

The Unconditional Love of God

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Hello. Good evening. How are you? Well, Gina very nicely made me a little tea, but I don't know if I am going to drink it without dumping it on myself. Bob told me that my nerves would settle down after the second verse, so I'm going to trust him.

I'm very excited. I think that today has been one of the best days of my life and a dream come true with all of you being here. After how many years? Eleven years, twelve years living here – we yearned for this moment. And it truly came to pass, thank God, and thanks to you all. So, thank you.

Apart from that we heard a great teaching this morning, then I went to cook (one of the things that I like, being at the grill). Afterwards, I got to know some good friends here: Ty, Jerry, that I met. We had a great time there. And Enok. I was with Enok. My best friends are here. So, it's been a great day and to finish it up teaching the Word and then hearing Bob will be great. So, I'm very thankful for this day.

Tonight, we're going to read a bit about how unconditional the love of God is. How nice that song of Christina's was. God is unconditional in giving us His love, in giving us His forgiveness, and that's something that we want to see a bit tonight.

1 John 4. 1 John. I know my Bible. I always use my phone, but I know that 1 John comes after Genesis. 1 John 4. We will start in verses 9 and 10. It says:

1 John 4:9-10:

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

And that's incredible, isn't it? He, God, didn't wait for someone to love him. He loved. He loved first. And it's an example that we should follow. He acted first – He loved. He loved, and it didn't matter if they loved him back, right? And that's beautiful. It's really beautiful. He sent his son because of love. Because of love.

Let's go to the next verse, verse 11. It says:

1 John 4:11:

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

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We love, we love one another, because He loved us first. And we give our unconditional love because it was unconditional with us. He didn't expect anything in return. God loved us without necessarily expecting that people would love Him back. That's how we need to love: without expecting that someone will love us back. If they love us, well, perfect! But believe me that there are many people that, although God is loving them, they are not loving God. And He's not bothered by this, nor is He being all dramatic about it or anything of the kind. Therefore, we can love unconditionally the same way, the same way that He did.

I'm going to take a drink of tea, if you all are okay with it, of course. Thanks, Gina.

What do you say let's go to Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew. Matthew, and let's go to Chapter 5. Matthew 5. We are going to read verses 43 to 48. Matthew 5, from verse 43 we will read to 48. And this is Jesus Christ speaking.

Matthew 5:43-48:

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?

⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

So, if we only love those who love us, it would be kind of boring, right? It wouldn't be exciting. There wouldn't be any excitement in the game.

We are here to love one another, and the nice part is that this is what Jesus said, isn't it. He didn't just say it and that was it, like many of us who say something and don't follow through. No, he followed through with it. Jesus Christ loved all the way through the last moment, unconditionally. It wasn't like, "No more; I am tired of these people," which he could have done. I sometimes do that, but it's about love, loving unconditionally, right? We love even if they hurt us, even if they injure us, even if we're treated poorly. We continue loving. We continue loving. Why? Because that's what God did, because that's what Jesus did, and that's our standard, that's our example, and we should follow it, right? We should do it. We have a different standard than other people who only love when they are loved. We're not like that. We need to love the whole world, right? Including our enemies.

What do you say we go to Romans. Romans Chapter 12. Romans 12. Let me tell you a quick story. We will begin in verse 21. Well, really, we are only going to read this verse here.

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About, I don't know, 8 years ago, Druzzo and I were not the best of friends. I didn't like him. And, you know, we had a lot of things that we didn't have in common. Really, we didn't have anything in common. And, suddenly, we realized that we had God in common. Today, Druzzo is one of my best friends and I'm thankful to God for his life and for having him here. Ha, ha! So, that's very nice. That's very nice. That's how God works. We only need to have God in common to love people. And if, well, we don't have God in common, we love them just the same. They deserve it, don't they?

So, let's read there in Romans 12:21, it says:

Romans 12:21:

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

In other words, we don't treat people the way that they treat us. In other words, if they give us a dirty look, we don't give them a dirty look. We do good. We love. We give the best of ourselves for the whole world, giving the best because that's what God wants. That's what God wants and it's the example that God wants us to follow. This is lovely. It's lovely. That's how God wants us to act. So, we don't repay evil with evil. We repay evil with good, with a smile, with an "I love you." Just like that. Easy. Say it.

Let's go to 1 Peter, 1 Peter. 1 Peter, let's go to Chapter 2. 1 Peter 2, Chapter 2. Chapter 2, and let's read a single verse here as well, number 23. 1 Peter 2:23. Here it says:

1 Peter 2:23:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

Jesus Christ, when they were reviling him, when they were torturing him, was not reviling them back. He was loving. He was asking the Father to forgive them, right? That's unconditional love. That's loving without worrying about anything else. So, we don't have any excuse; none of us has an excuse to say that we can't love someone who has done much evil. Jesus Christ forgave the people without them really repenting. That's tremendous. And he was loving them. That's what we have to do. Unconditional, unconditional. Love unconditionally.

How about we go to Ephesians. Let's go to Ephesians Chapter 4. Ephesians Chapter 4, and we'll read 2 verses there. Forgiveness is an important thing when we are loving unconditionally. We have to know how to forgive, too. We'll read verses 31 and 32. Ephesians 4, verses 31 and 32 say:

Ephesians 4:31-32:

³¹ Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

³² And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

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So, the concept is practically the same, isn't it – we love first because God loved us, and we forgive first because God forgave us. We don't need for others to give us love for us to love, and we don't need for people to repent in order for us to forgive. It isn't necessary. Jesus Christ forgave without the people being repentant. He loved without others loving him, so we can do the same ourselves, isn't that right? It's probably hard to do it, but when we think about it and when we try to do it, we focus on love and forgiveness; it is easy to live like that. We are somehow freer.

We are going to finish in Acts, in Acts 13. Acts 13, we are going to read from verse 49 to 51. Acts 13, verses 49 to 51. Okay.

Acts 13:49-51:

⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

⁵⁰ But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

And this “shaking off the dust of their feet” is an orientalism. They simply got it off. They shook off all evil thoughts, all hate, all rancor, all anger that they might have. And they said: “You know what? We'll forgive and move ahead. And life goes on. We can't allow ourselves to hang onto any situation, however difficult it might be. We'll forgive, and move ahead, and continue loving, and continue serving, and continue giving, in love. In the love of God, unconditionally. It doesn't matter what may have happened. It isn't that big. It isn't a big deal. We can love; we can forgive. We have the perfect example; we see it when we read the Bible; so we can do it. We can be confident that we will be living and walking God's way when we can do it this way. Love, forgive, we continue forward, we serve.

Let's do an exercise tonight. Look to the farthest table from you, to the people that are by your side, and tell them “I love you. I love you, and I love all of you. I love you all unconditionally.” [people in the audience begin to say “I love you” to each other.] Who is farthest over there? Bob? I love you and appreciate you for all that you do. Brian...

We love each other, we love each other. This is what God asks us to do – that we love one another. Even if we don't know each other, right? Love the person who has headphones on and whom you maybe might not understand. Tell them “Te amo,” “I love you.” How nice, isn't it? It's lovely to love each other. It's a tremendous blessing to be part of this family. It's a tremendous blessing to be able to love people unconditionally, the way that God loved us.

So, God bless you, you are the best of the best!