

Love of God

#1150

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 28, 1958

Come to my heart, oh thou wonderful love, come and abide. Let's turn to 1 John, the fourth chapter, and we'll read a bit about it. I love to read from John, don't you? He was that disciple that leaned on Jesus' breast. He snuggled up close to Him and got the most of the love; not that God was partial, there's plenty there for everybody, but he brought a bigger cup, so he got more. If any of you want more than you're getting, just bring a bigger cup, friends. There's plenty.

1John 4:8 beginning:

“He that loves not knows not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” 1 John 4:8–10.

Now notice, *where* is the love? Not that we loved God, but that He loved us. Now let's not mix up those two things or confuse them in our minds, because the point of the text is that there's a difference in the 2 things.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us...” 1 John 4:10.

The 16th verse: “We have known and believed the love that we have to God.” Is that what it says? It's right back on that point again, you see. We have known and believed, not the love that we have to God, but the love that God hath to *us*. “God is *love*.” He's repeating that again. We read it in the 8th verse. He says it again in the 16th verse. Right back on the point:

“...we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Herein...”

In this fact, in this truth, in our knowing and believing it, that God loves us.

“...is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment...” 1 John 4:17.

Are we in the Day of Judgment? Are we going to have boldness or be full of fear? It all depends on whether we know that God loves us or not. "Herein is our love made perfect" in knowing and believing that God loves us.

The 18th verse

"There is no fear in love..."

No fear? No. No fear.

"...but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment..." 1 John 4:18.

Anybody in torment here tonight? Oh you say, "Nobody's in torment. The fires haven't begun yet." I tell you, friends, I see people that are in torment. They're not waiting for hell at all. They have it. This world is just filling up with it. It's going to be a mercy pretty soon to put in end to it. But right in the midst of these troubled seas, in the midst of this angry, unsettled, worried fearful world that doesn't know the love of God, God is going to have a remnant of chosen ones, a firmament of stars that will shine out in the darkness, each one reflecting a full and perfect knowledge of the love of God.

And like the stars, friends, they're just going to shine right on through eternal ages. Wouldn't you like to be one? Thank God, you can. Herein, herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. And we have known and believed that love that God hath to us. And herein is our love made perfect so that we can have boldness, confidence in this Day of Judgment.

"We love Him, because He first loved us" 1 John 4:19.

You know I've just been out holding another week of prayer for one of our little academies, and I got hold of something while I was there, dear friends, that thrilled my heart. I picked it up in a book that was written 50 years ago, and I copied out a page of it. It's a little story. See if you don't think it's nice. Oh, I thought it was worth copying out by hand.

A gentleman of wealth and social position was very ill. A Christian man visited him and learned how little love he had for God. The sick man didn't know God. He didn't love God—just a man of wealth and position, lying sick. So this man that was visiting him, desiring that he should know something of God's great love, said to him, "When I leave you, I shall go to my home. And the first thing I expect to do is to call my baby girl. I shall place her on my knee, look into her sweet eyes, listen to her charming prattle, and tired as I am, her presence will rest me, for I love that child with unutterable tenderness."

"Does she love me, you ask? The fact is she loves me very little. If my heart was breaking, it would not disturb her sleep (this is a little baby girl). And if my body

was racked with excruciating pain, it would not interrupt her play. If I were dead, she would be amused in watching my pale face and closed eyes. If any friend came to remove the remains to the place of burial, she would probably clap her hands in glee and in two or three days totally forget her papa.

“Besides this, she has never brought me a penny, but has been a constant expense on my hands ever since her birth. Yet, though I’m not rich, there is not money enough in the world to buy my baby girl. How is it? Does she love me, or do I love *her*? Do I withhold my love until I know she loves me? Am I waiting for her to do something worthy of my love before I extend it to her?”

“Oh, I see, I see,” exclaimed the sick man, while the tears rolled down his cheeks. “I see it clearly. It is not what I think of God, but what God thinks of me. Not my love to God, but God’s love for *me* that I ought to be thinking about it. I do love Him now as I never loved Him before.”

Isn’t that nice, friends? Oh, I was so glad when I got hold of that. I felt like a pearl diver; I had something to bring back. Here it is, friends, in our text.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us,
and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”
1 John 4:10.

Oh how foolish it is then for us to go around studying how much we love God and measuring it whether it’s with a teacup or a medicine dropper. It’s not much, is it? When *all the while*, God is calling us to behold the ocean, the great ocean of His love. And it is a great ocean, friends, a great ocean.

Talking about the ocean, and God’s love, let me read you something wonderful here from *Volume 5*. See if you don’t want to read this whole chapter when you get home tonight or sometime tomorrow. It’s on the character of God. Here is one of those stupendous statements:

“All the paternal love which has come down from generation
to generation through the channel of human hearts...”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 740.

What is paternal love? Oh, that’s the love that Adam had for Cain and Abel and Seth. That’s the love that Enoch had for little Methuselah. That’s the love that Noah had for Shem, Ham and Japheth. That’s the love that thrilled the heart of Abraham when he took little Isaac in his arms, and that *broke* his heart when he climbed up Mount Moriah.

But my dear friends, there have been millions and billions and trillions of fathers and mothers in this world, hasn’t there? Now suppose you had some way of measuring all that love of all those fathers and mothers for all their children. Listen:

“All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God” *Ibid.*

Isn't that wonderful? Oh friends, I think we need to meditate on it. What do you say? Now here's compared to the ocean and all the human love that has ever been in this world, it says is but a tiny little rill, just a tiny rill compared with the boundless ocean.

How big is the ocean? Do you know? Well, you go down there, and you stand on the shore, and you look out, and there's nothing but water as far as you can see, and you say, “My, that's big, isn't it?” But it's bigger than that.

Then you get in a boat, and you sail for days and days and days, and you see nothing but water, and you say, “It's bigger than I thought.” But it's bigger than that, friends. The oldest captain that has sailed the seven seas, that has spent his life on the great oceans of this planet, he has never seen one-thousandth *part* of all the water in the ocean, my friends.

It's big, but it's bigger than that. And so it is with the love of God. And yet, men think about exhausting it. Men wonder whether God will forgive them one more time. Oh friends, what a meager, paltry idea of God's love. “Will God forgive me one more time?” “One more time?” Oh, how His heart must break under those misconceptions, the utter lack of any proper conception of how great His love is.

Would God forgive me one more time? I want to read something interesting to you on that. See if you don't find something interesting in this; this has blessed my heart.

Matthew 18:21–22, and with this Luke 17. Get both texts so that we can look at them together:

“Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?”
Matthew 18:21.

We're told that Peter had heard the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees that you ought to forgive a man three or four times, and Peter, doing what he thought was going the second mile, and realizing that Jesus was quite loving, he thought he'd just double what the scribes and Pharisees taught, but he thought he ought to get Jesus' permission to be that gracious.

And so he said, “Now Lord, how many times am I to forgive my brother? Up to seven?” And I suppose he thought that Jesus might say, “Well, Peter, as long as you're

that generous, we'll ok that." But he was utterly astounded and astonished by Jesus' answer.

"...I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" Matthew 18:22.

How many is that? 490. I suppose Peter took that away and thought it over a while. He probably kept still for a while after that. There's no record here that he said anything. [Audience laughter] He had something to chew on, didn't he? But he never got the full import of it until that pre-Pentecost session in the upper room, friends.

Now do you think that Jesus was in any sense establishing a mathematical answer to the question? Did He intend that we should go around with a notebook and that we should tell our brother, "Now this makes 35 times that I've forgiven you, and remember, there is such a thing as 490"? Was that the point? No. Jesus was trying to tell him that it was way beyond what he thought about.

But now I'm going to give you one that in some ways is harder than that one.

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shall forgive him" Luke 17:3-4.

In one day, the same man, seven times? That's what it says. Just imagine Brother Boykin and I are talking together, and I lose my temper, then pretty soon I come to him, and I say, "Brother, I sure did the wrong thing. I'm very sorry. Will you forgive me?" What does he say? "Sure, Brother Frazee, I'll forgive you."

But an hour later we're working together, and I do the same thing. But pretty soon, I come around again and ask him to forgive me. I suppose that Brother Boykin is like a lot of us, and he might say in his mind, "I wonder if he means it this time?" But he says, "All right, I'll forgive you."

But suppose I did it the third time, before dinner? Jesus says that if a man does this, how many times? Seven times in a, what? In a *day*. That Peter is to do what? Forgive him. Or John, or James, or whoever, they're to forgive him.

Oh my friends, what am I studying this with you for? Not to study what Peter ought to do, not particularly tonight to study what you and I ought to do. This is what I'm talking about. Listen. If God expects that much love and that much forgiveness of a poor little pint-sized heart down here in this world, how are you going to measure the love and forgiveness of the one whose love is like a mighty ocean? Tell me, do you see what I'm getting at?

If God expects you to forgive your brother until 70 times seven, and if necessary seven times the same man in the same day, do you think that God would expect Himself to be at least as forgiving as that?

Do you see? “Ah, But Brother Frazee,” somebody says, “Aren’t you going to make it so easy to sin and get forgiven that people won’t worry much no matter how many times they say, ‘Lord, Forgive me?’”

Listen. If the only reason that I don’t sin is that I’m afraid that if I commit one more sin, God won’t forgive me, I’m afraid that doesn’t have the holding power that I need, either in quality or quantity. God wants me to know, friends, that if I should need Him and His forgiveness a hundred times, a thousand times that His love would be just as strong the thousandth time as it was the first time. And so far from that thing causing me to sin again and again, when I get it in its fullness, friends, it will do just the opposite. Just the opposite.

How could I disappoint a love like that? How could I grieve a heart like that? How could I go on beating and breaking that One Whose love never tires, *never* is exhausted?

“Ah,” but somebody says, “Doesn’t it say the patience of God will finally have an end?” Yes. God uses those terms, but I want you to understand, my dear friends, and watch this point, the change that takes place in the relationship of God and sinners is not due to a change in God’s heart, in exhausting of His supply of patience, or His love. No. It’s impossible because He’s infinite. It’s the other way around. The thing that becomes exhausted is the sinner’s possibility of repentance.

The man who goes on and on in sin, wandering farther and farther from God, he finally reaches the place where it’s impossible for Him to *respond* to that love. For him, that love is gone. Much like the man that would go into a dark cave and wandering in its labyrinths finally reach a secluded chamber deep within the bowels of the earth. Has the sun quit shining? No. The sun shines on day after day. But choosing to remain in that darksome chamber, he’s lost to it.

The sun has not quit shining, but he has quit receiving it. That’s the unpardonable sin, my friends. Never think that it’s due to the sinner exhausting the patience of God, or God’s love running out. Never, never. God’s love is infinite.

Let me read this sentence again.

“All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 740.

I think that's wonderful. You know, speaking of this human love, paternal love, and all the rest, do you know the great reason that God gave us this love, friends? I mean this love in human hearts. It was to show us what His love is like.

We're told here in Steps to Christ:

"Through... the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us" *Steps to Christ*, page 10.

Have you ever known a father's love? If you have, that was a little reflection of the love of God. Have you ever known a mother's love? *That* was to reveal to you the love of God. Have you known the love of a husband, or wife, of son or daughter, of brother or sister, or friend, or neighbor? All those were to reveal the love of God. Just little reflections, that's all.

Let me tell you, friends, for there are many broken hearts and broken homes, if you have not known love through one channel, God will give it to you through some other channel, and if there are no human channels, I read, that for all that human beings fail to give us, He Himself will make up to us in the best of ways. For remember, oh remember, God will not fail to get His message to you because the messenger boy from Western Union stubbed His toe. The message is from God, and the failure of human fathers, human mothers, human husbands, human wives, human sons, human daughters, human friends, the failure of those human beings to deliver the message of love in no way lessens the love of God.

Rather the heart of God goes out it, seems to me most of all, to those that have been disappointed in this world. And if they only let God do it He will press close to their hearts and whisper in their inner souls, words of love, experiences of love. God help us, friends, to not brush that aside as a minor thing.

Let me tell you, friends, in the days to come in the time of trouble, each one is going to have to know this because when we're in some lonely dungeon, or banished like John to some desert island, we're going to need to know the love of God personally, aren't we? We're going to need to know it. Thank God we can. But in the meantime, these human experiences are to introduce us, shall I say, to God's love.

A few months ago, over in Hungary, many of you know there was quite a revolution over there. It seemed like the Hungarian people were going to throw off the Russian yoke. Well, it clamped down again, but in those dreadful days, there were thousands of the people that saw their chance and fled the country. For some reason, in some places, the guards seemed to be either blinded or careless; thousands of them got across into Austria. But on other days that boundary, the guards were right on the alert, and they'd shoot those escaping people in cold blood, or seize them and drag them back to questioning and send them off to Siberia and exile, forced labor camps.

There was a great deal of suffering that went on. Thousands lost their lives in the vain endeavor to escape. There were many deeds of heroism in trying to rescue various ones. There was one experience that I want to share with you tonight. As I say, it took place just a few months ago. It was in the wintertime, and it was cold. At this particular point, the boundary between Austria and Hungary was represented by a little stream, kind of a drainage canal.

The water was deep, too wide for anybody to jump across, and too deep to wade. But some people that could swim would swim across it. In some places, it was where a man could go through it with water up to about 4 ½–5 feet deep, I think. There were other places where they went through swamps and forests.

But at this particular place at the time of the incident I'm about to tell you, a man approached with his wife and his two children. They had walked a long ways—many, many miles. They were tired and hungry, near to exhaustion. But they knew that this was their only chance for escape. The mercury had been falling. During the night, it was bitter cold, and the thermometer stood now at nine above zero.

The smaller streams, the little brooks, had frozen over. But this stream was still running except for a tiny film of ice over the top, far too thin to carry any weight. And the man stood there looking across that water into free Austria knowing that back of him was all that he had fled from. There was his wife, little girl, little boy; what could he do? If he went up the canal to another place where they might get through, there were Russian guards up there. He was almost sure to be caught and killed or taken back into slavery.

What could he do?

Well, he didn't hesitate long. In that weather, nine above zero, he took off his clothes, laid them down, took his little girl in his arms and threw her on his shoulder, and went down the canal into that water, that icy water. With one hand, he broke the ice, with the other, he held his little girl. He climbed up the bank of the canal and down the other side into Austria and left his little girl, and came on back and waded through that icy water.

He rolled those clothes of his into a little ball, gave them to his little boy, hoisted the boy upon his shoulder, took him across the same way; came back, took his wife in his arms, went down through that icy water again. The reporter who saw him said, "If that man is still living, which I doubt, because of the exposure, he's a living monument to the power of love." The power of love—love for his loved ones.

Oh my friends, we wonder at that, and we appreciate it, and we admire it. We would all if we could pat that man on the back and say, "God bless you, fellow." And certainly, those children and that wife will never forget how he risked, perhaps gave his life for them that day. But remember what I read here a few minutes ago.

“All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 740.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And with the skies in parchment,
were every blade of grass a quill,
and every man a scribe by trade,
to write the love of God involved
would drain the ocean dry,
nor the scroll contain the whole
though stretched from sky to sky.

The Love of God by Frederick M. Lehman

Is that true, or is that just nice poetry, a sweet song? Is it true, friends? Ah let's put away all thought of exhausting the love of God. Let's behold that love and call others to behold it as John did.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us...” 1 John 3:1.

What effect will that have? Why friends, if we look at His love for us, our love for Him will grow. Yes. The tiny seed will grow into a little plant and that into a larger one, and finally a great tree. But through eternity we shall ever be entering into a larger and still larger comprehension of this wonderful love of God. Oh, that God may fill and thrill our souls with it tonight. What do you say?

[A Testimony service follows]

We thank Thee for that *great* love, like the boundless ocean. And we turn from our poor little concepts of love and our cheap and meager revelations of love. We turn to Thee, Thou whose name is love, Thou who art love itself. Keep us beholding, and we thank Thee in Jesus' name, amen.

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