

The Powerful Effects of God's Love

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 7, we'll begin reading in verse 36. Our Lord Jesus is preaching, and so we're breaking in in the middle of a sermon, and he says, be merciful.

Wait a second, I'm in the wrong chapter. Luke chapter 7, verse 36. Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

And when a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears.

Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them. And when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, if this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is.

She is a sinner. Jesus answered him, Simon, I have something to tell you. Tell me, teacher, he said. Two men owed money to a certain moneylender.

[1 : 16] One owed him 500 denarii and the other 50. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, and so he canceled the debts of both.

Now which of them will love him more? Simon replied, I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled. You have judged correctly, Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet.

But she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss. But this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.

You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven, for she loved much.

[2 : 20] But he who has been forgiven little, loves little. Then Jesus said to her, Your sins are forgiven. The other guests began to say among themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?

And Jesus said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Last week, we considered John 3.16, and we found ourselves meditating on God's staggering love gift of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes on him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

And we saw that everything about this love gift is amazing. The love of God the Father who gave this gift is amazing. The recipient of this love gift to whom he gave it, a condemned and hostile world in rebellion against him.

The costly gift itself. Not an angel, but God's one and only Son. The Son he delighted in. The Son he loved so well.

[3 : 36] And then what he gave him up to, the hellish death of the cross. And the difference it makes in whoever receives Jesus Christ and believes in him.

That they shall not perish. They shall not perish in an everlasting hell under God's wrath. But she'll have everlasting life, which is to know you, the living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom you've sent.

And to enjoy this loving friendship and fellowship for all eternity. I say everything about this love gift is amazing. And when it amazes us, it has a profound effect upon us.

And that's what I want us to look at this morning. And I have four points about the powerful effect of God's love in Jesus Christ.

The first thing is, is that there is such a thing as the love of God felt in our affections. You know, it's one thing to nod the head to the love of God and say, I know that.

[4 : 47] I can read. But it clearly can have no effect upon such a person. It's no big thing to them.

It does nothing to them. It doesn't move their affections. It doesn't change their will or the way that they live. There's is just a bare, cold, intellectual fact in the head about God's love.

Oh, but it's an altogether different thing. Another thing to have the love of God in Christ melting our affections, moving our will, motivating us to live a whole new life for him who loved us.

And I wonder which it is for you this morning. What is this love of God, this love of God in Jesus Christ to you? Is it just a bare fact in your head or is it a burning coal in your heart?

A fact you're not agreement to or a reality that has gripped your affections and will not let you go. That's shaping your life, changing what you do and what you don't do.

[6 : 07] this love of God in Jesus Christ. I want to begin this morning by showing you that the Bible holds out the latter, this idea of God's love being a burning coal in our heart.

It holds that out as a reality for the ordinary Christian to experience and to enjoy the felt love of God in Jesus Christ.

that this is something that should be happening as our response to this amazing love.

And though the degrees of it will vary and the expressions of it will look different and the burning sense of it may wax and wane, yet this is to be the normal Christian life and experience.

And I want to begin with the Apostle Paul and his testimony about the difference that Christ's love made in his life. It's 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verses 14 and 15.

[7 : 13] This would be our big text that we'll take off from. We'll not spend our whole time with it, but it's Paul's testimony about this very question. What did the love of Christ do to him?

And he tells us here in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verses 14 and 15 and what it was doing for him at this very moment as he wrote the letter to the Corinthians.

For Christ's love compels us because we're convinced that one died for all and therefore all died. And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Notice Paul says this is not only something that was true of him, but of us. The love of Christ compels us. It's for all of God's people, for all of those for whom he died and who in his death died to sin as well and because of his death also live.

This love does something for us. He says it compels us. It constrains us. It lays hold of us. It grips us and it won't let us go.

[8 : 35] It motivates us. It moves us. And so here it's not so much you getting a grip on God's love as God's love getting a grip on you and holding you and compelling you to live differently.

No longer for yourself, but now for him who died for you. Can you see that Christ's love was no mere nod of the head to Paul as sure, I believe that.

No, this love grabbed his heart and it moved Paul to live for an entirely different reason. His life took on a whole different orbit, not now orbiting around himself, but orbiting around Jesus Christ and his will for his life.

It's actually powerfully shaping Paul's life, he's telling us. It's controlling him. He's a man under the power of this love, under the life-changing control of this love in Christ.

And it left Paul a drastically different man than it found him. It transformed his whole life, he's saying. Of course, any knowledge of the New Testament reminds us of what he was.

[9 : 56] A persecutor, a blasphemer, a violent man, breathing out slaughter against the church of Christ. And he comes to know firsthand on the road to Damascus this love of Jesus Christ.

And it grabbed him and it made him a different man. He never got over it that the Son of God loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2.20 He puts it all down to this compelling, controlling love of Christ for him. That's it. When he writes to the Roman church, he says in chapter 5 and verse 5 about the hope that every Christian has that this hope does not disappoint us.

It's not like the world's hope. They hope for many things only to be disappointed. Here's a hope that does not disappoint us. Our hope in Christ. Why not? Because God has poured out his love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he's given us.

There is a supernatural love of God in Christ that is supernaturally revealed to the believer by the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 14] He pours out, not just sprinkles a little bit, but pours out great quantities of this love of God. Where does he pour? Into our hearts. Into our affections.

So that we get it. You see, it's the Spirit of God that makes the difference between a knot of the head agreement to the love of God and the love of God is a burning coal in our hearts.

How does it get there? Holy Spirit that keeps pouring it in to our hearts. This God in Christ loves me. And that's a love that will not let me go and that's why my hope in him will never disappoint me.

The Holy Spirit opening our eyes that we might see what? Wonderful things in your law. Wonderful things.

Like what? Well, is there anything more wonderful, full of wonder than the love of God in Christ? And it's the Spirit of God who opens our eyes as Christians to it.

[12 : 17] And it becomes a prayer for us every time we open the book. Open my eyes, Lord, I want to see Jesus. I want to see his love. And that's exactly one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit to us, to pour that love into our hearts so that we stand before it in wonder, in awe.

Dumbstruck. That's what Paul prays for the churches that he planted. The believers in those churches, ordinary people like you and me, sinners redeemed by the blood of the Lamb on Calvary.

Ephesians 3, 16 to 19. I pray that the Father may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being. What do we need?

This power of the Holy Spirit in our inner being. What do we need that power for? That you, being rooted and established in love, roots going down deep into the love of God in Christ may have power.

There it is again. This power, this power together with all the saints. It's something we all need. Power for what? Power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.

[13 : 40] knowledge. He wants us to know how deep the Father's love for us is. And he wants us to know how deep the Son of God's love for us is.

And he wants that love to do something to us to fill us with all the fullness of God. That's more than a cold intellectual agreement that God loves us.

No, this is a supernatural, powerful, revelation to our hearts. And that includes your affections. The heart in the Bible includes your mind as it thinks and the affections as they desire and yearn and long for and the will, the heart.

That's where the Spirit by his power makes us to know this amazing love of God in Christ. remember what John said in 1 John chapter 3 and verse 1 about this love. Behold. It's like stop. Time out. Stop and look.

[14 : 49] Draw aside and wonder. Behold, what manner of love that the Father has loved us with that we should be called the children of God and that is what we are.

Behold. Come closer. Like Moses as he looks and it's a bush on fire but it's not being consumed and he beholds it.

He comes closer. He wants to see this strange sight. That's what John's telling us. Behold. This isn't something ordinary. This kind of love is not something you usually see.

The bush is usually consumed. Love is usually for self. But look at this love. Behold it. You know, it's the same expression that the disciples when John says what manner of love is this?

It's what the disciples said when they were on the stormy sea and they woke Jesus up because they thought they were going to drown and Jesus just spoke a word and suddenly there was peace and they said what manner of man is this that even the wind and waves obey?

[16 : 03] That's what John's saying. What manner of love? What kind of love is this? Behold it. Be amazed at it. Well, we could go on and on but that should be enough to prove my point from scripture that there is such a thing as a true Christian experience of the love of God that is more than just cold intellectual facts in the mind but is a hot burning coal in the affections.

It's something to be felt as well as told the Scots would say and that's why this heart this warm hearted experience of God's love has ever been the theme of hymn writers and worshiping congregations down through the ages.

Those who have tasted this love of God in Christ have found this above all else tunes their joyful songs of praise. What wondrous love is this oh my soul?

Do you see something of the wonder in the hymn that that is the song that is what is this? Amazing love how can it be that thou my God should die for me?

That's not just a nod of the head God loves no this is something that has me stunned has me amazed that this kind of love of God's one and only son should die for me.

[17 : 29] He's lost in wonder love and praise. To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry.

Well he says could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made were every stalk every blade of grass on earth a quill a pen and every man on the earth a scribe by trade to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky.

Oh love of God how rich how pure how measureless and strong it shall forever more endure the saints and the angels song.

It's what we love to sing about. This amazing love I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and I wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean.

Oh how marvelous how wonderful how full of wonder is my Savior's love for me. Do you marvel at it? Are you ever struck full of wonder staggered in amazement pinching yourself to be sure you're not dreaming that this is real?

[18 : 51] Can it be? Ever melted by that love? Ever motivated by it? Moved by it? Well you say I'm not the emotional type.

Oh does that mean you never get emotional over your sports team? Or never get emotional about political issues or issues at work?

Or a movie? that reduces you to tears? Or your children? Your grandchildren? No emotion? Just heart of stone? That's what you're saying? Not the emotional type?

No the truth is we're all made in the image of God. That means we have mind affections and will. We have affections. We have something that's answerable to those perfections of God's heart without any of the imperfections of our emotions.

we have something of that about us. Affections. And yes you have emotions and you have affections.

[19 : 54] And though their expressions differ from person to person we all have them. And did you know there's nothing greater in life to move those affections than this love of God in Christ Jesus.

nothing bigger for which your affections were made than this. Have you thought about it? Why did God make us with affections?

Well it's a wonderful thing to love and be loved as a husband and a wife and as a mom and dad and children and church people. But did you know the highest exercise and use of your affections is to taste the love of God in Christ and to return that love to him.

A great preacher and theologian and seminary professor was asked once what to him was the greatest truth in the Bible. And without pausing or missing a beat he said that Jesus loves me.

This I know for the Bible tells me so. The greatest mystery. The grandest thing of all.

[21 : 07] Something I can't get to the bottom of it. It's way over my head. But neither is it something that I can leave alone. It's captured my affections. It's something I must keep plumbing the depths.

I'm wanting to know more and more of this love. I'm wanting to taste it. I'm wanting to be moved by it. I'm wanting to be compelled by it. there is such a thing in Christian experience ordinary Christian experience as the felt love of God in Christ warming our hearts.

Jesus loves me and I guess that says it all. Does it say it all to you? Is that everything to you? Is that as good as it gets? He loves me.

He loves me. And if I'm his child I can know that he loved me from everlasting to everlasting. That he's taken hold of me with a love that will never let me go.

So that's our first point. There's such a thing as feeling the love of God in our affections. Second point this morning. God's love for us in Christ has this wonderful effect of inflaming our love for him.

[22 : 22] I think that you know that by experience if you're a Christian. But we also know it because of 1 John 4 19 that says we love him because he first loved us.

So our love for him was ignited by his love for us. And our love for him will keep warm and will warm itself at the fire of his love for us.

You see there's something supernatural there. I would almost say magical. It is miraculous something miraculous about the love of God. It does something.

It affects something. It creates love here. It elicits love from here. It evokes love. Now we can see this in the dim shadows of human love.

love. When a husband loves his wife like Christ loved the church and he gives himself for her. There's something in that love that evokes love back to him.

[23 : 31] And that's just a dim shadow of what happens between us and God. It's the great dynamic of what his love does for us under the power of the Holy Spirit.

it inflames our love for him. Now how important is our love for God then? Well there's no greater commandment is there?

This is the most important thing of all. That I love God. And that I love him with all my heart. And all my soul and all my strength and all my mind.

Indeed this is the heart and essence of all of God's commandments. This is the summary of all that God expects from me that I love him wholeheartedly. That's a big deal.

In fact all the other commandments are simply spelling out what does it mean to love God with all my heart? What will that look like?

[24 : 33] And such wholehearted whole soul love simply will not be produced by a cold bare fact that says God loves me. No it will be produced by a heart that is amazed that God loves him.

It is in wonder that God loves her. So anything that will help me love God wholeheartedly I want more of it. And here it is. It's his love for me that inflames mine for his.

So that's the second point. Now let's see in the third place. Some of the many things that that this love of Christ producing love back to him will do in my life.

What will it do for you? How it will what it will empower you to do? Well we've just seen how it will first of all move us to obey his commands. The hard ones as well as the easy ones.

Loving your enemies as well as loving your your brother and sister in church. this love will empower us to keep his commands.

[25 : 39] Isn't that what Jesus says? If you love me you will obey my commandments. Indeed loving him is the main ingredient of every commandment.

Have you thought of that? So children when it says honor your father and mother the main ingredient in that commandment is to love God and because you love God you will love your parents.

You will honor them. You will obey them. It's the summary of the whole set of commandments and it's also the main ingredient in all our obedience to his commandment.

We love God. Did you think of that the next time you're struggling to obey a command or not? Don't just think on the horizontal level but this is one way that I love God in return to his great love for me.

And that's what the love of God produces in the hearts of his people. Secondly our love for Christ will set us free from sins reigning power in our lives. It's being gripped by Christ's love and loving him in response that changed the whole purpose of Paul's life.

[26 : 51] He told us it compelled me it motivated me to no longer live for myself. isn't that the very heart of our sin that we live for ourselves instead of for him and we say what power is this?

What's strong enough to mortify a life of self love of self indulgence of self rule and self will answer nothing but the love for Christ that is fired by his love for us.

That's why Thomas Chalmers entitled a sermon on 1st John 2:17 the expulsive power of a new affection. What he was saying there is the only way to be to free your heart from loving the world.

Is to expel it by the power of a new love. Your love for the heavenly father. And that if the love of the heavenly father is reigning in your heart.

you will not stay in love with the world. Love for him powerfully expels all rival loves.

[28 : 01] It ejects them from the heart's throne. It drives them out by force. It's a powerful thing. This love of God. This new affection for God.

And it grows out of his affection and love for us. So there's no rejection of sin. There's no killing of sin. There's no saying no to temptation that will last without this stronger love pushing you to reject its temptations in your life.

There's no lasting restraint on the love of the world but by the greater love for God. don't we have to confess that our lack of obedience is really just exposing a lack of love for the father for his son.

We've not loved him as we ought nor cared that we are loved by him. We've not been amazed at his love for us.

We've we've been ho-hum about it and just taking it for granted. And that's when we go astray into forbidden paths seeking forbidden loves.

[29 : 14] You see though this love for Christ has power to set us free from the power of sin. But thirdly love for God oils the wheels of service to God. It oils the wheels of service to God.

You remember Jacob. his mother said you need to go back to my family and seek a wife for yourself there. And so he goes and he sees Rachel and immediately he falls in love with her.

And he's willing to serve seven years as a shepherd under her father Laban to get her. That would probably be good for marriages today.

And don't get any fanciful ideas about being a shepherd. Oh that'd be an easy life. You just lay down in the grass and just drum your fingers all day long while the sheep graze.

Right? No. Wrong. The occupation of shepherd was detestable to the Egyptians.

[30 : 16] Remember that? It was beneath them to spend their lives hanging out with dumb sheep who love to wander off and get into trouble ever throwing themselves into dangerous path.

And on top of that Jacob explained his work as a shepherd with these words. The heat consumed me. In the daytime and the cold at night and sleep fled from my eyes.

You want a job where you can sleep? Forget about being a shepherd. You want a job where you're comfortable? Forget about being a shepherd whether it's day or night. You're either going to be too cold or too hot.

What? Seven years of it. Seven years of it. But listen to what Genesis 30 and verse 20 says. Jacob served seven years to get Rachel but they seemed only like a few days to him because of his love for her.

What will make 2,555 days and nights of such hard service seem like only a few days. The power of love.

[31 : 31] The things we do for love. I remember a certain man in this congregation when he was engaged and the love of his fiancée for him was more than just a cold mere intellectual fact.

It so gripped him. He was starry eyed. He was like a boxer stunned that she loved him. And so moved was he that he wore a tie to church and it had her face emblazoned right on it.

And I think Evie that if you had grabbed Steve's tie that was round around his neck that you could have led him anywhere you wanted him to go and he would have done anything that you wanted him to do to serve you.

the things we do for love. And service, hard service seems like just a few days when it was 2,555 days.

Now that's why I had Luke chapter 7 read where Jesus goes into the house of Simon the Pharisee and an immoral woman who had been forgiven much by Jesus already comes in and stands at his feet and weeps.

[32 : 39] and her tears splash onto his feet as she's standing as they're reclining at the table and splash onto his feet and she gets down and she wipes his feet with her hair and she kisses them and anoints them with perfume.

And of course Simon says, I know that Jesus is no prophet sent from God. If he were, he'd know who it is that's touching him and what a sinner she is and how she's defiling him.

And Jesus had a word for Simon, didn't he? She was serving Christ because she loved him and that was the very thing that Simon lacked, love for Christ.

And it showed up all over in his life. When I came into your house, Simon, you didn't even serve me with the customary kindness that is always shown to guests.

You gave me no water for my feet to wash in, but she's wet them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no customary kiss on the cheek, but she's not stopped kissing my feet.

[33 : 54] And you, you gave me no oil to refresh my head, but she's perfumed my feet. And she served much, you see, because she loved much. And why'd she love so much?

Because she'd been forgiven so much. And that made the love of Jesus amazing to her. And she served him as no one else had seen in that house that day.

So how is your service for Christ going? Maybe the way that you serve one another, you serve him by serving one another.

That's one way you serve him. How's it going? Are you growing weary and doing good without love or with little love? Service becomes a grind and nothing so oils the wheels of service to Christ as the love of Christ.

Do you know what a person will do for the love of Jesus in her heart? There's no telling. follow the Apostle Paul around for one testimony.

[35 : 02] Just follow him around as you read the book of Acts and the letters that he wrote to churches and say, this is what the love of Christ compelling a man will do to a man and how he will serve Christ because of such love for Christ.

Love will even make a man willing to die for the one who died for him. So great is love. That was the Apostle Paul.

That was most all of the original apostles. Perhaps all but John as tradition says. Many martyrs have gone to the fiery stake and there have confessed that they will die for the one who died for them.

So great is love and so great their love for him in return. I told you before of the two Margaret's that were martyred during the killing times in Scotland in 1685.

Margaret McLaughlin, a 70 year old widow, sentenced to drowning. Margaret Wilson, an 18 year old girl, sentenced to drowning with her.

[36 : 16] There you have it. The older mother in Israel, 70 years old, and the young 18 year old laughs. And they both love Jesus.

So on the appointed day, they went out into this little inlet of the sea that was soon to be filled by the swift running tide as it came in.

And they fastened two stakes, one further out for the older Margaret and one further in toward shore for the younger Margaret.

And the idea was that perhaps this 18 year old girl seeing older Margaret out there struggling and finally being suffocated by the waves as the water came in would change her mind and renounce Christ before the waters came to her.

But she didn't. She didn't. Instead, she opened her Bible and she turned to the 8th of Romans. And this is what she read.

[37 : 25] 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 sakes we face death all day long.

We're counted as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. I'm 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, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Lord, and clinging to the love of Christ for her, she in love laid down her life for him.

Isn't the love of Jesus something wonderful that would cause a 70-year-old and an 18-year-old to die for him who died for them and was raised again?

Such is the power of God's captivating love, capturing our affections and moving us to do what we otherwise would never do.

[38 : 45] What else does his love do? Well, it will enable you to trust him. I can't spend time on that. It's just clear, though, isn't it, that if you know someone loves you, you can trust them?

So why would these ladies and why would all of God's people, you know, Jesus, why would we follow Jesus wherever he leads us?

Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. Why? Why are they following? They don't know where he's going, where he's leading them all the time.

Why here? Why there? They don't know, but they know he's leading them. And who is he? I'm the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

Oh, there it is. He's proven his love for them. And now they're willing to follow him anywhere. They trust him. That's why the Israelites didn't go into the promised land the first time.

[39 : 52] They didn't trust him. Deuteronomy one tells us. And why didn't they trust him? They thought he God hated them. They came up to the doors of the promised land and they said, God, you've you've hated us.

That's why you brought us out into this wilderness to die here. We don't trust those who hate us. We trust those we know loves us that loves us.

And so this love will enable you to trust him, to follow him wherever he leads you. And then there's no fear in love for perfect love drives out fear.

This love of Christ will drive fear away. The fear of death, the fear of judgment. It gives assurance. It gives joy. It gives peace.

And this love of God will also free you from the love of men's praises and from their slavery to their affirmations. You know, there's only two kinds of people in the world.

[40 : 50] There's the givers and there's the takers. And so if my love cup is full and running over with God's love, I'll have plenty to be a giver and give to others.

But if my love cup is only a fourth way full or halfway full and I'm really not all that amazed at the love that that I have coming to me, God included, that I'm going to be a taker and I'm coming into my relationship with you to get from you whatever you have to get.

I'm a getter. I want you to praise me and I want you to affirm me and I want you to agree with me and I want you to do things my way and I'm a getter.

You see. Oh, but to have the love of God amazing you fills up your love cup. You now become a giver. It frees you from slavery to men's praise and affirmation.

So I trust we've seen the importance of keeping our hearts warmed with God's love for us in Christ. We simply cannot do without this. This is this is the healthy Christian life.

[41 : 57] This is the way it's supposed to be. That God's love does more than give a nod in response from us. Get a nod in response. But it gets a warm heart.

that can't get over it. And that compels me to quit living for myself and start living more and more for him.

You know, this is our last point. Work is needed to maintain such a heart hot after God and fired by his love for us. You've seen eternal flames maybe at a church or in a church building or in a graveyard.

There's this flame that somebody wants to keep burning forever. Somewhere that flame has to be fed, doesn't it? Fire doesn't burn by itself. You want the love of Christ burning in you like a flame that never goes out.

Warming your heart with love to him. Somewhere there's got to be a source feeding that love. And and I'm back to where we start.

[43 : 03] What will feed my love to this savior? It's. It's the food of his love for me. As a wise bridegroom, the Lord Jesus is ever showing and telling his bride how much he loves them, how much he loves us.

You know, God knows that all of our love, any love we have for him will come in response to his love. He wrote the verse. He knows about that and he's for us.

And so he's he's going to pour out his his love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Why? So that so that that fire of love to him won't go out. But you have a responsibility.

You ought to be asking the Holy Spirit to do what he's sent to do. You ought to be submitting to the Holy Spirit and then you need to get into the place where the spirit is known to pour the love of God into. And every two and three year old in our Sunday school class here knows what where that is.

Jesus loves me. This I know for the Bible tells me so. And if I want that love of Jesus filling my heart, I've got to be in this book. You know what Samuel Rutherford called the Bible, the love letters of Jesus.

[44 : 24] Remember, guys, when you got a love letter from your girlfriend, what it did for your love. You probably read him more than once. I did. And it stirs your love.

It's that way with God's love letters. From cover to cover, he's showing you, he's telling you of his love for you. Oh, be found in reading, meditating, memorizing.

Parts of his love letter. Marinate in it until your soul takes on the very flavor of it. Bask in the sunshine of it until your heart warms with its fire.

We're not safe to ourselves or others without this love of God shed abroad in our hearts. That's especially true in times of suffering. You know, Romans 5, 5 was written about suffering, that we can rejoice in our sufferings.

And it's then especially that we need the Holy Spirit pouring in the love of God into our hearts because circumstances, providences may suggest to us that God doesn't love us right now.

[45 : 33] That he's really not for us, that he's forgotten us. Oh, no. That's why we need the word of God. Sorting out our thoughts about God.

Why we need the weekly day of worship to gather and to think afresh about this love. Sing about it. Pray about it. Fellowship about it. That's why we need to be present and partake of the Lord's Supper.

As the Lord Jesus comes, not only to tell us of his love, but to show us with tangible bread and the fruit of the vine that we can touch.

He's wanting to make real to us just how much he loves us. It's all part of trimming the wick and refilling our hearts with the fuel of God's love.

But it's at the cross of Christ that God's love in Christ speaks the loudest and has the greatest power to melt and move us. For the cross not only proves the justice of God, just how holy God is, that he must punish every sin.

[46 : 42] And he does punish it even when it's found in his one and only son as he's bearing our sins. Yes, the cross is the demonstration of the justice of God, how holy he is.

But it's also the standing demonstration of how loving he is. That while we were yet powerless without any strength to fix the problem between me, the sinner and him, the holy God, when I was without strength, when I was still a sinner, when I was still an enemy of God, God demonstrates his love for us in this.

And that while we were in that state, Christ died for us. It's at the cross that that we most have his love displayed to us. that when the heavenly father's choice was to spare him or to spare us, it was for love that he spared not his own son, but gave him up for us.

So great his love. And nothing can separate us from that love. A love that has won our hearts forever.

Let's stay close to this heart of our God, our Savior, and have it captivate our hearts all over again today and then again tomorrow until we see him face to face.

[48 : 13] And in new and deeper ways, we see and learn of his love for us and our response to him. We'll hit a new high without anything of coolness, coldness, dimness between his love and mine, back and forth for all eternity.

Do you know that love? Sinner, if you're outside of Christ, this is what you'll receive. This is what you'll find if you come to this Jesus. Let's take this moment to thank him in prayer.

Oh God, forgive me for taking your love for granted, for hearing of it so often that I do not stop and behold and wonder and stand amazed.

Stop me in my Bible reading. Stop me in the singing of him. Stop me in the prayers that I hear or pray myself. Stop me in the preaching of your word.

When it's just the words and there's no response of love in my heart and give to me and give to my brothers and sisters power to grasp more of this love to where it grasps us and it holds us and it moves us.

[49 : 38] You deserve this love of yours deserves to have a people who can never get over. this love. It's that which will amaze us for eternity. Oh, please hear us and help us and make us a people whose hearts are overflowing then with this love back to you and to all around us.

Do it for the glory of your name. We ask through Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen.