

Christian Love

by D.L. Moody

True love is selfless, sacrificial, and demonstrated in actions, and it is the foundation of all other virtues in the Christian life.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22

Topics: "Christian Love", "Sincerity in Faith"

Description

D.L. Moody emphasizes the essence of Christian love as the foundation of the fruit of the Spirit, illustrating that love manifests in various forms such as joy, peace, and gentleness. He warns against holding truth without love, as it leads to harshness and ineffectiveness in ministry, and stresses the importance of sincere love that is not merely superficial. Moody also addresses the misconception that lack of material support equates to a lack of love, asserting that true love sometimes requires tough love and discernment. He encourages believers to reflect on their love for God and others, highlighting that genuine love is evidenced by actions and a heart aligned with God's will. Ultimately, he calls for a return to the understanding of God's profound love for humanity, demonstrated through Christ's sacrifice.

Transcript

IT speaks in Galatians about love, the fruit of the Spirit being love, joy, peace, gentleness, long suffering, meekness and temperance. The way this writer has put it -- and I think it is very beautiful -- is that joy is love exultant, peace is love in repose, and long suffering is love enduring. It is all love, you see, a gentleness is love in society, and goodness is love in action, and faith is love on the battle-field, and meekness is love at school, and temperance is love in training.

Now there are a great many that have got love and they hold the truth. I should have said they have got truth, but they don't hold it in love, and they are very unsuccessful in working for God. They are very harsh, and God cannot use them. Now let us hold the truth, but let us hold it in love. People will stand almost any kind of plain talk if you only do it in love. If you do it in harshness it bounds back and they won't receive it. So what we want is to have the truth and at the same time hold it in love.

Then there is another class of people in the world that have got the truth, but they love so much that they give up the truth because they are afraid it will hurt some one's feelings. That is wrong. We want the whole truth anyway. We don't want to give it up, but hold it in love, and I believe one reason why people think God don't love them is because they have not this love. I met a lady in the inquiry-room today, and I could not convince her that God loved her, for she said that if He did love her He would not treat her as He had.

And I believe people are all measuring God with their own rule, as I said the other day, and we are not sincere in our love, and we very often profess something we really don't possess. Very often we profess to have love for a person when we do not, and we think God is like us.

Now God is just what He says He is, and He wants His children to be sincere in love; not to love just merely in word and in tongue, but to love in earnest. -That is what God does. You ask me why God loves. You might as well ask me why the sun shines. It can't help shining, and neither can He help loving, because He is love Himself; and any one that says He is not love does not know anything about love. If we have got the true love of God shed abroad in our hearts we will show it in our lives. We will not have to go up and down the earth proclaiming it. We will show it in everything we say or do.

VERY NICE TO THEIR FACES

There is a good deal of what you might call sham love. People profess to love you very much, when you find it is all on the surface. It is not heart love. Very often you are in a person's house, and the servant comes in and says such a person is in the front room, and she says: "Oh, dear, I am so sorry he has come, I can't bear the sight of him ;" and she'll get right up and go into the other room and say, "Why, how do you do? I am very glad to see you!" [Laughter.] There is a good deal of that sort of thing in the world.

I remember, too, I was talking with a man one day and an acquaintance of his came in, and he jumped up at once and shook him by the hand-why I thought he was going to shake his hand out of joint, he shook so hard-and he seemed to be so glad to see him and wanted him to stay, but the man was in a great hurry and could not stay, and he coaxed him and urged him to stay, but the man said no, he would come another time; and after that man went out my companion turned to me and said, "Well, he is an awful bore, and I am glad he's gone." Well, I began to feel that I was a bore, too, and I got out as quickly as I could. [Laughter.] That is not real love. That is love with the tongue while the heart is not true. Now, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. That is the kind of love God gives us, and He wants the same in return.

Now, there is another side to this truth. A man was talking to me out here the other day that he didn't believe there was any love at all; that Christians professed to have love, but he didn't believe men could have two coats, and I think he reflected on me, because I had on my overcoat at the time and he hadn't got any. I looked at him and said: "Suppose I should give you one of my coats, you would drink it up before sundown. I love you too much to give you my coat and have you drink it up."

A good many people are complaining now that Christians don't have the love they ought to have, but I tell you it is no sign of want of love that we don't love the lazy man. I have no sympathy with those men that are just begging twelve months of the year. It would be a good thing, I believe, to have them die off. They are of no good. I admit there are some that are not real, and sincere, and true, but there are many that would give the last penny they had to help a man who really needed help. But there are a good many sham cases-men that won't work, and the moment they get a penny they spend it for drink. To such men it is no charity to give. A man that won't work should be made to work. I believe there is a great deal more hope of a drunkard or a murderer or a gambler than there is of a lazy man.

TOO LAZY TO STAY CONVERTED

I never heard of a lazy man being converted yet, though I remember talking once with a minister in the backwoods of Iowa about lazy men. He was all discouraged in his efforts' to convert lazy men, and I said

to him, "Did you ever know a lazy man to be converted?" "Yes," said he; "I knew of one, but he was so lazy that he didn't stay converted but about six weeks." And that is as near as I ever heard of a lazy man being converted, and if there are any here today saying they don't love us because we don't give them any money, I say we love them too well. We don't give to them because it is ruin.

Some years ago I picked up several children in Chicago and thought I would clothe them and feed them, and I took special interest in those boys to see what I could make of them. I don't think it was thirty days before the clothes had all gone to whisky and the fathers had drunk it all up. One day I met one of the little boys for whom I bought a pair of boots only the day before. There was a snow-storm coming up and he was barefooted. "Mike," says I, "how's this? Where are your boots?" "Father and mother took them away," said he. There is a good deal that we think is charity that is really doing a great deal of mischief; and the people must not think because we don't give them money to aid them in their poverty that we don't love them, for the money would go into their pockets to get whiskey with.

POVERTY SOMETIMES A BLESSING

It is no sign that we are all hypocrites and insincere in our love that we don't give money. I believe if the prodigal son could have got all the money he wanted in that foreign country he would never have come home, and it was a good thing for him that he did get hard up and to live on the husks that the swine ate. And it is a good thing that people should suffer. If they get a good living without work, they will never work. We can never make anything of them. God has decreed that man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and not live on other people.

But I am getting away from the subject. I only wanted to touch upon this subject because a good many are complaining that Christian people don't help them. I have sometimes fifteen or twenty letters a day, coming from Kansas, and Europe even, asking us to take up a collection. They say: "Here is a poor woman. Just get the people to give a penny apiece." Suppose we began doing that sort of thing. We should have to have somebody to look up this man or this woman and find if they are worthy. If we took up one collection, we would have to take up five hundred. I never found a person true to Christ but what the Lord would take care of them. I think it is a good thing for people to suffer a little until they come back to God. They will find that God will take care of them that love Him. A great many say, "Oh, I love God." It is easy enough, to say this, but if you do love God He knows about it, be assured. He knows how much you love Him. You may deceive your neighbors, and think you love God, and assume a good deal of love, when there is really no love in your heart.

Now it says in Corinthians 8: "But if any man love God, the same is known of him." God is looking from heaven down into this world just to find that one man. God knows where he lives, the number of his house, and the name of the street he lives in. In fact, He has the very hairs of your head numbered, and He will take good care of you. He will not let any of His own children come to want, He will not let any of those that come to want suffer, He will provide for their wants if they are only sincere, but He don't want any sham work, When the Lord was here He was all the time stripping those Pharisees of their miserable selfrighteousness. They professed great love for Him while their hearts were far from God. Let us not profess to love God with our tongue and lips, while our lives are far from it.

DON'T KNOW THEIR OWN MINDS

Another class say, "I don't know whether I love God or not. I am really anxious to know whether or not I love God." Now, if you are really anxious it won't take you long to find out. You cannot love God and the

world at the same time, because they abhor each other. They are at enmity, always have been and always will be. It is the world that crucified God's Son; it was the world that put God's Son to death. Therefore, if we love the world it is a pretty good evidence that the love of the Father is not in us. We may say our prayers and go through some religious performances, but our hearts are not right with God because we cannot love God and the world at the same time. We have got to get the world under our feet and the love of God must be first in our hearts or else we have not got the love of God.

The command we have is that he who loveth God loveth his brother also. Now, if we have got our heart full of enmity and jealousy and malice toward any of God's children it is a sure sign that the love of God is not in our hearts. To love a man that loves me that don't require any goodness; the greatest infidel can do that; but to love a man that reviles me and lies about me and slanders me-that takes the grace of God. I may not associate with him, but I may love him. I may hate the sin, but love the sinner, And that is one of the tests by which to find out whether you have love in your heart. The first impulse of the young convert is to love every one, and to do all the good he can, and that is the sign that a man has been born from above, born of God, and that he has got real love in his heart; and these tests God gives us that we may know.

CHRISTIAN LOVE OPPOSED TO WORLDLINESS

The question is, do you love the world? Had you rather go to a theatre than to prayer-meeting? Had you rather go to a dance than to commune with the godly? If so it is, then it is a good sign that you have not been converted and not born of God. That is a test. People want to know whether they love God or not; let them turn to that test and they will find out If your heart is set on the world and you had rather not be with God's people, it is a sure sign that you have not been born of God.

Well, there is another class of people who say, "I don't see if God really loves me and I love Him, why I am called upon t have so many afflictions and troubles." Just turn a moment to the 8th chapter of Romans, the 28th verse: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose." It is not a few things; not a part of them, but all work together for good. Give a man constant prosperity and how quickly he turns away from God, and so it is a little trouble here, and a little reverse here, and some prosperity there, and taken all together it is the very thing we need.

If you just take your Bibles you will find that God loves you. There is no one in this wide world, sinner, that loves you as God loves you. You may think your father loves you, or your mother loves you, or a brother or a sister, but let me tell you you can multiply it by ten thousand times ten thousand before it can equal" God's love. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Can you have greater proof of God's love and Christ's love? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Christ laid down his life for his enemies. Ah, my friends, it will take all eternity for us to find out the height and breadth and length and depth of God's love.

PROTECTED BY THE FLAG

How men with an open Bible can say that God don't love them is more than I can understand. But the devil is deceitful and puts that into their heads. Let me beg you, beg you, go to Calvary and there you may just for a moment catch a glimpse of God's love. There was a man came from Europe to this country a year or two ago, and he became dissatisfied and went to Cuba in 1867 when they had a great civil war there. Finally he was arrested for a spy, court-martialed, and condemned to be shot. He sent for the American Consul and the English Consul, and went on to prove to them that he was no spy. These two men were

thoroughly convinced that the man was no spy, and they went to one of the Spanish officers and said, "This man you have condemned to be shot is an innocent man." "Well," the Spanish officer says, "the man has been legally tried by our laws and condemned, and the law must take its course and the man must die."

And the next morning the man was led out; the grave was already dug for him, and the black cap was put on him, and the soldiers were there ready to receive the order, "Fire," and in a few moments the man would be shot and be put in that grave and covered up, when who should rise up but the American Consul, who took the American flag and wrapped it around him, and the English Consul took the English flag and wrapped it around him, and they said to those soldiers, "Fire on those flags if you dare!" Not a man dared; there were two great governments behind those flags. And so God says, "Come under my banner, come under, the banner of love, come under the banner of heaven." God will take good care of all that come under His banner.

Oh, my friends, come under the banner of heaven today. This banner is a banner of love. May it float over every soul here, is the prayer of my heart. God don't will the death of any who will come under His banner of love. It is pure love, and sinner, may the love of God bring you into the fold is the prayer of my heart. I read once of a young man who left his father, and at last that father died and the boy came to the funeral, and there was not a tear that flowed over his cheeks during all the funeral. He saw that father laid down into the grave, and he did not shed a tear. When they came to break the will, and the boy heard that the father had dealt kindly with him and had given him some property, he began to shed tears. When that boy heard his father's will read, his heart was broken, and he came to his father's God.

O sinner, if you want to find out God's love, take this last will and testament of Jesus Christ. He showed his love by going to Calvary; He showed his love by His death agony there. He loves you with an everlasting love; He don't want you to perish. O, may you love Him in return.

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