

Prayer 04 Prayer-His Commandment

by Alden Gannett

The sermon emphasizes the vital connection between love, obedience to God's commandments, and the power of prayer in the life of a believer.

Duration: 39:27

Topics: "Commandments"

Description

In this sermon, Paul emphasizes the importance of confessing Jesus as the Son of God and believing in his role as the Savior of the world. He encourages the audience to love not just in words, but in actions and truth. Paul assures them that even if their hearts condemn them, God is greater and knows all things. He emphasizes that following God's commandments is not burdensome, but rather a joy and a way to show love for the Lord and his people.

Transcript

May the Lord's blessing and fellowship be a joy to this opportunity. Will you turn to 1 John? 1 John chapters 3 and 4, do you think? 1 John chapters 3 and 4. We turned to chapter 3 last night from a negative point of view, and tonight I want to turn to it from a positive point of view. The issue is so important, and so far-reaching, it is meant to be turned to the subject of the evening.

Let's begin reading with verse 18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. By this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Love it if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, and whatever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments to do those things that are pleasing to us. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Love one another as he gave us. Amen. Let us read.

Precious Father, that is why it is, tonight, that I turn again to the word of God, to hear what thou didst have to say in it for our hearts. In this needy, needy hour in which we live, give us truth of thy word, and it shall prepare us for more to reach this generous and adopted age. Lord, keep us through it.

Jesus. Jesus. This morning, we were studying together one of the great conditions of prayer, that pray in the name of Jesus.

You notice in our text, tonight, another very fundamental condition for prayer, a condition which is actually twofold, but notice that it is singular in verse 23. This is his commandment, not commandments, plural, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another. He gave us the commandment.

This is his commandment. Believe, we love. Now we know from the word of God, in various places, that there is one condition for salvation, and that is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Philippian jailer cried out and said, Sir, what must I do to be saved? The answer came back, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. All of us who are believers tonight know that when we did that one day, when we truly called upon the name of the Lord to be saved, God did say so. He brought forgiveness and delight in Christ.

Why, then, does John here say this is his commandment, singular, that we should believe and love one another? He gave us the commandment. It is because one who genuinely expresses that faith by loving one another. Faith is the condition of salvation.

Loving one another is the evidence of salvation. We are evidence that one does pass from death unto life. Our concern tonight, again, is prayer, and did you notice, as we emphasized last night together, that John is pleading for reality? Loving, verse 18, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth for reality.

He has just said, verse 17, Whosoever hath this world's goodness, sayeth his brother hath need, and cut it up is the passion from him, how welletth the love of God in him. There isn't reality there when one is superficial in that exercise of love one for another. Now, if our hearts condemn us about a lack of love, we do not have confidence in our prayer life for God.

But, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence for God, and whatever we ask, we receive, because we keep His commandments, and through those commandments, we receive what we ask. I want us to be concerned tonight with this petition of answer to prayer, of keeping His commandments. Sometimes, we take prayer as a very light matter.

We can stand on our knees at any time and pray unto God, and expect God immediately and forthrightly to answer, even though we have not kept His commandments. And, John says it doesn't work that way. God's way, that's prayer.

It's conditional. It's conditioned in our text, verse 18, that Jesus Christ said, that loving one another as we keep His commandments. Now, to illustrate this in greater detail, we turn to chapter 4, beginning with verse 7. On through chapter 5, in verse 5, and I want us to see John develop this fundamental truth of love one for another.

And, I must say, as we begin our study of this tonight, the longer I study the Word, the longer I live among the people of God, the longer I share in the ministry of the Word of God, the more I appreciate 1 Corinthians 13, 13, and how might it say, Hope, love, be free. David said he did what? Beloved. 1 John 4, 7. Let us go on loving one another.

You can take all of Christian experience. Wrap it up in these words. You can take every responsibility I have in my relationship with God as a believer.

Wrap it up right here. Let us love one another. For love is of God.

Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. See, remember now that the context of 1 John, the purpose of 1 John, is the assurance of salvation.

So, John is using love here as the evidence, one of the evidences for one knowing that he has passed the temple of life. John says, Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God.

If you love, you're born of God, and you know God. But, if you don't love, you've not been born of God, and you don't know God, for God is love. You can't have God inside you without some love leaking out from prayer.

You just can't do it. You can't have God, who is love, within you, without manifesting, without knowing it, without demonstrating it to God. For, if it isn't there, you don't have Him, because God is love.

The word love, here, is the Greek word agape, which speaks of the preciousness of the other. When we read in John 3, 16, that God so loved the world, God is saying that the world, the individual members of this world, are precious to me, so precious that I gave my son. Here, he says, God is that man.

Let me illustrate this, John. Let me amplify this concept of love in verses 9 and 10. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

This is the kind of love I'm talking about, for God sent His Son, His only Son, into the world. This wicked world, a world that would have no room for Him in the end, a world that would try to murder all the infants two years old and young under, a world that would not receive Him, religious Judaism, orthodox Judaism of its day. God would have to write of Him, He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

He so loved the world that He sent His Son. To me, dead in Christ's land, this is true. We, without hope and without God in this world, might live through Him.

And, I'm glad I'm alive tonight, aren't you? I'm glad to be saved. I thank God for eternal life. John 3, 16 is one of the grandest, most glorious texts in all the Word of God.

I know it's not very good. But God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have what? Everlasting life. I'm glad to be alive to do this.

Positively, John said, think of it. Here's the kind of love. Here's the kind of love we're talking about.

It is not God in heaven who sent His Son. He sent Him. He asked for it, and He did.

Here in His love, not that we love God, but that He loved us. He sent His Son to be the propitiation. So, I say, don't talk about how much you love the Lord, sit down.

Don't talk about how much you love Him. Here in His love, not that we love God, but that He loved us. He sent His Son to be the propitiation, the satisfaction for all.

Here, John takes us to Calvary. John shows us Jesus Christ, God's Son, nailed on that cross, there to satisfy the justice of God, and His love, and His mercy, and His love. John shows us this.

He says, there on that cross, He was bruised for our transgression. He was bruised for our iniquity. The testament of our peace was upon Him, with His Christ, Peter.

Oh, we, like sheep, have gone astray, and we've turned every one to His own way. The Lord has laid on us His, His iniquity, our iniquity. God put Jesus Christ to death on the cross, the Lord said.

They argue, you know, as to who put Jesus Christ to death. Some people say the Jews did. The Jews did put Jesus Christ to death.

They cried, crucify Him, crucify Him. The Roman Catholic Church was in error when they exonerated the Jews for the death of Christ, for they did cry out, murder Him. We ask what Jesus did.

The Gentiles also put Jesus Christ to death. Pontius Pilate had said that Jesus died. He released Him, and He crucified that Roman governor.

So, he said, he wanted His hands washed of the whole thing. He, nevertheless, had in His power, humanism. So, it is Jesus Christ that He did it.

So, did you know that you put Jesus Christ to death? I put Jesus Christ to death. It was our sin that put Him on the cross, for He was the Lamb of God who had taken away the sin of the world. Ah, but the answer is not finally in any of these activities.

The final analogy is with God. God made His soul an offering for sin. Yes, the hatred was there in the presence of the Jews of that day.

Pontius Pilate did release Him. Your sins and mine put Him on that tree. So, the eternal counsel was God.

He was the Lamb laid before the founders of the earth. God made His soul an offering for sin. You know that this text says, in the Gospels, He sanctified the cross for all our sins.

Here is the cross. Not that He loved us. He loved His children.

Set His cross. This cross was for us. Will you look now in the verses that follow it? God's love in us.

We love it if God's soul loved us. And under the law of the Word of God, we ought also to love. If that love would cause eternal God's repentance on you and I that take love one another, if that love would cause Jesus Christ to be nailed to a cross, then we ought to love one another.

If that love would cause the God of heaven to voluntarily lay down His life for us, then we ought to love one another. God can do it. God dwells within us.

God says He can't. He's taught it now. Verse 12.

No man has seen God at any time. Why does He bring that subject up in this context? He tells us if we love one another, God dwelleth in us. And, if love is protected in us, think of it, beloved, the moment we were saved, the God of heaven came to dwell with us.

God is love. God says, then, if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love was protected in us, and continues to be protected in us. The strongest way that we find it here, and think of continuity, the results and effects of it here.

It goes on and on and on that way, and on and on. God says, then, that the God of heaven, who is love, and the God who manifests that love in sending His Son, the God who put His Son on the cross, that we might live and be protected. God is love.

Furthermore, verse 13, by this know we that we dwell in Him, as He in us, because He hath given us His Spirit. Another evidence that this God who is love is within us is that His Spirit is there. Paul tells us in Romans, remembering the lessons of His Spirit, bear witness of our spirit, that we are children of God.

I pray that evidence that God is in you tonight is that witness of the Holy Spirit that says you are a child of the living God. Furthermore, we have seen and we testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, as He in God.

Have you confessed Jesus Christ as the Son of God? Have you said, yes, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Yes, I believe that He came to the world to save sinners. Yes, I confess Him as my personal Savior. Have you ever done this, and done this not so? God is love, and He loves us.

Then he adds verse 16, and we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God is Him.

Do you know that love in your life today? Are you abiding in that love today? Just that love, love in your heart today, for the Lord, and for one another, and for precious souls for whom Christ died. Do you know that precious love? Have you experienced it? Do you know the thrill of it in your own life? God says, there is no evidence than this positive, that God is love. So, John gives us in these four verses, saying that love is not only, nor does it palpitate, but in us.

Because, John, because this is so, verse 17, herein, notice your margin, herein is love made perfect with us. We may have boldness in the day of judgment, because it is. So, are we in this world.

You see, in this dream of assurance and salvation, John says we have boldness in the day of judgment. All of us know about the day of judgment. Our Dean of Students, Mrs. Carey, who is along and sang for us tonight beautifully, she said on the way down, as I asked her about my own courses, you know, these deans learn a lot, and they hear what the students think, and so I talked to her very frankly about my course, and she said the seniors scare the freshmen about my course in God and in spiritual life, and later on in doctrine, and they just train them to be scared about my examinations, and that's tragic.

You know I'm not that harsh. You can tell, can't you? Say no to that. But all right, we'll go on now.

We'll get along fine the rest of the evening. Now, students are afraid of the day of judgment, the examination. We're afraid of the day when the boss is coming to town, when the manager of the class is going to arrive and make an inspection, when the chairman of the board is going to be there, these days of reckoning, when we have to go in and make our annual report or whatever it might be, fear of the day of judgment.

How does it go? When God is in your life, when the God who is love is in your life, there's no fear of that day of judgment when we shall stand before God. There's no fear in love, verse 18, but perfect love passes out fear, because fear is for men. It appears it's not made perfect in love.

What does he say? Why, he is saying that the child of God is dwelt by the Lord himself. He does not fear that day of judgment. Or, verse 17, as Christ is, who are we? The illiterate? What are you talking about? He says, fear in the day of judgment.

Fear of standing before God some day, and in this context, he says, as Christ is, so are we. As Christ is in respect to judgment, so are we in this world. Could Jesus Christ ever be judged for sin? Thank God, no.

Could Jesus Christ ever be condemned for our sins, for his own sin? Never, never, never. Ah, he is a righteous, holy son of God, as he is, so are we. Right here and now, in this world, what a gospel! What a salvation! That our salvation is so perfect, so complete, that our standing before God is the very standing of God's Son.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made what? The righteousness of God. Jesus Christ. Oh, I fear not the day.

I look forward to the incontinence of this tragedy. I rejoice in the expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to us. Ah, there will be the presidency of Christ, for our works will be done.

Ah, but our sins were dealt with in Calvary once and for all, and I fear it will be. Now, John's argument here is that because God is in Calvary, because God's love, then, is inside us, that love is real, real! So, here, we shall be enshrined shielded. John had one more consideration there.

He speaks not only of God's love toward us, however, God's love in us, believers. Now, beginning with verse 19 of chapter 4, on through chapter 5 of verse 5, he speaks of God's love toward us. We love him.

We love. The word him is not in the best reason to say it. We simply love.

Love the Lord. We love his people. We love the law for whom Christ died.

We love, says God. He won't tell you that. We love.

As God's love toward us is Calvary, God's love in us. He says we love. Why? Because he's good.

Now, in theory, if a man says, I love God, and he will claim it, and he will make this bold profession, he is his brother at the same time. God says, why? For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? In this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loveth his brother. We have hungered for God, and we seek his commandment.

Do those things that we do. Now, in theory, says God, Oh, how in the world can we love one another when we don't even love the Lord? How can we say we love the Lord when we don't love one another? If we don't love the people he has seen, how in the world can we say we love him? God now puts it in shoeletters, in practice, in verses 1 to 5. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is glorified. And every one that loveth him that's begotten of the Father, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Praise God. But if I really love God the Father, God says, I will really love you too. Therefore, he reasons, if I don't love his children, I don't love you too.

Don't worry about that. In these passages, I'm a freak all night, so relax. All right.

Oh, don't miss the principle now. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. And every one that loveth him that begotten, loveth him also that is begotten.

Now, he's saying, by this we know that we love the children of God, and we love God as he is man. It sounds as if John's going in circles. He is.

He has a complete picture. I tell the Lord I love him when I love his children. I love the Lord's children when I love him, and I love him when I love the Lord's children, and I love the Lord's children when I love

him.

And around he goes. For this is the love of God. You and I couldn't define love this way, could we? This is the love of God that we want.

Keep his commandment. What is his commandment? We should believe in the name of the Son of Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave his commandment. And his commandments are not burdensome, that is what we are saying.

Not burdensome. I didn't care. You did not know my faith.

That's what I wanted you to know. His commandments are not burdensome. Come, I'm going to lull you to sleep, or meddle you to sleep.

I meet you lowly in heart, ye shall find rest on your soul, for my yoke is flat. Easy. My burden is what? Is that really so? Isn't it really tough to be a Christian? The text says it is.

He says his commandments are not burdensome. Oh, but there have been lots of times when I have fought to be a Christian. What do you Christians do anyway? Did you ever have anybody ask you that? What, you don't have any fun at all? You don't go out and live it up at night? You don't get drunk? What do you do? We just go to church and sing and pray.

How boring can life get? I'll come along for the service. My family will say, well, how'd things go tonight? My son will pick up and say, did your audience have as much fun as you did? Yeah, I sat on the telephone last night. I'm enjoying part of the box.

Are the folks enjoying it as much as that is? It's no burden to be a Christian, my friend. What a joy it is to serve Jesus Christ. Oh, what art thou missing at? Study to show thyself the truth of God.

For work in the knee is not to be ashamed, nor are they dividing the word of truth. Commandment. Study to get diligence in the word of God.

No longer God but Jesus. Pray without ceasing. Cannot always to pray and not to drink.

This is the commandment of God. Walk in the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit.

This is the commandment of God. His commandments are not to be broken. On the first day of the week, let each one lay aside as God has promised him.

His commandments are not to be broken. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every preacher. His commandments are not to be broken.

Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, O, I move you all the way, even to the end of the ages. My commandments are not to be broken.

Why is this point given today? For whatever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world? But he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

He doesn't talk about worldliness in chapter two. Here, clear over in chapter five, he brings up this subject in good conscience. What does he say? This world's system of hell is a different matter.

It's the children of the devil that come along and tell us, Oh, it's rough, I tell you, to be a Christian. It's tough to have to go on and obey God. It's tough to have to submit to the Lord's temple Jesus Christ in your life.

Oh, it's too burdensome, too grievous to make wrongs right, and to spend your time loving one another instead of living for yourself and all you can become in this world. Isn't that a good reason? The devil whispers this, you know, I don't know, I'm going too far, and I will have to submit. Going too far if you have to live a holy life after all, Milton, that's a little bit much.

The devil whispers, you're going too far, you know, when you can't have your own way after all. Your soul's your own, isn't it? Can't you live as you please? Going too far when you have to bow the knee to the Lord Jesus. Haven't you agreed? You mean I've got to give up home, I've got to give up loved ones, I've got to give up wealth, I've got to give up the material blessings of life and go and bury myself in the mission field somewhere.

That's too much to ask, the devil says. He commands agreement. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our pain.

When I sing the greatest song, when I trust God to shed forth His love in my life, His commandment. You know, when you fall in love, you change. Remember? You won't have to open your eyes.

My wife and I celebrated our 24th wedding anniversary on Monday of this week. We've been to twice this week. What a wonderful wedding.

I remember when I was a kid, the thing I needed worst to do with all of experience was do the dishes. I was old enough. I'm young.

They said to me to do the dishes. Well, my mother learned quickly that if you really wanted to see how I ate, you promised me that I had to do the dishes. That solved most problems.

Ah, but you know how it goes. Sometimes you forget. This young fellow forgot.

Left his pajamas on the bed. Didn't hang them up. Son! Never forget it.

Do the dishes. I wept over it. Came time to do the dishes, and there was the old-fashioned dishpan at the cottage on Super Lake, one of the finger lakes of New York State.

Oh, did you know it? I can see myself right now standing over that dishpan with a tear literally dripping out of my eyes into that dishpan. I was so pleased at this. Her commandments were urgent, if I tell you.

Then I went to college. I met a redhead. He was beautiful.

And I fell in love with this redhead. Of course, you ought to know it. You know why.

I went to Oil City, Pennsylvania to see her. Do you know when I saw her? I volunteered to take her to the beach house, sit in that kitchen, and help her with the dishes. Her commandments were so long, so brief.

My wife came to the end, and my first marriage, we got married on the 21st. We were always single. He didn't want to be single, and so did I. So then, I do love you.

So when you love the Lord, you love His Word. When you love the Lord, you love the place of prayer. When you love the Lord, you gladly give of yourself.

When you love the Lord, you love God's people. Difficult as they may be, obnoxious as they may be, carnal as they may be at the moment, rebellious and stiff-necked as they may be, unwilling to work together and fellowship together, you still love them with a love of Christ. Your heart goes out to the people across the world who have a burden in Jesus.

You find yourself praying for them. You find yourself getting concerned for a mission, and you find yourself praying for your own children about their responsibility in going to the ends of the earth. Loving in deed and in reality.

Then, every time, whatever we ask, we receive in the name of Jesus. In Jesus' name. Amen.

This is His commandment. We should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. Go on loving one another.

The question, as we close, is this, am I meeting this condition for answer today? Do I meet this condition for answer today? Do I love God? Indeed! Can I look into the face of my Lord tonight and sing from all my heart, My Jesus, I love Thee, I love Thee! Can you look around God's people tonight in this room, and on these grounds, and back home from which you've come? You can say before God tonight you do love the Lord's people, with their prophets, with their birds, with their carnality, with their needs, with love. Can you say tonight you love the Lord? You express it by praying for individuals who need to pray. You express it by a heart concerned for evangelism, and redeeming the opportunity of this occasion to escape it.

You express it by incurring for missionaries who know, in praying for them and supporting them. You love. Are there those tonight who have to say, Richard, it's not right to make such a commitment.

My heart is cold. My heart is rigid. I know what you're talking about, I want to say.

My heart wants it brought with a love of Christ, it does not know. I say immediately, this is explanation enough, why the heavens came to wrath. This is explanation enough for God not having answered his right.

For that loss, for that hurt, for that nature. Let us confess our sins tonight. Let us confess having lost our first love, let us confess our coldness and difference tonight, our neglect of those who need behavior.

Let this be our focus. I will confess my sin, my sin, and pray that Lord, she has wronged me, as we're vowed in God's presence. Let us let the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit of Christ, is true to all of us.

What has God said to me? Did I come short? Is the love not there at all? Are there people I do not love with a love of Christ? Do I really care for sinners who need behavior? Am I doing something that is wrong? If not, let's confess our sin. Let us claim this message. Now let us trust the Lord.

The Lord pours that love into our hearts and ears. For he is there. He is love.

Let us trust him. Claim it in Jesus' name. That love once more will be there.

It is true. The love of the Lord. And it's true.

That sinners exist. Thank you.

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