

Love Sermon 2011

Doug Hamilton

There are many prominent words in the Bible: Evil, good, money, sin, life, death and sacrifice just to name a few. Likely the most important word in the whole Bible is LOVE. This word appears in nearly every book of the Bible in one form or another and is a cornerstone theme of the plan of God. Knowing this, I would like to cover three types of love that Bible clearly spells out for us.

- 1) The love of man for man
- 2) The love of man for God
- 3) The love of God for man.

No matter where you are reading in the Bible, one of these three loves could be discussed. We will outline the Bible in such a way concerning this lesson.

1) Love of Man for Man

Throughout the Bible we can find many examples of the love we are to have for our fellow man.

- A. Husbands *Titus 2:4 Older women "...may encourage the young women to love their husbands..."*
- B. Wives *Eph 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her..."*
- C. Children: *Eph 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*
- D. Parents: *Eph 6:2-3 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.*
- E. Employers and Employees: *Luke 7:2-3 And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.*
- F. Leaders: *1 Tim 2:1-2 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties {and} prayers, petitions {and} thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.*
- G. Mother-in-laws: *Ruth 1:16-18 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you {or} turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people {shall be} my people, and your God, my God. "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if {anything but} death parts you and me."*
- H. Father-in-laws: *Exodus 18:24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.*
- I. Friends: *1 Samuel 18:1 Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.*
- J. Church Family: *John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*
- K. Enemies: *Matt 5:44-45 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He*

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causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good, and sends rain on {the} righteous and {the} unrighteous.

Loving an Enemy

In The Grace of Giving, Stephen Olford tells of a story of a man during the American Revolution named Peter Miller. He lived in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and enjoyed the friendship of George Washington. In Ephrata also lived Michael Wittman, an evil-minded sort who did all he could to oppose and humiliate the pastor. One day Michael Wittman was arrested for treason and sentenced to die. Peter Miller traveled seventy miles on foot to Philadelphia to plead for the life of the traitor.

"No, Peter," General Washington said. "I cannot grant you the life of your friend." "My friend!" exclaimed Miller. "He's the bitterest enemy I have." "What?" cried Washington. "You've walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in different light. I'll grant your pardon." And he did. Peter Miller took Michael Wittman back home to Ephrata--no longer an enemy but a friend.

God is watching how we are treating our fellow man. If we love them with the grace and mercy that the Father affords us, then expect things to go smooth. If not, then do not expect things to work out at all.

2) Love of Man for God

Jesus told us in *Matt 10:37* "*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*" Our love for Him is to be first and foremost in our life. He also said concerning the greatest commandment of God *Matt 22:37* *And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'* That is the depth of the love that we are to have for the Father.

Heart

- *1 Sam 12:24 "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.*
- *II Ki 23:25 And before him (Josiah) there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.*
- *The scripture says that David was 1 Sam 13:14 "...a man after His own heart..."*
- *Prov 3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.*

Soul

- *Ps 119:167 My soul keeps Thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly.*
- *Ps 35:9 And my soul shall rejoice in the LORD; it shall exult in His salvation.*
- *Ps 63:8 My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me.*
- *Ps 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope.*

Mind

- *Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is*

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any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

- *Colossians 3:2-3 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*
- *1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Longing to Love God

Years ago, there was a Christian missionary who was transporting some Bibles in Hungary. The customs agent came through the train and opened up the box of Bibles. One by one he threw the Bibles out the window of the moving train. Then he grabbed the missionary's own personal Bible and threw it out the train as well. He was so discouraged that he just wanted to go back home, but he didn't.

Three year later, his personal Bible came in the mail with a letter explaining: *"I found it by the railroad three years ago. I have kept it, read it, and studied it often. My family and I have written many Scriptures down on paper and many more in our hearts. We cannot thank you enough, for now maybe we can go to heaven . . . please forgive me for keeping your Bible so long. I thought that if I did not read it now, I might never find a Bible to read."*

That man was longing to love God, but had no access for he had no word in from which to study God. We must never forget that there is the Love of Man for God all around us and through the Bible. We simply have to make sure that we are loving Him with all our heart, soul and mind.

3) Love of God for Man

We are told in the sacred scriptures that *1 Jn 4:19 We love, because He first loved us*. In the love scenario, God made the first move.

- *John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*
- *John 15:13"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*
- *Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*
- *Ephesians 5:2 "...walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."*
- *Jer 31:3The LORD appeared to him from afar, {saying,} "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.*

As prophesied by David in Psalm 22, Jesus knew that He would be going through incredible suffering on our behalf. *Psalm 22:14-18 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count*

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all my bones. They look, they stare at me; ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

Look at the Hands!

During the 17th century, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, sentenced a soldier to be shot for his crimes. The execution was to take place at the ringing of the evening curfew bell. However, the bell did not sound. The soldier's fiancé had climbed into the belfry and clung to the great clapper of the bell to prevent it from striking. When she was summoned by Cromwell to account for her actions, she wept as she showed him her bruised and bleeding hands. Cromwell's heart was touched and he said, "Your lover shall live because of your sacrifice. Curfew shall not ring tonight!"

Closing Passage:

John 20:25-29 So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." ²⁶ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace *be* with you." ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸ Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed."

Thomas clearly understood the Love of God for Man by seeing the nail holes in Jesus' hands. He was able to recognize the depth of His compassionate love and come to the final conclusion that He was his LORD and God!

Are you carrying out the Love of Man for Man? Do you have a genuine Love for God? Do you understand the depths of God's Love for Man? If you do, then you understand enough to press forward in a relationship with God.