

Love That Transforms

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Ephesians 5:1-8

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. 3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light”

Yet again I want to deal with the subject of the love of God. If you didn't hear last Sunday's message, I encourage you to go to realtruthmatters.com and listen to it or you can read the transcription of the sermon. The transcriptions are lightly edited to make them read better, but they are the sermons as I preach them and you can read last week's message.

God's love is infinitely gracious. The psalmist said God's "lovingkindness is better than life" (Psalm 63:3). His love is utterly amazing and with nothing can you compare it because nothing else will do. The Bible says God is love, it's not something He does but who He is. It is the very essence of His existence and not just something He does. He doesn't love us based upon our deserving. Nor does He love us more when we are more like Him and less when we are less like Him. He doesn't love you as you would suppose—He loves you as you are and not as you should be.

Today, our text shows us the extent of God's love for us, an extent that we cannot totally understand—He loves us in Christ Jesus, who has "given Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God." But almost equally hard to believe is the fact that we are commanded here to imitate God and to walk and love as Jesus loved us. Who of us can do this? Who of you can walk as Jesus did on this earth and love others as He did? Not a one of us in our own power. Yet it is stated in a matter of fact way as if it were more than possible.

We are put into some perplexity as to how we love like God. How do we love people in a way that does not celebrate their sin? Do we love people in a way that we never address their sinfulness? Do we never speak of the judgment of God on sinners? And if God loves we, His children, undeservedly, shouldn't we overlook the sins of our brothers and sisters? This is perplexing!

Today, many missional and evangelism trainers are teaching that to love the sinner we must not be judgmental, which means we somehow celebrate the life of the sinner and show no displeasure with their sin because registering some form of disapproval of their lifestyle is to say you somehow disapprove of them and degrade rather than elevate them. Is this true? Are we to just let everything go, *que sera sera*? Are we to never mention sin or deal with it at all, in the name of love? Is this what love means?

We know we are not to judge in the sense of condemning a person, meaning write them off and reject them as not savable, we know we're not supposed to do that, but how are we to deal with their sins, especially the sins that are scandalous? Human trafficking is a scandalous sin. Sexual abuse is a scandalous sin. Domestic abuse is a scandalous sin and it's even in homes that find their names on the membership rolls of churches. Are we never to deal with these issues?

I mean, God loves me undeservedly when I sin, even scandalously, He still pours out His love on me—how do we do that and lift the person up? There is great perplexity but there is a biblical answer and I hope God will help me to give that to you this morning.

The Apostle Paul begins with saying “love like God loves.”

I. The Love of God: How to Imitate It

*“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.
And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us” Ephesians 5:1-2a*

Who can love like Jesus loves? I am very thankful that the Apostle Paul inserts the words, “as dear children” in verse one. It seems to give some alleviation of pressure. I think these words are purposely used by the apostle for that very thing. You cannot imitate God perfectly because you are not God. That is not a great stroke of genius but it's very important to state it. You're to imitate God, not trying to be perfect in a way that you could never be here on this earth, but like a child tries to imitate his father or mother.

In fact, the word *imitate* that the Apostle Paul uses is a word that literally means *to mimic*. To mimic your father. We've seen this played out plenty of times, have we not? A boy tries to mimic his dad because he idolizes his father. He tries to mimic him because he wants to be just like him. Or a daughter does the same for her mother. If the dad is out working in the backyard, the little boy goes up to his room and gets his play tool belt and when dad is hammering the nails into the boards he gets his little plastic hammer and he watches how dad does it and he mimics his father. Of course he's not adding or contributing anything to the project but he feels like he is. Why? He's doing it the way dad is doing it.

This is the concept the Apostle wants us to interject into our thinking. None of us can be perfect like our Father but we can attempt to learn how to love how our Father loves. How does our Father love? How do we see it? How do we know it? How do we look at it so we can mimic it? It's in the person of Jesus Christ.

A. God's Love is Manifested and Revealed in Christ Jesus.

*And walk in love, **as Christ** also has loved us" Ephesians 5:2a*

Jesus perfectly revealed the Father to us. Jesus is the express image of our Father.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

When we see Jesus, we see what the Father looks like. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." When people saw Jesus they saw expressly, exactly what the Father was like. There is a great deal of confusion here, is there not? When you read the Old Testament you get an idea of God that He is some angry deity, that He's angry, quick-tempered, and will not hesitate to destroy in a fit of rage. Then you move into the New Testament and you see Jesus as someone who is long-suffering, kind, and patient, gentle, tender, and loving.

But the truth of the matter is that Jesus, in the form of man, showed us exactly who God is in the Old and the New. Because it's impossible for God to change, He didn't change in that intertestamental period of 400 years between the Old and New Testaments. He's always been the same: yesterday, today, and forever, and we see in Christ as He walked on this earth the beautiful display of the love of God.

Last week we looked at this love and saw that this love is a hard act to follow.

B. A Hard Act to Follow.

I. Jesus loves in spite of the sin.

This was beautifully displayed in the story of the prodigal. Here is a father who had two sons who had both dishonored him. It wasn't just the younger one. Jesus masterfully shows in this one parable how sin manifests itself. One manifests itself in a profligate way, in the way of great immorality, and licentiousness in the younger son. He went to the bottom of the barrel and did unspeakable things, full of evil. But the older brother was equally sinful, yet it doesn't seem to be so, does it? He had always obeyed the father, he always honored him, at least it appeared that he had, he had always done what he was told, and yet that older son dishonored his father and embarrassed him in front of all of his guests. Why? Because in his self-righteousness he declared that he never received the love of the father, he had earned his father's love and the father owed it to him.

Sin can manifest itself in a very heinous way or in a very self-righteous way. Both of those young men shamed their father but the love of the father did not diminish because of their dishonoring them. He continued to love them, he chased after them, he pursued them, that he might redeem both of them. That's how God loves us in Christ. He loves us in spite of us.

2. Jesus accepts the sinner.

Why should that be so strange to us? Yet, if you watch church people, you wouldn't know that God was that way. You wouldn't know that God receives and accepts sinners. The woman at the well said to Jesus, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9). She doesn't say only that she is a Samaritan or only that she is a woman. She states both of the huge social obstacles. To the Jew, a Samaritan was one of the worst kinds of people. They were far worse than the Romans and other Gentiles, because they were a mixed-breed. They were a compromise of Judaism and paganism. A Jew believed that to even have a conversation with a Samaritan would be not only demeaning but contaminating, it would somehow make them less holy in the sight of God. That's a huge social obstacle.

Besides that, the whole situation between men and women in the first century was weird and it wasn't even biblical to be quite frank, so there was that stigma. And she cites both of these. She could have mentioned a third social obstacle; do you know what it is? She could have said, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a sinful Samaritan woman?" Here she was living with a man who was not her husband, she's committed adultery before, and here's the Son of God, the holy, pure, perfect One conversing with her. He accepts sinners.

Your sin doesn't put Him off. Your sin doesn't cause Him to turn His face and hide—He bore the shame already! You can come to Him this morning. You can come to Him right now. Dear child of God, your sins this week, your attitudes, your unbelief, your complaining and murmuring has not turned His face from you. He receives sinners and accepts them!

Does your pot-smoking neighbor know that you accept him or her? What if two homosexual men move in across the street from you and they've adopted children the same age as your children, would you let your kids play with theirs? Would you invite them over to dinner?

Or does the question the Pharisees asked about Jesus get stuck in your throat about now, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Or do you flat out object that you can't tolerate sinners like these? It's no longer a question why Jesus did it; it's become an outright accusation of Jesus, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2).

You think Jesus understands. *They're wicked. They do things I cannot approve, and if I associate with them like that I'm approving and affirming their sins. Surely Jesus understands.* Yes, He understands why we don't love sinners and He doesn't agree with us. He understands but He doesn't agree. This is the way God loves. Jesus shows us how the Father loves—He accepts sinners.

3. Jesus does not condemn.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)

This is amazing. God, the Judge of all the earth, was in flesh standing before sinners. There was never a person He talked to or associated with that was not a sinner. Yet He said He didn't come into the world to pick up a stone and hurl it at them, to judge them, to condemn them, to cut them off. No. He came that they might be loved and saved. He didn't condemn them. He doesn't have to—we condemn ourselves.

I've seen this time and time again over the years. Women who are undergoing abuse at home: sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and you ask them, "Why do you stay in that kind of situation?" And their answer is a self-condemning one. They don't think they deserve anything. They've come to see themselves the way they are, they know they've sinned, they know they've done wrong in their lives and they don't think they'll be able to achieve anything better than this so they stay.

The alcoholic doesn't need to be condemned, he's condemned every time he looks into a mirror when in a drunken stupor. He knows his sin has already condemned him. That's what Jesus said.

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:18-19)

Jesus did not have to condemn when He came into the world and He doesn't condemn us now, we condemn ourselves. To the woman caught in adultery in John 8, Jesus says, "Neither do I condemn you." What's interesting is that she was not doing any of the things we would require for conversion, such as, repenting, or praying for forgiveness, or promising she would change, or believing that Jesus is the Savior from her sins. She was caught in adultery! She was probably wrapped in a sheet and blanket because she was in the very act. There she was weeping and crying because she believed at any moment the first stone was going to be cast and she would be executed. She was not seeking a Savior from her sins, she was seeking a Savior from the crowd.

What does Jesus say to her? "Neither do I condemn you." This is remarkable, is it not? Jesus doesn't condemn us. So as we look at the way God loves us, are we not under the pressure of our text even more, are we not? How do we imitate this kind of love? I'm looking at this text and find it quite easy to look down my nose at other people. Why? Because I somehow justify myself in the act of condemning others. I find it difficult to associate with someone whose worldview is completely different than mine, what have I got in common with them? Yet the source of our love is not you or me, it's God.

C. The Source of Our Love is the Love of God For Us.

"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." (Ephesians 5:2)

My dear friends, the source of our loving others—even Christian brothers and sisters, family members, as well as sinners and enemies—is not our mustering up some sort of feeling or emotion for them. It is that we have received the love of God for ourselves. Those who are the recipients of divine love have experienced something that is remarkable and so powerful that it literally turns them, changes them. If you've been the recipient of mercy it is far easier for you to grant mercy to someone else.

Augustine many years ago, talking to God, said: "In loving me, You made me lovable."

I think he meant two things. First, there is no deserving the love of God in any of us. We covered that last week. You don't earn it, you don't merit it, you don't get it because of works, goodness, or religion. We're not worth the love of God. We don't deserve it. We all start there. That's the place where we all begin. Don't worry about trying to get God's favor, you don't get it because you don't earn it. You don't deserve it. But even though there is no reason for God to love me, He does love me. This is why it's so hard to believe. By God loving me, bringing me into His family as a son, He makes me worthy now of His love, not by virtue of who I am and what I do but by virtue of who He is and what He has done. What has He done? He adopted me into His family and made me His child.

I think that's what Augustine is getting at. But secondly, I think He's also saying the love of God has done something for me and to me so now I am lovable. I give love. I grant love. Even to the unlovable who, like me, do not deserve the love of God.

It's at this point that some of you are surely wrestling with the perplexities of how we do this. It almost sounds like we ignore sin, don't deal with it, and leave it to God to sort out. We are merely to forget about sin and love everybody; act like everything's cool even when nothing is cool. Just pretend that we're all going to the same place just in different ways, different methods, but it's all under the same love of God. Paul wants to make sure we don't think this way.

In verse three, Paul changes course.

II. Love Does Not Endorse Sin But Endures Sin

This is God's position and it should be ours. Love does not endorse sin but endures sin. God's love does not approve of our sin, it tolerates it. God tolerates our sin. Another way of putting it in biblical terminology is long-suffering. God suffers long our sin. He doesn't endorse it; He endures it. How do I know this? By one word in verse three.

"But" (Ephesians 5:3)

Oh, that divine conjunction! There's another place Paul uses this divine conjunction, which always draws a contrast.

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.” (Ephesians 2:1-4)

Do you see that divine conjunction and how it's being used? This is what you once were *but* God! It's a contrast, something different has happened, something has changed. We see how he uses it in the second chapter, now back to our text. You're to love sinners in spite of themselves always and you're to accept them and you're not to condemn them *but*. A contrast is put into motion.

“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints.” (Ephesians 5:3)

Love does not endorse sin; it endures it. Paul says this is the way you once were but not now, therefore, because you have experienced the wonderful love of God there ought to be a difference in the way you live. These things ought not to be even named among you because it's not fitting to saints. In other words, saints don't live this way, which means love demands holiness.

III. Love Demands Holiness

From verse three through verse eight, Paul shows us this.

A. Sinners Sin But Saints Shouldn't.

That doesn't mean sinners should sin either but they can't act contrary to their sinful natures, the saint can.

v. 3—“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;”

Jesus demands something other than a lifestyle of sin and disobedience. He demands holiness. He demands you love purity, walk in purity, pursue it. “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

The woman caught in adultery was told something else besides, “Neither do I condemn you.” What else did Jesus say to her? “Go and sin no more.” The love of God demands a change. It demands that we live holy lives unto God. Why? Because that's what His love does. That's what His love is. It loves everything that's holy and pure and right and good. So Paul says this in our text but also in chapter two. Look at what love does.

“among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),” (Ephesians 2:3-5)

What’s he talking about? *You were so consumed with doing life your way.* That’s all sin is.

Sin = Doing life your way

You were consumed with that *but God.*

Do you see it in these verses? Love demands a change. Here’s your nature, you’re lost in your sin, but Christ came and loved you and it resurrected you as a dead man out of the grave, you’re no longer the same. Love demands holiness. Where the confusion lies, especially for those of us pursuing holiness, is that we forget the love of God is both merciful and just.

B. God’s Love is Both Merciful and Just.

1. Love is demonstrated in mercy.

I’ve given you examples from the life and ministry of Jesus. The last message was one whole sermon dealing with the demonstration of God’s mercy to sinners. God’s love is demonstrated in mercy. Therefore, we are to be merciful to the sinner, we are to receive them and love them for who they are and not condemn them. But love is also demonstrated in justice.

2. Love is demonstrated in justice.

This is where we’re confused. How can it be both? They seem diametrically opposed.

“For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” (Ephesians 5:5-6)

This is in the same breath as verse one, to be imitators of God and to walk in love as Christ loved us. How did Christ love us? In such a way that He was able to touch us and receive us even though we were vile sinners. But now He says clearly that the justice of God will come upon any who will not receive Jesus Christ. These two things seem diametrically opposed but they’re not and here’s why, love is demonstrated in both mercy and justice.

God’s love is holy. Some theologians have even said that is the essence of what love is: the love of that which is holy. What does that mean? In essence you could summarize it this way: God loves everything that exalts His Son Jesus and edifies His children. God loves everything that exalts His Son and everything that is good for you and me. That’s what He loves. Anything that would not

exalt His Son and would not be good for His kingdom He must, because of love, come against it. If it is harmful to you, if it hurts you, if it's not helpful for your progress in grace, if it defames Christ and abases Him, then He must come against it. This is why the writer of Hebrews said Jesus died, "that He might destroy the works of the devil." Here is the dark lord of hell, who is a thief and a murderer, he does nothing but plunder and steal and Jesus came in the name of love to bring an end to his works.

The Bible says now we are living in a time when the love of God is being manifested mostly by mercy. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." This is a moment when God's love is in this room to receive any and all who will receive it. You can come without fear of being rejected or cast aside. You are not too evil to be accepted. No, today the love of God is manifested in great mercy. But the hour comes and it hastens quickly when those who do not bow the knee and confess with their mouths Jesus Christ will stand before a throne of judgment and the love of God will come against them not in the form of mercy but in justice because they stand against everything God loves.

Therefore, Paul is writing to Christians and he says do not be deceived. Just because the love of God has forgiven you and given you much love in spite of your sins, don't think that means God is confirming or affirming your sins. Why?

C. God's Love Both Forgives and Transforms.

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light"
(Ephesians 5:8)

Do you see the contrast? At one point you were under the dark lord and his reign and now you've been brought into the light by the love of God. The love of God didn't just forgive you of your sins, it did something for you, it transformed you, it turned you from darkness to light.

Don't be deceived by empty words that state salvation by grace is nothing more than the forgiveness of sins and has nothing to do with how you live thereafter.

Many teachers and preachers are espousing those words today. You can turn to Christian radio, Christian television, books at the Christian bookstore, and you'll find where men are teaching these things and deceiving many into believing that salvation by grace simply means the forgiveness of sin and that's all. They proclaim that if anyone wants to talk to you about being holy and growing in grace and becoming sanctified, then you need to reject that person because they're bringing works and legalism, and that's nothing more than the doctrine of the Pharisees. It's all by grace, and if it's all by grace it means it's just forgiveness of sin and God just deals with you on that basis alone. If you introduce one iota of holiness to the life of a believer beyond the forgiveness of sins then you've introduced works. That's what they say.

Paul says in our text those are empty words. That's not the Gospel. They're deceptive. It sounds logical, I can understand why you would say that, but God's love does more than just forgive you of your sins—it transforms you! It does more than wipe out the accounts against you, but rather it puts you in a right position growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, it makes you like Him. Any grace that isn't working in you, motivating, convicting, shaping you to be like Jesus, is not the grace that saves.

There is an equally damning and empty teaching that goes the opposite direction.

Don't be deceived by empty words that salvation by grace is perfectionism.

In other words, if you're a Christian, you get to a place of perfection where you don't sin at all. That too is equally wrong. Those who teach this often re-define sin. You catch a person who believes this doing something that is clearly wrong and you say to them, "That was a sin according to Scripture."

"Oh, no, no, that was a mistake in judgment, that's not a sin. I've been sanctified. I'm no longer like that," they reply.

That's not Scriptural. The Bible says there is a struggle. He's writing to Christians and telling them not to do these types of scandalous sins. I mean, there are some pretty big sins here: fornication, uncleanness, which is a word dealing with all other forms of sexual perversions. If Christians can't do these kinds of things, why command them not to do these kinds of things? He's wasting his ink and he's wasting their time in reading it. There is a struggle! We're not perfect yet; we need the grace of God. I need, today, the love of God to flood my soul to the point where I want to be like Jesus. Without the experience of that love I slide back into apathy, into a salvation that is nothing more than a forgiveness of sins only.

Don't be deceived by empty words that you have to participate in sin or affirm sin in order to love the sinner.

Again, many people are teaching this in churches today. They say if you're going to reach sinners, you're going to have to be more like them so they can relate to you. That means you need to do some of the things they do. You say you've never heard that. It's out there; you're just not seeing it. It's out there, believe me. There are people out there who say in order to reach the lost you've got to show you don't judge or condemn so that means you do some of the things they do in order for them to see you really love them. No, no, no! That's not what Jesus did! That's not His love!

Listen to me, if you participate in their sins with them, they just think you're one of them. It's the difference love makes in us that says, "No, I can't go that way but I don't condemn you." That's what they noticed in Jesus. He didn't condemn them for their drunkenness or their prostitution or their cheating the people of their taxes. But He didn't go around doing it Himself. It's that difference that will be light that shines on your love for them.

No better example that God's love both forgives and transforms is the true story of a man who was despised for his crimes. He was a professional extortioner and blackmailer. He tore families apart. He left many of his victims in financial ruin while he built his own empire. He was a money mogul, owning diverse assets in real estate, currency, and collectibles. You could call him the Bernie Maddoff of his time. He was also distinguishable because of his very small stature. He was not a tall man to say the least.

Another important player in our story is a faith healer who was very famous having large crowds in all his meetings. Talk circulated around him that he could have political aspirations.

On the day of our story the faith healer communicated to the wealthy villain that he would like to have a dinner meeting with him. The diminutive man had climbed a tree to overlook the crowd and see the passing celebrity preacher. But the preacher seemed to know that he was there whether he had been visible in the tree or not.

Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." Well, the little man scurried down the tree and joyfully received the preacher. The whole town was both flabbergasted and frustrated. As famous a holy man as was Jesus you wouldn't have guessed that He would spend the entire day at the house of a nefarious traitor and tax man. The self-righteous members of the First Synagogue of Jericho muttered their disapproval to one another, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." Implying that perhaps Jesus was more charlatan than consecrated. Maybe He wasn't as holy as they first had thought. They thought He should have spent the day with the chief rabbi rather than the chief tax collector.

But as Jesus had said on several occasions, that it wasn't the well but the sick that needed a physician. There wasn't a more soul sick man in all of Jericho than Zacchaeus. There was no one who stood in more extreme need of the overwhelming gracious love of God than this extremely short man. Immediately the infamous thief knew that there was one Man in Jericho who didn't hate him but really cared for him. Zacchaeus hosted a banquet for Jesus and his immediate followers. It was a feast of exquisite food, sweet wine, and rich desserts, no doubt accompanied by professional musicians hired by the rich man. It was a party!

The effect of the love of Jesus on Zacchaeus was life changing. The little man stopped the music, the servants stopped their pouring and serving, every one looked at the host as he secured their attention, raised his glass and what started out as a toast to Jesus turned into a confession of sin, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much" (Luke 19:1-10).

The love of God not only forgave but transformed Zacchaeus. He was a changed man. Why? Because that's what the love of God does! Have you been transformed by it or have you just accepted your sins to be forgiven and that's all?

Many want the forgiveness of God but they care nothing about the transformational love of God. They want their sins forgiven but they do not want to be changed. They haven't experienced God's love yet. Because God's love doesn't just forgive, it transforms. The love of God does not condemn, reject, or despise the sinner, but neither will it leave the sinner the same. It doesn't leave him or her the same.

Have you really experienced the love of God? Where are you in the process of pursuing holiness? Can you say there has been something happening in you that is making you more like Christ? Some of you would have to agree with me today that there is a great deal of misery in your soul because you're not progressing as you ought to. Where does that dissatisfaction come from? It's the love of God.

As I conclude, we, as God's people, are to love as God loves us. That doesn't mean I participate in the sins of people, it means I love them in spite of their sins and when given the opportunity under the power of the Holy Spirit, I share with them the love of Jesus. I tell them about what the great Savior has come to do for those who are great sinners. Oh friends, I pray today that we are a people that loves people. If we're not, if we're typical, traditional, Sunday-go-to-meetin' kind of church, then we're a loveless church. We're a people void of the love of God because the love of God transforms, changes the good, the bad, and the ugly. The unlovable are made loveable because they have experienced the transforming love of God. Amen.