

# The Love of Jesus for His People

by J.C. Philpot

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*The sermon emphasizes the essential nature of God's love, Christ's love for His Church, and the importance of communion with Christ for believers.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 54:5, Hosea 2:19, Matthew 3:17, John 3:35, John 14:31, John 17:23, Romans 5:5, Ephesians 5:30, Colossians 1:22

**Topics:** "Divine Love", "Christian Union"

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## Description

J.C. Philpot preaches about the profound love of Jesus for His people, emphasizing the communicative nature of love that desires to give and receive affection. He delves into the Triune God's eternal love for humanity, highlighting the deep bond between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Philpot explores the union and communion between Christ and the Church, illustrating how Jesus' sacrifice and love reconcile believers to God and lead to a transformative relationship. He encourages seeking communion with Christ through prayer, repentance, and a deep desire for His presence, as true religion is found in a living faith and love for Jesus.

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## Transcript

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Love is communicative. This is a part of its very nature and essence. Its delight is to give, and especially to give itself; and all it desires or asks is a return. To love and to be beloved, to enjoy and to express that ardent and mutual affection by words and deeds; this is love's delight, love's heaven. To love, and not be loved--this is love's misery, love's hell. God is love. This is his very nature, an essential attribute of his glorious being; and as he, the infinite and eternal Jehovah, exists in a Trinity of distinct Persons, though undivided Unity of Essence! there is a mutual ineffable love of the three Persons in the sacred Godhead the Scripture abundantly testifies--"The Father loves the Son;" (John 3:35;) "And have loved them as you have loved me;" (John 17:23;) "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17.) And as the Father loves the Son, so does the Son love the Father--"But that the world may know that I love the Father," are his own blessed words. (John 14:31.) And that the Holy Spirit loves the Father and the Son is evident not only from his divine personality in the Godhead, but because he is essentially the very "Spirit of love," (Rom. 15:30, 2 Tim. 1:7,) and as such "sheds the love of God abroad in the heart" of the election of grace. (Rom. 5:5.)

Thus man was not needed by the holy and ever-blessed Trinity as an object of divine love. Sufficient, eternally and amply sufficient, to all the bliss and blessedness, perfection and glory of Jehovah was and ever would have been the mutual love and intercommunion of the three Persons in the sacred Godhead. But love--the equal and undivided love, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, flowed out beyond its original and essential being--to man; and not merely to man as man, that is to human nature as the body prepared for the Son of God to assume, but to thousands and millions of the human race, who are all loved personally and individually with all the infinite love of God as much as if that love were fixed on only one, and he were loved as God loves his dear Son. "I have loved you with an everlasting love," is spoken to each individual of the elect as much as to the whole church, viewed as the mystical Bride and Spouse of the Lamb.

Thus the love of a Triune God is not only to the nature which in due time the Son of God should assume, the flesh and blood of the children, the seed of Abraham which he should take on him, (Heb. 2:14-16,) and for this reason viewed by the Triune Jehovah with eyes of intense delight, but to that innumerable multitude of human beings who were to form the mystical body of Christ. Were Scripture less express, we might still believe that the nature which one of the sacred Trinity was to assume would be delighted in and loved by the holy Three-in-One. But we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the point, that puts it beyond all doubt or question. When, in the first creation of that nature the Holy Trinity said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and when, in pursuance of that divine council, "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," God thereby uniting an immortal soul to an earthly body, this human nature was created not only in the moral image of God, (Eph. 4:24,) but after the pattern of that body which was prepared for the Son of God by the Father. (Heb. 10:5.) The Holy Spirit, therefore, in Psalm 8, puts into the mouth of the inspired Psalmist an anthem of praise flowing from the meditations of his heart upon the grace and glory bestowed upon human nature, as exalted in the person of Christ above all the glory of the starry heavens--"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained--what is man, that you are mindful of him? and the son of man, that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet." (Ps. 8:3-6.)

Here the Psalmist bursts forth into a rapture of admiration at beholding how man, that is, human nature, in itself so weak and fragile, so inferior in beauty and splendor to the glorious orbs that stud the midnight sky, should yet attract the mind, and be visited by the love of God; how that nature, "made a little lower than the angels" in its original constitution, yet should, by virtue of its being taken into union with the Person of the Son of God, be crowned with honor and glory, and dominion given to it over all the works of God's hands in heaven and in earth. (Matt. 28:18.) That this is the mind of the Holy Spirit is evident from the interpretation given of the Psalm by the inspired Apostle--"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that you visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crown him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:6-9.)

When, then, the Son of God took our flesh into union with his own divine Person, he not only invested that nature with unspeakable glory, but by partaking of the same identical substance, the same flesh, and blood, and bones, wedded the Church unto himself. This is the true source, as it is the only real and solid

foundation of all the union and communion that the Church enjoys with Christ on earth, or ever will enjoy with him in heaven. He thus became her Head, her Husband, and she became his body, his wife. Nor are these mere names, and titles, any more than husband and wife are mere names and titles in their natural relationship. The marriage relation is an unalterable tie, an indissoluble bond, giving and cementing a peculiar but substantial union, making man and wife one flesh, and investing them with an interest in each other's person and property, happiness and honor, love and affection, such as exists in no other relationship of life. Thus the assumption of human nature made the Lord Jesus Christ a real, not a nominal husband, yes, as much a husband to the Church as Adam became husband to Eve on that memorable morn in Paradise, "when the Lord God brought her unto the man" in all her original purity and innocence, (beautiful type of the Church as presented to Christ in her unfallen condition!) "and Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man." (Gen. 2:23.) As then in the marriage union man and wife become one flesh, (Gen. 2:24,) and, God having joined them together, no man may put them asunder, (Matt. 19:5,) so when the Lord Jesus Christ, in the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," betrothed the church unto himself, they became before the face of heaven one in indissoluble ties.

As he undertook in "the fullness of time" to be "made of a woman," she became one with him in body by virtue of a common nature; and becomes one with him in spirit when, as each individual member comes forth into a time state, the blessed Spirit unites it to him by regenerating grace. Such is the testimony of the word of truth. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;" (Eph. 5:30;). "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. 6:17.) Her union, therefore, with his flesh ensures to her body conformity in the resurrection morn to the glorified body of Jesus; and her union with his spirit ensures to her soul an eternity of bliss in the perfection of knowledge, holiness, and love. Thus the union of the church with Christ commenced in the councils of eternal wisdom and love, is made known upon earth by regenerating grace, and is perfected in heaven in the fullness of glory.

The church, it is true, fell in Adam from that state of innocence and purity in which she was originally created. But how the Adam fall, in all its miserable consequences, instead of canceling the bond and disannulling the everlasting covenant, only served more fully and gloriously to reveal and make known the love of Christ to his chosen bride in all its breadth and length and depth and height! She fell, it is true, into unspeakable, unfathomable depths of sin and misery, guilt and crime. But she never fell out of his heart or out of his arms! Yet what without the fall would have been known of dying love or of the mystery of the cross? Where would have been the song of the redeemed, "Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" Where the victory over death and hell, or the triumphs of superabounding grace over the aboundings of sin, guilt, and despair? Where would have been the "leading captivity captive," the "spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in himself?" What would have been known of that most precious attribute of God--mercy? What of his forbearance and longsuffering; what of his pitiful compassion to the poor lost children of men? As then the church's head and husband could not and would not dissolve the union, break the covenant, or alter the thing that had gone out of his lips, and yet could not take her openly unto himself in all her filth, and guilt, and shame, he had to redeem her with his own heart's blood, with agonies and sufferings such as earth or heaven never before witnessed, with those dolorous cries under the hidings of his Father's face, which made the earth to quake, the rocks to rend, and the sun to withdraw its light. But his love was strong as death, and he endured the cross, despising the shame, bearing her sins in his own body on the tree, and thus suffering the penalty due to her crimes, reconciled her unto God "in the body of his flesh, through death, to present her holy, and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." (Col. 1:22.)

Having thus reconciled her unto God, as she comes forth from the womb of time, he visits member after member of his mystical body with his regenerating grace, that "he may sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," and thus eventually "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. 5:26, 27.) Communion with Christ, therefore begins below, in our time state. It is here that the mystery of the marriage union is first made known; here the espousals entered into; (Jer. 2:2, 2 Cor. 11:2;) here the first kiss of betrothed love given. (Song 1:2.) The celebration of the marriage is to come; (Rev. 19:7-9;) but the original betrothal in heaven and the spiritual espousals on earth make Christ and the church eternally one. As then the husband, when he becomes united to his wife in marriage ties, engages thereby to love her, cherish her, feed her, clothe her, count her interests his interests, her honor his honor, and her happiness his happiness, so the blessed Jesus, when in the councils of eternity, he betrothed the Church to himself, undertook to be to her and do for her everything that should be for her happiness and honor, perfection and glory. His own words are, "I will betroth you unto me forever; yes, I will betroth you unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies--I will even betroth you unto me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord." (Hos. 2:19, 20.) And again, "For your Maker is your husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." (Isa. 54:5.) "For as a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you." (Isa. 62:5.)

There must be union before communion, marriage before possession, membership before abiding in Christ and he in us, a being in the vine before a branch issuing from the stem. It is the Spirit who quickens us to feel our need of him; to seek all our supplies in him and from him; to believe in him unto everlasting life, and thus live a life of faith upon him. By his secret teachings, inward touches, gracious smiles, soft whispers, sweet promises, and more especially by manifestations of his glorious Person, finished work, atoning blood, justifying righteousness, agonizing sufferings, and dying love, he draws the heart up to himself. He thus wins our affections, and setting himself before our eyes as "the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely," draws out that love and affection towards himself which puts the world under our feet.

What is religion without a living faith in, and a living love to the Lord Jesus Christ? How dull and dragging, how dry and heavy, what a burden to the mind, and a weariness to the flesh, is a round of forms where the heart is not engaged and the affections not drawn forth! Reading, hearing, praying, meditation, conversation with the people of God--what cold, what heartless work where Jesus is not! But let him appear, let his presence and grace be felt, and his blessed Spirit move upon the heart, then there is a holy sweetness, a sacred blessedness in the worship of God and in communion with the Lord Jesus that makes, while it lasts, a little heaven on earth. Means are to be attended to, ordinances to be prized, the Bible to be read, preaching to be heard, the throne of grace to be resorted to, the company of Christian friends to be sought. But what are all these unless we find Christ in them? It is He who puts life and blessedness into all means and ordinances, into all prayer, preaching, hearing, reading, conversing, and everything that bears the name of religion. Without him all is dark and dead, cold and dreary, barren and bare. Wandering thoughts at the throne, unbelief at the ordinance, deadness under the word, formality and lip service in family worship, carelessness over the open Bible, carnality in conversation, and a general coldness and stupidity over the whole frame--such is the state of the soul when Jesus does not appear, and when he leaves us to prove what we are, and what we can do without him.

He is our sun, and without him all is darkness; he is our life, and without him all is death; he is the beginner and finisher of our faith, the substance of our hope, and the object of our love. All religion flows from his Spirit and grace, presence and power. Where he is, be it barn or hovel, field or hedge, closet or fireside, there is a believing soul, a praying spirit, a tender conscience, a humble mind, a broken heart, and a confessing tongue. Where he is not, be it parlour or chapel, public worship or private prayer, hearing the word or reading the Bible, all is alike empty and forlorn to a living soul, pregnant with dissatisfaction and loaded with self-condemnation.

It is this inward sense of the blessedness of his presence, and the misery of his absence--the heaven of his smile and the hell of his frown--that makes the sheep of Christ seek communion with Him. He has won their heart to himself by discovering to them his beauty and his love, and they having once seen the glory of his Person, heard the sweetness of his voice, and tasted the grace of his lips, follow him wherever he goes, seeking to know him and the power of his resurrection, and counting all things rubbish and loss that they may win him, and have some manifestation of his love. What is to support the soul under those trials and temptations that at times press it so sore, relieve those cruel doubts which so disquiet, take away those fears of death which so alarm, subdue that rebelliousness which so condemns, wean from the world which so allures, and make it look beyond life and time, the cares of the passing hour, and the events of the fleeting day, to a solemn and blessed eternity--but those visitations of the Blessed Lord to the soul which give it communion with himself? Thus were the saints of God led and taught in days of old, as the Holy Spirit has recorded their experience in the word of truth. Remembering the past, one says, "Your visitation has preserved my spirit" (Job 10:12.) Longing for a renewal, another cries, "O when will you come unto me?" (Ps. 101:2;) and under the enjoyment of his presence the church speaks, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." (Cant. 2:4.)

We are, most of us, so fettered down . . .

by the chains of time and sense,

by the cares of life and daily business,

by the weakness of our earthly frame,

by the distracting claims of a family,

by the miserable carnality and sensuality of our fallen

nature, that we live at best a poor, dragging, dying life.

We can take no pleasure in the world, nor mix with a good conscience in its pursuits and amusements; we are many of us poor, moping, dejected creatures, from a variety of trials and afflictions; we have a daily cross and the continual plague of an evil heart; get little consolation from the family of God or the outward means of grace; know enough of ourselves to know that in self there is neither help nor hope, and never expect a smoother path, a better, wiser, holier heart, or to be able to do tomorrow what we cannot do today.

As then the weary man seeks rest, the hungry food, the thirsty drink, and the sick health, so do we stretch forth our hearts and arms that we may embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and sensibly realize union and communion with him. From him come both prayer and answer, both hunger and food, both desire and the tree of life. He discovers the evil and misery of sin that we may seek pardon in his bleeding wounds and

pierced side; makes known to us our nakedness and shame, and, as such, our exposure to God's wrath, that we may hide ourselves under his justifying robe; puts gall and wormwood into the world's choicest draughts, that we may have no sweetness but in and from him; keeps us long fasting to endear a crumb, and long waiting to make a word precious. He wants the whole heart, and will take no less; and as this we cannot give, he takes it to himself by ravishing it with one of his eyes, with one chain of his neck. If we love him it is because he first loved us; and if we seek communion with him, it is because he will manifest himself to us as he does not unto the world.

Would we see what the Holy Spirit has revealed of the nature of this communion, we shall find it most clearly and experimentally unfolded in the Song of Solomon. From the first verse of that divine book, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," to the last expressed desire of the loving bride, "Make haste, my beloved, and be like a roe, or like to a young deer upon the mountains of spices," all is a "song of loves," (Ps. 45 title,) all a divine revelation of the communion that is carried on upon earth between Christ and the Church. She "comes up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved," while "his left hand is under her head, and his right hand embraces her." She says, "Look not upon me because I am black;" but he answers, "You are all fair, my love, there is no spot in you." At one moment she says, "By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but I found him not;" and then again she cries, "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me." (Song Sol. 3:4.) Comings and goings; sighs and songs; vain excuses and cutting self-reflections; (5:3-6;) complaints of self and praises of him; (5:7-16;) the breathings of love, and the flames of jealousy; (8:6;) the tender affections of a virgin heart, and the condescending embraces of a royal spouse; (1:7; 2:3-7;)--such is the experience of the Church in seeking or enjoying communion with Christ as described in this divine book.

O that we could walk more in these gracious footsteps! Whatever be our state and case, if it can truly be said of us what the angel said to the women at the sepulcher, "I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified," we have a divine warrant to believe that, "he is gone before us into Galilee. There shall we see him." He is risen; he has ascended up on high, and "has received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." He is now upon the mercy seat, and he invites and draws poor needy sinners to himself. He says, "Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He allows us, he invites us to pour out our heart before him, to show before him our trouble, to spread our desires at his feet, as Hezekiah spread the letter in the temple.

If we seek communion with him, we may and shall tell him how deeply we need him, that without him it is not life to live, and with him not death to die. We shall beg of him to heal our backslidings; to manifest his love and blood to our conscience; to show us the evil of sin; to bless us with godly sorrow for our slips and falls; to keep us from evil that it may not grieve us; to lead us into his sacred truth; to preserve us from all error; to plant his fear deep in our heart; to apply some precious promise to our soul; to be with us in all our ways; to watch over us in all our goings out and comings in; to preserve us from pride, self-deception, and self-righteousness; to give us renewed tokens of our saving interest in his finished work; to subdue our iniquities; to make and keep our conscience tender; and work in us everything which is pleasing in his sight.

What is communion but mutual giving and receiving, the flowing together of two hearts, the melting into one of two wills, the exchange of two loves--each party maintaining its distinct identity, yet being to the other an object of affection and delight? Have we nothing then to give Christ? Yes--our sins, our sorrows,

our burdens, our trials, and above all the salvation and sanctification of our souls.

And what has he to give us? What? Why, everything worth having, everything worth a moment's anxious thought, everything for time and eternity!

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