

# Love - the Missing Ingredient

by Bill McLeod

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*Love is the missing ingredient in the church, and it is the greatest gift of all.*

**Duration:** 46:32

**Scripture:** Luke 24:25, Acts 20:24

**Topics:** "Love"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a Christian young man who rented rooms in his house to university students. The students brought in raunchy videos that the young man didn't approve of, but he allowed them to use his machine to watch them. The speaker questions why there is so much negativity and violence in the world today, citing an incident where a woman was attacked and beaten. He then tells another story about a man who was rejected and mocked while sharing the message of Jesus, but he persisted and eventually led the person to salvation. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having love in all that we do, as without love, we are nothing according to God. He encourages listeners to see themselves from God's viewpoint rather than seeking validation from others. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God can use us despite our flaws and weaknesses, but we should never take credit for what God has done.

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## Transcript

The church at Corinth was a strange church, as you possibly know. I went through 1st and 2nd Corinthians one time, and I came across about 30 things that Paul was concerned about, things that were not really the way they should be. Then I went back through it again and found about the same number of good things he said about the church.

It wasn't, as some people call it, a backslidden church. There were some backsliders in the church, but it was not a backslidden church. But it did have some problems, and historically, apparently even a hundred years after Paul's death, they didn't overcome all of these problems.

There was a spirit of division in the church, and that's a problem always. It was, however, on Paul's confession, a highly gifted church. He said, "...in everything you are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is faithful.

God is faithful. We are enriched by God in all utterance and in all knowledge. Then in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 he said the same thing, that they were full of faith and utterance and knowledge, full of it.

But there was something lacking, something more important than any of these things, and that's what he discusses in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians. To add some correction, and I think we need it today, "...though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love." Some translations use the word charity, of course. Charity is actually a Latin word, *caritas*, and it meant love.

It did not mean then what it means today, charity. And so I'll use the word love here. "...though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I want nothing." Now, King Herod made a great speech.

He was displeased with the people of Tyrenside and was thinking of having war with them. So they sent a delegation, and he made a great speech, and they flattered him out of his mind. They shouted and cried.

They said, it's the voice of a God and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he didn't give God the glory, and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. Not a very nice ending, really, would you say? He didn't give God the glory.

You know, sometimes we take the credit for what God does, and sometimes there's always the danger of an element of pride coming in. Now, Aaron was a good public speaker. God said so.

He said, I know that your brother Aaron can speak well. Moses was not a good public speaker. But if God had given the job to Aaron, it would never have been done.

Israel would still be in Egypt, likely. Aaron was weak. His sister Miriam pushed him into challenging Moses' leadership for one thing.

He just never had it. Can you imagine Israel saying to Moses, make us a golden calf? Do you know what would have happened? There would have been a bomb go off. And I like the way he handled it when he came down from the mountain, man alive.

He gets ahold of his brother. What were you thinking of? Well, you know what some people are like, you know, they're bent on mischief, and I threw this stuff in the fire and this golden calf walked out. That's exactly what he said, you know.

He was beside him, so he didn't know which way to turn. He was a weak person. Great public speaker, but not much of a saint, really.

God did everything, it seems, through Moses. Aaron was two years older than Moses, so he should have been the one that God chose. But God's not a fool.

A man looks on the outer appearance, and God looks on the heart, always on the heart. Now I have, oh wait a minute, I should stop here for a second. In Jeremiah, I think it's 49, God says, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is just a noise.

Just a noise. What is that phrase today? It's just a big noise, right? I had a friend who worked among native people in North Saskatchewan many years ago. I'm sure he's not here today.

But anyway, he's a great talker, just an absolute great, he's had, I think, even in his sleep, he's always talking, you know. And the native people and the people he was working with, they had a deal where they would give you a name, sort of describing the chief characteristic you have. And he knew they'd given him a name, but they wouldn't tell him what it was.

And he begged and begged, and nobody would tell him. And finally they told him. The name was Big Wind.

Big Wind. Pharaoh was a big wind, a windbag. John said, my little children, it's not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

We don't want to be a windbag, as sometimes, perhaps, all of us have been. But I have the gift of prophecy. Somebody said they love the study of prophecy because you've got such truckloads of return for such a tiny investment of facts.

You get what I'm saying? It's like that, isn't it? Somebody's got it all figured out, exactly what God's going to do, when he's going to do it, and all this kind of stuff. And a major in that, I was converted, reading a booklet on the second coming of Christ. And I got into this, and I got bitten by the same bug.

And for about three years after I was converted, I had this feeling that if a preacher doesn't preach on prophecy, every second sermon, he's either a liberal, or he is a backslider. One of the two. Then I came across a verse in Revelation that said, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

And a prophetic teaching does not make people love Jesus more. There's something wrong with it. The Jew is not the key to prophecy, Jesus Christ is the key to prophecy.

I want you to remember that. And sometimes, I preach on prophecy too, don't misunderstand me. But some people, they pride themselves that they've really got it, you know, and they put up book after book after book.

Of making many books, there's no end, and they're trying to fulfill that thought in Ecclesiastes, I think, I don't know. I've written a few books too, they don't sell well, but then, that's alright. Some people get help, and that's okay.

And I can understand all mysteries and all knowledge, like Joseph or Daniel, they were both really clued in when it came to this sort of thing. But if I don't have love, I have nothing. I have nothing.

Well, you know, when you think of it, in Isaiah chapter 40, all the nations of the world are like one drop in a bucket, and God said there that we are a mathematical impossibility. He said we are less than nothing and vanity. Now that doesn't really build up your self-esteem, does it? Is that a problem? You know, the verse in Job, where Job said, Behold, I am vile, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes, in some of the modern translations, that's not there anymore.

That doesn't fit in with Bob Shuler, you know. And some of these other people that are preaching self-esteem all the time, you know. That's not what we need, dear people, it's Christ-esteem.

We have to come to know Christ, and the more you get to know Him, the less confidence you have in yourself, the more confidence and faith you have in Him. So, I can have prophecy, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, I can have all faith, so that I could remove mountains. But if I don't have love,

well, four times he's really saying it, I'm nothing.

I'm nothing. And people, we need to see ourselves from God's viewpoint. People can pat us on the back and say nice things about us, is that how God sees it? Well, maybe sometimes, mostly not, I wouldn't think.

Man at his best state, listen to that, man at his best state is altogether vanity. How seldom are we ever at our best state. Altogether vanity.

Emptiness, wind and confusion, but God deigns to use us anyhow. He doesn't have to have much, but he has to have something to work through. But don't ever take credit to yourself for anything God has done.

Ruth Orr said to me one day, I didn't hear a voice, but it went like this, wouldn't you mind if I let somebody else take credit for something you did? And I said, hey God, the flesh wouldn't like it, but I think it'd be great. And you know, within 24 hours it happened, I was in a home, and they were talking about a family that led to Christ, and somebody said, wasn't it wonderful the way Brother So-and-So led that family to Christ? You know what I did? I looked up to the heavens and said, you rascal. I didn't expect it to happen so soon, you know.

Now in the olden days I would have found some subtle Christian way of cluing them in as to what really happened, you see. I couldn't have cared less. Praying Hyde was asked to speak at this prestigious Deeper Life conference in England, Keswick, you know.

And they didn't know when they invited him that he was not a scintillating, you know, platform performer. He was a very slow speaker. Nobody knew that.

And they were accustomed to having the best speakers in the world. He got up to speak, and after eight or nine minutes the crowd got restless. He was speaking so slowly, you know, and deliberately.

And finally, you know what happened? A lady got up, and she announced a hymn, and they sang it down. And he never spoke again at the conference. Now I'm asking this question, how would you handle that if that happened to you? Angry? Embarrassed? Wish you could dig a hole and disappear? How did he handle it? A friend went running up and said, oh, Brother Hyde, that was a terrible thing they did to you.

And he said, Brother Hyde smiled ever so sweetly and said, my brother, it is the Lord. Let him do as seemeth him good. So though I speak, though I have, though I do, if I don't have love, God says you're nothing.

You're just a clanging gong and a clashing cymbal, just a noise, like Pharaoh, king of Egypt. You don't amount to anything without the love of God. And then he says, this is kind of shocking, though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.

You know, if a guy had a million dollars in the bank and, you know, suddenly decided I'm going to take all this money out and give it to the poor, wouldn't he think he'd done something great? Especially if he was a Christian, now that was a big thing. Boy, he's really walking with God, this guy. And God says, no, you can do that.

I don't have love. Did you know that the Pharisees all tithed? They paid tithe and mint and anise and cumin, it says. But, Jesus said, they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith, and

the love of God.

So he said, these ought you to have done, but not to leave the other undone. And so, you haven't given your body to be burned, he goes on to say. Well, there were people back in those days who longed to have a martyr's crown, and actually went out of their way to provoke the authorities so they could suffer a martyr's death.

I remember reading about one guy, they were burning a bunch of Christians, they had them all tied to these stakes, and some guy heard about this, and he put a saddle on his horse and he was riding, and when he got within, he was shouting, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, and he pulled up and leaped off his horse and ran over and said, I too am a Christian. So they tied him to a stake and put the faggots around him. He was burned to death.

And it says you can give your body to be burned, but if you don't have love, it doesn't profit you in the slightest. In the slightest. These are simple truths, I know.

But they're very profound truths, too, because they head us where we live. They speak to us as we often are. Well, what is love? Well, it says love suffers long.

It's long-suffering. Wouldn't it be nice to live in a world where you never have to be long-suffering? Well, you'll be in that kind of a world in the Kingdom of God, but in the meantime, we're down here. And we must, through much tribulation, inherit the Kingdom of God.

If you'd be without chastisement, wrath, all our partakers, then you are illegitimate children, not sons of God. And so the Bible makes it very clear that in this life, man is born of trouble as the sparks fly upward. Man that's born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble, it says.

I don't think it's a cynic speaking, it's God speaking to another's servants when he said that. So love is long-suffering and kind. In Romans 12 it says we are to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.

When I think of being kind, I always have to think in terms of doing something for somebody. Some little thing, maybe, but doing something. Holding a door open.

Letting somebody take their last chair in the place when you got there first, you know. Or something like this. Just being kind.

That's love. Love is kind. Then love doesn't envy.

If a friend of yours gets a bigger car than you get, or than you have, can you praise God for that? Hey, isn't that great? He got a better car than I've got. Wow. That's not how we think.

How in the world do you manage that? I'll bet he's really into it deep. I don't think the guy can pay for that thing, you know. Love does not envy.

No matter what. No matter how smart you are, there's somebody smarter, you know. And no matter how rich you are, there's somebody richer.

And don't ever forget this in James chapter 2. It says, Harken, my beloved brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?

Who has God chosen? The poor of this world, rich in faith. People, when God hands out the crowns, I think us people from North America were standing so far back when we had binoculars to see anything, you know. There'd be people from third world countries that God would be handing the crowns out to, and we'd be standing back somewhere in the shadows, you know.

And who would think that? God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith. I think it's a crime to be poor. God doesn't think it's a crime to be poor.

So love never envies. You're satisfied. Having food and clothing, let us be there with content.

A friend of mine wrote in there, this must include housing, too. Let's know what God said. He said, if you've got food and clothing, you should be content.

Well, you can't in the wintertime. You'd have to have a place to stay. I understand that.

I'm sure God does, too. But content with what we have. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Nothing out. And I can give your total biography in four words from the Bible.

Nothing in, nothing out. That's it. We have to see things from God's point of view.

Love does not envy. It's completely satisfied with what it has. You know, sometimes, I suppose Zacchaeus complained because he was so short.

But somebody said his shortness became his salvation. Because he couldn't see Jesus, so he ran before and climbed a tree. And then Jesus looked up and said, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down.

We're going to state your place today. And down he came. Otherwise, if he'd have seen him, he'd have walked away, probably, because there was nothing untoward about Jesus.

When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire in him. He's despised and rejected of men. A man is sore and acquainted with grief.

And remember, the earliest likenesses of Jesus Christ ever found. Show him as a very, very ordinary-looking person, with pockmarks on his face. Not the pictures we see, despised and rejected of men.

Now, he's not talking about Hollywood love here at all. You may have heard me say sometimes, I don't mind saying it again, if you could take, you know, they call them great lovers in Hollywood. If you could take the six greatest lovers in Hollywood and stick them in a room for twelve months, I don't think that between them they could spell the word love at all.

They don't have a clue what love is. They know what lust is. They don't know what love is.

And then he fell in love with Tamar. He loved her so greatly that he fell sick for her. He couldn't even eat.

And if your love for a person of the opposite sex makes you act this way or react this way, then it's obviously not really love at all. He raped her. After he raped her, then he felt such a hatred for her, it was greater than the love he had for her before.

Now, what happened in twenty minutes to change him from this great love to this hatred? And he ordered her out. And she said, in doing this you're doing worse than you've already done. Because, you see, the law of God said, if a man raped a woman and she was not engaged to be married, then he was to marry her.

Now he was ordering her out. And he said, he called his servants and said, have this woman out from me. The word woman is not in the original at all.

What he was really saying was this, get this thing out of her. He couldn't stand the sight of her. That's Hollywood love.

They have no idea what the Bible means or what God means by the word love. Doesn't it want itself? It's not puffed up? Not pride, full of pride? Do you know, according to Isaiah chapter 2, in the coming day of God, the major sin in the world will be pride. He talks about the day of God being upon all that are proud and lofty.

He talks about the day of God being on all the high hills, all the high mountains, all the high trees, the oaks and the cedars. Love is not puffed up, no matter what happens. It knows better.

Does not behave itself unseemly? It's modest. Shy and retiring, perhaps? It's modest. And then I think of all he says here, that probably the next statement is the most powerful of all.

Love seeks not her own. Most of us are unhappy because we're always seeking things for ourselves, our own family. We never get beyond that.

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's welfare. 1 Corinthians 10 says, let no man seek his own. Paul said in Philippians 2, all seek their own, not the things which are of Jesus Christ.

Are you aware of the fact that he was talking about Christians? How do we know that? Look at the context. He said, I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ. We're the mistaken notion of apostolic church without any problems.

They were perfect churches. They were not perfect churches. Five of the seven churches in the book of Revelation were backslidden.

Some of them were backslidden than any church I know about today, with the preaching fornication from the pulpit. I've never heard of that, even in the backslidden church today. Anyway, love seeks not her own.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. How's my brother doing? We probably get out of our own problems a lot faster if we try to help other people out of their problems. But we're so self-centered.

We see nothing but ourselves and our own family and our own little circle. Why is it, if God sends a revival to some country in Africa, it doesn't grab us the same as if God sent revival to Canada or the States? Is it less important to God the color of some person's skin? Is it less important to God the fact he doesn't have any money in the bank? Is it less important to God because he isn't put together right? He's got a big nose or floppy ears or something? One preacher was saying, you know, somebody told him, and he really had big ears, I saw a picture of him, he said, my head from behind looks like the back of a taxi cab with the doors open. Does that mean anything to God? Absolutely nothing.

Nothing to God. Oh dear people, man looks on the outward appearance and the Lord looks on the heart. What's my heart like? The eyes of the Lord run to and fro towards the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him.

You know, we're singing that chorus, you know what I have to do halfway through? I have to pray and ask God to forgive me. I wasn't thinking in the words. I wasn't singing it to Jesus, you know.

What am I doing here? My mind was somewhere else for a moment. Now I ask God to forgive me. Love seeks not its own, is not easily provoked or irritated, some translations say.

You know, there's so many people around that can irritate you, right? And sometimes they live in the same shack you live in, you know, right? And it gets to be hard sometimes. But love is not easily, it doesn't say love is never irritated. I'm glad it says that.

It just says it's not easily irritated. Thanks, no evil. I'm really getting scared here, people, when I see what's going on in our culture today.

Petroleuse and I were in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, the Crusades several years ago. We got back to our motel. We had different rooms, about 11 at night and 11 o'clock.

There was news on TV. So we both turned, we compared notes the next day. We both turned the set on and both of them had Playboy Channel on.

I never knew that kind of absolute rotten garbage was available in Canada on TV yet. I didn't know that then. We found it that night.

Next morning, Petro got on the phone and he blasted the ears off the guy that ran the place. And the guy said, well, it's not my problem, it's their problem. People want to watch that, they can watch it.

The Providios. A Christian young man told me he had a house and he rented rooms in his house to Christian kids going to university. And he said, these kids pick up these videos and he says, Bill, they're absolutely raunchy.

He said, I wouldn't even look at them. But they bring them in, they borrow my machine to show them. I said, we're just as guilty as they are.

He said, no, no, no, I don't even look at them. He said, no, but you let them use your machine. What's the difference? And then they have the nerve to tell us this doesn't affect people badly.

Why do you suppose all that's going on today is going on today? Some lady's walking home from a superstore in Winnipeg the other day and what happens? In broad daylight, some guy's accosted her, they wanted her purse, they beat her almost to death, she's in the hospital, they still don't know if she's going to live or die. Broad daylight. At Asher in Manitoba, some kids the other day, they broke into a house, they tied up this elderly couple, they beat them, they threatened them, they did everything they could.

And they didn't kill them. They caught the guys and they had a hearing in the town hall in Asher and everybody and his dog was there. The whole town was there.

They were so angry. It would have gone on. And one of the three guys who had done this was smiling at the crowd the whole time.

It's a wonder they didn't lynch him. But they're running this garbage on TV. Rape, I mean, they see it on TV all the time.

This garbage, dear people. He says, love doesn't think in evil. Stay away from that.

Don't let it get into your heart. Now, you can sit down. I remember in a crusade one time in Toronto where a fellow got up and he said, you people know who I am.

We found out later on he had worked with youth, he was a great youth worker, been in many of the churches, they all knew who he was. He said, you know my name, but you don't really know my name. He said, my name is Seward because that's the kind of mind I have.

I wish you'd pray for me. And he told us afterwards what a terrible, terrible time he was having, you know, with just thinking evil, love thinks no evil. In Genesis 6 it says that every imagination of the thought of men's heart was only evil continually.

Now they never had TV in those days. They never had videos in those days. But every imagination of the thoughts of men's heart.

So it's worse today. It has to be. When all this junk is available to people, love thinks no evil.

And it's something we have to deal with. Rejoice is not in iniquity. Sometimes you hear about some goon who takes his clothes off and runs down the street in broad daylight, and sometimes the flesh kind of gets a chuckle out of that, you know, if you watch it.

Love never rejoices in iniquity. It rejoices in the truth. And we Christians are people on the search for truth.

We found him of whom Moses and the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. We haven't found it all. We found him, but there's a lot of truth.

We're searching and seeking. We're trust seekers. We rejoice in the truth.

He says, Love bears all things. Remember Paul said, None of these things move me, nor do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. What things? Well, he said, Everywhere he went, every city he went to, the Holy Ghost kept saying that bonds and afflictions were waiting for him.

And he said, None of these things move me. So don't ever allow anything that happens to bulldoze you off dead center in the will of God. Love bears all things.

Love believes all things. In Luke 24, Christ said to the men of Emmaus on Emmaus Road, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ who suffered these things enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Love believes all things. You may not understand it all. I don't understand it all.

I believe it all. I pray over it. Remember, Moody used to say that he read the Bible the way he ate fish.

He said, If I come to a bone, I don't stop eating fish. I lay the bone on the side of the plate, and I go right on eating fish. And so he said, If I come across something I don't understand, it doesn't throw me.

I don't stop reading. I just lay it aside and pray over it. And you'll find if you ask God to interpret something for you, he'll do that.

Maybe instantly, maybe down the road, maybe through somebody else, maybe through a book, a message you hear, he'll do it. He'll shed light on it. You know, books I read, like, say, 20 years ago, I look at them now, and say, What in the world did I ever find in that book, you know? Like, in the meantime, I've grown, I hope, and so things that really helped me then don't help me now.

And so love believes all things, hopes all things. Peter put it so neatly in 1 Peter 1.13, Hope to the end, for the grace that's to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Now, when I asked this question, I heard it asked, Are we saved by hope or by faith? People say, Oh, you're saved by faith.

Well, in Romans chapter 8, it says we're saved by hope. Did you know that? It says we're saved by hope. Hope that is seen is not hope.

For when a man sees, what does he have hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we of patience wait for it. So hope to the end, for the grace that's to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. You know, I can hardly wait.

I'll have to, but I can hardly wait until Jesus comes back, the grace that'll be brought unto us at that particular time. He endures all things. Paul said, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Paul didn't take it for granted they were going to get saved anyhow. He endured all things for the sake of the elect, that they also might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. So one of the reasons why Paul never complained or drew back or let any of these things move him was because he knew.

The things he said that happened unto me have fallen rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. He knew that. Thrown in jail? Jail he gets converted.

No matter what happens, God has his way. When Paul was at Corinth, I think there's a little evidence there that Paul got a little bit afraid that maybe a riot was going to develop. It seemed to develop everywhere he went, and he was a little bit afraid, I think.

There's some evidence in the story there. And God said, Fear not, Paul. So he must have been fearing.

He said, I have much people in this city. Paul had no idea who they were. God knew who they were.

Paul didn't know. Paul's business was to preach the gospel to everybody he could. As we sing one of our songs, Well, the Lord shall claim his own.

That's what Paul did. He endured all things for the sake of the elect, so they would obtain that salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. What are the characteristics of love as God sees it? Love never fails.

There's a verse in Psalm 8 that says, Love is as strong as death. Ever seen anybody at funeral get up out of the coffin? I've never seen that happen. Ever seen anybody get up out of the grave? No, death is pretty powerful.

Love is as strong as death. That's the Old Testament. The New Testament, as we see here, says love never fails.

And so in our relationship with other people, love never fails. A friend of mine started a new church in a town in Argentina where there was no evangelical work at all. He discovered there was a certain cop in town who was just absolutely deaf on evangelicals.

But he had a lot of influence. Everybody liked him and spoke about him and so on. And so he began to pray, Lord, give me a chance to witness to this guy.

It came in a very unexpected way. He heard that the fellow's daughter was very ill and might not live. So one day he went down and beat on his door.

And the guy and his wife came and said, what do you want? Well, he said, look, we heard your daughter was sick and we'd just like to come in and pray for her if you wouldn't mind. No, we don't want you in this place. Get out of here.

And his wife said, well, wait a minute, honey. He's just going to pray. He's going to preach and he's just going to pray.

Why don't you let him come in and pray? And finally her husband, in a solemn way, allowed him in. And his wife led him to the bedroom where the daughter was in bed. He said he could just feel the hatred coming from that cop, you know.

And he went down beside the bed and prayed for the girl to be healed. And he leaned over and kissed the girl. And the father broke.

He just started to bawl and bawl and bawl. And the gal was instantly healed and jumped out of the bed. And the guy was the first convert he had and the best convert he could have ever gotten.

That's how God did it, you know. Love never fails. Now remember, every day you live, your faith will be tried and your love will be challenged.

We don't like either of those. We don't like our love to be challenged. But neither love nor faith operate in a vacuum.

You can't talk about love without thinking about people that are very unloving. And people don't understand where you're coming from. You have to put up with that and just continue loving.

There was a guy up in Red Lake, Ontario, you know, he was a little guy, a preacher, starting a church there. And there was a guy in the town that, he weighed about 300 pounds. He'd live with about six or eight different women.

He could lick in any three men that ever came along. He was a great boozier, a minor. And one day God told this little preacher to go preach the gospel to him.

He said, hey God, come on, you're kidding, aren't you? Go hear that guy. He hates the church, he hates Christians, and God doesn't want you to go. So this kid went, beat on the door.

The guy said, what do you want? Well, he came to talk to you about Jesus Christ. He said, the guy slammed him in the face and knocked him about six feet through the Atlanta snowbank, just out like light. He came to and the door was shut and he staggered home and his face was a mess.

Then a week later the Lord said, go back again. I said, oh God, you're not serious. Look at my face, God.

So I'm back again, beat on the door, searing, trembling. The guy slammed the door. Hey, he said, I like your nerve.

You came back again, did you? Come on in, let's have coffee. So he goes in and the short of the story is he got saved that afternoon. Love never fails, but it may be tried to its limits.

Love is as strong as death. Many waters can't quench love, it says in Solomon 8. Love is a fire, but to have the love of God is what we need. How do we get, how can we be filled with the love of Christ? Spurgeon said, we will never know the fullness of the love of God in our soul until we die utterly to ourselves.

I believe he's right. Until we die utterly to ourselves. Not many people understand that Spurgeon, when he was converted at the age of 15, saw the truth of Bible baptism, but he also saw the symbolism of baptism that it talked about being dead to self.

So he determined he would not be baptized until he could say he was honestly dead to himself. He spent weeks studying the Bible, getting off in the woods by himself, going to parks and places, praying, fasting, praying, calling on God. And the day finally came when he felt he could honestly say he was dead to himself.

And as sure as God. And someone here is saying, yeah, but he smoked cigarettes. No he didn't, he smoked cigars.

Let me put just a slightly different light on this. The reason he smoked was because he was having some problems as a pastor, because he met success of his ministry, Jemasmi, in his time, and his doctor told him, smoke cigars or a pipe. It will help to calm your nerves.

It wasn't an issue among evangelicals in Britain at the time, and that's why he smoked. He did not smoke all his life. There came a time when he saw that it was wrong.

He quit smoking. I have sermons of his in which he invades very strongly against tobacco smoking preachers, you know. So let's push that aside.

He was baptized shortly after in a river dividing two counties in England. His people were congregational, and his mother said, Charles, Charles, I often prayed you might become a Christian, but never that you'd become a Baptist. And he said, well, Mother, the Lord answered your prayer with his usual bounty and gave you more than you asked for.

But you know, he knew what it meant to be dead to self, to be filled with the love of God. When they served communion in his church, people used to come just to listen to him. They said Jesus Christ was so real to Spurgeon that sometimes he was totally overcome in the pulpit he couldn't say a word.

There were times when he was afraid to go into the pulpit, because Jesus Christ was so real to him. The power of God was so real to him. People used to say, oh, come on, he can't really feel that way.

How can he? Well, they said that because they didn't feel that way. J. B. Earle was a well-known American evangelist. He's been dead a long while now, back in the days of Moody.

I think perhaps a little bit before Moody's time. And he'd been preaching for some years and getting absolutely nowhere. Nobody ever got saved.

Nothing ever happened. And he went to conduct a crusade in the church, and he made up his mind he was going to break those people or die trying. He said he prepared ten of the hardest, harshest sermons he could think of.

And he preached nine of them. He beat them over the head. He scalped them.

He threw hot water on them and salt and all the rest of it, and nothing happened. And so he took that last sermon, and he put cactus and barbed wire in it, he said, and saltpeter and everything, you know. And he gave them the works, and nobody stirred.

That night, he was alone with God. He said, I was on my face before God, and I said, hey, God, what's wrong with these people? I've done everything I know, and nobody's getting saved. What's wrong with them? And God said, nothing, but there's a lot wrong with you.

And he said, wait a minute, God. You know, when I preach, I often cry. And God said, yes, it's water off an iceberg.

Now, J. B. Earle tells how he stayed on his face before God for hours that night, and then he said, suddenly I was filled, I was overwhelmed with the love of Jesus Christ. I was completely filled with the love of God. A hundred and fifty thousand people were converted after that happened, before he died.

You know, we have such a tendency to forget that when Finney talked about, he called it the baptism of the Spirit, to forget that he said he felt as if he was being fanned with gigantic wings of love. It was a love experience. Morley said the same thing.

He felt, he said he was so filled with the love of God, he felt he could take the whole world into his heart. In both these men's cases, it was a matter of being filled with the love of God. A people until self dies, until I'm willing to be forgotten.

You preachers here, do you ever ask God to make it so that people will forget you and remember Jesus? That's a good way to pray sometimes. You know what happens when you do that sometimes? You falter, you stutter, you stumble, you don't get off the ground. And God blesses sometimes more powerfully then.

George Mueller was to preach in the big church and could not shake a terrible feeling he had of depression. So he finally made up his mind, he better contact the preacher and let him know he wasn't coming. And he was praying about it and God said, well you're always telling the people to live by faith, why don't you preach by faith for a change? He never thought of that.

So it didn't cancel. And he thought likely something would happen before he got in the pulpit, but nothing happened before he got in the pulpit. And so he preached this message by faith.

And 18 people were either converted or backsliders were restored in that one meeting. And Mueller said, I learned that day what it meant to preach by faith. We walk by faith, not by sight.

But let all your things be done with love. Walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and has given himself for us, and offering his sacrifice to God. For sweet-smelling savour, but fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, that it not be once named among you as become saints.

Now their filthiness, and their foolish talking, their jesting, which are not befitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know that no who among an unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, nor God. And so, if we want to be filled with the love of God, we have to die to ourself.

Somebody asked Mueller, you know, what was the secret of his astonishing success? And he said, there came a day when George Mueller died, and he said this about ten times. Each time he said it, he bent lower and lower and lower. He said, I died to worldly acclaim, I died to worldly criticism, I died to sin, I died to myself, that I might live to the glory of God.

Love seeks not her own.

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