

The Love of God

by Art Katz

God's love is revealed in the sending of His Son and is perfected in us when we love one another without condition or expectation.

Duration: 49:22

Scripture: Genesis 12:3, John 21:17, Acts 2:3-4, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Peter 3:1-2, 1 Peter 3:8

Topics: "Love Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of love as the defining characteristic of God and the believers. The sermon explores the idea that Judas' betrayal of Jesus may have stemmed from a disappointed love, as Jesus did not meet his expectations as a deliverer for Israel. The preacher also highlights the need for believers to love unconditionally and extend themselves for others, even at the risk of their own lives. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that love is a powerful force that cannot fail and that God is glorified when believers demonstrate love for one another.

Transcript

You know, I don't know, is that the word that believers use today in speaking to one another? I very rarely hear that. When you do hear it, it's almost like a figure of speech or just a mode of speaking. But for John, it really was Beloved.

You know, you loved once. Let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God's love was revealed among us in this way. God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love.

If that was me, I would have put a period right there. Rather than introduce another statement, I would say that this is love, that God sent his Son into the world that we might live through him. Isn't that a remarkable statement of what love is? God couldn't make a greater provision than that for the life of men.

And then, in the context of John, in this is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God.

If we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. We have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world.

God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God, so we know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this, that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in the world.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, I love God and hate him, brothers or sisters, are liars, but those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.

This commandment we have from him is this, those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. So, what is the knowledge of God, or what can the knowledge of God be, independent of or outside the sending of God's Son? John is tying up the whole issue of love with the manifestation of God's Son. This is the revelation of God.

This is love that God has sent his Son. And that is also the knowing of God, because if God is love, then to know God is to know love, and to know that love is to know it in the way God has chosen to manifest or express it in the sending of his Son. See, verse 9, God's love was revealed among us in this way.

God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him, and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. In verse 10, that begins with, and this is love. That deserves contemplating, because the very act is God giving something out from himself.

That would tie in with 1 Corinthians 13, love that gives of itself. The love pours itself out. Love extends.

You wonder why the text uses words like, let us love one another, or the first commandment is that you love the brethren. Why do we have to be commanded, and why let us, as if it's not automatic? My question I'm trying to form is, why shouldn't it be? If we did not know love until God came, and God is love, and we have received this life which is his love, why isn't that just expressed? Why do we have to be commanded to love one another, and let this love in you? As if, if you don't let it, it's not going to express itself. It's not automatic that we've received something, and now it will just issue, although it issues from God.

And this is the first commandment, so it's a requirement, which means that if it was not commanded, we might not have given it. In fact, that if we fail to respond to the commandment, we have cancelled the evidence that we are indeed the children of God. Of course, his love is shed abroad in our hearts by his Holy Spirit.

So I think what John is saying is, you guys speak in tongues, you've had a baptism in the Spirit? Well, that's the enablement. So, what hinders you? Now, having received the Spirit, which sheds abroad the love, why don't you express this? Let it be expressed through this. If you have the evidence of the Spirit through tongues or gifts or some other evidence, then you know that you received the medium by which love is given and communicated and expressed.

That's why he's saying that. It's remarkably important that the Church knew that it was loved, because God had given His Spirit. Maybe believers need to be reminded that they are loved of God.

But it sounds like the gift grows by its use. Just like in the other gifts of the Spirit, there's a corollary. If we love one another, in verse 12, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us.

So something is given and something is perfected by its use, by its expression. If, there's a great if there, which shows again that it's not automatic. There's a wonderful statement today in Oswald Chambers on will.

Did anybody read that? Wow. I don't know if we ought to stop just to look at that now if we have a copy, but the sense of it was that this is the great battlefield, is the issue of will. And that we should not wait for some crisis to come up to test us in a particular point, but face the moral crisis of the surrender of will itself.

The greatest struggle is the giving over of the will to God. Maybe this is what this is pointing at, all of the ifs and let us. If we will, the Lord seems to have put all of his eggs in one basket.

This issue of love and the communication of himself as love to the unbelieving world by what they see in the saints. No one has ever seen God in verse 12. If we love one another, where does that come in? Because it's got to do with seeing God.

If we love one another, that's the demonstration, the sight, the phenomenon, the manifestation of that love. And God lives in us and his love is perfected in us. The phrase one another seems to suggest it doesn't matter who the other is.

It has nothing to do with their charm, their looks, their spirituality, their character, their accomplishment. If you can love one another, you then love any other. Do you know what I mean? Because it's not based on deserving or something that makes you partial toward one.

Therefore, if you hate one brother, you really hate all. Either you love all or you... That's the nature of it. You think in the phrase from John 3, 16, God so loved the world.

That's just a general statement or that he loves the particulars that make up the world. Every soul in the world is an object of his love or else he would be despising one and loving another. He really loves the world.

It's a real statement of how inclusive God's love is and without partiality. We mustn't think about Old Testament God, New Testament God as if we're speaking about different deities. And even in the statement, Jacob I have loved and Esau I have hated.

It's not an issue of love-hate in the way that it seems. One has been preferred in my choosing. There's something like if you don't hate your own father, your own mother, is God actually asking us to hate? It's what they call a hyperbolic word.

It's an exaggerated term to show something with a special clarity, but it's not an invitation to hate. Because, well, I was going to say God does not hate, but he does. He does hate unrighteousness, he hates iniquity, he hates sin.

But can you think of where it talks about a hatred toward men? He hates the evil and the source of it. If God is calling us to an unconditional love, love the brethren, without partiality, without being selective on the basis of one is closer to your liking than another, how can God ask of us what is not true of himself? Because God is love. And so anything that we're expressing is what God is.

As we abide, his love is being perfected. So there's something at the end of the rainbow where we, by the grace of God and by faithful obedience and by consistent abiding, then we will be what he is in the world. We ought to be what he is in the world.

We ought to love as he loved. We ought to lay down our life for a friend. And when his love is perfected, that's what we'll be expressing.

So what's the issue of abiding? If the issue of perfecting is the issue of abiding, what's the issue of abiding? Resting. With regard to the issue of loving. Dying.

That's more where the rubber hits the ground, to examine that. Though the words are just left hanging without explanation. What I'm suspecting is the daily irritations of things that come up that would break us off from abiding in God and lapsing into ourselves.

And that's where the resentment, the irritations, hard feelings, criticism, critical spirit, all of that is before us as a continual option. Abiding would mean willfully, consciously recognizing that there's a choice that is being put before us and refusing to take the choice of the flesh. Refusing to be resentful.

Refusing to be disappointed. Refusing to be irritated. And with that refusal and that choice, we're abiding in its love.

We're giving the brother the benefit of the doubt. We're thinking the better construction of something that's before us and not the worse. We're choosing to hope in a more promising future than need not be chosen.

I want to get at this abiding, because the abiding is the perfecting. I'm thinking of the fickleness of the saints. You know, it can take years to establish relationship, esteem, affection, and love.

Particularly if you're in a place of leadership. But how long would it take to lose that from the saints who have given it? How long will their love endure if we would have three successive Sundays like last Sunday? We would have three successive clocks. The psalm would be dead.

For three weeks, how long would the affection and the esteem of the saints remain toward me? How much latitude do I have in failing without threatening the affection and the esteem and the love of the saints toward me when I am performing? When I'm performing, there's no problem. But what happens if I would fail to perform over a series of time? How long would the love and the affection and the esteem of the saints remain? Because love endures long. Love is long-suffering.

Love can suffer loss and yet not be diminished. But my observation with the saints in 35 more years of Christianity is that when I go through my address book, I can easily remove one half of addresses which at one time were so current, so affectionate, so responsive, so related. And today there is like dead limbs.

There's just no phone call, no letter, no contact, no inquiry, nothing. Something's happened. I've passed out of favor.

I no longer enjoy the esteem or the recognition. I don't know what. Maybe someone else has risen or they themselves have changed or their taste has changed or it's a momentary fascination.

But I've had opportunity to observe the fickleness of the saints which would indicate that what passes for love among Christians is probably more human than it is divine. Because God's love endures. And I wonder if he'll allow prominent men to fail if for no other reason than to test the love of the saints.

Because failure or success is not from men but from God. So think on that. Now would your affection abide and remain if the brother for whom you have a present affection ceases to gratify you in the way that you've enjoyed him and come to expect from him? What if he becomes consistently disappointing? How long would it take before you're shut off? You know what I mean? So this is a good way to consider what the love of God is and what abiding is that it might be perfected.

And it works both ways with the saints, the disappointment of leader-taught saints or failed brothers. But that's the beauty of God's love that it doesn't require performance, let alone consistency. Because the nature of that love is to abide without partiality, without a basis by which it has been earned as reward.

You know what I mean? It just is. It's what God is. And that's how he has demonstrated what love is, by sending himself.

And not just coming down from the place of his deity and his honor and glory, but as a propitiation for our sin, which is to say a bloody sacrifice and a mess. This is what love is. We could not have known it.

It could not have been taught us in principle. We can only be reminded in the principle by pointing back to what God has done. Because what he has done is the statement of what he is.

For God is love. And so as he is, so ought we to be in the world. Wow.

It's sobering to think that some commentators have suggested that Judas' ability to betray Christ came out of a disappointed love. That Jesus did not shape up, according to his expectations, as a deliverer for Israel. And the turning point for Judas was the way in which Jesus honored the woman who broke the alabaster box.

And that he was the most indignant at the waste. And when Jesus applauded that act, that was the last straw for Judas. And from that point on, he became increasingly disappointed and unrelated until finally Satan could actually enter him to the point of a betrayal unto death.

So there's something instructive there. And maybe the problem is that Judas' love, assuming that to whatever degree it was ever authentic, was based on a certain requirement, certain fulfillment that the object of his love needed to perform. And when that performance was not forthcoming, but was disappointed, love turned to hate.

And this is what I believe we're going to see in many who are present fascimators, being fascinated with Israel. When Israel will fail to come through and will be a broken, shattered, ugly nation in its more apparent sin, many who have celebrated it sentimentally will be the first to turn from it with contempt and with disgust as a failed expectancy. So love, the love of God, does not have a standard of requirement.

Do you know what I mean? And imagine how freeing that is for the church, that every single brother and sister, no matter what their background, no matter what their maturity in Christ, no matter what their batting average and their record, is an object of love because the love that is extended to them is not a reward for performance or for attainment. It simply is. And that is freeing.

So I can't think of a worse deception that we should labor thinking that we're in the love of God when really it's an affection, an esteem, or an emotion that is more human than divine and based on some gratification we're receiving from the object of our love so long as it continues to reward us. And if that's not at the heart of the great rate of divorce, I don't know what is. I don't love him anymore.

Or I don't love her anymore. Or she's no longer the delight that she once was or her looks have changed. So you see how human love is predicated on image, on gratification for self and on certain requirement.

What do you want from an unregenerate person? How can you make any demand and make that a basis for your esteem? And if God is after this and he's got to be after it because this is his testimony to the world. By this they shall know that the Father has sent me. When they see, you have love one for another.

Think of Peter at the very end of the Gospel of John in the New Testament. What about this man? What shall this man do? He still had a kind of competitive rivalry with John. Maybe John was leaning on the bosom of Jesus and there's a kind of favoritism expressed within that probably irked Peter.

What will this man do? What about this guy? So as much as they had the privilege of their relationship with the Lord and having his spirit breathed into them still right to the very end maybe up to Pentecost itself until that fire came from heaven to consume the dross of rivalry and competitiveness and superiority Peter and John could not go forth together to the gate beautiful and to heal the man born lame who fixed his eyes on them. Isn't that interesting the way the text says it? Peter did the talking but he fixed his eyes on them. What was he seeing that awakened his faith to receive a word that could lift him from lifelong affliction? It was the love of God between John and Peter.

Something had turned. Of course the love of God is shed upon by the Holy Spirit. I can think of one guy but maybe more than one I was such an object of his devotion and attention and affection until I started in with the subject of Israel.

When the Lord opened that up and I began to speak of that something came down and remains down to this day. I was cut off as effectively as if I had betrayed the faith. He loved me when I was cross centered and the messages and discipleship walk with God but when the subject of Israel came something came down and that was the end of the relationship.

When I think of someone like Dick Hanna it doesn't matter what my current vogue is or what I'm preaching or that they appreciated his message there has never been a faltering a lack of affection a lack of identification and esteem from that brother. There would be a wonderful contrast of a man who was not shut off because of a disappointment or has gone off on a tangent he's no longer of interest to me. It doesn't matter.

I think if I fell into heresy that the affection of Dick would remain and maybe I would be saved from my heresy by the counsel and confrontation that would come from a loving brother. A lot of what we love in men is what we see in them that reinforces ourselves. It's really self-love being expressed by something that we see in another that is the statement of ourselves.

I don't know how to say that. And when the person changes then we can no longer tolerate we can't take that because it's a loss of ourself. So to see sin is to come to death and then it's the death of requirement because what could a sinner require of another? If you're the most degraded sinner and the chief of sinners what performance can anyone make? What accomplishment, what standard can you require of them if you yourself are the lowest of the low and the chief of all sinners? Then you can love the pervert you can love the lesbian you can love the transvestite it doesn't matter how horrible their sin there's a love that goes beyond it because your sin is equally as horrible.

But if you're in a place of superiority especially of spiritual superiority out the window. Remarkable. And he loved us while we were yet sinners and died for us while we were yet sinners.

There's the statement of the love of God that is without qualification. He loved us when we were in an abominable state not only in the degrading aspect of our sin but in the aspect of our sin that was rebellious and contemptuous of him. My mouth was full of cursings as an atheist.

I was not an indifferent I was an active hostile agent against God. And he loved me while that filth and anger and blasphemy was pouring out of my mouth. That's the love of God.

And we, if someone looks at us cross-eyed or we said the wrong word or we stepped on a toe that's it, bye bye baby. One infraction is all it takes to sever a relationship. I marvel thirty-five, thirty-six years in the Lord I still remain astonished at the ability of Christians to be offended.

And Jesus said, blessed are they who are not offended in me. This ability to be offended what is it? There's something alive that can be easily injured, snubbed insecurity insecurity because they don't know that they're accepted and they're beloved. He says, blessed are they who are not offended in me.

The blessing is not the reward for not being offended the blessing is the fact that you're in a state of such union with God that you're not a candidate for being offended. You cannot be offended because you're blessed. You're blessed because you're in relationship because God is unoffendable and therefore you can't be offended.

So the blessing is not a reward for the performance of not being offended it's the statement that you're in a certain place with God and in God that does not take offense. If God took offense who then could be saved? And the issue for the church in the last days is will we take offense in a people who will become ultimately offensive the least of these his brethren will measure whether we are blessed or not whether we are righteous or not whether we are in the life of God or not because the life of God is the love of God that cannot be offended. I can't imagine what a fellowship is that is living in such a condition corporately where there's no prospect for offense you don't have to walk on eggshells for fear that you've expressed something crudely it doesn't matter we can live with that.

There's a freedom to be in Christ to abide love can suffer the loss of esteem and affection and not itself be offended and wait because it knows that's accepted in the beloved and it knows that the saints are in different places of maturity and because it doesn't need that affirmation it can wait for the work of God just to hold up the mirror from another place to get another angle on this in that confrontation between the resurrected Christ and Peter Peter, lovest thou me? Remember how many times that was repeated?

Oh Lord, of course you know then again the same question Do you love me? Peter, do you love me? But Lord, of course I love you Peter, do you love me? Third time and then the answer is if so, feed my sheep So my question is how does that relate to the question that Jesus is asking? You would think that if he's asking one who's going to be the pillar of the church as the apostle Do you love me? Then continue in your affection, continue in your esteem The subject then turns away from the Lord and goes to the sheep You love me?

Feed my sheep So my question is what is God telling us there? What's the connection between love toward the Lord and feeding his sheep? It's almost like what's unspoken is don't get away with it don't celebrate and think that you love me because you have affection and emotion and tears don't measure it

by that measure it by this, feed my sheep And who are his sheep? Stinking, dirty moaning, groanings left behind outside the pack dumb, you know, feed those Then that's the statement of love And probably a companion statement from Paul would be the love of God constrains me So here's another way to get at the genius of what this love is What is it?

How is it defined? How is it revealed in something that we do? That we would not do if it were not for the love of God Because feeding his sheep is not some reflex action You know, sure, I'll take care of that Feeding his sheep is an enormously demanding task And the God and the Lord makes that the measure and the statement of the truth of Peter's love for him For those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen Put that in your spiritual pipe and smoke it Paul saw in the people of God, God And if you can't see God in the people of God you'll not see God You'll not love what you can see of God in his people You'll not love God whom you cannot see Because the only seeing you're going to get is the seeing in his people That's why feed my sheep is the statement of Do you love me?

If you love me you'll feed me in my sheep My sheep are me, I'm in my sheep See what I mean? The Lord does not allow us the luxury of an abstract elevated ethereal love removed from the actuality of his people And if you can't love those whom you have seen why can't you love them? Because when you see them they're despicable They're edgy, they're this, they're that They're contentious, they're cranky, they're fitful They're spoiled, they're mean How are you going to love that?

Because if you can't love that you can't see me and love me in that then there's no way You cannot, that's the word here You cannot love God whom you cannot see If you cannot love me in what you can see you are disqualified You cannot love me unseen That's the God brings us back to the sheep So Paul's sin was the recognition of his hatred for God in his ability to persecute God's people Though he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees and a religious man He hated those who really revealed the fraudulence of his religious self-righteousness and pride There's something about God's sheep that bugged him And Stephen is a classic example the busboy, the waiter on tables demonstrated an authentic reality of God an authentic spirituality that Paul couldn't even begin to approach and that's either going to inspire love or hatred, and it was a hatred unto death So these are remarkable That's the foundation for the great apostle of love Why do I say the apostle of love?

Because God made him the apostle to the Goyim to the Gentiles Everything that would rub an orthodox Jew raw, Paul had his face pressed into Their eating, their habits their culture, their Corinthians their sensuality their man-centeredness they were partial to this party or that party Everything that would have been offensive God made, immersed Paul in that and that Paul labored in that and fed those sheep patiently, he was a father and a mother to them, and travailed that Christ be formed in them is the triumph of love and when he had to part from them, they wept that they would see his face no more Paul is the apostle of love because he was the chief of sinners So I'm close to something I'm feeling for something where we are Can you put this together?

We'll have hit something here that's at the heart of the whole mystery of what love is and I praise God that it's neither romantic nor ethereal but that God roots it in the reality of his church and says if you can't love what you see there don't profess to love me who is unseen because what you're really loving is something that you have conjured in your own imagination that fills what is invisible but it's not me it's a projection of yourself you're loving yourself in some imagined deity but it's not me you're loving if you want to love me, here I am in these sheep, in this condition and that's why I say that the issue of the Jew in the last stage is

the acid test it's so much the acid test, it will determine the eternity of every soul that will be judged on the basis of their response and their response can only be made on one basis, love you can't just be nice to the least of his brethren either you're going to extend yourself for them at the risk of your life laying down your life for the brethren or you're going to circumvent them I didn't see you hungry thirsty when did I see you naked?

I chose not to see but love will require an extending of yourself, a pouring of yourself out you're giving your life for the brethren because if you get caught at that you're finished but how can you do otherwise? love constrains you because love is a power love cannot fail love triumphs and God is glorified and why do they return as the redeemed of the Lord? because they have seen God in the love of the saints that is not mush or sentimentality or because they're cute, they know that they are despicable and yet they see people extending themselves not clinically or mechanically or religiously but lovingly they see God face to face this is past finding out and so how do you see it? because it was revealed to us when the father sent his son to be a propitiation for our sin that goes back

to the first question that began this evening can the love of God be known and independent of and unrelated to the act of God in sending his son as a propitiation for sin this was revealed to us what God is God is love, why? because he sent his son that we might live through him how come we can live through him? because he died for us through his death we can live through him if we just look at current events right now Israel and the bitterness toward the Palestinian and the Arab a common cry breaking out all over the land is death to the Arab it's a hatred because they are threatening to their life and the perpetuation of their society they are incapable of loving their enemy love your enemy what is God saying? do the impossible you were an enemy and I loved you now be to others what I

was to you how? because now you live your life through me I'm asking something that you cannot perform humanly but you can perform it through me because this is what I am the fact that Israel cannot shows that whatever love it professes to have humanistically failed when the rubber hit the road they could not live with the people in the land who were different from them and other and I know those differences because Inga majors in it in her west bank relationship with these people and I see how different it is from the Jewish mentality but look even within Israel itself of those Jews that have come from Islamic lands and are darker complected the Sephardic Jews the Ashkenazic Jew can't make it with them and has kept them out of the places of power and influence in Israel till this present

time so even within themselves there is faction and division on the basis of appearance background, culture the Jews love themselves they love another Ashkenazic Jew who celebrates learning culture wisdom, refinement when these Jews came up from Ethiopia and even other places they took the doors off of their housing and burned them for fuel on their living room floors, didn't know from beans so you can imagine the contempt that would rise up in the heart of some Ashkenazic Jew living in Tel Aviv in a garden apartment at these crude primitive and yet they're Jews they can't have they have not the love of God how expensively has God set the stage to reveal to us the paucity, the bankruptcy of our mere humanity it cannot cut it even with ourselves and the end is violence and death hatred

because if you'll not lose your life for another, you'll take the other that's why I said to this brother on an airplane flying into Canada an engineer from Saudi Arabia, Muslim I said, you know how you can tell the difference between God and not God those who are subscribing to a God who is not God inflict violence on those who are different from themselves those who know God will receive violence against themselves rather than inflict it and this is God's message, that God is love how is he going to tell the world by the

actual demonstration evidenced by his people see Martin Buber the Jewish philosopher theologian tried to bring this dimension into Israel's foundation that unless they were reconciled with their Arab neighbors unless they made room and recognized them as equals the

state would eventually enter and become in the end a thing unto itself and exert its power for itself and they would be the victims and in the end the violence would come back upon themselves that's exactly what was being fulfilled but what Martin Buber could not provide was how to love your neighbor he knew that this was the requirement but he didn't know how to do it because he didn't know that God is love and that we might live our life through him is to have the power to do it, it's a power because it's contrary to all the flesh I'm thinking of a verse from 1 Peter 1.21 love one another with a pure heart fervently, seeing that you have purified your souls through obedience to God through the Spirit one day will take a whole night just to ponder that one statement but what I'm getting

at is this that statement is feeding the sheep first and second epistles of Peter are glorious instructive letters that we also ought to suffer not only to believe in him but to suffer for his namesake lay down your wives submit to your husbands as quite a mixed spirit, I mean it's full of the most sublime instruction so completely different from the harshness of Peter in his earlier discipleship with Christ before he was filled with the Spirit of God those letters feed the sheep but those letters are the product of a life that has given itself out how is it ended?

On the cross, upside down so you're right when the Lord said feed my sheep you really love me?

Then here's what you'll do if they're going to be fed it'll be by the life that issues out of your death well may that love be perfected in us because we abide the daily issues of our life the abiding in the daily issues not being ruled by disappointment, not withdrawing our affection for the want of performance or whatever that's just one of numbers of things that are before us will bring us at the end to the place where we will lay down our life because that love has been perfected that performs it and in fact that's how the age ends so how shall I say it what we are about every day is critical to the conclusion of the age when you think of these epigrammatic statements love never fails love casts out all fear what are the other love statements love suffers long love always hopes love

is kind always trusts because Jesus abided in the Father when he had every provocation to come out from that and to speak and act out of his own humanity you dirty brakabraks in this last moment you're still chiding me and abrading me and saying come down and I will believe you if you haven't seen what I'm doing for you every provocation in his flesh and his humanity that a centurion would expect a man to say when he's dying by inches being provoked every provocation in his flesh and his humanity that a centurion would expect a man to say when he's dying by inches being provoked by an ungrateful people instead father forgive them they don't know what they do he abided in the father at a critical moment he went as a lamb to the slaughter silently when he had every provocation, every right

to let go a torrent of curses silently that's love love suffers long love suffers rejection love suffers insult misunderstanding what a demonstration right to the end of what love is that even that centurion this is god is what he's saying what we're seeing here is what god is as nothing else could have revealed it we needed this revelation we could never have come to a knowledge of god except that we had seen what love is before us and so will the world see it one last time in the body of christ lord we love love a real thing because it's what you are it's remarkable you're great my god oh precious god and what an offense against love in the world's manipulation of that word in the way in which they have caricatured love and

made it a mushy, feeling oriented sensate ego gratifying kind

of a thing you're altogether other and we love my god what we're understanding we love your love for it's what you are and what we desire to be and so we say more love lord because to say more love is to say more power and we thank you my god oh precious god help us in the things that are before us daily in the provocations granny is set before us my god a perfect provision to test us in patience and the willingness to be extended so may she sense my god progressively from this one, that one, that one all who are around her 24 hours a day the love of god that never fails, it doesn't grow weak it doesn't get tired it doesn't take the night off it's there, continuously it gives because you are an inexhaustible god and we bless you and we thank you for tonight lord it's a little minor

miracle, it's a micro miracle tonight, every bible study is every sunday is and we bless you for it lord and if we have to be tested by failed performance and disappointing messages so be it, because what's at stake is more than our enjoyment of a sunday but the test the revealing of the truth of our life and the provocation to be as you are to love uncritically, unconditionally one another thank you my god, it doesn't fail and we bless you oh lord, oh lord, oh lord oh lord, oh lord help us and what greater help than your life that we might live through you thank you lord instruct the nation Israel, how else shall it bless all the family of the earth, except by the love of god thank you lord so do we praise you my god thank you lord precious god and again we ask a baptism of fire Peter

needed it all of them needed it, they all fled, they all betrayed you, they were all full of accusations, I can imagine what went on for ten days, well if you didn't do this and you did this and because you failed in this they were full of and when that fire came purge us my god fire devour all of the dross my god all of the critical spirit all of measuring another by our own standard to see if the other deserves our affection burn it up my god we pray and fill us with the spirit of love thank you my god that we will no longer say, and what will this man do, thank you my god we know what we will do, we'll feed the sheep we'll love the unlovely we'll love the least of your brethren my god because it doesn't matter whether they are the least or the most, it's not what they are in their

attainment it's because they're your people we see you in them thank you my god so do we bless your name I have a poem, and it's been on my heart for two days my god I love you with a

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