

Divine Love Questioned

by Octavius Winslow

The sermon explores the questioning of God's love and encourages believers to trust in His unwavering affection despite trials and doubts.

Scripture: Malachi 1:2, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 1:4

Topics: "Trust in God", "Divine Love"

Description

Octavius Winslow explores the theme of divine love as expressed in Malachi 1:2, where God declares His love for His people despite their doubts and ingratitude. He emphasizes that God's love is evidenced through His choice of Israel, the blessings bestowed upon them, and ultimately through the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Winslow challenges believers to recognize their own moments of questioning God's love during trials and to accept that even in hardship, God's love remains constant and unchanging. He encourages a deeper reflection on our love for Christ, urging believers to focus on God's unwavering love to inspire a more profound and obedient love in return. The sermon calls for humility and trust in God's eternal love, regardless of circumstances.

Transcript

"I have loved you, says the Lord. Yet you say, How have you loved us?"--Mal. 1:2

Was ever baser, darker, ingratitude than this? Study it, O my soul, for have you not, in spite of the countless evidences of your Lord's love to you, often doubted its reality, and questioned the wisdom, righteousness, and tenderness of its dealings? But, listen to the divine declaration of its existence. God Himself asserts it; and who shall dare call it in question?

"I have loved you." How does the Lord evidence the reality of His love to us? Take the display of God's love to the literal Israel, as typifying His love to His spiritual Israel; and in the analogy we shall see more distinctly wherein He has loved us. The Lord's love to His ancient people was exhibited in choosing them above all nations upon the face of the earth to be His peculiar people in conferring upon them especial blessings and distinctive privileges; by perpetuating their nationality amid many changes and revolutions; by bringing them up out of Egypt; by emancipating them from the Babylonish captivity; and by conducting them to their own land. And to crown these signal and especial blessings, having one Son, well-beloved, He sent Him to deliver and save them, saying, "They will reverence My Son."

In all this, O my soul, see your Lord's love shadowed forth. Did He not choose you to be His peculiar treasure, loving you with an everlasting love, and with love drawing you from your idol state to Himself; making you to forget your own people and your father's house, that He might "betroth you to Himself forever, in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercy?" Has He not "blessed you with all spiritual things in Christ Jesus," conferring upon you the relation of a child, the dignity of a saint, the inheritance of an heir? And to crown all, has He not given you His dear Son to be your Sin-Bearer, your Surety, your Redeemer, your Portion, and your all? Truly may the Lord say, "I have loved you."

"And yet you say, How have You loved us?" Ah! here is your dark ingratitude and base unbelief. When a cloud has shaded His love--when a providence has hidden it--when a trial of faith has tested it--when some dark, crushing dispensation of your God seems to belie it, then you have exclaimed, "How have you loved me? Is this love? Has love painted this dark cloud, blighted this beautiful flower, broken this strong staff, and embittered this cup of earthly sweet, emptying me from vessel to vessel, all His waves and His billows overflowing me?"

Yes, my soul, divine love--everlasting love--redeeming love--unchanging love has done it all! Then, Lord, I will no longer distrust your love--no more will I ask, How have You loved me? but will accept every cloud that shades it--every trial that embitters it--every correction that changes its voice from the accents of tenderness and sympathy, to those of austerity and terror, as still love, disguised though it be. Dear Lord, allow me never more--in the gloomiest hour, in the sorest trial, in the severest rebuke, in the saddest moment--to call in question, to allow the shadow of a doubt to rest upon the great, the tender, the changeless love with which You have from all eternity loved me.

But, my soul, how much greater reason have you to doubt your true and deep love to Christ! He may well ask, "Do you love Me?" Be humbled at the cross for this; and yet be not discouraged. Look to the Lord's great and changeless love to you, and not to your poor, faint, faltering love to Him. This will inflame your affections, kindle a more responsive, obedient and patient love in return--a love that will constrain you to do all and suffer all your blessed Lord in love commands and ordains.

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