

# The love of a triune God (Quality: Very good)

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[ 0 : 00 ] I ask your attention to the chapter that we read together as our lesson this evening. That is the fourth chapter in the first epistle of John.

I will announce by way of text the 15th and 16th verses. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

And we have known and believed the love of God, the love that God has to us. God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.

I think we all are sufficiently acquainted with the experience of John, the disciple of the Lord, who is before us in the former record of scripture, as well as in these epistles, as a man very well furnished with the benefit of love.

Remember, he lay on the bosom of the Lord. We read nothing in scripture to give us any hesitation in saying that his whole commitment appears to be seasoned with this precious gift of God.

[ 1 : 45 ] that is, the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. And my friends, in these letters of John, it is very evident that much of his thought was taken up with the fact that the whole exercise and experience of true godliness is covered, as it were, or encompassed by that little but far-reaching expression, love.

He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. So that if a person lives and dies in natural ignorance of the Almighty, then that person essentially is under judgment and becomes a lost soul.

What a mercy that there is such a thing. I'm going to speak of that, perhaps in a little more detail as we go on, that there is such a thing as love in the heart of God that's taken account of every impediment in the heart of man.

And so comprehensively and absolutely is God's knowledge of the prevailing situation in the light of the approaching fall that from eternity past the Lord entered into a covenant, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wherein the need of a lost sinner shall be covered and everything necessary to deliverance shall be worked out and walked out.

Really, we might say that whatever is professed in the world that's destitute of love is not of God.

[ 4 : 11 ] We must, in religion, know somewhat of the exercise of love within our hearts as God makes known to us his saving truth by the leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Well now, let us look at that wonder that God exercised his love toward his people before he made the world, before sin entered into the world.

Older than sin is salvation's plan. and my friends, everything necessary to the accomplishment of that plan was undertaken by God himself in those three persons of the ever-blessed Trinity with such a comprehension as to give a solid foundation of hope to a sinner and a solid anticipation of redemption and deliverance from that terrible condition which entered into the world when our first parents disobeyed the commandment of God in the Garden of Eden and sin entered into the world and death by sin.

Salvation is of the Lord and we need to keep that in perspective continually. Salvation is of the Lord and salvation is worked out by nothing less than the power of the Almighty executing those decrees which were settled between them before the world was made.

A book was written may well be referred to as the book of life certainly the wonderful book that records the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and his followers everyone who is to partake of the benefit of salvation by the decree of God is recorded in what we know as the Lamb's book of life.

[ 7 : 01 ] My friends what better exercise can be found in our hearts as we seek our situation and condition before God and approaching eternity that the Lord will show us or the Lord will assure us that in that book our name is written beneath the Lord the Lamb.

It is a number which no man can number of every nation kindred and tongue. There's nothing constituting a boundary in exercise among mankind that can clearly define those whom the Lord has chosen to save.

They are a people loved of God from all eternity. His love is fixed upon them and that love will prevail whatever it may constitute in the cost of its execution it will prevail until ultimately the subject of that love is in that precious abode of love which awaits the redeemed people in the presence of God forevermore.

Loved from eternity and to eternity is the blessed estate of the people of God. we are conscious that the Lord in his grace opens up a love love in the hearts of his people which is a miracle a heavenly divine miracle love.

And my friends every heart that is thus wrought upon by the Spirit of God and made to love the Lord the things of the Lord is a saved soul love.

[ 9 : 42 ] Because the Lord begins in the exercise of his love to quicken into life those that like the common multitude are born dead in trespasses and sins.

God having loved them from eternity written their names in the Lamb's book of life and thought upon them with those precious thoughts to their perfect deliverance from sin and everything alien to their eternal joy and comfort I say the Lord himself is the one that executes brings to pass performs that miracle of saving deliverance one of the features we begin to see in the gospel of God's grace that this is possible for the Lord to love a sinner the Lord to love a sinner what incomprehensible fact that is as presented to us and especially in a personal sense it's surely a wonder that there is the possibility of

God having loved me from eternity for knowing as he does everything detrimental to his own glory everything as it were savoring of a reason and cause to the execution of divine justice and banishment from his presence forever nevertheless God himself purposes and prosecutes everything needful to the salvation of that soul good Jonah after a very strange experience to say the least he came to that conclusion salvation is of the Lord there was nothing of a natural nature that was in any way sufficient to bring him from the condition in which he found himself but he found that God who is

God over all was sufficient to bring to pass a miracle of deliverance and he found himself safe once more in that environment congenial to his future life and my friends the same in that sense is the experience of every child of God oh how wonderful it is that such is the love of God toward his people that at a certain time and in a certain way decreed foreknown and executed by God himself that person comes to the knowledge of the awfulness the terrible condition of sinfulness and begins to awaken to a sense of need of salvation and when we think of the way of salvation and I must be brief in the person and work of the son of

God our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ and the necessities that surrounded the performance of his covenant undertakings we realise the wonder of the love that was in the heart of the father to the church that the father decreed that his son should be sent into the world the greatest testimony of love that has ever been God so loved the world and can you think of any equal expression of love in the whole history of the universe God in the appointed time and in the appointed way and we've just considered that together in the celebration of the

[ 14 : 44 ] Christmas season afresh he sent forth his only begotten son and my friends he knew everything about the life and experience of the Lord Jesus Christ he foreknew everything that was necessary to the accomplishment of that tried perplexed experience from the very poverty of his death to the enmity and bitterness that surrounded his passage from sinner and from saint and he went onward and eventually came face to face with the extreme sacrifice the one offering for sin the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world and the father knew all about the ingredients of that cup that was given to Jesus

Christ to drink let me say this never never is there a sweeter cup presented to a child of God than that that constitutes the cup in which Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin experienced the bitterness and the wretchedness of crucifixion outside of Jerusalem's gate laying down his life a ransom for many yes yea he loved the people all his saints are in thy hand you see there the constitution of the church from all eternity loved of God the father was given into the hands of the son and all that the father hath given me shall come to me says

Christ and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out never never has there been such an expression of sacrificial love as exercise and brought forth when the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for many never was there a greater expression of the willingness of love to pay a penalty a penalty inconceivable by our contracted understanding but nevertheless essential to the reconciliation of a holy God to our position and condition as law condemned sinners before him now let us come whosoever shall confess that

Jesus Christ is the son of God God dwelleth in him and he in God surely there is here a note of assurance unto which we can scripturally lay claim that if we truly believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh if we rest as it were our whole hope upon this foundation that short of the Lord Jesus Christ being made a man taking our flesh and dwelling among us there would be no way by which God could be reconciled to us but God is reconciled through the son of his love he sent forth his only son to bear the burden to carry the penalty he was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of

God in him now whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God what think he of Christ whose son is he is it a vital part of your profession that you believe in the son of God being made flesh the incarnation of that one and only suitable one who left heaven and condescended to come to earth to carry the sins of his people in his own body on the tree of Calvary now whosoever whosoever that seems to me to disqualify a lot of man-made restrictions whosoever now this is a fundamental requirement but it's fundamental yet it's comprehensive enough to break through the distinctions that exist among mankind it as it were stretches down to the lowest parts of the earth that it might gather those who see no reason at all to hope for the favour of

[ 20 : 42 ] God because of the wretchedness and ruin in their hearts that they've been made to realise but there it says whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God oh my friends do you come in there tonight there's no other name there's no other person there's no other work that affords you any hope for eternity but that precious work of the Son of God anointed of the Father sent into the world to become a man among us and to live and to die the just for the unjust now whosoever let us just further consider some of the characters in the faithful witnesses of Holy

Scripture whosoever some strange characters some unexpected witnesses but nevertheless whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God it goes back into the Old Testament and gathers there its witnesses who were brought by type and shadow to acknowledge the person of Jesus Christ in the prophecies and in the types that gave witness of the same thing a sacrifice for sin by the shedding of blood for without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins you see by faith some of those ancient children of God chosen of God who saw by faith the sacrifice of the

Lord Jesus Christ remember on the Mount of Moriah when Abraham and Isaac went up to the point and place of sacrifice and there was a testimony made by Abraham to Isaac God shall provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering God shall provide himself a lamb and we must consider what that truly means by accurate interpretation God shall provide God shall provide himself God shall make a provision himself for a lamb God shall provide himself the second person of the ever blessed trinity should be the one that would bear the sins of many bear the sins of the whole church should carry as it were to perfection that requirement that

God the father could be in all his holiness should be reconciled to his blood bought people whosoever shall confess now confession really is heart work isn't it it's heart work it's not a matter of utterance from the lips it is the very honest exercise of our heart God if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness oh my friends have you ever confessed your sins with an eye fixed upon that blessed sacrifice of the son of

God and if so be the lord by his spirit and according to his word has made salvation known to you through the person and work of his dear son I'll tell you you'll never find anything in Christ that's unworthy of your affection you'll never find anything concerning the lord Jesus Christ that is any wise detrimental to the outflowing of your affections and desires toward him if we confess that Jesus is the son of God God dwelleth in him and he in God nobody can come to that but by the the teaching leading and teaching of

[ 26 : 08 ] God himself my friends it is whosoever shall confess God dwelleth in him oh is God dwelling in you do you see in Jesus Christ the pearl of great price do you see Jesus is the one thing needful I without him perish must and do you see the only reason why I should be possessed of a hope beyond the grave centres in nothing less and nothing else than Jesus Christ and him crucified always ever loved like this in any other experience brought to pass in the history of mankind

Jesus the son of God standing in the sinner's place paying that great price not that shall I say the cleansing should be promising but the cleansing should be perfected the cleansing should be absolute these are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb such is the efficacious atonement made through the precious blood of Christ that the foulest sinner out of hell that lives to feel his need is welcome to the throne of grace the saviour's blood to please God dwelleth in him God dwelleth in him who made you concerned about your soul who laid upon you the truth of the weight and burden and the eventual consequence of your own sins and transgressions my friends it was

God himself by his spirit raising you up to a consciousness of the reality of being the reality of being born into the flesh possessed of an immortal soul that must go to God eventually and stand for the judgment due what a wonderful thing it is Jesus in the sinner's place Jesus carrying the burden oh in the garden and upon the tree of calvary we have a wonderful record of the love of Christ the love of Christ bearing the sins of his people and suffering the consequence in himself I think one of the things that shows to us the terrible depth that was necessary to the deliverance afforded by the

Son of God to his people is that agonizing cry my God my God why hast thou forsaken me and my friends really it's not an experience that can fully be appreciated by the people of God the children of God they feel forsaken but they're never actually forsaken but Christ was forsaken his in that sense his father turned from him as he bore the terrible burden of the sins of his people and carried that weight of guilt until the law was satisfied and God his father was reconciled and there was peace accomplished in the relationship of the people of God to their

God through the saviour of sinners now whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God God dwelleth in him and he in God if God's taken up his abode in our hearts he'll see us through because those that are born of God are possessed of a life that will never die those that are born again of the spirit are the participants in this great matter this great work of God to the salvation of each and every one of his people Jesus is the way to God Jesus is the way to bliss so the text goes on and we have known and believed the love that

[ 32 : 17 ] God has to us now this is of inestimable value we have known says John and believed the love that God hath to us do you know this do you know this do you know what it is to be assured that God has thought upon you with thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end you've seen Jesus by the eye of faith God has led you by his spirit into the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him he's shown to you the unfolding of his eternal purposes even that covenant of love that was settled by the three persons of the ever-blessed trinity before the world was made surely salvation was from eternity and will continue to eternity well now and we have known and believed the love that God had to us

God is love God is love what a wonderful declaration of holy scripture that is God is love can we think of anything higher can we think of anything of greater value God is love the characteristic necessary to the performance of the salvation of his people is shown to us in that simple yet most profound and gracious expression God is love God is love if that were not so the whole gospel would disintegrate fall apart but this is the fact that God in the exercise of his love comprehended the need of this body of people his church and for ordained the plan whereby they should be taken from the depths of sin and iniquity the beggarly condition of the

Adam fall and raised to be among the princes of God's dear people if and we have known and believed the love that God has to us how can this be how could a holy God love such a person as me the question so often arises the apostle Paul makes that expression in Romans said oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord that's the answer that's the answer this expression of the sovereign love of Jehovah made manifest in the way to escape that God has provided that we might not reap the due reward of our deeds but that we might partake of the blessings of salvation through the love of

God made manifest this strange expression expression of sovereign love that it should be by the substitutionary sacrifice of his dear son that we should be made free we should be cleansed from all unrighteousness we should be presented faultless before the throne of God forever and forever and we have known and believed the love that God has to us God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him it's a high calling it's a high calling I don't feel that we necessarily walk in the enjoyment of our status as loved by

God to be involved in this great exalting truth of God's love being fixed upon us and prosecuted to our deliverance from everything that is alien to our eternal peace my friends the assurance doesn't waver but the enjoyment of the assurance is not intermitted is not suffered to go on with some temptation some unbelieving fear and we come to the point am I his or am

[ 38 : 23 ] I not yes we're subject to many changes we have an enemy in the devil that's going to rob us of every vestige of comfort from the sacred truth of the word we have as it were an unbelieving heart that's ready to believe a lie before it will assent exclusively to the truth of God's word but nevertheless our standing doesn't as it were depend upon our experience but there is to be such an experience of assurance as the Lord by his spirit may shed abroad the love of God in our souls oh that we might know more of that oh that the multiplication of that inexpressible pleasure may be made over to us again and again and how we shall love the father how we shall love the son and how we shall love the blessed spirit forever making his abode within us and leading us and teaching us these sacred sacred and promising truths well now

God is love God is love he not only has provided for salvation from sin in the person and sacrifice and offering of the Lord Jesus Christ but the love of God also comprehends that essential leading and teaching and preservation in the things of God the spirit of God is possessed of all the power of deity and we need that spirit to uphold us to maintain us to exercise our hearts and to bring us to an understanding that the chief asset that is to be realized under the sun is that God does truly love us and you'll never find any reason in yourself why he should the reason why he has done is in his sovereign goodness in his purposes to election that numbered among the people of

God you shall be you'll never never be able to answer the question except you're brought to acknowledge this that God loves whom he will and has sent his son to redeem such with a perfect price paid and sends forth his Holy Spirit in due time into the heart and life of the favoured subject but each and all are born again of the Holy Spirit of God they're led about and instructed in those ways that God the holy and infallible teacher of the people of God decrees as necessary to his own glory and to the well being of the favoured subject of such an infallible teacher well now and we have known and believed the love that

God hath to us God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment he goes on in this subsequent verses to this chapter and speaks of love to the brotherhood if you've got a love to the Lord you'll have a love to the people of God and really the health of the church here upon the earth in the fallen state we're in by nature the health of the church depends upon that spirit of love finding its way in the fellowship in the relationship of the people of

God together one of the things that is so prominent in the exercise of love and I'm talking about the heavenly love as well as the love of the brethren is forgiveness if God has forgiven you for his son's sake doesn't it become you to forgive your brother in those ways that may give substance as it were to a measure of condemnation in your spirit of what they've said or what they've done love all defects surprise makes great distinctions small and my friends it's a wonderful thing when we're walking in the enjoyment of God's love toward us and realize the wonderful relationship of eternal consequence that exists between the people of

[ 44 : 52 ] God you know there's no more enduring sweet relationship to be found under the sun than the love of the brotherhood when for Christ's sake we realize God has given to us a relationship which is indissoluble forever do you know what it is you can't love God and realize the love that God has to you and entertain bitter attitudes toward fellow believers oh you see the comprehension of the love of God to such an extent and such a degree that you love them for Jesus sake you love them for

Jesus sake all inferior considerations as it were are swept away when you feel that great and lasting bond of true spiritual affection as heart flows to heart and the promise of eternal endurance in that relationship well now we love him because he first loved us if any man say I love God and hated his brother he's a liar you know that's a very searching scripture isn't it that's a very searching scripture and that makes us very careful how we speak it makes us very fearful as we think let alone give utterance to our thoughts oh my friends what a wonderful thing it is the love of

God the Father the love of God the Son the love of God the Spirit and the love in the church the gift of God's grace that makes the people of God a family a family brotherhood sisterhood which is inexpressible as an asset on human on the level of human relationships let alone that higher relationship as begotten together in Christ Jesus forever more I hope my few remarks will have been plain do seek God to answer your question if you're in doubt as to your interest in the love of

God if you've got no interest in the love of God you're a poor person I don't care what your assets are I don't care what your earthly situation would suggest to other people as most desirable love that might be next to me in heaven if nothing but a spirit of bitterness existed between he and me in this present time state oh what a wonderful thing it's the peaceableness of the brotherhood as each in all humility acknowledges that what they have that savers of saving religion and good religion is an interest in the love of God, an interest in the redemption of the Son of God, and an interest in the abiding and indwelling teaching of God the Holy Ghost in the heart.

May that be our portion. May that be our relationship. For Jesus' sake. Amen.