

Love of the Saints

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[0 : 00] Well, the godly man's picture. Oh, one other thing before I begin. I was passing out, and you should have received an April missionary prayer guide. So if you didn't, there are more available, I believe, in the back.

Please make sure to pick those up so that we can be praying every day for a missionary. The godly man's picture, it's been a long time. A long time. It's been about a year.

We began to look at the godly man's picture again last week. I don't really remember if it has been said, but the godly man looks like God in some ways.

That's sort of what it means. Specifically, it looks like the God become man, God as man, Jesus Christ.

That's who the godly man looks like. And Jesus Christ is the godly man in perfection. The ideal, the standard, the godly man.

[0 : 59] And it's as we see the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ that we are transformed from glory into glory.

It's as we look upon him and imitate him and are strengthened by him and our hearts are lifted up to him that we begin to take on the shape of the godly man himself.

It's important then to remember we can't start and finish with the godly man with this description in the abstract. We have to actually begin with Jesus Christ himself.

Because if we do, if we begin with the godly man in abstract and we say, okay, the godly man is this and that and now go and do it, pretty soon we would be overwhelmed.

It's been a long time since we began this series, but from the very beginning, we've already looked at 16 features of the godly man.

[2 : 05] 16, that's six more than the Ten Commandments if you need a math lesson. And pretty soon we would say, I can't do this. I can't put on all these like I should.

And we'd give up. We'd say it's too much. So who's sufficient for these things? But I want to begin with giving you some hope, some encouragement, and some perspective.

So here's some hope. The godly man's picture, as Thomas Watson has been describing him, because he's drawing him out, he's drawing him from the scripture. The godly man's picture really did come to life.

He stepped out of the portrait, so to speak. He stepped out of the picture frame. And he walked here among us. And he is alive. We're going to remember that next week with Easter.

He is alive. And he is united to us. He is connected to us. We don't put on any sort of godliness apart from our connection and our union to Jesus Christ.

[3 : 12] Ephesians says that we are one flesh with him. Intimate. What is his is mine. So there's nothing in him that's not already ours.

Let me repeat that. There's nothing in him that is not already ours. Now, we might not have it in actual possession yet, but our names are on it. It belongs to us through our union with him.

And so we don't want to begin and end with the godly man's picture in the abstract. We want to begin with Jesus Christ. We want to begin and end with him as he is already yours.

Jesus Christ is yours. This godly man in perfection belongs to you. So we talked about zeal and patience. Zeal and patience last week.

Well, that is already yours in Christ. And so what we need to do is we need to lay a hold of the zeal and the patience that the Lord has in himself available to us through the Holy Spirit.

[4 : 19] And we need to receive it from him as the vine and the branch, the branch in the vine. We are connected to the zealous, patient man.

So do you need zeal? But the Bible says that zeal for God's house consumed him. He had zeal. And I'm connected to him, including in everything that is his is mine, including Christ's zeal. So what does that end up looking like? Another way to think about it is if he is my husband, then my husband has already stored up for me.

He has in his warehouse everything that I need, all sorts of treasures and wealth for his wife to use. And so then what do we do? We go to him.

And we say, Lord, I need zeal. This moment that I'm in, the situation that I'm in, I need zeal. Or give me some of that patience.

[5 : 23] I am in need of it. Now, is that too bold? It sounds sort of like name it and claim it. It's not really that. It's more like union and communion.

But is that too bold? I don't think so. I want you to I want to read a quote from Wilhelmus Brockle. And he wrote a very well-loved and well-used book called *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. And it's a four-volume, very practical, very devotional, systematic theology that he wrote for ordinary Christians. And I want you to listen to what he wrote.

Because now he's in the middle of a section on our union with Christ and our communion with Christ, with the godly man. And now he comes to the section with, well, what does that look like to live in union and communion with him?

How do you actually live out this communion? Does it have hands and feet? And his answer is definitely yes. How does the soul do communion with Jesus Christ?

[6 : 34] And this is what he writes. He says, by making use of his strength and all his benefits as her own.

This is how the soul does communion with Jesus Christ. By making use of his strength and all his benefits as her own. The believing soul knows that she may avail herself of Jesus' benefits.

That this is pleasing to him. This is not an imposition for us to ask, to seek, to trust, to depend, to call on him. This is pleasing to him. And that he has given them to her for that very purpose.

If a sin has been committed, she will flee to the blood of Jesus. If she has polluted herself, she will go to him as the fountain to be washed. If she is weak, she will take hold of his strength.

And in union with Jesus, will overcome all resistance. Doing whatever is according to Jesus' will. By his strength, she is encouraged.

[7 : 43] She boasts of his benefits as being her own. And she presents herself as possessing light and life, strength, riches, glory, and all things in him.

That's what the communion and union looks like. We see that whatever is in Jesus Christ, he is now signed over and made available to us. And we then pray it out of him.

We take it out of the storehouse. We depend upon it. His strength is mine. His love is mine. His light, life, riches, and glory are mine. And by faith, I ask him to give me what is mine.

I ask him to give me what is ours together as we share it. So we aren't stealing from him. We're using what he's made available to us. And he's pleased with that.

Now, that's big. That's essential because what we're moving into today is the godly man's picture.

[8 : 51] Today is a big one. The godly man loves the saints. Loves the saints. And this is how you know if you're spiritually alive.

We've looked at a lot of different features. But this is why I'm saying this is a big one. Jesus doesn't ever say the world will know you by your knowledge or your zeal or your patience.

As important as those are. How will the world know that we are his disciples? What's the answer? By the way we love the brothers.

We love each other. Do you remember what 1 John 3.14 says? How do we know that we've passed from death to life? Do you see this is essential? Not by our zeal. How do we know that we've passed?

That we have actually gone from being spiritually dead to spiritually alive? What does he say? It's because we love our brothers.

[9 : 57] This is absolutely essential. And all religion is completely dead and worthless without this. For anyone, this is what John says, For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

If religion at its very, very, very, very core is, I love God. It's love for God. We can't say we love God if we don't love the actual brothers and sisters that we live with.

That we see. That we're with. 1 Corinthians 13 says you can have all kinds of zeal for holiness. You can have zeal for orthodoxy.

You can have knowledge and understanding such that, he says, you can understand all mysteries and all knowledge. So you know everything there is to know about this book.

But if you have not love, you don't love the brothers, then what does he say? You are nothing.

[11:07] Nothing. In other words, I'm going to be so bold because the Bible is so bold. It doesn't matter whatever else you have in the godly man's picture. Without love, you're not godly.

You're not godly. Because isn't that 1 Corinthians 13? So our picture, without love for the brothers, our picture is not just missing a minor bit of color.

It's not just a few shades off of what it should be. You really don't have a picture at all. You probably don't know who Jackson Pollock is, but you've seen probably his work.

He's one of those artists that people pay millions of dollars for that they just dribble paint on the canvas. And there it is, this huge, big canvas.

And it has all these colors. And there's no shape. There's no form. It's just all this color. That's what you have if you don't have love. You just have random bits of things that look maybe someday like godliness.

[12:18] But you're missing the very shape of godliness. You're missing the very outline, the very picture. You're missing God.

Because God is love. And so the godly man loves the saints. He loves the saints.

Not in theory, but in reality. Not just with words, but in truth and action. Now, we want to see this in Jesus Christ. I want to begin with a picture of hope.

And a picture of, okay, there are certain challenges to loving the saints. But we are not left without resources. We are not left without the living vine and the flowing fountain.

And so we want to begin with Christ. Because he's our example. He's our help. He's our source.

The love that we need for our brothers and sisters, for all of the saints, is first found in Jesus Christ.

[13:16] Because we do love only because he first loved us. So, how has he? And I want to open the floor for you. And I want to encourage you to just say what you think.

So, how does he love the saints? Does Christ have any love for the saints? And I think the answer is yes.

So, what is that? How does he love us? How does he love us? Anyone? Let's just throw some things out there. With his discipline. With his discipline. Yeah.

We're going to, at the very end of this, or near the end of our lesson here, every rod of correction is love.

And it's encouraging us to love. We're going to see that. Every rod of correction has a shout inside of it that says, love the brothers. So, in our discipline.

[14:15] Roger, you have your... By his kind providence is to us. By his kind providence to us. Very good. Very good. Do you have more to say? Okay.

What else? Communication. Open doors. He's not hidden himself such that he doesn't talk to us.

Let's keep going. He gave himself for us. No greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. And he gave himself for us.

All. All of himself. Withholding nothing back. How else? This should be tons of stuff. He intercedes for us.

This is present love. Cross might be past love. Right now he is in heaven interceding for us. Now, see, let me ask you.

[15:16] If someone is interceding for someone else, what does that say? Let me see how I can say this. Like, are we on? We're on his heart. I guess I'm going to just say it. We're on his heart.

Our concerns. Our trouble. Our souls. Our situation. Is on his heart. He's thinking about us. How many are his thoughts towards us?

What else? He's patient with us. Yeah. So patient. You're in love.

You're patient. Love is patient. First Corinthians 13. That's how it begins. Yeah.

Mercy. I mean, that stretches from mercy on us for our sin to what Roger was talking about. We're suffering.

[16:15] This is difficult. And he sees us in this difficulty and he lifts us up. He's merciful to us. How else?

His ears are attended to my prayers. His ears are attended to my prayers. This is what sort of related to what Steve was talking about. He's interceding, but he's hearing from us. And more than that, he cares. How else does Jesus love the saints? He delights in us and rejoices in us.

Yeah. Sometimes I think we think of love as to there's not enough delight. Like if you love someone, you delight in them. You rest in them.

You find a light in them. I love my wife and she doesn't need to do anything. I just like being with her. Is Jesus love smaller than my love?

[17 : 22] No. Well, we could go on. And I hope this stirs up.

And I hope you're thinking of things and you're just, you're not, you're not being bold enough to answer. I hope you're thinking of a lot of things. How does Jesus love the saints? That's it's he loves us with all that he has.

And a lot of this is connected to what we see and how the godly man loves the saints. Our love for the saints is not something completely distant and foreign to how Jesus Christ loves the saints.

And so I want you to drink this then. And I want you to dwell on this because this is how he loves you. And so he is not telling you to do something that he himself is not presently doing for you and towards you.

He is loving you. And so we want to give what we have received. That's our next point. And this is where we're going to spend most of our time.

[18 : 29] How does the godly man love the saints? How does the godly man love the saints? And I'm just going to start going here. Thomas Watson opens up his machine gun and just starts firing.

And we're not going to take very long. But I hope that it will at least be suggestive to you. So first, he loves them especially. He loves them especially.

The holy ones that are in the land are my delight. David said. Augustine said the bond of the spirit is closer than the bond of blood.

If Christ has loved them especially and that he laid down his life for them especially and singularly, we should love them especially. So there should be greater love for the saints than just for ordinary people that we meet.

We should have a special love for them. Second, the godly man loves the saints sincerely.

Sincerely. So especially and sincerely.

[19 : 37] What do I mean by sincerely? What does that mean? If you love someone sincerely, you love them for real.

Genuinely. You're not putting on something. 1 John 3.18. Let us not love with words or tongue or words indeed, but with action and in truth.

Not just with words, but with sincerity. Not just pretend, but in reality. Love comes from the heart. It's something that we do from the very core of our being.

We love. And this love that we have for the saints is not something that's just like we go through the motions, but it does have a beginning.

It's sourced here in my heart. And I really do love them. You know, there's many that claim love. But they really are after something else.

[20 : 38] Pharisees claimed love. Then they devoured widows' houses. That is the way of false teachers.

They claim love. And their followers drink it up. But really, they are wolves claiming to be friends with the sheep.

Wolves and sheep can't be friends. Because wolves have this desire to consume the sheep. They want something from the sheep. And false teachers are wolves. And they claim to be friends.

But in reality, what is going on is something different. That they're looking to use these people.

Sincerely means in reality. It's not painted on.

It's from the heart. Third, the godly man loves them spiritually. He loves them spiritually. What does that mean? It means we must love the saints because they are saints.

[21 : 39] There's spiritual reasons behind this love. There's spiritual realities behind this love. It's not because of what they can do for us. And it's not because they are likable or lovable all the time.

And not because they've been kind to us. Or they have loved us in return. But Christ has loved them. That's a spiritual reason. Christ has set them apart.

And they are going to be filled with glory someday. And so now we love them while they are works in progress.

You know, this is the only chance that you're going to get to love a saint while he's unfinished. But we love them for what they will be.

They're going to be radiant children of God. And we love them for what they are, even presently. Temples of the Holy Spirit. United to Jesus Christ.

[22 : 44] And so I love them for what is true about them spiritually. Fourth, the godly man loves all the saints. This is going to be our biggest point.

Because this is the point of greatest difficulty and biggest obstacles. The godly man loves all the saints. This is really where we do need to lean into Jesus Christ.

Because, you know, it is true. Some people are just more likable and more lovable and are easier to get along with. They are, just to our natural man, easier to love.

That's just true. That's not... We get along better with others. But this is where we do need to lean into Jesus Christ.

And we need to see that Jesus Christ loves them. And he has a special love. And he has a sacrificial love. And he has present, ongoing love for them.

[23 : 46] And so I need to love them. Watson says this, A Christian in this life is like a good face full of freckles. Apparently freckles were not something that was looked on as beautiful.

My wife has freckles and she's pretty cute. So I don't know what he's talking about. A Christian in this life is like a good face full of freckles. You who cannot love another because of his imperfections have never yet seen your own face in the mirror.

You haven't seen your own face. So your sister's infirmities. And what do we put in the category of infirmities? You know, we can put in the category of infirmities, just weakness, lack of grace, and even sin.

We all have sins that we struggle with that are difficult for us. So your sister's infirmities should make you pity her.

Love pities weakness. Love pities the person struggling. Even if it's struggling in something ugly.

[25 : 09] Hate scorns weakness. Hate scorns the sinner. So don't hate because he or she is sinful and weak.

Pity them. And love him for what he is and what he's going to be. He's not always going to have all these freckles. He's not going to have all this all the time forever and ever.

Christ pities us in our sinful weakness. And that's why he helps us. And that's why when we sin for the 500th time, we come to him and we plead for mercy.

And he gives us mercy. Because he pities us in our weakness. So, his love is pity joined with power.

So, we love all the saints, even the ones we disagree with. Another Christian very well may disagree with us on some things.

[26 : 15] Surprise, surprise. And so, right now, it seems very apropos to ask the question, how are you doing? Because now has been a very contentious time. Lots of problems and questions and disagreements and difficulties and, you know, even our local setting and the broader setting and the world.

How are you doing? Are you loving those you disagree with? You know, if you only love the people that you agree with, pretty soon, you know who the only person you're loving?

Yourself. So, why do they disagree with us? Let's think about that. Why do they disagree with us?

Well, they disagree with us for one of two reasons. Either they have more light than we do or they have less light than we do. They have more understanding or less understanding.

God has given them a better view of things or God has not given them a better view of things than us. They understand more or they understand less. Now, that's why we disagree because we have different understandings of things.

[27 : 29] Different levels of understanding. Different depths of understanding. Now, so they either have more or less. In love, what should our first thought be? That they have more love or more light or less light than we do?

What should be our first inclination in a disagreement? That they don't know as much as us or maybe they know something we don't know. Someone help me out.

Sorry, like three people talked all at once. Yeah. So, we should look at ourself and say, oh, I probably, I know my weakness.

I probably am missing something here. Maybe I'm missing something here. Our first thought should be that they have more light. They understand and know things that maybe I don't know yet. That's what love does.

That's the inclination. We should withhold judgment until we at least talk to them. Or at least try to dig in and figure it out. But however it turns out, you know, love is not saying they always know more than I do.

[28 : 39] That's not, because that's just not true. But however it turns out, if they have more light than I do or less light than I do, I should love them. If he has more light than I do, if he understands some things that I don't understand, then who am I to criticize?

Right? I'm criticizing from a point of ignorance. And if it's because he has less light than I do, then I ought to bear with that person in love. I ought to bear with them as the weaker vessel.

So connected to that, the godly man loves the saints when their graces are more than his and even less than his. We have a hard time with this.

I have a hard time with this. What do I mean? Well, here's a pastor and he has greater gifts than I do. A greater audience, greater ability.

What should I do if I love them? What should I do if I love him? Well, I should thank God for blessing him. I should be happy with the gifts and the graces that God has given that man.

[29 : 49] You know, Christ is honored in that. My brother is blessed. God is using him. And I should be happy in that. And if he has less gifts or graces than I do, then should I look down on him?

No, what makes me to differ? I should love him. If you think about it again, let's go back to Jesus Christ.

It says, the Bible says he had the fullness of the Holy Spirit poured out on him. There was no grace lacking. No gift lacking.

Every gift was perfect. He looked down on every man as far as giftedness went. He was Mount Everest.

And no matter how high any other mountain went, it wasn't as high as he was. Did he scorn the disciples because they weren't him? No.

[30 : 52] He loved them. He encouraged them. He gave them things to do. He sent them out two by two. And when they came back, he celebrated what the Lord was doing with them. He encouraged them in their gifts.

He honed their gifts. He thanked God for what he was doing in their lives. That's what we should do. We should be happy with what the Lord has given people.

Not look down on them. You know, this is really quite a thing. Pride will eat on anything. Pride will come to the table, the royal table, and eat the finest of foods.

And pride will go down to the roadkill and eat that too. It doesn't matter. Pride will eat on anything. It's quite a thing. I'll envy and be really bothered when one man has more gifts than I do.

And then I'll look down on a brother who has less than I do. That's just pride. It's not love. So I envy him and I scorn him.

[31 : 55] Well, love is loving both. So that's number four. It loves all the saints. The godly man, number five. The fifth point, the godly man appreciates and delights in the saints.

This is what Pastor John was talking about. Love really honors and delights in them. Psalm 15, four is this picture of who's the godly man? Who can come into the Lord's presence?

Who can come in the temple? Who does the Lord approve of? Who's this godly man? And it says he despises a vile man and yet honors those who fear the Lord. Honors. He says, these people are high in my esteem.

These people, I raise up. So who's worthy of honor in your life? Who's worthy of honor? The rich? The funny?

The clever? Those we agree with? Those who think like we do? So who do you say, man, that guy is something else.

[32 : 57] He is special. I really like him. Well, the godly man honors those who fear the Lord. The godly man honors.

He esteems the saints. The saints aren't just lowly in his sight. The godly man lifts them up.

Watson says that we are to look upon the wicked as lumber and the saints as jewels. I know a thing or two about lumber.

I spent months and years putting loads of lumber on trucks and they were driven out to some muddy work site and that truck just lifted up and the whole thing slid down in the big pile of mud. It was all banded up. It didn't go everywhere. But, you know, and then they left it. Half the time, no one was even on the work site. We never put jewels or anything expensive on this truck and just dumped it onto a dirty work site.

[34 : 05] One is treasured. The other is common. The godly man treasures the saints. Christ treasures the saints.

And we do too. They're high in his heart. They're high in our heart. Six, the godly man loves the saints and spends time with them. The godly man loves the saints and spends time with them. Matthew 8 tells the story of two men who lived, two demon-possessed men who lived among the tombs. They lived with the dead.

Godly men prefer to live among the living. Godly men prefer to be with the living, not with the dead. So who do you like to spend time with?

You know, that question needs to be broadened out because in Watson's day and for a long time spending time meant literally physically spending time with people.

[35 : 12] In the age of the internet, in the age of interconnection, in the age of I can spend time with anyone and everyone practically, any kinds of people, any sort of people.

So who do you like to spend time with? Who do you like to spend your online time with? What kind of people are they? Where do you find the godly man? You'll find him with the saints.

You'll find him with his people because Christ meets with his people. We want to meet with his people. The godly man likes to meet with God's people.

And so again, what does that look like? It looks like spending time together. Now, today, this kind of day, Sunday, but not just Sunday, any kind of day.

You know, there isn't any kind of rule. It's not in the confession. It's not in our Bible anywhere that you can only have hospitality on Sunday afternoons. You know, Friday nights work great and informal times work great.

[36 : 20] Fun times work great. You know, when you're dating and when you love someone, it's not all formal time. It's not all planned out time. It's not all serious.

Most of the time it is informal. People are realizing, you know, like maybe 20, 25 years ago, everyone was really pumping the idea of quality time, quality time, quality time.

And people are now realizing there's really no, there's no, you can't exchange quality time for quantity time. Quantity time is usually better.

quality time is good, quality time is maybe better. So if anything in the last year that has happened, it should make us hungry to be with the saints.

If it's done the opposite, I'm afraid that it's not worked itself out correctly in our hearts. Love is real. Love is real. And if it's real, you want to spend time with the person that you love with or you love.

[37 : 30] Seventh, the godly man shows his love. We're almost done here. The godly man demonstrates his love. God demonstrates his own love for us in this.

It wasn't hidden love. It wasn't secret love. It was love in action. Watson says we should be ready to do all offices to them. He means whatever that they need, we should be ready to do.

Vindicate their good names. Contribute to their necessities. Or like the good Samaritan, pour oil and wine into their wounds. We need each other.

I need you. I need you to love me. I need you to show me that love. And it's going to look different at different times, but love for the saints will not be dead and inactive.

It will demonstrate itself. You know, Jesus never takes a day off from loving his people. He never takes a moment off of loving his people. He has this constant burning desire to do them good and he does them good.

[38 : 36] And so, we too have to be busy loving God's people. Paul wrote to the Galatians, you, my brothers, were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh, but serve one another in love.

God saved you. God's forgiven you. God's given you freedom. Freedom to do what? To just indulge, do what I want? No, to love. To love them.

To love these people. Then he goes on, if you keep biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, live by the Spirit. Notice how all that is all pretty much connected there.

Loving God's people is what it looks like to live by the Spirit. It's not some sort of mystic feeling or something like that. It's living in the sense that God loves me.

He's set me free. He's poured out his love in me. And now I'm going to do the same. Now, as we end here, that's number seven. It's demonstrated. As we end here, I want you to think with me for a minute about how evil it is not to love the saints.

[39 : 45] How evil it is. The saints are Christ's lambs.

He died for them. And will you disregard them? He gave his life to save them, to deliver them. Will you bite and devour them? The saints are your brothers and sisters. How terrible it is to not love your brothers and sisters.

You know, back to the wolf and the sheep, the lamb there. It's not unusual for a wolf to bother, to harass, to bite, devour a lamb.

But a lamb that harasses another lamb, that's unnatural. It's wicked. Think about how foolish it is to not love them.

[40 : 46] The world hates us. The world hates us. It's hard for everyone. Should we hate each other too? You know, we have enemies all around and they will gladly put away their hostility to hate us.

will we be so foolish as to put away our love to hate each other? It's foolish. And then he says, now is not the time.

Think about how poor of a timing it is to love the saints. What do I mean? Well, here we are. We're in this together. The world, the water is boiling around us.

The world is, is against us. We're in this, so to speak, common disaster together. You know, we're like soldiers in France in World War I.

We're in the trenches. We are fighting. Now is not the time to turn our guns against each other. Now is not the time to do that.

[41 : 50] We're all in this together. Why does the Lord put saints together into affliction? Well, it's so that they, they would melt together.

You put two metals into a furnace in order that they would melt together. That's what God is doing. Chrysostom, the ancient Christian preacher, said, God uses affliction like a shepherd's dog to make all the sheep run together.

Satan wants affliction to divide us and to separate us. God is using it to draw us together. So here's where we're going to end.

We're out of time. We started with Christ's love for us. We started there because we need to see all of these things that I mentioned. We can, at every single point, Jesus loves us like that.

And there is grace for us to love each other like that. And we, it's stored up in Christ for us. And so we need to pray it out of Christ's warehouse.

[43 : 08] We need to, we need to see it in Christ. We need to get it from Christ. And then we need to pour it out on our brothers and sisters. We don't want to be cul-de-sacs of love.

We want to be aqueducts, pipelines, channels of love. So we get it from Christ and we give it to our brothers and sisters. We give it to the very people that are here.

Well, we're dismissed. We're dismissed. And we're dismissed.