

Love From a Pure Heart

by Bill McLeod

The goal of Christian instruction is love, and it requires a pure heart, a good conscience, and a genuine faith.

Duration: 31:28

Scripture: John 4:23

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of visiting a penitentiary and realizing that the inmates didn't need a sermon but something else. He then proceeds to share his own life experiences of growing up in a broken home and facing poverty. The speaker emphasizes that before one can be filled with the love of God, they need to consider three things: a pure heart, a good conscience, and a genuine faith. He also references a preacher who initially struggled to connect with his audience until he sought God and was filled with the love of God, leading to the salvation of many. The sermon highlights the importance of love as the goal of Christian instruction and warns against empty talk and running one's ship on the rocks.

Transcript

The song our brother just sang reminds me of something that happened years ago in the States. The King of England was visiting in the States and Chief Whitefeather, a great gospel singer, was asked to sing at this occasion. And that's the song he sang.

And the Americans were horrified at this. They couldn't stop him. And he's a great singer, you know.

And he sang it right through. And when he was through, the King spoke up and said, Thank you. I believe as you believe.

And that relieved the tension somewhat, you know. But I think it took a lot of courage that Chief, you know, to sing that kind of a song in that kind of a situation. But like it says, you know, God has servants everywhere.

I have a little thing called Shepherd's College. And I train young people that maybe don't feel comfortable going to Bible school or seminary. And we have a number of them in full-time ministry now.

Jeremy Shumlack is in Humboldt, Nebraska. And he's got quite a thing going there. There's a penitentiary in the area.

And he has two days a week, two days a month to get in there. So when I was there with him visiting, we got into one of the services there. I prepared a sermon.

And we got there a little early. And men were struggling in. So I got to talking to someone, moving around the crowd.

There was about 50 altogether finally. And it suddenly dawned on me, they didn't need a sermon. They needed something else.

And the Lord showed me exactly what to do. So I said, you know, I came from a broken home. Mom and Dad didn't, their heads were going up and down like this, you know.

They didn't get along very well. And they left. And I told them about the times when there was no mother in the home.

And some of the guys were nodding their heads. And then I told them about things later on, poverty on the farm, had it not been for rabbits and cockroaches, we would have starved to death. And more heads were going up and down.

And then I told them about a time when I rode freight trains looking for work in the dirty 30s and more heads are going up and down, you know. And so I shared an occasion when I did something for a guy and it was crooked. I didn't know it was crooked.

I had a question mark about it. I wasn't a Christian at the time. But I did it anyhow and then discovered it was crooked and got in trouble and a lot of heads were going up and down.

And you know what? Finally I had them. And then I brought a simple, simple gospel message and gave an invitation and there were 11 men who wanted to receive Christ. So there's times when people don't need a sermon.

They just need, you know, a story about life. The text I want to take is from 1 Timothy 1.5, the end of the commandment. I'm going to use a different text or at least a different way of putting it.

One or the other translation. I'm not even sure which translation it is, but it goes like this. The goal of our instruction is.

I like that. I mean the end of the commandment means that too, but this puts it just a little clearer I think. The goal of our instruction is what? The goal of our instruction is love.

I remember a guidance counselor telling me one day, he said, you know, there are 40,000 different professions you can train for. We never tell the kids that because they couldn't handle it. So we tell them there's 400, but there's 40,000 of them.

We're not talking about those kind of things now. We're talking about the goal of Christian instruction. Why are we teaching kids? Why are we teaching adults? I mean, what is the goal that we have in mind? Well, we want them to know about the flood and some of the great miracles in the Bible and something about the apostles and Jesus and all kinds of ideas as to why we're training people.

But our text says the goal of our instruction is that people might wind up being loving, filled with the love of God. And he goes on to say, from which some, not aiming at, have turned aside to vain jangling. One

translation says they've turned aside to empty talk.

And later on, verses 18 and 19, it talks about some people who ran their ship on the rocks. And so we have, you know, if you're shooting at a target with a rifle at 100 yards and you miss the bullseye by one inch, and then you shoot at the moon and you miss the moon by the same incidence, you'll miss it by 8,000 miles, which is to say, if you don't have the right goal, the further you'll go down the road, the further you'll get away from the truth. We've got to have the right goal in mind, in training people, in teaching people.

You know, in 1 John, there are 12 places where love is made the asset test of reality in the Christian life. 12 places. He that loves not, beloved, let us love one another.

The word beloved means divinely loved ones. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. He that loves not, and we need to be from time to time thundering that message out.

Are you a loving person? If you are not, then likely you have not been born again. Dare we say that? Well, in 1 Peter chapter 1, seeing you have purified your souls and obeying the truth through the Spirit unto, unto what? Untamed love of the brethren. That's what it says.

You know, I sometimes thought to myself, would it be possible to go back in time? I know it isn't. There's a book on that subject, which is a classic. It's a great book.

But I was just thinking that way. Then reading in John 17, I came across a verse that tells me what he taught them. We call that a high priesthood.

And here's what he said. I have declared unto them your name. Why? That the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

So he had the same goal. Training the twelve to be filled with the love of God. That's what he had in mind.

Empty talk. Or maybe even people wind up. We're going to leave that to a side for a few moments.

Think of a few texts. We're to follow after love, we're told, at least twice. We're to walk in love, Ephesians 5. We're to increase in love, in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3. We're to abound in love, in Philipians chapter 1. We're to be rooted in God.

You know, I'll tell you something. If we're not filled with love, we're not filled with the Spirit of God. Because the Spirit of God, in Romans 5.5, pours the love of God if love is not there.

Let all your things be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16.14. We're taught of God to love one another. Precept, command, example.

Precept, we quoted a moment ago. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God, and everyone that loves knows God. He that loves not, knows not God, for God is love.

That's a precept to teach you. Command, and this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another in his commandments. He said this is his commandment.

You can't divorce the one from the other. Believing in Christ, and loving one another, they go together. We don't do it that way, or preach it, or teach it that way.

Often we should though. Example, 1 John 3.16. Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his for the brethren. Precept, command, and example are taught of God to love.

But to forbear one another in love, Ephesians chapter 4. Our hearts are to be knit together in love. It says in Colossians chapter 3. We're to put on love, Galatians 3.14. We're to speak the truth in love, Ephesians 4.15. We're to labor in love, as we see in 1 Timothy 1.3. Direct, we are directed into love by God in 2 Thessalonians 3.5. Love works no ill to anyone, Romans 13. We owe love to all men, Romans 13.8. We have been given the spirit of love.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, 2 Timothy chapter 1, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, a disciplined, healthy mind. That's the spirit that lives in us as Christian believers. Then the Bible speaks about the love of the spirit in Romans 15.30. The love of the spirit.

It's the only place in the Bible you find that phrase. The love of the spirit, then Colossians 1 speaks about the love of the spirit. He's a loving spirit, you know.

When Moody had that dramatic experience of the spirit walking down the street, he said, I was so filled. And he ran to a friend's home, asked for a room, and stayed in that room for hours. He never ever heard of anything like that.

Not a thing. And suddenly he was overwhelmed with the spirit of God. And the next day, every person he spoke to was converted.

It was a love experience. I remember one time in a meeting, a lady, she dragged her husband down to the front. He didn't want to come.

To some people, she said, speak to him. He's a backslider. If I hadn't have come forward, she'd give me a lot of problems at home.

But I'm not ready, he said. So I turned to her and said, are you a Christian? Of course I'm a Christian. You know what it means to be filled with the spirit of God? Yes.

She said, I speak in tongues 30 minutes every day. I said, I didn't ask you to speak in tongues. I asked you to be filled with the spirit.

Well, it's the same thing. I said, it isn't the same thing. You may speak in tongues 30 minutes or 40 minutes a day and still not have a loving heart.

And he was looking, going like this. And so I just pursued it. And finally, she said, well, I have a few little problems.

Well, tell me about your problems. Well, she said, I have a horrible temper. And he was going like this.

I have a horrible temper, she said. And sometimes when I lose my temper, I curse. And sometimes I've even cursed God.

And I said, sister, you're not filled with the spirit of God. And finally, she got on her face and the floor, cried to God and got her life straightened out. No.

If you're not filled with love, you're not filled with the spirit of God. Don't kid yourself. And don't let others kid you either.

You know, it's together everywhere in the word of God. The Bible speaks about love, unfeigned. It means a genuine love.

1 Peter 1.22. Sincere love. 2 Corinthians 8. Sincere love. Never failing.

1 Corinthians 10. Love is the only thing that never fails. We're told that.

Serving others, Galatians 5.13. OK. The goal of our instruction is love. And we have to keep that in mind, I mean, all the time.

If we miss it, we're missing the heart of the whole thing. I declare them your name and will declare that the love were of you who love me may be in them and I in them. So he saw the need and he that's where the apostle got it from, you know.

OK. But notice something. People say to me, I pray constantly to be filled with the love of God.

Nothing changes. What do you mean nothing changes? Well, I'm just the same afterwards, you know. People tell me they prayed for weeks and years even to be filled with the love of God.

Nothing ever changes, you know. OK. Let's look at our text.

It's love rising out of a pure heart. Do you have a pure heart? If you don't have a pure heart, you won't have His love. You can't divorce it, you see.

It's love rising out of a pure heart. So blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. So we need to seek for a pure heart.

And the problem is right here for most people. They haven't seen this. They're going to talk this.

I don't know what it is. They just don't know it. It's love rising out of a pure heart.

The Life Action Ministries in Michigan, I've worked a lot with them. And one of their men, he was not on the road preaching, but he was one of their men. They have a lot of people that support them and work with them.

And he was a multimillionaire, I guess, and had a great business and all. He came to me one day and said, you know, I just want to be honest, he said. I got a polluted mind, he said.

If I see a rusty tin can sitting in the ditch or a cardboard box blowing in the field before a wind, I think something evil right away. He said, it happens all the time, he said. Could you bring a message on that text, blessed are the pure in heart? So I did.

And I'll tell you, I really prayed and fasted over that message. And I brought it to the whole group. And then day or two later, he came running to me and he said, hey, he said, God did it.

God did it. My heart is pure. So it's love rising out of a pure heart and then love rising out of a good conscience.

I may have shared this before, I don't know. Some of you have heard it, I'm sure. But I was in Chile and he brought this guy and he was acting, he didn't know any English, the interpreter told me, so we could talk quite freely.

And the interpreter said, he says he's got a bad conscience and he wants you to pray for him to have a good conscience. And I said, well, tell him this, in Hebrews chapter 13, it says, pray for us for we trust we'll have a good conscience and all things willing to live honestly. Tell him I can't pray for him until he has a good conscience.

So tell him to go home and get his conscience straightened out. Whatever's troubling his conscience, deal with it. So he told this guy this, and I just walked away because the guy was starting to cry.

He wanted to be prayed for. That's not what he needed. You know what happened? He went home that night, fell on his face, spent hours crying to God and opened up his heart and God cleaned his whole life out.

And the next night he was back with the interpreter talking so fast he had to slow him down. He couldn't get all the guy was saying in Spanish, you know, but yeah, he, he had a good conscience. So if your conscience is troubling you, what are you waiting for? You can pray all you want.

God can't fill you with his love on top of a bad conscience. We've got to deal with it and go back as far as God leads us. I've had to do that kind of thing.

It isn't always easy. Sometimes it's quite embarrassing. What you have to do is God leads you.

I remember Gordon Bailey, what he did before his family, set all his kids up and his wife, set a chair here, ask them each one to forgive him for being such a poor father and such a poor husband. I'll never forget when he told me, he said, oh, Bailey, it was the hardest thing I ever did in all my life. And then what happened? That night, working in his barn, he had a herd of black Angus cattle working in the barn.

And he said, suddenly God filled me with the Holy Ghost from top to toe. He never even tried to win the soul of Christ in the six years he'd been a Christian. And the next nine months, he led 30 people to Christ.

And then he went to an Indian village, a Sioux Indian village not far from his farm. And he led about 35 Indians to Christ. And then churches began inviting.

He only had a great education, but boy, he could preach. And churches were having him come and great things were happening. And then American churches began to invite him.

And then God took him home by a heart attack. Now, his ministry was over, but I'll never forget that. How did it happen? Well, you know, twice we're told in James 4 and 1 Peter 5, that if you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, he will exalt you in due time.

He'll lift you up. Now, before that happened in Psalm 102, God just put this verse in my mind and it fits in. I don't know exactly how.

You have lifted me up and thrown me down. That's what it says. Ever happen to you? Given something great, made great progress, and all of a sudden you trip and stumble somewhere, you're down in the mud.

Don't be surprised. That happens, you know, at times. But if you humble yourself under God's hand, just do whatever God is asking you to do, then God will pick you up and lift you up.

So it's love rising out of a clean heart, a pure heart, and rising out of a good conscience, and rising out of a genuine faith. See, these three things you have to consider before you can expect to be filled with the love of God. I don't know if you've ever heard of this one.

I just, I can't quite think of his name. It'll come to me somewhere, maybe now or a hundred years from now. Anyway, he was a preacher, an evangelist in the States.

He preached occasionally in the Maritimes many years ago, and nothing was happening in his meetings. So he was to go to a place and he prepared twelve sermons, and here's what he said. I filled them with barbed wire and cactus and everything I could think of, and saltpeter and everything I could, and I hit them bang.

He went through eleven of these sermons and nobody stirred. So he said, I took the twelfth sermon and I worked it over. I put a lot more junk in, rocks and cement and everything I could think of, you know, and our soul stirred.

Then that night, in his room, he got on his face and he said, God, what in the world is wrong with those people? And God said, nothing but there's a lot wrong with you. Hey, wait a minute, God. He said, you know, I cry sometimes when I preach.

Yes, 50,000 people found Christ as their personal Savior. He never had it, you see. He never had it, and he got it from God.

What a wonderful text. What a text. The goal of our instruction is love, rising out of a purity from which some not aiming at, empty talk, a wilderness of words, or later, as we pointed out before, running our ship on the rocks.

And so we need to ask ourselves, where am I at? Am I really filled with the love of God? I know a godly couple. He's a doctor, and she, and they're both very godly people. They used to live in Meadow Lake.

I'm not sure where they are now. They were on holidays in China, and while they were on holidays in China, they left their children with her dad and mom. And there's four children, and one day, the mom and dad, the grandma and grandpa, they took the kids out for a walk.

And while they were walking along this road in the country little ways, a drunk teenager ran into them. The grandma died, and the grandpa died the next day. This couple in China, but they got them home, and my son-in-law, Danny, he had the funeral.

I knew this couple very well. I mean, the couple had died. I knew them very well.

After they were home, Blanche, whose mom and dad died, she said, where is this young man that killed my mom and dad? Oh, he's in jail. So she went to the jail and asked if she could see this young man, and they were quite surprised, but they let her in. And this is what she said, basically.

You killed my mom and dad, and I miss them very, very much, but I know they're in heaven, and I just came here to tell you that I forgive you, and I want you to know how wonderful Jesus is, and she led him to Christ. Could you have done that in a similar situation? That would have been difficult, but she was filled with the love of God. God just let her.

She did it, you know. And then one other story which might help. When the Red Guards in China, during Mao's leadership, young people were given the right to go through the country and kill anybody that was religious, or wealthy, or an intellectual.

And they killed thousands of people until the thing got out of hand, and then they stopped it. They killed many, many Christians in that time. In some cases, they just burst into homes with clubs and beat everybody to death.

And they did that in one case, and they beat everybody to death, and walked away, and left them, but some other lived. They didn't know that. Then this thing was all over, and some years later, this mother discovered that the young man who led the group into her home and murdered her family was living about two blocks from her place.

So she began to pray for him. Then she heard he had a son that wasn't well, and he couldn't afford to go to hospital. And so she went to him.

He didn't recognize her, of course. She didn't say anything. She just said, I heard about your son being ill, and I know you need to work, and you can't look after him.

His wife was gone. And so she offered to nurse him back to health, and she did, and took him back three weeks later. And then she told this guy who she was.

And the story, he fell on his face on the floor, and began to weep, and weep, and weep, and she led him to Christ. Can we do things like that? Well, no, we can't in our own strength. But in the power of God, we can.

People, listen. This is a goal of God's instruction, not just Paul's. This is God's goal for your life.

You say, I'm not that type. What do you mean you're not that type? What kind of a type are you? Aren't you a human being? People give me those kinds of answers. I don't have an outgoing personality.

What kind of personality? Do you have any personality? That's got nothing to do with it. Every Christian, every Christian is supposed to be rooted and grounded in the love of God. And we're supposed to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge in order that what? That we might be filled with all the fullness of God.

And you can't have it apart from the love thing. I know it's hard. It's hard because we want to go our own way, do it differently if we possibly can.

We like to get into a shouting meeting where they're praying much and shouting much maybe and hope something will fall on me. It's just not that way. So it means we have to be 100% honest before God, take whatever time it takes, make whatever has to be made right, make it right, humble yourself before your family perhaps or others, whatever, until finally you know you're clear, you're clean, everything's right.

Then cry to God to fill you with the Holy Spirit and the love of God and He will do that. So the goal of our instruction is love. Love, teaching kids, Bible camps, whatever it is.

It's got to be the same everywhere. Not just special occasions, you know. That's the goal of our instruction.

That's His goal of our instruction that we should be this kind of person, one He can trust, one He knows will not flake when a bad thing happens. They'll just move with God. And people, it's wonderful if and when you get to that place where you can just move with the flow of God, you're doing, you're moving, it's because God is moving and doing.

And it's always, you know, in Ephesians 5 it says walk in love. We think of love as being something special we put on when some relatives are coming that we don't particularly care for. And you have to put up with them maybe for a weekend or maybe even a whole week.

And so I think I told you about a couple, you know what they did? They were having some relatives come that couldn't really stand. And so they practiced smiling in the mirror for a whole week, you know. No kidding.

You know, it's to be that way all the time. Remember that hymn, It Is Well With My Soul? You remember how it was written? I think while his daughter died, they were drowned in a ship or something and he heard about it and wrote the song, It Is Well With My Soul. He knew where they were.

That's what makes a difference. I don't have anymore to say, so if I say anymore it will be too much. I'm through.

Let's just pray for a moment. Father, thank you for the clear, clear teaching of the Word of God. Don't let us run away from it, Father.

Help us to run to it. And God, if we have to get on our face and fast and pray. Jack Hiles' father, when he threw himself across his father's grave and said, God, I'm not leaving here until you touch my life so I can preach the gospel with power.

And Father, I read the story. I heard him say it once. He lay there three days and three nights that you touched him.

In all the years he'd been preaching, he never won a soul to Christ. After you touched him in the very first meeting, Father, 18 people were saved. And the last time I saw him, I wasn't preaching in his church, but the church had 95,000 members.

But he said frequently, I remember this, Father, how he said frequently when he felt the power wasn't there, he fasted and prayed again. And so, Father, you taught him. Lord, God, teach us to help us, we pray.

We can't all have a big ministry, but any ministry is big if it's with God. Bless these dear people, every one of them, Lord. And God, help us, we pray, as a fellowship of people to be noted for our love.

In Christ's name, amen.

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