is it what is it and one thing after another is brought up no no none of these things for we're more than conquerors even in these things through him who loved us and I'm convinced you see

[36:34] Paul's sure of this as David was he was sure that unfailing love would follow him all the days of his life so Paul is convinced that neither death nor life angels demons things present future powers height depth or anything else in all God's creation shall be able to separate me from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord God's love is changeless fifth God's love is eternal one of the repeated frames throughout the Psalms you love the Psalms I'm sure you have no argument with this that God's love is eternal over and over you see this refrain the Lord is good and his love endures forever the Lord is good and his love endures forever Psalm 100 in verse 5 then you turn over to Psalm 136 and 26 verses that's how long the Psalm is and they all end with the refrain his love endures forever his love endures forever you say that 26 times and you begin to get it drummed into you this love of God is eternal his his love doesn't run out it's reached down to me here I am 2008

AD and he's he's still loving me his love endures forever and this only underscores what we've just been saying that his love is unfailing if the river of God's love runs forever then it will never run dry there's no fear of failing why?

because God himself is love the fountain himself is love so the fountain never runs dry so yes the rivers the streams the tributaries of God's love will ever reach me his love is eternal the Lord says of his bride in Jeremiah 31 3 I've loved you with everlasting love and with cords of love have I drawn you and then we all memorize Psalm 103 in verse 17 from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him what a precious verse from everlasting you see his love is eternal in both directions from everlasting to everlasting so we can go backward in time as far as we can go and then keep going and he's always loved us and then we can go forward in time stopping right here today March the 9th 2008 he still loves me and then I can go forward another thousand years ten thousand ten billion years and I can say to everlasting from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him you see what it says is that there's never been a time when I've not been loved by God there's never been a time nor will there ever be a time in the future that I as his child will not be embraced in his arms of love and that dispels the lie that he might stop loving us the love with which he loved us is an eternal love eternal yet ever new that's what Jeremiah founded in Lamentations 3 because the Lord's great love were not consumed for his compassions never fail they are new every morning great is your faithfulness eternal love yet ever new new expressions today of it toward me his child lastly God's love is infinite Bible has a lot of ways of telling us how great God's love is sometimes it just uses that term his great love it says that he's abounding in love it's not something he has a little of he's abounding in it he lavishes it how great is the love that the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called children of God but now we're saying God's love is infinite why can we say that infinite means without measure without bounds without limits God's love God's love is infinite that means in coming to this subject we're waiting in an ocean that is a bottomless ocean there's no bottom to it and that means that as we're looking at this subject we're looking into a heavens that goes on and on and Psalm 103 in verse 11 says as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is his love for those who fear him this is great love as high as the heavens are above the earth well how high are the heavens above the earth well they're way up there 93 million miles will get you to the sun that's way up there kids isn't it but if you want to go just

to the nearest star beyond the sun well that's 5.88 million million miles and now our minds are balken we don't understand that language so we develop a different measurement tool a unit of measurement we call it light years so let's shrink this 5.8 million million years down to something to one unit so that we can understand it let's get a real long yardstick and we'll call it a light year the distance you could travel at the speed of light 186 thousand miles not an hour but miles a second traveling at that speed you could go around the world seven times every second that's the speed of light okay now let's head back out to that star the nearest star after the sun it would take us 4.3 years to get there when every second we're going seven times around the world it's way out there isn't the heavens are high above the earth that's just the nearest star how long would it take us to get out to the farthest object in the universe that man has found with their instruments ooh you're going to be an old man before you get there 25 billion years to get there traveling at the speed of light as high as the heavens are above the earth so great what is

God doing he's just stretching our minds so we'll understand a little more of how great this love is in Psalm 108 verse 4 Psalm says great is your love higher than the heavens so even when we get out there to that star 25 billion years light years away his love is greater his love is greater without limit measureless beyond comprehending in fact it's so far out there God's love is so immense and infinite that it will take the Holy Spirit to give you power to grasp even something of the infiniteness of this love and so Paul prays and I pray that you being rooted and established in love may have power together with all the saints to know how wide and how long and how high and how deep is this love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that's almost double speak isn't it to know this love that is unknowable what Paul is saying by the power of the

[44 : 30] Spirit you can know something about it though you can't comprehend it and I'm praying that's what the Spirit of God would do for you that he would shed abroad the love of God in your heart so that you could grasp something of its dimensions and something of its infinity something of its greatness because you will not be the same if you grasp the greatness of God's love for you writers have spilled!

much ink to describe the greatness of God's love the hymn writer says could we with ink the ocean fill you got the picture kids there's the ocean fill it up with ink and we're the sky of parchment made the whole heavens that we just described paper parchment and we're every stalk on earth a quill every blade of grass every tree and shrub a pen to write with and every man a scribe by trade 6.7 billion people and every one of them a writer well to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretch from sky to sky oh love of God how rich and pure how measureless and strong it shall forevermore endure the saints and angels song one way we measure love is by how much it gives if we apply this love to or this measurement to God's love well then we're back to wonder aren't we how much does his love give well it it searches the vaults of heaven and it finds the most precious thing to give his one and only son and he gives him that whoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life

God so loved the world that he gave his son this is how we even know what God what love is that God gave his one and only son to the cross for us what love is this oh my soul so meditate on the love of God it's love it's initiated from within God it's sovereign he sets it on whomever he pleases it's holy if he's loved you he's going to see you changed into his holy image it's changeless doesn't fluctuate good days bad days no it's constant it's eternal it lasts to this day it's everlasting from everlasting to everlasting and it's infinite it's so great there's no end to it glory in it meditate on it bask in it the subject is so vast that we have to stop before we come to the applications of it and I hate that but I trust your own hearts will begin to apply that yourselves and will come in future weeks to the applications of this love how should we be different knowing what we know about God's love surely we ought to sing of it we can close and make our response to God by singing of his great love I will sing of the mercies the loving kindness of my God let's pray oh Lord our God we confess that our thoughts of you and your love have been too small too human too sinful forgive us Lord that we would think of you and your love as being like ours take your truth in and burn out of us every small view of your love come with your truth and spread abroad in our hearts Holy Spirit this love of God until it burns like a fire in our hearts until we are pinching ourselves with surprise and wonder that we should be loved with this special love of the eternal God take it home to the hearts of some sinner who's never known this kind of love melt their hearts and draw them with those cords of love and make us to be a different people because whatever's happening to us you are

God love us love us so greatly in Christ so we ask you change us by this wonderful love we ask it for Jesus sake and in his name amen