

# We Love Him

by John Ridley

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*We are called to love one another as Jesus loved us, because He first loved us.*

**Duration:** 30:55

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:39, John 13:34, Romans 5:8, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 3:14, 1 John 4:19

**Topics:** "Christ's Love", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not just taking snapshots of our faith, but truly studying and immersing ourselves in the love of Christ. He highlights the example of early saints like John and Paul, who spent time adoring and studying the love of Christ. The speaker encourages listeners to behold the love of the Father and to be transformed by it, becoming more like Christ. He also shares a story about a boy who would gaze upon a carved face in a quarry, symbolizing the power and vision of Christ. The sermon concludes with examples of Jesus' love and miracles, reminding listeners that Christ's love should inspire and compel us to love others.

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## Transcript

You know, dear friends, to us, loving is a difficult business, real loving, because our natures are fond of each other. Earl tells us that, sitting about the nature, unregenerate in man, he says, hateful and hating one another. And you know how natural it is to resent.

Immediately, you feel the self-like hurt, where pondering the love, but with God, it's quite different. The quiet, restful, rigor-like flow of the divine nature of the man is love, and there never has been love, love. And when Jesus came into the world, love was manifested in human form.

What the Jews said of Jesus, by the grave at Lazarus, as they stared him weeping with Mary and Martha, look how he loved him, might be said of Jesus Christ in relation to every man and every woman. The whole, how he loved him. One day it puts it like this, Jesus taught me when I was growing up, love divine laid a hold on me.

Love incarnate in the mind. Love in thinking, on the free, and then God, especially that great poet of the Methodist Revival, brings it home in one of his great hymns. I know thee, Savior, who thou art.

Jesus, the feeble sinner's friend. Nor wilt thou with the night depart, but try and love me to the end. Thy mercy never shall remove.

Thy nature and thy name is love. How did Charles Wesley discover that? How did the other poets discover that the name and the nature of God is love? Probably by a twofold vision, first. The vision of the manger and of the cross.

The vision of life. The vision of death. The vision of birth.

The vision of blood shedding. The vision of deathly end. The vision of salvation.

That's how they discovered it. And what they discovered, I can discover, and you can discover. That mangled form upon a cross, with blood and wounds and bruises all over his body.

That marred face more marred than any man. That agonized form wrestling with the pain of crucifixion and the burden of a world sin. That whirlwind of abuse.

That fire of anger. That earthquake of eruption. And then a still, small voice.

He first loved us. God commended his love for us. In that voice he rejected us.

Christ died for us. He first loved us. And because of that, dear friends, because of that, the apostle says, we love.

We love. We love the Savior, because he first loved us. That's on the natural.

That's on the right. That's on the response of any grateful heart. We love the Savior.

If you read the New Testament carefully, I think you'll find on nearly every page of that lettered book, a portrait of Christ's dying love. A portrait of his dying love. Have you ever carried photographs about with you? In two world wars, in my children's process, I carried photographs just to keep loved ones in front of me.

To be able to glance at their faces and to remember them. And one of the saddest sights I ever saw in action, was a palace Australian souvenir hunter, taking from a German prisoner, a photograph of his wife and family. The man was desperate in his own language.

He grabbed the photograph. The Australian souvenir hunter pulled it from him. And the tears came rolling down the man's face.

That he did take a photograph of his wife and family. Dominant as the souvenir. And how they loved to look at those portraits.

As dear ones in the homeland. And I was a businessman away in the southwest. I remember reaching one of those lonely outback townships.

And I was asked by a certain Baptist man there, would you go down brother and see our new Baptist pastor. He's a very young man. He's only just started in New York.

And he's terribly homesick. He only got here two or three days ago. And he's wiped down in the ditch.

Don't have a word with him. So I went down to where the Baptist pastor was staying. In a very gloomy room.

A dead city room. In a very gloomy house. In a gloomy street.

And to tell the truth, it was a pretty gloomy church he'd gone to. As well. And I could understand the poor fellow's feelings.

He'd come out on his first long separation from home. He was very young. He had to do his studies.

And he had to build up the church. He'd had a very poor welcome. And there he was sitting.

Everybody sort of thought a man down in the dumps. I saw one way. There he was sitting and his head was down.

The gloom of the room was all around him. Right in front of him was his table with his books. And there a large photograph of a very nice young lady.

Just there he stroked at him. And after we'd had a few words together, and I tried to be a little sympathetic to him, I said, oh, brother, who is this lady here in the photograph? And he dropped his head lower still, poor fellow. Why, he was aggravating his own sickness.

He was stabbing himself through by that photograph. But he would have it so, you know. He always have it so.

Though it's so aggravating. You see that photograph, that portrait of a loved one. Alexander McGrath and the great expositor once said, you know the trouble with many of us Christians is this, just this, that we spend our days like amateur photographers, going about taking snapshots all over the place, snapshots.

Sorry, but that's not the way to excel in photography. You sit down and study the view. Let its beauty go in.

See its splendor. Get it at the right angle. Take a good photograph of it.

But the trouble with us, we just take snapshots. And I hurry five minutes by the bed in the morning, and less time at night perhaps, and then into bed. You'll never teach us the love of Christ.

Never. Oh, what time those early saints spent upon adoring love to Christ. How John must have studied the portrait of Christ, love to him, to all men.

How he must have studied them. How he must have looked upon them, until out of that burning lover's heart there came these words, behold, what manner of love the Father hath displayed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Quite wonderful.

The passionate Paul sits down in front of the photograph of Christ's dying love, and he studies it. He studies it from every angle. He views it in different directions.

And then he tries out to know the love of Christ, which passes not. Which passes not. And then you think of other great names.

Samuel Rutherford of Amherst, one of the great lovers of the Church of Scotland. He produced a book, the like of which I've never read. Spurgeon, the most practical priest, the one who said, let the world know that Spurgeon considers Rutherford's letters the nearest to divine inspiration amongst the mere writings of men.

I haven't such another book in my life as Rutherford's letters. And Rutherford so studied the love of Christ, and that he cried out, oh, for eternity's leisure to look upon him. Oh, for the long day of summer ages, to stand before him and to enjoy him.

He fell in love with Christ, I think. Absolutely. And the great Baptist missionary Judson of Burma, who endured more sorrows and sufferings, I think, than any missionary, cried out in his deathbed, the love of Christ.

The love of Christ. Why should I do for eternity? So it is, dear friend. We'll never get to the end of it.

You'll never fully understand it. You'll never fathom its depth. You'll never stand its height.

You'll never measure its width. The love of Christ. Oh, to study that photograph, that portrait of his dying.

Love him, love him, love him. You love him, of course you do. Say, I love him.

I love him. You know, when Lord Nelson is the hero of Great Britain, he fell in love with another man's wife. One of the saddest stories in all of history.

England's greatest hero. And the most lovable man at that. Fell in love with another man's wife.

Lady Hamilton. Wife of the British ambassador to the nation. And she loved him passionately as he loved her.

And though it caused the domestic tragedies, it never for one moment reflected Nelson from his duties. And he died saving England in the great battle of Trafalgar. And poor Lady Hamilton.

For ten years outlived the hero of Trafalgar. And then she was found dead in the miserable garrot in Calais, France. In a poor dead hand.

The plucking of portrait of Nelson to her grave. All that was left, of course. And you remember how Hardy stooped and kissed his great captain, Gadmore, just before the death of Nelson.

And Captain Hardy lived on, away many years after Nelson's death. But when he came to the hour to die, Captain Hardy asked that the portrait of Nelson be placed in the coffin with him. He was a man to love, you see.

And the poor woman's back supported to her breast. And the great captain asked that the big boat stay a dead body in the coffin. But I'll give you something better than a trumpet even.

Oh, I'll give you something better. Listen to the sister. Listen to the great apostle Paul speaking.

We all, with open faith, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed from the same image, from glory to glory, changed by the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Lord Himself. That is, looking, as in a glass, at the love of Christ, which then pours unto the become-like person, unto the love-like person. Though, as in that remarkable story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, a grave story about a boy who used to go out of his home away in one of the districts of old England, and that he'd walk some distance to a quarry, and he'd look upon a great hill, and there, right in the centre of the hill, in a stone, there was a noble saint's car.

And the boy would look on the car, and look on it, and look on it, and then come back to his house. And years afterwards, the neighbours said to the parents, You know, your boy is just the same as that portrait, that face, on the hilltop. Well, he's taken the likeness to himself, by looking so nicely at that face in the rock.

That has become like God, looking unto Him. We love Him. We love Him.

Because He first loved us. And we love the saints, because He first loved us. We love the saints, because He first loved us.

Because we love Him. That's why we love Him. Because He loves us.

We love the saints. By this, you know what I mean? Now, you're my disciple. If you have love, one to another.

One to another. That would prove you're a disciple of mine. Oh Lord, I thought if I had power, that would prove.

If I had eloquence, that would prove. If I gave large gifts, that I were. If I was considerate of the poor, if I was friendly to my neighbours.

No, He said, Yes, you'll prove that you're my disciple. If you've got love, one to another. Love.

And I tell you, by nature, we're not lovers, friends. David is one of the grandest figures in the Old Testament. David was a man after God's own heart.

Now, listen to what happened to David. Adultery. Murder.

Deception. The threats of sin. He made a revolution.

And yet when David said from a broken heart, I have sinned against the Lord. God forgave him. God took a life.

Life is not God. God loved him freely. Loved him freely, then He forgave him.

I want to tell you, his family and his friends said, Why didn't you forgive him? Why his own son led the rebellion that split his kingdom? Absolutely. David's dearest friend, a hippopotam, turned traitor to him. Jullii of the house of Saul, whom David had spared from death, picked up stones as the poor king went out a fugitive, and hurled them at him, and cursed him.

Poor David. His friends didn't forgive him. His friends didn't love him.

Oh, dear friends, that was happened frequently in the church of God. God forgave him. God took the life.

God pardoned everyone. A brother is saved, and he comes into the assembly, and he begins to act with a good deal of self-confidence. He does this, and he does that, and he does the other, and he makes a mistake or two.

Perhaps he speaks to somebody and asks them to come further. You go further with them, make a stand for Christ, and the other one resents it and is a bit of an upset, and then somebody pokes it on themselves, to abuse this brother, this Christ. Ah, that's not the way, dear friends.

That's not the way. That's not God's way. Kind a little word, maybe said, but we look behind the scenes, and we see a man who's trying to do something for Christ's sake.

And we love him. A sister has a cause. A fair, moral cause.

And her sister is raised in the assembly, raised if they don't want to speak to her. Get together and whisper, make her feel embarrassed, make her see the signs as though she isn't wanted, and then she's raised, raised, raised. They who should have got right round her and loved her back into blessing, pretty well throws her out.

And I don't know how many thousands of people have been driven from the sanctuaries of God by lack of love. I know they have, though. I know they have.

How differently Jesus acts. Peter denied him three times with oaths and crosses, but when Jesus Christ rose from the dead and met that woman, you remember what he said to the girl, tell my disciple, will do anything to her because of his love for her. I love him.

That's love. And I want to tell you, dear friends, that the love that can't love on in spite of resentment, in spite of failure, in spite of mistakes, can't love on, love on, is not really love. It's not love born of God.

No, it's just a perception that rises or falls according to the state of another person's standing or life. Not once in this New Testament, not twice, not seven times, not ten times, not twelve times, but fourteen times. Fourteen times, Jesus.

I am called to love one another. Love one another. Love one another.

You know, I ought to know, because I've just written a book on love, and this is a hundred chapters. I ought to know something about the subject, I'm busy on this morning. I tell you, it's wonderful, wonderful to place love in the Scripture.

Fourteen times. Stupid little girl, and she's learning her text for the Sunday school, she's only five years of age, can you hear her going over the text, love one another, love one another, love one another. What's that mean, says her other little sister, about four years of age? Don't you know, she said.

Why, that means I've got to love you, and you've got to love me. I'm one, and you're the other. No simple theology, no little lips, simple theology, but true theology, sublime theology.

Yes, love one another. Henry Drummond, you know, who wrote the greatest thing in the world, tells us about a nice young woman who grew up in a church, and ministered wonderfully, and kindness, and love in the church, and was a blessing and a benediction, and she went into the thirties, and she stepped up towards the forties, and some of the dear people who, you know, get interested in little links, and relationships, so why do you think she ever married? Well, well, look, she wears a locket around her neck, and inside that locket, it says, and I don't know, but they say that there's a photograph of a lover who kissed her first love. Oh no, no, it wasn't that, says someone else, she's darling to me.

But she never told me that. No, but it did seem so, and I've heard somebody say that, but anyway. And so they talked about that locket, and it was a suspicious thing about that family, and then, just as she reached the forties, she passed away.

And then they opened the locket, someone opened the locket, the truth was out there, just a little bit of paper, on which she had written, with her own handwriting, who having not seen, she loved the saints, and yet, if she loved Christ, then she would have said that she didn't have. Or she loved the saints, because he first loved her. And then of course, in closing, I must say that they love sinners, because he first loved her.

Of course they do, because they're the sinners themselves. The only difference with us, to anyone who hasn't come to Christ, is this, that we're sinners under the blood, and they're sinners without the blood. We're sinners saved by the grace of God, and they're sinners under the wrath of God, and don't come to the grace of God if we're like them.

Because Jesus did. Jesus came into the world and saved sinners. Jesus sat down with the publicans and the harlots and the sinners, and he had his meal with them, and he shed his kindness and his grace over them.

Jesus touched the rotting, leprous body with his hand. That was an inauspicious thing to do in Eastern countries. That was a profounding thing to do.

Jesus put his two fingers into the deaf ears and opened them. Jesus clasped the two eyes that had been blind from birth with the poses of Christ and said, Now you go and watch in silence. And he went and came to.

Jesus went into the room and took the dead hand of the little girl of twelve. And he said, Oh Lord, what was the fire of the game? I tell you, the day before it was a strange experience. And he lifted that little girl up and she was raised from the grave.

Oh, sweet love of God. He knew. He knew the death of sin.

He did a lot for us. At some point, I went back to China following Christ and he went out with the same spirit. I love these Chinese, he said.

And he began to work for them. He couldn't get to their hearts. And he decided he'd dress like a Chinese.

He'd pray and all. And then he decided he'd eat like a Chinese. And he'd live like a Chinese.

And he went down and became one of them, and he won them, won them, won them in hunger. Until he died. Worn out, colonized.

That's what he said. Worn out, colonized. That's grand, isn't it? Some of you may have heard of a Chinese man named Luke Duke.

He sold himself as a slave in South America. That's the thing I couldn't do, sell myself as a slave. He sold himself to work in the mines in South America for one purpose, that he might reach the coolings.

The poor Chinese coolers that were lost in their sea. And as a slave working with them, he preached Christ to them. And after five years, he had a church of 200 converted Chinese.

And a great Baptist preacher, Dr. AJ Gordon of Boston, said, when you look at Luke Duke, you can see why many men have even laid down their lives for Christ. It took a Chinese Christian to sell his liberty for Christ. But it is worth it.

He loved to save people. You have to be a friend when it comes to a meeting time and again. You'll find that you can't get people to love souls.

They come out one night out of about four in the week. That's a bad day, all those souls. They hardly put in an extra effort to pray for half an hour a day, the souls have a run.

If you put on a prayer meeting before the meetings, and I don't doubt the pastor will, you don't find them very much. And yet they say, I love God, man. They love God, whom they haven't seen.

And him whom they have seen going down to death, they don't love. They long to be saved. No, I tell you, it's reality I want.

Reality I long for. If I meet a man with the image of Christ in him, no matter what he may say, what label he might put it in, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, but he's got the image of Christ on him, I love him. But I shall be in heaven with that man.

I shall dwell in God's city with that man. He's my brother in the Lord. Isn't that so with you? Oh, yeah.

You know what? I'm certain of this, that many a mother has come into the dust of sacrifice for love of their children. I saw one mother do it in my own home. And most of you can remember the mother who was willing to do it.

I know that some men have come right into a collapse, a nervous breakdown, for love of business. I know some soldiers that have given their life, but most love on the battlefield is the love of country. Oh, Pickling said, never the lotus flowers, never the wildflowers wait, but the soul went out in the east wind of God, for England's sake.

That's all very well. That's good. What about love of souls? What about love of souls? Oh, I'm just ashamed, dear friend.

When I think of the little love I have, although I've been laboring for souls for thirty-odd years, the little love I really have for them. I tell you, it's a sad thing when you can't even work up a sorrow or a tear for the love of the lost. And when we've got the opportunity that we have now together, as the world's laborers, to try and fill up the lifeline, you do your best to cooperate, because you love them.

Sometimes we say, and we say it rightly, we don't agree with certain systems, and I know that's right, but we must never, never embrace all the people, the souls in that system when we say that. You know, amongst the Roman Catholics there have been some remarkable saints. Dr. A. J. Burden, that great Baptist preacher, once said Catherine of Siena was a pearl of piety and purity in the middle ages of the Roman Catholics.

And Dr. A. J. Burden quotes, and he was an out-and-out Baptist of the finest order, he quotes how Catherine of Siena used to pray to God for the salvation of souls. She'd scorn heaven's throne. She'd plead with Christ to lose his power upon the poor souls of men.

She'd stretch her hand up into the distance as though she was laying hold upon the garments of her Saviour. Oh Lord, she'd say, Lord, my Jesus, promise me you'll save them. And one day, her hand seemed to come down just for her.

And she felt the piercing of her nose as though she had heart. And Dr. A. J. Burden doesn't need to tell me the application of that. You're never to be a soul lover or a soul winner until you know something, something, that the fellowship of Christ says.

So they're not swept up like the man sleeps up for sleep. So we have to be restful for them. Go on, off to travel into the kingdom of Christ.

And some of us, you know, can't pay the price. May God make you become most devoted to Christ. And you will do your part.

And we'll praise to the glory of Christ and love of souls, love of saints, and love of Saviour.

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