

The Greatest Commandment

by Brian Long

The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, and this love originates with God.

Duration: 43:23

Scripture: Deuteronomy 13:1, Matthew 22:36-40

Topics: "Loving God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving the Lord with all our hearts. He states that the greatest commandment is to love God completely, and therefore, the greatest sin is to not love Him wholeheartedly. The preacher uses the story of the two debtors to illustrate that those who have been forgiven much will love God more. He urges the listeners to give their hearts fully to God, as He desires to have all of their love and devotion. The preacher concludes by encouraging the audience to reflect on how much God has loved and forgiven them, and to strive to love Him more each day.

Transcript

Matthew chapter 22, and look at the verses that our little brother Alec read earlier, and I want to say thank you so much to brother Steve and brother Curtis for sharing this morning. That was that was really good. It was Scripture is word right from the heart of God, and it confirms that I'm on the right track.

I couldn't make myself bring notes to the pulpit today. God just filled my heart, and now I understand better why I didn't bring any notes, because between these two brothers, they basically read all my scriptures and and said a lot of what I was going to say anyway. So Matthew 22, Jesus was asked by an expert in the law or a lawyer, it says in the King James verse 36, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? In other words, what is the greatest commandment in the law? Verse 37, Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment. The first and greatest commandment, Jesus says, is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength. If this is the greatest commandment, and it is, then what do you suppose is the greatest sin, the greatest transgression? Surely it's not to love the Lord your God with all your heart.

If the greatest commandment of all is love the Lord your God with all your heart, then surely the greatest sin is not to love the Lord your God with all of your heart. Jesus said this is the greatest commandment.

This is the first and greatest commandment.

This is the commandment that sums up all the other commandments. This is the commandment upon which all the other commandments of God hang. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, because if God has all of your heart, he has all of you and it sums it all up.

And the burden that God's given me this morning to share with you, brothers and sisters, is not so much probably anything that you don't know. And it's not even a reproof, but it's it's an exhortation to say this is essential. This is fundamental.

This is foundational. You see, God is doing something new here. Would you agree with that? God is doing a new thing.

It's the first time I've ever gathered like this. I think it's probably the first time any of us have gathered like this. God is doing something new.

And what we have to understand is that Jesus Christ is building his church. He's building the house of God. He's calling us to join him.

And in order to join the Lord Jesus in building the house of God, we've got to make sure that we're laying the proper foundation. If we don't build on a solid foundation, then the house will surely fall. The foundation is Jesus Christ himself.

We know that. But there are other fundamental foundations that are laid on top of Christ as we're building the house of God. And one of those foundations is this great commandment that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength.

If that essential ingredient is not put in the cement, then the concrete crumbles, if you will. The foundation will be faulty and the house will soon crash. This is something that we have to lay hold of.

God wants our whole heart. He wants us to love him with everything that is within us. All throughout the book of Proverbs, we see the cry of a father to his son over and over again.

In Proverbs, we read, My son, listen to me, my son, my son, my son. And over and over again, you know what he says? My son, give me your heart. Give me your heart, because if I have your heart, then I have all of you.

And that's what Jesus wants. Jesus wants a love relationship with you and I. Have you ever thought or wondered why did God even create man? Why did he even create us? Was it just so we could serve him? I don't think it was just so we could serve him because God has a heaven full of angels who serve him perfectly day and night. Was it just so we would worship him? Certainly we will worship God because of who he is.

You can do no other but to worship him. But God has cherubim and seraphim and myriads and myriads of angels who worship him. And the Bible says the seraphim fall down before him and cry, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty.

And they don't stop doing that day and night. They never stop. God is being worshipped and has been worshipped and will always be worshipped.

Why did God create man? Let me ask you this way. To which of the angels did God ever walk with in the garden in the cool of the day? But God did walk with Adam and Eve in the garden in the cool of the day. You know why he created Adam and Eve? To have a love relationship with man.

To which of the angels could God say that does the scriptures say God spoke with them face to face as a man speaks to his friend. But the Bible does say that God spoke with Moses face to face, even as a man speaks to his friend. What does God want? Love relationship.

Why does the Bible talk about the church being the bride of Christ? Jesus is our bridegroom and we are his bride. It's because Jesus Christ is after, again, love relationship. To which of the angels does the scriptures say they're sons and daughters of God? Doesn't say that.

You know what the Bible does say? To every single one of us who have been born again, who have put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, the Bible says we have been adopted to be his sons and daughters. God wants relationship, not religion. Relationship.

Love relationship. And that's why Jesus said this is the first commandment. This is the foremost commandment.

This is the greatest commandment of all that you love the Lord your God with all your heart. And I believe that's why. Out of all seven churches that the Lord Jesus addresses in the book of Revelation.

I believe the one that grieved his heart and that hurt him the most was the church in Ephesus. And you know why? It was the church of Ephesus that Jesus said, I know all of your works and everything that you're doing, but I have one thing against you. You've left your first love.

He didn't say you lost it. He said you left it. They made a decision to turn away and go after other things and to get busy.

And they forgot who it was all about. Jesus Christ. You've left your first love, he said.

And then he says, repent and return. He's calling his church back. You know, no one can hurt you deeper than the one who is closest to you.

The one that you love the most, the one that you've known, love relationship. No one on earth could hurt me deeper than my wife could hurt me. Thank God she's not going to do it.

But why? It's because there's love relationship. And I believe the church of Ephesus hurt, it grieved the heart of Jesus Christ when he had to say to them, I see all that you're doing, but you you left the most important thing. You left your first love.

And he's calling them to return now. I'm not saying that we have a barn full of people who have left their first love. I believe you truly love the Lord Jesus, or you wouldn't be here this morning with wasp flying around your head and in a crude barn.

I believe you're here because you do love Jesus. But my question this morning is, how do we continue in that love relationship with God? So that we're keeping this first and great commandment to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength. How do we live in first love kind of love? How do we live in this kind of relationship? Huh? Stay in the word.

That's part of it. That's part of it. Exactly.

Biggin. I asked the Lord sometime ago, and many of you have already heard me speak on this, I'm sure. But I asked the Lord sometime ago, Lord, what is first love kind of love? Because that's the way I want to love you with first love kind of love.

And the answer that I believe the Lord gave me, the picture that he gave me is found in Luke chapter seven. Let's look at this together. Luke chapter seven.

In Luke chapter seven, we read about Simon, the Pharisee, who invited Jesus to come to his house to have a meal. And Jesus went. He came into Simon, the Pharisee's house, sat down for a meal.

And as he was in this home, there was a woman in that particular city that heard the news that Jesus was in this house of Simon, the Pharisee. Now, typically, this woman who had a very sinful reputation, mind you, would never have even thought never would even have given the second thought to going into the house of a religious Pharisee. She would have been so condemned and shamed.

She'd have been run right out of that house. But this woman who had a sinful reputation heard that Jesus Christ was in Simon's house and she came to that house. And the reason she came, I believe, was because she had met the Lord Jesus previously and she had been touched by him.

She had been forgiven of all of her sins. And so she comes to this house of Simon, the Pharisee, knowing Jesus is inside. And she brings with her the most precious, the most valuable thing she owns.

It was an alabaster box full of precious perfume. And the Bible says this perfume was so costly that it was worth more than a year's wages. Think of that today.

If you if you had something that was worth more than your annual salary. All right. That's what she's bringing to the Lord.

And she comes into Simon, the Pharisee's house. She sees the Lord Jesus. She breaks this alabaster box and she pours out the ointment on the Lord.

And then she goes even further. She goes. She stoops down and she washes the feet of Jesus with her tears.

And then she dries his feet with her hair. And Simon, the Pharisee, couldn't stand what he was seeing. And he said to himself, let's read what he says to himself in verse thirty nine.

When the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him, for she is a sinner. Simon is saying this Jesus, if he is who he says he is and who I thought he was, he surely would never have allowed this woman to do what she's doing. She's a sinner.

More than likely, she was a prostitute at one time. He could he couldn't understand this. Jesus knew his thoughts and Jesus answered him in verse forty saying, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.

I have something to say to you, Simon. He saith, Master, say on. Jesus said there was a certain creditor which had two debtors.

The one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.

And he said unto him, Thou is rightly judged. Jesus gives him a parable, a story. Here's one man who owes five hundred pence and the other fifty.

Both of them are forgiven. Which of them is going to love him most? Of course, the one who was forgiven the greatest debt. And Jesus is saying this is why this woman is doing what she did.

What motivated or compelled this woman to pour out a whole year's worth of wages of ointment on the feet of the Lord Jesus? It was this compelling love of Jesus Christ. It was love for her savior that compelled her to do this. In her mind, nothing was too expensive to pour out on the feet of Jesus.

Nothing was too valuable to break, to shatter, to pour out upon her Lord. Why? Because this is the one who had forgiven her for so much. Here's what I want you to see, brothers and sisters.

In order for us to love Jesus Christ with all of our heart and to love God with first love kind of love, we can't work up this kind of first love. It doesn't originate with us. You can try.

You can you can leave here today and say, I'm determined I'm going to love God more. I'm going to love him with all my heart. And you try to work up this first love kind of love.

How would that work in a marriage? I'm going to try to love my wife. I'm going to try to love her more. Where does this first love kind of love originate? It originates in the scriptures that Steve read.

It originates not with us. It originates with God. First John chapter four, verse 19 says we love because why? He first loved us.

The reason this woman loved Jesus the way she did is because she had been so loved by him first. She loved Jesus this way because he first loved her. Steve read another verse in first John four that said here in his love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and gave his son.

He sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Here's you want to love Jesus more. Don't look to yourself to try to work up love for Jesus.

Look to Jesus first and how much love he has already shown you. You know why nobody else in the house loved Jesus the way this, this woman loved him because no one else had had their eyes open to how much they had sinned against God, how much they had been forgiven, how much this Jesus Christ loved them. It was only one woman in the house whose eyes were open, who had scales fall from her eyes and who could really see.

No one has loved me the way this man has loved me. No one has loved me the way he has. I am forgiven.

She knew who she was a prostitute, unworthy to step foot into this house, unworthy even to wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair. But she could do no other. She had to give her all in her best to the Lord because she saw how much she'd been forgiven.

Do you know who loves Jesus this morning the most among us? I can tell you from scripture who of us loves Jesus Christ the most. It's whoever it is among us who knows they've been forgiven the most. The

determining factor of how much you love God is how much you realize you have been forgiven and how much you realize he has loved you.

What is first love? It's the kind of love that begins with God. It began before time ever began. It began before you and I were created, brothers and sisters.

It's the love of God that's looked down through the corridors of time. And long before he even created the heavens and the earth, he looked into the future and he knew what he was going to do. He already had his plan of redemption planned out.

He saw through the quarters of time and he saw a lost human race, a human race who had sinned against him and been separated from him because of their sin. And he looked through the quarters of time and you know who he saw? He saw Biggin. He saw Dwayne.

He saw Brian. He saw Terry. He saw Jim.

And you know what he said? I'll send my son for him and Deb and Karen. I'll send my son for D. I'll send my son for them. I'll take him.

I'll take her. It's the love of God that he even created you and me. It's the love of God that he chose you and me.

It's the love of God. First love the love that originated with not us, but God that chose us, created us, redeemed us, as Linda said earlier, came to seek and to save us when we were lost. We didn't find him.

He came and found us. He pursued us. He drew us unto himself.

And whereas this woman took the alabaster box full of precious perfume. You know what God did? He took the gift, the perfect, sinless son, his only begotten son, and clothed him not in an alabaster box, but in human flesh and sent him to this dark world. And just as the woman broke that alabaster box, the scripture says in Isaiah 53, that it pleased the Lord to crush him, to crush his only son for our sins and for our transgressions.

Jesus Christ, when he hung on the cross out of love for you and me, was crushed under the weight of the sins of the world. And he was crushed under the very wrath of God that all of us deserve for our sins here in his love. Not that we first love God, but that he loved us and gave his son as a propitiation for our sins.

Romans 5, 8 says that God has demonstrated his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We were unworthy. We were undeserving.

And whereas that alabaster box was broken and out came precious perfume, the Son of God was broken. His body was broken. We just celebrated that at the table.

His body was broken and out came not precious perfume, but the blood, the precious blood of Jesus Christ that the Bible says will wash away all your sins. So that we will be made whiter than snow. This is love.

And here it is, brothers and sisters, you want to love God with first love kind of love, you want to love God. My prayer is that we as a church would be characterized and known for one thing. They love God with all their heart.

They love Jesus Christ with every fiber in their being. And when you love him that way, you love one another. And you love others.

Love must characterize us. Love must be the foundation of everything that's being built here. The love of God, love for God, loving him with all of your heart.

You know what this kind of first love does? It holds nothing back. It holds nothing back from the one who held nothing back for you. Gee, God Almighty God, the Father gave his only begotten son when it came, when it came down to you and I perishing in the eternal fire fires of hell, or to his only begotten son being crushed on the cross and crucified to pay for our sins in mind, your sins in mind.

He gave his only son. He chose not to even withhold his only son, but freely. Bible says he spared not his son, but freely gave him up for us all.

First love does not hold back. That's why this woman took the most expensive thing in her house and she poured it out on the feet of Jesus. It's the kind of worship that doesn't hold back.

It's the kind of love that will not withhold anything from the Lord. It's the kind of love that loves Jesus supremely, loves him chiefly, loves nothing and no one else like they love him. You know why? We hold something back or we don't love Jesus with all of our heart.

If we get honest, it's because we love something or someone more than him. And therein we've committed the greatest sin of all. If we get real honest, you know the reason we sin? This is the reason for every sin that I've ever committed, every sin that you have ever committed.

This is the reason. When you get, when you boil it down, you can say, well, the sin is anger. The sin is pride.

The sin is name them all. That's all fruit sin. Let me tell you the root of all sin.

You love that sin more than you love Jesus. That's the root of it all. We're not, we're not willing to let go of that sin because we loved it more than him.

God is calling us to love him more than anything. Now I want to, I want us to, I'm not getting, I don't think I'm getting close to finishing, so I'm not going to say closing, but I want us to turn to John chapter 21. Perhaps this is where we'll wrap it up.

But John chapter 21, I want you to see the example of the apostle Peter. Now most of you know what happened to Peter. Peter was the one who was so sure of himself.

He's the one who basically said to Jesus, Jesus, you can count on me. Every, all your other disciples may deny you. They may all run away.

They may all get scared and fall away and, and, and betray you, but you can count on Peter. You can count on me, Lord. I will never deny you.

And Jesus said, Peter, I tell you the truth before the rooster crows in the morning, you will have denied me three times, three times that you even know me, Peter. Peter couldn't believe that he would do such a thing. But how many of you know that's exactly what he did, isn't it? Three times he denied the Lord Jesus Christ.

And think of it this way. The Bible says that third time when Peter denied Christ, the rooster crowed, and he immediately remembered the words of Jesus. And they must have been leading Jesus, walking him by, because the Bible says as soon as Peter denied him the third time, the rooster crowed, Jesus turned and looked upon him.

Can you imagine that? The eyes of Jesus. You've just denied Christ, who loves you more than anybody could ever love you, who loves you with an everlasting love, an unconditional love, and you've just denied him for the third time, and he turns and his eyes pierce right through you. And I don't believe the eyes of Jesus were condemning Peter.

I believe they were piercing his heart, because he saw in his eyes such love. And Peter must have wondered, how could I have done this? How could I have denied the one who has shown me nothing but love for three and a half years? How could I have denied him? The Bible says Peter went out and he wept bitterly. He cried.

He sobbed. You know what he did later? He says, I'm summing, I'm paraphrasing all of this, of course, but in essence, Peter said, I'm not fit to be an apostle. I'm not fit to be a disciple.

I'm not fit to follow Jesus Christ. I'm gonna go back to what I know how to do, and that's fish. So Peter left his first love and went back, his first love, Jesus, and he went back to his old love, fishing.

The only problem was, now he couldn't even catch a fish. God loved him too much to let him catch a fish, and Peter fished all night. First of all, he said, I'm going fishing.

Some of the other disciples said, we're going with you. That is to say, we're not fit to be disciples either. Let's go back to what we used to do.

Let's go back to our old life and our old ways. So they went out on the Sea of Galilee, fishing all night, didn't catch one fish. All through the night, can you imagine how discouraged he's thinking? One thing I know how to do is fish.

Now I can't even catch a fish. I couldn't be an apostle. I couldn't follow Jesus.

I denied him. Now I can't even catch a fish. But someone loved him so much that he would pursue him even after Peter had denied him.

Jesus Christ was waiting on the shores of Galilee that next morning, and he said, boys, have you caught any fish out there? They said, we've not even caught one. He said, let down your nets on the right side of the boat. And they did.

And they had so many fish, their boat started to sink. Peter knew immediately it was the Lord. John said to him, Peter, it's the Lord.

Peter doesn't wait to row to shore. He jumps into the water and swims to shore because Jesus is waiting for him. You know what I think Peter must have been going through his mind.

I think this would be going through my mind. He still loves me. After all that I've done, he still loves me.

He's still there. He's calling me back home. So he swims to the shore, gets to the shore.

Jesus already has breakfast ready. Some broiled fish. They have breakfast.

And Jesus asked Peter three questions. And these are the three questions he's asking you and me today. Three questions Jesus has for Peter.

In essence, Jesus is saying this, Peter, I don't care about your fishing. I don't care whether you're a good fisherman or a bad fisherman. And Jesus was not there to bring up his past and to rub it in his face and say, Peter, I can't believe you denied me three times.

You said you wouldn't do it and you did it. He didn't do any of that, did he? Jesus said, I don't care any about that. This is what I care about right now.

I want to know this answer, Peter. Do you love me more than these? Let's read it. John 21.

This is the first question. Verse 15. When they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? Saint Peter, do you love me more than these? He saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, feed my lambs. What is he saying, Peter? It's only one thing I want to know. Do you love me more than these? And what is Jesus pointing to when he asked that question? Could have been the fish because that would have been a lot of that would have been a lot of money in that day, right? They could have sold a lot of fish.

Do you love me more than these fish? Could have been his buddies. Do you love me more than them? Could have been his boat, his nets. That was his livelihood.

Do you love me more than these? More important than that, what is Jesus pointing to in your life and asking you right now? Do you love me more than this? More than him? More than her? More than them? More than it? More than that? Do you love me more than this? Did you know God will test us to see if we love him with all of our heart? Listen to this scripture. I don't you I don't know if you're familiar with this scripture. I'm gonna come back to John 21, but write this scripture down.

You can look at it later. I'll read it quickly. Deuteronomy chapter 13.

Listen to this carefully. Deuteronomy 13 beginning in verse 1. We'll read 1 through 4. He says, if there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and giveth thee a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee saying let us go after other gods which thou hast not known and let us serve them thou shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams for the Lord your God proves you it proveth you that is your Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul you shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice and you shall serve him and cleave unto him. Here's what he's saying.

If there's a prophet or a dreamer of dreams that prophesies something and it comes to pass and it shocks you, you think how did he know that? He must be for real. He must be a real prophet. But that prophet then turns your heart away from God and leads you in another path.

God says don't listen to him, don't follow him, but God allows this. Why? Because he says God is testing you to see whether or not you love him with all your heart and all your soul. Have you ever wondered this?

Why did God even put that tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden? If he knew that Adam and Eve was going to sin, going to eat that forbidden fruit and sin against him, why even put the tree in the garden? Why even let there be temptations in this world? Why doesn't God just do away with all temptations? Do away with the devil.

We wouldn't have any temptations. We wouldn't have any sin. Why doesn't he do that? You know why? Love must always have a choice.

If love does not have a choice, then it's not love. If we didn't have a choice, then all we would be is robots. And can a robot love you? No.

You can't have a love relationship with a robot. Love must have a choice. So God said, I will let that tree of knowledge and good and evil be in the garden, and I will give my people a choice whether or not to love me in return with all of their heart.

And God does the same thing in our life today. He allows there to be temptation. He allows there for a short time Satan to roam this earth.

Satan will have an end. God will take care of him. But God allows all these temptations.

Why? Because he tests us to see whether or not we love him with all of our heart. Does he know that already? He knows that already. We don't know that already.

Peter knew for sure he loved Jesus with all his heart, and he would never deny him. But when he was tested, it was proved he did not love God with all of his heart. So we will all be tested.

And in the test, Peter failed. But now Jesus is calling him again. He says, Peter, do you love me more than these? Yes, Lord, I do, he says.

He asked him a second time, Peter, do you love me? Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said, Peter, do you love me? And Peter was grieved because Jesus asked him the third time, do you love me? And to make sure Peter understood what this kind of love meant and what he just said, and God just said this in the scripture that we read in Deuteronomy, after he says the Lord is testing you to see whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul, the very next thing he says is you shall walk after the Lord your God. In other words, if you love him with all your heart, you will follow him and you will fear him and you will keep his commandments and obey his voice and serve him and cleave unto him.

And so back to John 21, you'll see that Jesus is saying the exact same thing. Peter, do you love me? And Peter says, Yes, Lord, I do love you. And Jesus says in verse 18, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou was young, thou girded thyself and walkest whither thou wouldst.

But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Peter, if you love me more than these, then you must follow me. If you love me more than these, Peter, follow me even. Know this, Peter.

It's going to mean death. It's going to mean that you even die for me. And Peter left his fishing boat, left his nets, left the fish, left everything behind him.

And in essence said, Though none go with me, I will follow you, Jesus, because I love you with all my heart. Here is one evidence, brothers and sisters, that you love God with all your heart. You will follow him wherever he leads you.

You will obey him, whatever he tells you to do, if you love him. And that's what God wants. He doesn't want you to follow him out of duty.

He doesn't want you to follow him just out of obligation. He wants you to follow him because you love him. Because he has your whole heart now.

Can I ask you this? I'm not going to ask you. I'm not going to embarrass you. I'm not going to ask you to say what it is.

But just in this message, have as have any of you heard the Holy Spirit in this message when I said Jesus is pointing something and saying, Do you love me more than these? Was there anything specific that the Holy Spirit spoke to you? If there was, would you raise your hand? Praise God. Praise God. You have ears to hear what the spirit of God is saying.

Now, let's get honest. This will be the most liberating thing you can do, OK? You get alone with the Lord. And you get God wants honesty.

And you can you can wallow around in all these fruit sins and name them all. And it's good. Confess your sins to the Lord.

But I believe God is calling us deeper. Go beyond confessing those fruits of sin and get to the root and get real honest and say, Lord, here's the problem. I love this or I have loved this more than you.

And I'm sorry. And when you get honest with God and you confess that to him and you say, now, Lord, take my whole heart. God's going to answer that prayer.

And here's another prayer we can pray, Lord, open my eyes to how much you love me. How much you have forgiven me and brother or sister, when you see how much you've been forgiven, how much you've been loved by God, if you're a child of God, there's no way you cannot love him in return. When you see how much he set you free and how much he's forgiven you for.

You want to love him with all your heart. Why do you think the old Puritans used to say this? Love God with all love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and do as you please. That was their motto.

Why could they say that? Because if you love God with all your heart, there's a thousand and one things you will never do. Because the last thing you want to do is grieve his loving heart. That's the message this morning.

Love him with all your heart and you want to love him more. Look to him and look at how much he's loved you, how much he's forgiven you for and get honest with God when he puts his finger on something and he says to you, Brian, do you love me more than this? Even more than this? Lord, I am sorry. I've not loved you more than this and that's my problem.

But I want to. God will have mercy and compassion. He will forgive you and he will flood your heart with his love.

The Bible says in Romans 5 that God has shed his love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That love is to first and foremost be given back to him. It's love that we receive from him in order to give back to him.

And then to give to one another. Father God, I thank you for the way that you love us so very, very much. I honestly believe, Lord God, this is, you know, my heart.

So it's foolish to try and play games with you, God, because you see everything. But I believe with all of my heart that there's not one person in this barn that has been forgiven for more than I have. And I thank you for your forgiveness.

I thank you for your mercy. And Father, I ask you today to open the eyes of every single one who hears the sound of my voice to see how much you love them. Our brothers read the scriptures so, so clearly when we partook a communion earlier.

How much you love us, oh God. How much you love us. How much you forgiven us.

How far you were willing to go to save us. We thank you, Jesus. And Lord, I'm praying that every one of us, God, you would give a heart full of love for you in return.

That we, as your people, as the body of Christ, would be known and characterized by love, having a love for you that is greater than all. Lord God, give us undivided hearts that loves you more than these, more than anything, more than anyone. Fill our hearts, oh God, with your love.

May we walk in this love. May we obey you because we love you. May we turn from sin and turn to you because we love you.

May we follow you with all of our hearts wherever you lead us because we love you, Jesus. May we do whatever you tell us to do because we love you, Jesus. I pray, Lord God, that this fundamental, foundational doctrine of truth would be cemented in our hearts.

And Lord, that it would characterize every part of our lives. That we would not even pick up a piece of trash except for because we love God. We go to work tomorrow and serve you in the workplace out of love for you, God.

Lord, thank you for speaking to our hearts. Thank you for my brothers and sisters. I praise you.

I bless your name. Thank you that you're doing a new thing here, Lord Jesus. And I ask that you have first place, have the preeminence, Lord, in everything.

May we never, may the flame that you've ignited in our hearts, this flame of love and devotion to you, Lord Jesus, may it never flicker. May it never die, but may it burn brighter and brighter and brighter in the coming days, O God. I pray, God, you would spare us from becoming like the church of Ephesus where we all of a sudden just are going through the motions and doing things and being religious, but we're not loving you with first love kind of love.

Lord, please, please deliver us from that road. Please, Lord, may we always grow. May we be forever growing in love for you, love for one another.

Thank you, mighty God. Thank you for answering our prayer, Father. In the name of Jesus, amen.

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