

# The Love of God and Prayer

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at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.  
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Matthew 7:7-11

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

It seems that prayer is considered something quite unnatural and most difficult. In fact, hardly anyone talks about prayer who doesn't use some kind of word that makes it appear hard to do. I wonder why that is. Why is it difficult to talk to someone who loves you so much?

For many, prayer has been made anything other than what it is supposed to be and for that reason I believe we have made prayer even more difficult. Here in this text I believe Jesus is trying to get to the very heart and reason for prayer. Not how to pray but the reason for prayer. When the reason, or motive, of prayer is properly established and embraced, then how to pray will become easy. Prayer is to be conversation or practicing something vital—relationship.

I believe Jesus directs our attention to the motivation of our prayer.

## **I. The Motivation for Prayer**

### **A. Prayer is Relational**

He uses a logical argument, the argument from the lesser to the greater. If the lesser argument is true, then the greater has to be true. The lesser argument is this: *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children.* If that is true, then we can proceed to the greater argument. But before we do, let's look at the lesser. The lesser argument says that earthly fathers, who are not as loving as God, can love their children and give them good things. It's a premise. Jesus uses the term *evil*. He is not suggesting that the apostles were not believers or true disciples. He is saying that even the disciples' love for their children when compared to the love of God looks evil because they were fallen and less than perfect.

The word *evil* shows that men, you and I, are not as holy as God is and therefore our love for our children is small when compared to God's love for us. That being true, Jesus now moves to the greater argument, that God's love for us is greater and we need not doubt it.

*“... how much more will your Father who is in heaven  
give good things to those who ask Him!”*

Here is the very reason you and I should pray. In this logical argument of the lesser to the greater, Jesus rips open the real motive and reason for prayer. Why should you pray? Not simply because you need something. Oh, how we have made prayer into a want list for God and it's not designed for that. It will accommodate that, but it's not designed for it. Prayer is relational. Prayer is a conversation between two people who are madly in love.

Prayer is not practicing religion, in other words, it's not something you have to do in order to be acceptable to God or to fulfill some duty or rite. Wrongly, and to our detriment, we see prayer as an obligation and not the joyful practice of a relationship with someone you love. It's like a college student going off to college and calling mom and dad only because he or she *has* to check in but not because they really love and miss them.

That's how we treat prayer. We check in with God because we believe we're obligated to do so and if we don't we'll be in trouble. So to stay on God's good side, we pray, we fulfill the duty, we complete the rite. That's not prayer. No wonder prayer is so difficult.

Jesus said the foundational reason you pray is because God loves you; your love is not foundational to prayer. The emphasis here is on the love of God for His children. It is God's love for us that motivates our love for Him.

How could you not want to talk to your Father, especially when you know how much He loves you? I understand some of us may have had fathers who did not show us fatherly affection or kindness. Some of you may have fathers who forsook you and your family. Others may have fathers who were abusive or difficult. Do not transfer to the Lord God your earthly father's poor example. How would you like it if someone projected on you the mistakes of someone else and treated you as if you committed those mistakes? Would you like to work for a boss who, at one time had a very unsatisfactory employee, and treats you as if you are that employee? If married before, would you like your spouse to transfer to you all of the sins of the former spouse? Not at all. None of us wants to be judged for the sins of another. Why then do we transpose the sins of our fathers who are evil upon our heavenly Father who is righteous?

In Jesus' illustration, He takes into account that the majority of fathers loves their children and will not mistreat them. Look at what He says, "how much more." How much more will God, who is your Father, bless you and give to you?

The Bible says, "God is love." The fact that God loves you more than you love you—and we all admit we love ourselves very, very much. God's love is the motive of why we pray. I believe the reason prayer is difficult is because we really do not believe how much God really does love us.

I am persuaded we do not really believe how much God does love us, and some of us struggle to

believe God loves us at all. While others think God loves them more than He loves anyone else. But all of this is a failure to rightly understand the love of God and believe it, and for this reason prayer is more difficult than it already is.

This is where prayer starts. It's not about how eloquent or organized your prayers are, but that God loves you. This is a relationship.

Any little boy who knows his father loves him will want to be like his dad. He'll go to his dad's closet and get out his shoes and put them on and try to walk in them. Or he will get his coat and try to wear it. Why? Because he wants to be like his father. He adores his father and will follow him anywhere. It is the same way with prayer. Your Father so madly loves you that you will follow Him and long to be with Him that you will do whatever you can to make sure you have to time to converse with Him. That's the basis of prayer.

This is what Jesus is trying to change in the thinking of His disciples. Their view of God was completely Old Covenant, where the fatherhood of God was hardly mentioned and almost non-existent. They didn't really see the Father in that light and now He's trying to show them. Through Jesus they would see a side of God they never saw in the law or tablets of Moses. They would see the heart of a Father who pursues His children and will care for them better than they deserve.

That, my friends, is the motivation of prayer.

## **B. The Motivation of Love**

He has promised to give us everything we need. Isn't that what we see in this text? He uses things we need: bread and clothing. The motivation is that He will give you everything you need with one qualification: faith. That's it. Which is why you have the statement Jesus makes, "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). God loves you so much that He does want to do good things for you, He does want to bless you, He does want to pour out His favor on you. But He cannot without your faith. *If He loved me, why doesn't He do it anyway?* You don't understand love if you ask that question. What kind of relationship is it, father and child, husband or wife, if it's one-sided? How can you be good to somebody who doesn't believe you want to be good to them? I've met people like that. You try to love them, you try to be good to them and the more you reach out to them the angrier, offended and closed off they become. They literally try to create situations to push you away, and the truth is we do that with God and we don't even realize it. I have learned that often He gives to me in abundance even when my faith is small. He is so in love with us that He will give to me even when my faith doesn't match up.

Therefore, God's love for us ought to be a magnet drawing us into solitude with Him. We should want to be alone with Him to experience His heart and to have heart-to-heart conversations with Him. Why? We love Him and, more importantly, He loves us.

I don't have to make time for my wife. I don't put her on my calendar. That doesn't even cross my mind. Now, everyone knows we have Mondays and that's our day, but that's not the only time

we're together. I enjoy being with her. Why? Because I have a requirement to fulfill as a husband? Absolutely not. That would dishonor her. I pursue her because I love her. That's the same motivation for prayer.

What God gives to us is always good—*good things*, “how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

## **II. The Matter of Prayer**

### **A. What Should We Pray For.**

The Apostle Paul tells the Philippians, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). Evidently everything should be a matter of prayer. However, the Apostle James tells us that selfish desires do not honor the Father's love for us and therefore, do not get answered. “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (James 4:3).

Would you give a 5-year old a knife as a gift? No, of course not. I cannot see Missy or Justin giving 5-year-old Martin a hunting knife. No matter how much he petitioned and pleaded they would not grant that request, because it is not a “good thing.” Therefore, when we bring God our petty, self-centered requests for things we will spend on our own pleasures without regard to His honor and glory, we should not expect our Father to grant those requests because those are not “good things.” They're not good for us. It is insulting to the love of God to ask Him for things that are not loving because it disputes with the fact of His love for us. It says He will give us anything whether it is good for us or not, which can only mean He really does not love us and that He is simply a genie in a bottle who grants carnal wishes.

That is not the love of God. He loves you too much to answer your petty, selfish, self-absorbed desires. He gives you *good things*. Therefore, good things ought to be what we're praying about.

Jesus tells us what the matter of our prayers ought to be. This is part of the Sermon on the Mount and in chapter five He defines the righteousness of the kingdom and that those who are in the kingdom have that kind of righteousness. In chapter six He transitions and teaches us how righteousness is to be lived out. If you are going to teach about living in the kingdom of God and according to righteousness, you must talk about possessions, money, and the necessities of life because they make up a great deal of our life. This Jesus does. Therefore in chapter six, as He's teaching about prayer, He says this,

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. (Matthew 6:7-8)

There is that word *things*. But there's a word absent, isn't there? *Good* is not found here, just *things*. And the "things you have need of" are referring to the necessities of life—food, clothing, shelter, the things we need. He says, *Don't consume your prayer time with these things. That's what sinners do because that's all they're concerned about. Besides that, your Father already knows you need these things; why don't you realize how much He loves you?* If you realized how much He loved you, you wouldn't worry about whether He would provide the things you need because you believe He is a good Father.

As a child, I never got up in the morning and went to my dad and asked if he was going to feed me that day. Never. That never crossed my mind, and my father was very difficult man. He was very difficult but he was not so difficult that I would question whether he would feed me and give me the necessities of life. How did I know he would? Because he got up every morning to go to a job he did not like in order to feed my sister, my mother and me. I never had to ask him for that.

Jesus is saying if your prayer life is consumed with those carnal things you're not sure that God really loves you so you've turned prayer into this idea: "If I ask, ask often, and say it the right way I will receive what I ask." And then it's not relational and it's not based upon love and it won't work.

He then moves to the model prayer, we call it the Lord's Prayer.

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. <sup>13</sup> And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Six petitions and two statements of praise: *hallowed by Thy name* and *Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*. Six petitions and only one deal with material things. It's not wrong that we pray for material things, but in this prayer we see that Jesus does not tell us to pray simply because that's what's required of us and we aren't sure we'll get it if we don't. We see that the request for our daily bread comes in the midst of requests of a higher nature. These are more spiritual oriented requests so the kingdom of God becomes reality in you and the world around you.

Therefore praying for your food and daily needs is just another way of showing how good He is and how much He does answer. It's a way of proving to the world that He does take care of us. So the theme here, the matter of prayer, is the things of the kingdom for the glory of God.

In verses 19-30 Jesus states that life does not consist of the things we possess here on earth, rather our lives consist in our investment in the kingdom of God, things that outlive this earth. So don't be pursuing goods and security and fame, because those are just things that will not last.

In verse 32 He uses the word *things* again. “For after all these *things* the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these *things*.” God knows you and I need certain things to maintain our physical lives, and it is right that we ask for them, but they shouldn’t be the greater portions of our prayer life. Why? Because God’s love will provide them for us as a father loves his children and provides for them.

In verse 33, Jesus tells us that what He means by “good things.” “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). In Luke 11:13 Jesus says exactly the same thing but He does not say God will give “good things,” rather He says God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the good thing. To have food and clothing today is the kindness of God. It is love. But God’s love is far better than these temporal things.

If my father just put food on the table and gave me the bare minimum of clothing so I wouldn’t go to school naked, and that was the only expression of his kindness to me, could I say my father loved me? It would be very doubtful, wouldn’t it? I grew up having very little. As I look back on my childhood, I see the sacrifices my father gave of his own self, the sweat, the blood, the aggravation to make sure that we were blessed, and even though he was very hard to please, he still showed me love. If he could do that not being a Christian, how much more will your Father in heaven give you more than food and clothing and a roof over your head? He wants to bless you with the Holy Spirit and with power and grace and righteousness so that your life will have eternal consequences. Those are the good things.

### **III. The Method of Prayer**

How should we then pray? After years of studying I have found the way to pray. Here’s how: in faith.

We have complicated prayer by all the formulas and acronyms and methodologies of prayer. You’ve read them, you’ve heard about them. But what does that say about God? What does it say about prayer?

When I visit with my wife, I don’t develop an outline based on some acronym like ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. Nor will I prepare an outline today of things I need to discuss with her tomorrow because without that I will have nothing to say. Do you see how we treat God?

We’ve read books, heard sermons, and gone to conferences on prayer and we’ve learned all these methodologies and it says one thing about our hearts—we really don’t love God. And worse than that, we don’t really believe He loves us. If prayer has to be based on some system or methodology, then it’s no longer a relationship of love. I shouldn’t have to work at trying to find something to say to God. I don’t have any trouble finding something to say to my wife. We can sit and talk for hours and the conversation is not planned. We go from one thing to another in

the conversation. Why should prayer be different? Why should talking with our Father be unlike talking to someone we love?

I'm not totally against prayer lists. I have a prayer list but do you know what's on that list? You. I pray for you by name. Then there are a few things on the list with the ministries we are involved with. But other than that, my time in prayer is very conversational and very relational because that's what God wants. He doesn't need it, but He wants it.

Prayer is relational. It is to be fueled by the fact that God loves us. It does not matter if you believe God is faithful to His promises if you don't believe those promises apply to you. You can believe every word of this Book is true but if you don't believe God loves you enough to make it apply to you, then it won't matter. Your belief in this Book will not translate to God's favor and blessing in your life. These promises are true, but they're not true for you if you don't believe God loves you enough to have made that promise and covenant with you.

What are the reasons we have difficulty believing God will answer our prayers or that the promises will come to pass for us? There are more than I have time this morning. But, I am going to take the time to deal with what I consider the three most significant reasons.

The first two are often confused as the same—unworthiness and inability—but they are not.

## **A. The Feelings of Unworthiness.**

The feelings of unworthiness cause us to doubt God's love for us and therefore our prayers are hindered because the only basis for prayer is that love relationship. Therefore, if you don't believe God loves you or that He doesn't love you all that much, your prayer life is going to suffer because His love is the motivation for prayer. Feelings of unworthiness will do that to you. Why do we feel unworthy to come before God?

### *1. Comparing yourself with others.*

Most of you compare yourselves to people you consider more spiritual. You say, "I'm not like them, therefore I'm not worthy." But I think there is a more significant reason. I'm not a psychologist, and I don't want to be a psychologist, but we have to understand there are experiences in our life that shape us, and if we feel we have been rejected by a person who ought to have been a significant person in our life we are going to suffer with feelings of unworthiness.

Do you know there are many men who strive for great fame, power, and wealth because they're still trying to please a father they felt they never pleased as a boy? Men have made it all the way to the oval office because of that motivation and we have to recognize that. But let's be biblical as we analyze this and not worldly.

Why do I feel unworthy?

Because you love self too much.

Just the opposite of what you would think. Feelings of unworthiness come from self-absorption and self-pity.

## 2. Self-pity.

The reality is not that you think yourself unworthy it's that you're not being treated by others to the degree you believe you ought to be treated by them. That's what you think.

It's like a 5-year-old girl who thinks she's a princess. She really believes she's a princess, but nobody plays along with her and sooner or later what does she do? She goes off to her room pouting. Why? Because you didn't treat her the way she thought she deserved to be treated. She's feeling bad about herself but her feelings of feeling bad and self-pity are really because she loves herself too much.

We are a people who have bought into the religion of narcissism. What does that mean? It simply means we are overly occupied with ourselves. We fill too much of our own thoughts and are always asking how things are going to affect me. It is to be in love with yourself more than anyone else.

I'm probably going to be offensive, although I don't mean to be, but I want you to stop and think. I don't understand social media except that it's an outlet for this narcissism. We take pictures of ourselves and put it on Facebook. I don't get that. Some of the things you do when you're taking the photograph, I wouldn't want anyone to know. We're very consumed with ourselves. You've heard the question: When you get a photograph and who is the first person you look for? Yourself.

We all are narcissists at heart and that's a problem. But you begin to develop feelings of unworthiness and self-pity because people are not recognizing you for what you think you are worth. And that begins to be how you view yourself. *I must not be worth very much but I really believe I am and nobody is recognizing it so maybe I'm really not.* And you transfer that to God. That sense of insecurity is brought into the prayer closet and therefore you really don't believe He truly loves you as He says He does.

Gideon is a biblical example of this.

*"So he said to Him, 'O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.'" (Judges 6:15)*

## 3. Disobedience.

There is another reason you feel unworthy—rebellion. Spiritual decline. You don't feel like you can go into the presence of God when you have just disobeyed Him do you? You feel unworthy.

All of these things are an evidence of the absence of a gospel orientation. What do I mean by that? I mean the gospel doesn't drive your thinking, it doesn't permeate the way you see yourself, God, or the world. We must have a gospel orientation. We misunderstand that none of us deserve God's love. None of us deserved His Son dying on a cross for us. Listen to what the Word of God says, "For when we were still without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). "But God demonstrates His love to us, that in while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His dear Son, how much more will we be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10).

Do you see what these statements are proving? None of us deserve the love of God. God loves you because He's loving and He's chosen to love you in spite of you. That's the way we should think about God's love. When you sin the worst thing you can do is wallow in shame and self-pity because it's not gospel-oriented. *What about conviction of sin?* Yes, you ought to be convicted, and there should be godly sorrow, but if you're not careful, godly sorrow can be deceivingly turned into worldly sorrow real quick if you stay there very long. The shame and reproach was put on Jesus Christ. Yes, there is shame in our sins but I don't bear that shame anymore, Christ bore it, naked before the world carrying the reproach of men who scoffed at Him. That was my shame. That was my unworthiness. I don't bear that anymore. The Bible says I am accepted in the Beloved. I am worthy to come before God at all times because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I should never hang my head when I come before God. To hang my head as I approach God is to say *I'm not sure Jesus did it all for me.*

Our text has another argument that is implicit. If fathers who are evil will give bread to not just one, but all of his children, how much more will God give the same good things to all of His children? A father will not do for one of his children, that he will not do for his other children.

If I gave something to Shelby, I better give something to Joseph. In fact, I made a grave mistake one Christmas. Shelby wanted a TV in their room. I thought, *Okay, that will be a great present, but it's too expensive.* So we bought the TV as a present for both he and Joseph. That was a mistake. Joseph didn't want a TV that Christmas.

You don't do for one what you won't do for the other. Love doesn't work that way. If I, being evil, love all my children equally, then how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to all of His children?

God doesn't love you any less than He loved the Apostle John or James or Paul. I'm saying to you that whatever good things He gave those men, He'll give to you if you'll simply believe He loves you that much. Whatever He's done for others, He'll do for you. Why? Because He's a loving Father who loves His children and will not do for one what He would not do for them all.

Another reason you might doubt the love of God is:

## **B. The Feelings of Inability.**

You know what that's like. You just don't feel qualified to do what God has called you to do. You don't feel like you're qualified to walk holy before the Lord.

Moses argued that he could not speak well.

Jeremiah thought he was too young.

This too is an evidence of the lack of a gospel-orientation.

Here's what we think: *God is in charge and He works, but I've got to do my part.* That's true. But in your part, is it you and your talents and abilities, or is it God in you? The gospel tells me it's Christ in me, not my talents or abilities.

When I first came here more than 20 years ago I thought if we got everyone to know their gifts they would help this church and the church will grow. Then I learned I was wrong. It doesn't matter if you know your gifts or not; you'll be used by the Spirit according to those gifts whether you know them or not because He's in you motivating you. Really, the only gift to be concerned about is one—the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself. It's God in you.

What about the famous quote, "Pray as if it all depends on God, work as if it all depends upon you"?

Yes, I know about that statement. No one is sure who said it. Some say Ignatius, some say Augustine, others attribute it to C.T. Studd, but let me tell you I don't like that statement because I don't think it's altogether biblical.

I prefer, "To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Colossians 1:29).

Yes, I work. I put my hand to the plow, but it's God in me working. If you let your inabilities determine how much God will use you, then none of you will be used.

Our ability is from God, the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the perfect example of this. Not John, James, Moses or Paul, but Jesus. For 30 years Jesus lived on this earth as a man and nobody knew except Mary and Joseph that He was God in the flesh. There was nothing spectacular about those 30 years except His birth and the day Mary and Joseph lost Him and left Him behind in Jerusalem. Why, His own brothers and sisters didn't even know He was God. Mary and Joseph didn't tell them. Jesus looked like, and acted like any normal human being in this world for 30 years. And one day God said it's time. Jesus found John the Baptist, was baptized, and then the Spirit of God

came upon Him. Then the Spirit of God led Him into the wilderness to be tempted and afflicted for 40 days and 40 nights.

When He came out of that temptation, in the power of the Spirit, He went to the synagogue He grew up in, and He took the scroll of Isaiah and read,

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

When He finished, He sat down and said, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Do you know what the audience said?

*“Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” (Matthew 13:55, 56)*

Jesus did everything He did as a man filled with the Holy Spirit to be our representative and example. Friend, your inability is nothing to God. Gospel orientation tells me I have no abilities to please God. There is nothing within me, nothing at all, to gain God’s favor. It’s the ability of Jesus Christ and what He’s done on my behalf that my Father imputes to me.

When I don’t believe I have everything I need—and I often bemoan what I lack—I have forgotten the gospel. I have forgotten that Christ has fulfilled everything for me.

### **C. The Feelings of Impossibility**

The feelings of impossibility make us to doubt God’s love for us.

Sarah was 90. She couldn’t have a child. It’s impossible.

Zacharias and Elizabeth were told they were to have a child. But in Luke 1:18, “Zacharias said to the angel, ‘How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.’” It’s impossible. He didn’t believe. He didn’t believe God could love he and Elizabeth like that.

You cannot talk impossibility without talking about Israel at the Red Sea. Do you know why that story is in the Bible? It’s not for a bedtime story for your children. It’s to show you that God often leads us to a place where it is impossible and our abilities cannot do anything, thereby when He works we all know it is God. The sea in front of Israel and the most powerful army of their day behind them. It was literally impossible. Even Moses couldn’t see a way out. He’s begging God to show him what to do and God says, “What are you praying for?” It was that impossible and

yet God broke through the impossibility. This wonderful, omnipotent God did something amazing that even some men today don't believe.

You've heard the story of the atheist who is in his professorship teaching college students said, "I'm going to tell you why the miracle of the Red Sea is a myth—when they crossed it was only six inches deep."

A Christian stood up and said, "Thank you, sir, for making me see even more how great a miracle this was!"

Bewildered, the professor asked, "How did I do that?"

"Well, it's an even greater miracle seeing God drowned and destroyed the whole Egyptian army in only six inches of water."

At our Pastors' Fellowship the question was asked how do you know if God has spoken to you? I answered based upon Jeremiah 32, which shows that if God has spoken to you it will come to pass. The brother responded with a question, "then if it doesn't come to pass we can know it was not God." But that's not a hard fast rule because the Bible says in Hebrews,

*"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."  
(Hebrews 11:13)*

If God speaks to you it will come to pass, even if you die and don't see it. Can you tell me something more impossible than when you close your eyes in death and the promise hasn't been fulfilled yet you still believe? Why? What is the basis for your belief? Because God is faithful and won't lie? Yes, but there is something under girding that truth. What is it? It is that He loves you. That's why He's good to you.

Friends, I want to say to us as we go into this week of prayer that it might look impossible to us right now, and it will look even more impossible in the days and weeks to come, but God's love will be given to those who endure and believe. *Believe what? That God spoke to you, the pastor?* No. You are to believe that He loves you and He wants to give you good things, things so indescribably good that you can't believe it today. So all I ask you today is to believe that He loves you. Just believe that He loves you more than you love yourself, more than you love your wife, husband, children or grandchildren. Believe that God cares about you and that He's got better things than your faith can believe Him for today.

With time, He will increase your faith to believe it if you just stay with the fact that He loves you undeservedly and unconditionally. Amen.