

Five Responses to God's Love

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Psalm 136, a psalm that was written to be either read or sung responsibly. One voice or group of voices reading the first portion of each verse, and then all the others reading the repeated refrain, His love endures forever.

And so we will read it responsibly this morning. I will read the first portion of each verse, and you all respond with the repeated, His love endures forever.

Let us stand together for this reading from God's Word. We'll read Psalm 136 responsibly. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords.

His love endures forever. To Him who alone does great wonders. His love endures forever. Who by His understanding made the heavens.

[1:06] His love endures forever. Who spread out the earth upon the waters. His love endures forever. Who made the great lights.

His love endures forever. The sun to govern the day. His love endures forever. The moon and stars to govern the night.

His love endures forever. To Him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt. His love endures forever. And brought Israel out from among them.

His love endures forever. With a mighty hand and outstretched arm. His love endures forever. To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder.

His love endures forever. And brought Israel through the midst of it. His love endures forever. But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea.

[2:04] His love endures forever. To Him who led His people through the desert. His love endures forever. Who struck down great kings.

His love endures forever. And killed mighty kings. His love endures forever. Sion king of the Amorites. His love endures forever.

And Og king of Bashan. His love endures forever. And gave their land as an inheritance. His love endures forever.

An inheritance to His servant Israel. His love endures forever. To the one who remembered us in our lowest state. His love endures forever.

And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever. And who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.

[3:03] Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever. Amen. Amen. God's love.

God's love is a most powerful thing. It changes people. It changes who we are. And what we do. How we think.

And how we live. The power of God's love. We're studying the love of God. And so far. We've noticed seven different characteristics of His love.

Just by way of brief review. God has loved His people with a self-initiating love. That means He loved them first. He loved us when there was nothing lovable about us to love.

There was nothing to draw His love out. It was self-kindled love. And then that love is sovereign. He owes it to none.

[4:01] He sets it on whom He wills. God's love is holy. It's not this kind of unconditional love that men like to receive.

Where no one gives them any grief. They just accept them the way they are. God's love is not like that. God loves you so much with a love that is holy. That He's determined to change you.

And to make you what you ought to be. God's love is unchangeable. Not like man's fickle love. Hot one moment, cold the next.

God's love is eternal. From everlasting to everlasting is His love. God's love is infinite.

You can't measure it. It knows no limits. It's higher than the heavens are above the earth. And then God's love is costly. There's blood on Calvary that was shed for love.

[5:01] The Father sacrificed His own Son for love. The Son laid down His life for us for love. So this is the love of God revealed in Scripture.

There's none like it. And when by the power of the Holy Spirit, that love is shed abroad in our hearts, it changes us. And as we have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep this love of Christ is, we find it changing us more and more.

The more we grasp of this love, the more it changes us. Now we've started to examine this change. What is the change that the love of God makes upon a person where it's grasped?

Well, two weeks ago, we looked at the life of the Apostle Paul and we saw that here's the bottom line change for those who are loved by God.

Christ's love compels us to no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died for us, who loved us and died for us and rose again. 2 Corinthians 5, 14 and 15.

[6:17] There's a compelling motivation about the love of God in Christ to make us forget ourselves, to forget about living for ourselves and to begin living for Him who died for us.

Compelling love. So today we want to look at five more responses to God's love. We're simply spelling out in greater detail what it means to no longer live for yourself, but for Him.

We're spelling out in greater detail the change, the difference that the love of Christ makes in the life of the loved one. And the thing that unites all five of these things is that they're all found in the book of Psalms.

So I invite you to turn to Psalm 48 as we begin. And we'll find the Psalms to be full of this theme of God's love.

So, does God love you? Then, number one, meditate on His love. Psalm 48 and verse 9.

[7:30] Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. Is there such a love as we've just spoken?

Then can there be any more delightful exercise of the mind than to give ourselves to thinking about this love? You've been given a wonderful faculty of the mind.

And there's no higher exercise than to think upon God. And no more delightful exercise than to think upon His love. Notice the word is meditate.

We meditate on your unfailing love. That word means to chew something over and over again in your mind. It's the mental chewing of the cud, a word picture that comes to us straight from the farm.

There's the cow out in the field. And she's got a mouthful of grass. And she doesn't just take one bite and swallow it down, does she?

[8:37] She chews it and chews it and chews it some more. And then she swallows it. And then she brings it back up and chews it some more. And gets everything out of that mouthful of grass.

Well, that's the picture of God's people. That's the picture of you, dear child of God, chewing on God's love. And the longer you chew on it, the better it tastes.

And the more you chew on it, the more you see of it. And the more you want to taste it. And the more compelling it becomes to you. Think on it.

Spend some time on this topic every day that you live. Think on it until your heart warms to it. Until your heart burns within you.

Do you ever complain of a cold heart toward God? Do you ever complain that you find God's love not compelling you more than it does? Then I must ask you, how much do you think?

[9:42] How much do you meditate on God's love? Oh God, we meditate on your unfailing love, the psalmist says. And if our meditation on his love be meager, can our love for him be great?

There's a soldier in Iraq and he's separated for a time from his beloved wife and he receives a love letter from her. What does he do with that? Well, he reads it, you say.

No, he meditates on it. Not just once, but he goes over it, some parts, dozens of times. He chews on it. He puts it in his pocket. He goes off into battle with it.

He brings it out. He reads it again. Another picture of the loved ones of Jesus. You know, the Bible has justly been called the love letters of Jesus to his bride.

And so we pour over them and we read them and reread them and we meditate on his love for us. The Bible helps us to meditate on God's amazing love.

[10:56] What do you find in the Bible? Well, you find God choosing those whom he will save, as we heard in the Sunday school hour. Love before time.

God, in love, he predestined you to be adopted as his sons. And we think about his love before time. Then we think of his love that brought him out of heaven to take on flesh, to become one of us and to live a life with us and to identify with all of our sorrows and griefs, to see him going through life rejected, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, all for love.

And we see him go into Gethsemane and pray, not my will, but yours be done, because he loved us. And he goes to Calvary. Oh yes, we must get ourselves to Calvary. That's the grand demonstration of his love.

And it's there we see the love of God on display. That God loved us while we were still sinners. Christ died for us. So we follow him from the cross to the tomb and we see him rising because he loves us and ascending into heaven and living for us because he loves us and praying for us every day and sending us help and keeping us and watching over us because of his love.

We see him preparing a place for us there. We see him coming again for us because the Lord Jesus cannot imagine an eternity separated from his bride.

[12:30] Father, I want those you've given me to be with me where I am that they may see my glory. So we read our Bibles and to read our Bibles is to read about the love of God in Christ.

And so this Bible will help us to do exactly what the psalmist is saying to us. We meditate on your unfailing love.

There's no shortage of things to think upon when the love of God is our subject. Take the promises of his love.

Hundreds of them. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will never be shaken. Isaiah 54.10. Many other promises of his love.

And I don't mean by the promises of his love, just those promises that refer to love and to his love. But I mean all the promises. Think of the love behind every promise made to you, Christian.

[13:31] What's the love of God behind that promise to work everything in your life for your good? How much love is there behind that promise to meet all your needs according to his riches and glory by Christ Jesus?

What is the love of Christ to not let you be tempted beyond what you're able to bear, but with that temptation to make a way of escape? What will God not do for those he loves?

The promises. Spell out what he will do for those he loves. And then you can meditate not only on the promises of his love, but the characteristics of his love. There's seven of them listed there at the top of the handout.

Just by way of review, you could take one a day. Wake up to it. Get dressed to it. Today I'm thinking about the self-initiating love of God for me.

And as I put on my clothes, I'm thinking about it. Maybe you want to do it as you shave, man, or as you drive to work or you give some portion of your day and you work through the seven attributes here, characteristics of God's love.

[14:41] We meditate on your unfailing love. Or think of the commands of his love. Promises, characteristics, commands of his love.

There's hundreds of commands. Think of the four-year-old girl and her mother tells her, Now you can ride your big wheel on the sidewalk, but don't you ever ride it out into the street.

Why does she give her that command? Because she's a big killjoy and she wants to spoil the little girl's fun? Or is it because she loves her so much and doesn't want harm to come to her and wants the best for her and so, little one, don't ride your bike in the street.

Now it is no different for every command that you find in the Bible for you, dear Christian. That command is there not to kill your joy and to ruin your life.

It's there because God loves you. When's the last time you thought about the love behind each of God's commands? Here's an assignment for you. Just take the Ten Commandments, the summary of all God's law.

[15:52] And think, how does God's love stand behind every one of those Ten Commandments? Let me show you what I mean.

I'll just take the first and let you work out the other nine. The first commandment, you shall have no other gods besides me. Now what's the love behind that command?

Well, it's the love of the lover of our souls who loves us so much that he doesn't want any rivals for our affections.

He wants our love to be reciprocated, his love to be reciprocated. He wants us to have him as the supreme object of our love. No other gods, none other in his place.

And so he tells us, no other gods besides me. You see, it's a jealous love. So great is his love for us.

[16 : 54] Wise, if you have a husband who doesn't care if you have other lovers, you better question his love. True love is jealous love. And so our God wants us to have no other gods besides him.

So great is his love. Now you take the other nine and work them out. and think about the love of God. Talk about it over the table this afternoon.

You have any problems with seeing the love of God in any one of those nine? We'll talk about it tonight. You come and we'll discuss that. Think about the love of God in his promises.!

In the characteristics of his love, in the commands of his love. And see his love in his discipline. For he disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.

Proverbs 3 and verse 12. Oh, it's real easy to miss God's love when we're going through some discipline, some hardship, some trial.

[17 : 55] And so we need to meditate on his unfailing love behind the discipline. Just as a father says to his son before he spansks him, I do this, son, because I love you.

So our father says, son, daughter, I am disciplining you because I love you. Don't miss his love.

Oh, it changes your whole attitude toward his discipline. Those whom I love, I rebuke and chasten. I discipline. Revelation 3 19.

And then don't miss the daily expressions of his love. We're teasing out the application of we meditate on your love. And we're showing that there's no shortage on things to think about, to jog our minds, to chew on.

Think about the daily expressions of his love. It is in him and in his love that we live and move and have our being. We swim in the ocean of his love.

[18 : 53] It's underneath me, all around me, the current of thy love. It's everywhere. So think about it. See the love of God in everything around you, in the blue sky, in the refreshing rain, in the faces of a loving family.

Don't miss the love of God when you view these things. Hear it in the singing birds. Smell it in the spring flowers.

Taste it in the food you eat. Feel it in the warm sun. Be quick to spot his love. Develop an eye for it. You know, we say that guy has an eye for that. He's able to see something. I have a brother-in-law that has an eye for quarter horses and he can tell just when they're real young, whether it's a winner or a loser.

He has an eye for it. He knows what to see. Do you have an eye for the love of God? Have you developed an eye to see it in all these things that surround you? Expressions of God's love.

[20 : 00] Don't miss it. There's so much to meditate on when we're told to meditate on his unfailing love. And notice the verse begins, Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

Within your temple. Now, we, the gathered saints, comprise the temple of God in the new covenant. Don't you know, Paul said to the Corinthian church, don't you know that you, plural, you yourselves, are the temple of the living God, are God's temple and that God's spirit lives in you.

And so our gatherings for worship ought to ooze with this theme of the love of God. Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.

It ought to fill our thoughts. It ought to amaze us. It ought to cause us to stand in awe as we worship meditating on his unfailing love. Our preaching, our praying, our singing, our reading, our giving is to know much of the love of God.

But not only in public worship as we've just spoken, it's wherever we go, we have fodder for thinking and chewing on God's love. Look at Psalm 26.3.

[21 : 21] Psalm 26.3. Yes, within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. But Psalm 26.3, For your love is ever before me and I walk continually in your truth.

God's love compels us to walk in the truth. Spurgeon says if we were, if we had God's love ever before us more often, then we would be much more compelled to live in and to walk in his truth. But notice, it's your love is ever before me. God's love compels us to live for him. But it's not forgotten love that compels us.

It's love that's ever before us. It's only as his love is before us that we'll feel compelled to live no more for ourselves but for him. And so David kept God's love right there, front and center, ever before me, he says.

It's not an occasional thought. It's not off to the side. It's front and center with me. It's right there. Remember, two weeks ago we looked at the lives of the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John and saw how much the love of God compelled them.

[22 : 41] But it did so because it was ever before them. It was ever before. It was on their minds and that's why it gripped them. That's why it held them and moved them and controlled them. We can't expect to be gripped by that which we give little time to thinking about.

The key is to keep his love ever before me so that whatever else is going on in my life, be it good times or bad times, whatever else is in the periphery of my vision, I've always got God's love before me.

Nothing looks the same with God's love before me. Blessed theme to live with the love of God.

Blessed companion to live with the God of love. And so we're to keep his love ever before us.

Psalms 107, 43, whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord. So consider his great love.

Meditate on it. Think upon it until his love brands you. It leaves its mark on you. It compels you. It changes you.

[23 : 53] So you can't think of yourself without thinking of the one who loves you. Like John the Apostle, the disciple whom Jesus loved. And you can't think about God without remembering that he's the God who has loved me and does love me in Jesus Christ.

We, from time to time, sing a song of repentance here. number 418. I find the words are always fitting for me. It doesn't matter how long since the last time we sang it, but I find these words are mine as I sing my song of repentance to Christ.

We have not loved thee as we ought, nor cared that we are loved by thee. I don't know which is the worst of the two.

To not love him as I ought or to not care that he has loved me, that I have not thought about it any more than I have.

Thy presence we have coldly sought and feebly long thy face to see. Lord, give a pure and loving heart to feel and own the love thou art.

[25 : 07] And the next verse goes on to say, the things of earth have filled our thoughts and trifles of the passing hour. As I thought over this verse, that we meditate on your unfailing love, I'm struck with two things.

I'm struck with the things that I think about in the course of a day and the things I don't think about. Is there such a thing as this amazing love of God? I am just shocked that I don't think more about that.

And oh, when I think of the trifling things in the course of a day, the fruitless things, the passing things, the evil things that I think of, I am shamed.

And I'm also compelled to give more time to this delightful exercise of meditating upon his great, his unfailing love.

That's one way the love of God in Christ changes us. It makes us to think about his love. Secondly, does God love us?

[26 : 13] Then give thanks for his love. God's love is to give birth to thanksgiving. Psalm 136. This is the passage that we read responsively.

And notice how the psalm began and how it ended. psalm 136.

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of God. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of Lord.

His love endures forever. Now, after about three times, we begin to see the connection, I trust. Give thanks for his love. Give thanks for his love never ends.

Do you see the connection there? God's love deserves a thank you from us. And then the next 22 verses tell us what he has done.

[27:16] And he starts with creation. And notice after everything that he does, we responded his love endures forever. Why did we say that?

Because everything he did in creation he did for love. He loved us. And so he put a sun in the sky. He loved us. So he put a moon in the night sky and stars in the night sky because his love endures forever.

He did all that for love. And then he moves on into the theme of redemption. And he brought us out of Egypt. And he split the Red Sea.

Why? Because he loved us. And he drowned Pharaoh in his elite chariot corps. Why? Because he loved us. And he led us through the desert, that trackless wasteland, because he loved us.

And he brought us into the promised land and gave us that land as an inheritance because he loved us. And he drove out the kings because he loved us. Sihon because he loved us. Og because he loved us.

[28:16] Every time. What he did, he did for love. And so we come to the end of the chapter, the final verse. Give thanks to the God of heaven for his love endures forever.

So wherever his love flows, our thanksgiving is to follow. Do you live in God's created world? Then give thanks as you enjoy all of these expressions of his enduring love.

Do you know his redemption from sin? What the Old Testament picture of redemption was in Egypt, in delivery out of the slavery of Egypt? That's a picture of our redemption out of sin and its bondage and out of condemnation and hell.

Do you know that? Then give thanks for his enduring love. God's love and salvation makes every day Thanksgiving day, now and through all eternity.

So we're talking about the difference God's love makes. It makes us meditate on his love. It makes us give thanks for his love.

[29:28] And thirdly, it makes us glad. Does he love you? Then be glad and rejoice in his love. Psalm 31 and verse 7. We have here a psalm of David.

And he says, I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. He speaks of the love of God in his affliction, right in the midst of his affliction, because God saw his affliction.

He says, you saw it. You ordered it. You measured it. You controlled it. You set boundaries to it. That is, to my affliction. And he knew David's anguish of soul and was moved by it.

For in all their afflictions, he too was afflicted. What love is this that saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul and affliction? So I will rejoice and be glad in his love.

His love makes us glad. Brothers and sisters, the love of God is something to be rejoiced in. It is something to be glad about. There are many things to make you sad in life.

[30:43] The Bible doesn't ignore those. But here is something to make you glad and to make you glad even in the midst of your afflictions and anguish. So I heard at a funeral this week that there is something in God to make us smile through our tears, to be glad even in our afflictions.

What is it? It's God's love. I will be glad and rejoice in your love. There's enough here for a continual feast of joy. God loves you, child of God.

He loves you. You know, there are many places in Scripture where we're commanded to love or to rejoice in him, rejoice in the Lord always.

Is it unreasonable for God who knows the afflictions and troubles in this world to call us to always be rejoicing? No. Because there's always this cause for joy.

He loves us. Whatever the cause for sadness, there is always this cause for gladness. God's love. I will be glad and rejoice in your love.

[31:56] So joy ought to be the dominant note in the life of everyone loved by God. there's Nehemiah. He's the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes. He's away from the promised land and his people.

And he's one who tests the wine before giving it to the king to make sure it's not poisoned. So if it is poison, he dies and not the king. And that's his job. He wakes up to it every day with a cheerful countenance.

How do you know that? Well, because one day he didn't have a cheerful countenance and the king noticed it. Now, if he was a down in the mouth kind of guy that drug into work every day and had no joy or gladness about him, the king wouldn't have noticed anything different.

But on this day when Nehemiah was sad, the king noticed. We find it in Nehemiah 2, I had not been sad in his presence before. I wonder if you could say that about your place of employment. I had not been sad in their presence before. So the king asked me, why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart. And he was concerned for Jerusalem, for God's kingdom, as the story goes.

[33 : 13] But the dominant note you see in this man who was loved by God was joy. And so it ought to be in the life of every one of us who are loved by God. And if we would meditate more on his love, then we would be more full of his joy.

And notice David's determination here in Psalm 31 7, I will be glad and rejoice in your love. I'm not going to be controlled by my feelings.

I'm not going to be controlled by my circumstances and let them tell me to just wallow in sadness. No, I will. There's a determined decision. I will be glad because there's every cause for me to be glad and to rejoice.

I am not glad and rejoicing because I'm ignoring reality. I'm living with my head in the sand. No, I am considering the greatest reality in the universe that the God who made it all loves me and sent his son to die for me.

I will be glad and rejoice in your love. Does God love you? Then, number four, sing about his love.

[34 : 23] There's a progression here, isn't there? Does God love you? Then meditate on it. As you meditate on it, you'll want to give thanks for it. And as you give thanks for it, you'll be glad and rejoice in it.

And as you're glad and joyful in it, you'll want to sing. sing about his love. Singing is the overflow of a glad and joyful heart. And nothing sets the heart to singing like the love of God.

Now, the very fact that all these references that we're looking at this morning are found in the book of Psalms is a testament to the fact that God's love sets our hearts to singing, our mouths to singing.

Because the book of Psalms is the Old Testament songbook, the Old Testament people of God. So this is what they sang. They sang about God's love. It wasn't just something to talk about and something just to be silently glad about.

They opened their mouths and sang about his love. Psalm 59. And we read on Psalm 59 that when Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him, he cries out for the Lord to protect him from his enemies and he ends his psalm this way, Psalm 59, 16 and 17.

[35 : 43] But I will sing of your strength. In the morning I will sing of your love. For you are my fortress, my refuge in time of trouble. Oh, my strength, I sing praise to you.

You, oh God, are my fortress, my loving God. In the morning I will sing of your love. All night long, Saul's hit men are lurking and prowling in the shadows, waiting to take his life.

And David promises a song in the morning, a song about his love. More on that next time. The confidence that the child of God has in God's love.

But God's love is something to sing about. It's a wonderful way to greet the morning with a song of God's love. Psalm 92, 1 and 2. It is good to praise the Lord and make music in your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.

Great way to start the day, remembering that God loves me. What do I have on the docket this morning? Well, what do we have to do today? Well, you've got this and this and this.

[36 : 55] Well, before you think about all the things you have to do, remember God loves you. And then go into your day. Sing a song about his love as you begin the day.

And if we did that more often, we'd be singing more about his faithfulness every night. To proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.

Psalm 89, 1, I will sing of the Lord's great love forever. forever. When a man's singing, he's usually happy, isn't he?

Sure, there are the blues and other forms of mourning, laments, but when a man's singing, it's often an expression of joy. I want to ask, what's big enough, what's great enough to cause a man to sing forever?

Psalm 89, 1, answers, I will sing of the Lord's great love forever. God's love is great enough to keep a man singing forever.

[38 : 00] And so men have not exhausted the theme in all of our songs. You read through the hymnal and we sing through the hymnal and we see all these songs about the love of God in Christ.

And new songs are continually being written.

This theme cannot be exhausted. In 10 billion years from now, the theme of God's love will still be sung, still be sung by those who are his loved ones.

It's a song that will never end. The love itself never ends. And so the song will never end. I will sing of the Lord's great love forever.

In a moment we're going to have the opportunity to do just that, to sing about the Lord's great love.

So does God love you? Sing about his love. And lastly, does God love you?

then tell others about his love. Tell others about his love. Some things are too good to keep to yourself, and God's love is one of them.

[39:06] You know what I mean by things that are too good to keep to yourself. Maybe it's a good book, and it really moved you. And so when you see your sister in the foyer, you've got to tell her, this is it.

You've got to read this. Maybe it's a movie you saw. Maybe it's a vacation spot, a restaurant, and it's too good to keep to yourself, and you've got to tell others.

And if that's true of all these piddly things, what can be piddly things, how much greater is it true of God's love? It's too great to keep to ourselves.

there's a young lady, and she's head over heels in love, and she can't stop talking about her fiancé and how much he loves her.

You won't believe what he sent me today. You won't believe what he did for me. And she keeps talking. Nobody's forcing her. In fact, you've got to force her to shut up, don't you?

[40:04] She's just taken in by his love, so she tells others about it. It's all quite natural for her to speak about his love for her.

And it ought to be oh so natural for every loved one of the Savior to tell others about his love.

There's no love like his love.

Let me tell you about it. Psalm 40 in verse 10, the psalmist says, I do not hide your righteousness in my heart. I speak of your faithfulness and salvation.

I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly. God's love is too great to hide, to conceal.

Psalm 89 2, I will declare that your love stands firm forever. God's love deserves to be declared.

And David resolves to declare it in all the assembly, the congregation, and to anyone else who will hear.

[41:08] David's talking about the love of his God. And I say if that's true of this man who lived before Calvary, how much more should it be true of us who live after Calvary?

If this man and these men in the Psalms are so delighting in God's love when what they had were shadows, they had an altar with an innocent lamb with his throat slit and the blood running, and they saw in that an atonement for their sins that the great Messiah would one day bring and through the shadows of the ceremonial law they saw the love of God.

But we look upon a Savior slain and he still bears five bleeding wounds that pour out effectual prayers for us. How much more ought we to tell others of his love?

Psalm 63 3, because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. Because your love is better than life, okay?

We've got a scales here, better, it's weighing out, which is better? You've got a choice, your life or God's love. What are you choosing, kids? Your life or God's love?

[42:32] love? To live the whole of your life, to live to a grand old age, but without God's love? Or to have God's love?

David says your love is better than life. I'd rather have your love than life itself. What is life without your love? That's what he's saying. Isn't that what Peter said?

When Jesus says, you're going to leave me also? To whom shall we go, Lord? What's life without you and without your love? Because your love is better than life. My lips will glorify you.

This is love of every love the best, and it can't be kept to himself with my lips. In other words, I'm going to talk about it. I'm going to tell others about your love.

Did you know that when you use your lips to talk about God's love, that he is glorified? We often use that phrase, sometimes I think it becomes one of those no-brainers in our prayers when we pray for God's glory and honor to be done.

[43:41] How is he glorified and honored? Do you know when you speak and tell others with your lips about God's love, he's glorified and honored? That's one way to glorify him. My lips will glorify you.

And that was the apostle Paul. And his heart was holding a continual feast on the love of God. And that love compelled him to do what? To not live for himself, seek out a comfortable life and just live to myself and my comforts and my peace and my prosperity.

No, it compelled him to go from town to town, stoned, left for dead, up to the next town. Why? The love of Christ compels me. It's better than life itself.

I must tell others about this love in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul would tell us, I grew up in a religion thinking I needed to earn God's love.

That was the Judaism of the day. And Paul grew up in it and was trained in it at the feet of Gamaliel. And I grew up thinking that I had to earn God's love.

[44:46] That I studied the commands and the precepts of Scripture and that if I would keep these commands, then I would work my way into God's love. I would earn it.

But oh, how wrong I was. I was so wrong about my good deeds. They couldn't earn His love. They were all the more reasons for God to hate me because they were filthy rags.

All my righteous deeds were like filthy rags. They were proud thoughts that lifted themselves up and said, God, you're not so great, but that my good deeds should earn your love.

No, no, I was so wrong about my deeds. And I was also wrong about His love because His love was set on me while I was still a sinner.

God's love is demonstrated in this, in that while I was still a sinner, Christ died for me. While I was an enemy, while I was a rebel, while I was persecuting His church, He loved me.

[45:54] Let me tell you about His love. No wonder He pulled Himself off the ground and went to the next town. Here's a story to tell to the nations. Here's a story to take to the ends of the earth.

He loved me. He died for me. And He still loves me in spite of my sin, in spite of my failure, and He always will.

My friend, do you have anyone that loves you like that? His love is eternal and unchanging. Have you ever thought of witnessing as just simply telling others about the great love of God in Christ? That God so loved the world, so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is how we know what love is, friend.

Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. Your love is better than life, therefore my lips will glorify you.

[47:02] It's a story worth telling your relatives, your neighbors, your workmates, your schoolmates. In a world hating and being hated, we have a message of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus spread His praise from shore to shore. How He loveth, ever loveth, never changes, never more.

Sinner friend, don't trample on this love of God in Christ or you'll know nothing but the wrath of God for eternity. His wrath is as great as the love that could be yours.

Turn from your sin, turn from your self-righteousness, trust in His death to atone for your sin, to give you forgiveness. Bring Him your sin and He'll give you His righteousness.

Bring Him your heart and He'll fill it with His love. With such a lover of your soul, you can freely and openly and safely entrust yourself into His care for time and eternity.

[48:16] And brothers and sisters, has the Lord Jesus loved you and freed you from His sin by His own blood? And never be ashamed to speak of His love. Never be ashamed to witness for Him, to speak of the wonderful love of Jesus that is greater than all your sin.

An ungodly English traveler was visiting our nation and was growing perturbed at a Native American Indian who was witnessing for Christ.

Man, he said, what is the reason you make so much of Christ and talk so much about Him? What has this Christ done for you that you make so much do about Him?

Anyone ever said that to you? without saying a word, the converted Indian gathered together some leaves, dry leaves and dry moss and he laid them out in a circle.

And then he lit the circle on fire. It's burning. And he picked up an earthworm and he dropped the earthworm down in the middle of this circle of flames.

[49:34] flames. And the flames began to scorch the earthworm. And it sought escape one way, only to be repelled by the heat and sought it another way.

And finally, it returned to the center of the circle as if to curl up and die in despair. And the American Indian then reached down and gently picked up the earthworm and laid it close to his heart. stranger, he said to the Englishman, do you see that worm? I was that perishing creature. I was dying in my sins, hopeless, helpless, and on the brink of eternal fire.

And it was Jesus Christ who put forth the arm of his power. It was Jesus Christ who delivered me with the hand of his grace and plucked me from everlasting burnings.

It was Jesus Christ who placed me, a poor, sinful worm, near the heart of his love. Stranger, that's the reason I talk of Jesus Christ and make so much about him.

[50 : 50] I'm not ashamed of him because I love him. May there be more of the American Indian in us as we think of what our Savior did to redeem us, where we would be today and forever and ever had it not been for his redeeming love.

And the illustration breaks down because Jesus really was burned for us, wasn't he? Didn't just reach in and pull us out. What did it cost Jesus to save us from eternal torment?

It meant he himself feeling the fire of God's wrath in our behalf. So, dear believer, has God so loved you in Christ? Oh, meditate on it.

Find it to be a theme in your life every day. Give thanks for it. Be glad and rejoice in it. Sing about it.

And tell others about this amazing love of God in Christ.

Our Father in heaven, we do feel that thank you is such a small thing to say in response to such love in Jesus Christ. But we lift up our thanks to you for having loved us so deeply.

[52 : 00] We thank you that we'll never get to the bottom of your love for time or eternity. We thank you that this is the one sure thing that we have in this life and in all eternity that you'll never stop loving us.

Father, this is such a love that none but your loved ones know. And we pray that others might venture on your love, might not fear to draw near in Jesus Christ and to plead for your mercy. because of what he's done for sinners. Draw others to taste and see that you are indeed this loving and kind. And then send us on our way with a song in our hearts and with words on our lips to tell others what you've done in loving us first.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.