

# Motivating Power of Love

by Ken Baird

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*We are motivated to live a godly life and serve God out of love, not fear, and the Spirit of God helps us to fulfill the law by loving one another.*

**Duration:** 42:47

**Scripture:** Romans 8:1-3, Romans 13:8, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 1 John 4:19, Revelation 1:5-6

**Topics:** "Godly Love", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the motivating power of love. He acknowledges that while faith is often emphasized, the power of love is equally important. The sermon is divided into three sections: love as the secret of a godly life, love as the motivation for our service, and love as the foundation for worship. The preacher emphasizes that the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is the driving force behind a godly life and our service to others. He also highlights the importance of dwelling on God's love for us as a way to cultivate our love for Him. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that fear is not a proper motivation for obedience, but rather love should be the driving force in our relationship with God.

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## Transcript

Tonight I'd like to talk about a subject that should be of interest to all of us. I'd like to talk about the motivating power of love. We have talked about faith, I think I've talked here at Lannan about faith and the accomplishments of faith.

The power of faith. But I think that perhaps I have neglected the power of love. And I want to talk about that tonight because certainly love is something that we're all capable of and something that we enjoy in connection with our Lord Jesus.

And I'd love to talk about this subject under three headings. Love, the secret of a godly life. Love, the motivation for our service.

And love, the foundation for worship. Now, love is the secret of a godly life. If we love the Lord, we're going to live for the Lord.

As a matter of fact, our Lord says, and we might turn to that in the 14th chapter of John's Gospel. John's Gospel, chapter 14. And in verse 15, the Lord says, If ye love me, keep my commandments.

And then he says down further in the chapter, verse 21, He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. And I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Judas saith unto him, not Viscarius, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. Now isn't that quite a promise? Isn't that quite a privilege? We will come unto him and make our abode with him.

If we love the Lord, if we love the Father, he knows all about it. And he says, I'll make my abode with him. Now, this matter of the godly life is a matter of pleasing the ones that we love.

We love to please the ones that we love. That's true of a man and a wife relationship. We please the one that we love.

And it's actually, as a matter of fact, it's mentioned in the scripture, 1 Corinthians chapter 7. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 34, There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin, an unmarried woman. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband, because she loves her husband.

Now, pardon me. We do not need to assume that because a young woman gets married, that she ceases to love the Lord. That's not the force of the scripture here at all.

The force of the scripture is simply that if she loves the Lord, she will serve him better if she has no distractions. Now, it goes without saying, if she's got a husband, she's going to be thinking of his desires upon her. The Apostle Paul made it very, very clear that a person can serve the Lord better if he's single.

Now, he also, the word of God also teaches that it's better to have two, so that if one falls, they have to fix him up. We cannot be dogmatic about these things. These are things that have to be settled in our own minds before the Lord.

But he makes it very, very clear here that the married woman is going to find herself pleasing her husband. She is going to have a divided attention. Now, that does not mean that God did not ordain the marriage state.

It does not mean that she necessarily has to give up all her devotion to the Lord. It doesn't mean that at all. I don't think we should infer that from this scripture.

But she will please her husband because she loves him. We love to serve those that we love. And so the Apostle Paul, and notice the next verse, please.

He says, well, I'm going to read verse 34 again. There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin, one that is not married. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit, but she that is married careth for the things of the world.

And that's not the world in its bad ethical sense. It's just worldly, earthly things. The things that occupy our thoughts.

And the things that occupy our needs. How she may please her husband. Now notice, please, this verse.

This I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. Now lest you think, lest you think that I'm speaking against Mary, I'm going to quote a couple of scriptures. He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing and attaineth favor of the Lord.

There is nobody that can help a man so much as a good wife. She could be a blessing. She is a gem.

And the scripture says very plainly, do so, now I can't quote it now. I started it a while ago, quoted it a while ago, and I can't get started right. He that findeth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord.

And that's not one of your contradictions. Now, but it goes without saying that that woman spends part of her time and part of her effort in feeding her husband, doing the things that she wants to do, that she thinks he would appreciate. She will be concerned about maybe perhaps baking him a pie.

Now, I better be careful now. I'm on thin ice. But she's going to please her husband.

Well, pies are rather hard to bake. You've got to, I wouldn't try to bake a pie myself. She's got to roll out that crust and it takes a lot of work.

And she finds that it takes time to bake pies. But she does it to please her husband. And he does little things to please his wife, like a dozen roses.

Oh no, not a dozen roses. Not in this day and age. You know what a dozen roses cost? Fifty dollars in the city.

Well anyway, he likes to please her. Why? Because he loves her. That's why.

He loves her and he likes to please her. You know the same rule works for the Lord. The same rule works for the Lord.

If you love the Lord, you're going to live a godly life. If children love their parents, they're going to respect their parents and live as they feel that their parents would like to have them live. Love is a motivating force.

Just the same as faith is. It's a tremendous power. We used to hear the old expression, love makes the world go round.

Well, that needs some modifications, of course. But love is a powerful, motivating force. And the Lord wants us to love him.

Now, we've got reason to love him. We love him, as John tells us, in his first epistle, pardon me, in his first epistle, chapter four, I think, verse 19. We love him because he first loved us.

Now, love begets love. And we love him because he first loved us. We might turn to that fourth chapter of first John.

First John, chapter four. In this matter of love as a motivating force. Verse 19, we've already quoted, we love him because he first loved us.

But let's go back farther in the chapter. Verse seven, Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

He's got God's nature. If he's born of God, he's got God's nature, and God is love. We read in the next verse.

He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. And this was manifested, the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Here is the secret of love. Herein is love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation, the sacrifice for our sins.

Now there are lots of people that worry about the fact that they don't love God. The law commanded, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind. I think that's the order mind and strength reversed it.

That's the Lord's quotation from the Gospel of Mark. In four areas. Now that's with all the mind, the heart, the soul, and the strength.

Now the law demands that. But the demands of the law are never met. And we're to love our neighbors as ourselves.

That's a high standard. Do we keep it? Do we fulfill that standard? No, we don't. But the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit of God.

And the fruit of the Spirit is what? Love. Love, joy, peace. Gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and so on.

Nine wonderful, wonderful attributes, characteristics that the Spirit produces in our hearts. That love began when we saw how much God loved us. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten sons.

And whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. God loved us. There are lots of people in the world today that worry about the fact that they don't love God like they should.

Well, I suggest that perhaps they're not dwelling on the love of God for them. And if they would, they would see how much God does love them. God loves us so much that he gave his son for us.

That could certainly open our hearts toward him. The law of the man and our love never got it. But God sent his son and manifested his love to you and to me here in his love.

Not that we love God. We're not saved on the basis of our love to God. We're saved on the basis of God's love toward us.

But he that loved us that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation the sacrifice for our sins. Therein is true love. Now that love warms our hearts and moves us toward serving him.

Toward a godly life, first of all, as we've already spoken. And that godly life results out of the fact that we love the Lord and we want to please him. The Israelites, they were motivated by fear.

They kept the law because they were afraid. The law had teeth in it. And they were afraid.

And they obeyed because they were fearful. Now we see that in Scripture. You don't have to take my word for it.

Hebrews, if you please. Hebrews chapter 2. I think we'll break in on verse 14. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, that is Christ also, himself, likewise, took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Now the law had teeth in it. The law would actually produce death. It is interesting to note that after Moses gave the law on Mount Sinai, there were several cases that show us the character of the law.

Now let me tell you one of them. A man went out and picked up sticks on a Sabbath day one day. A Sabbath day was no time to gather with.

God said to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. That was the law of Moses. This man went out to pick up sticks and they caught him at it and they brought him to Moses.

And they put him in ward, as we would say in prison. They put him under restraint until they asked the Lord what to do about it. They asked the Lord, what are we going to do with this man that picked up sticks on a Sabbath day? The Lord said, stone him.

And they stoned him for picking up sticks on a Sabbath day. Quite severe, isn't it? The law has teeth in it. They kept the law because of fear.

Now that's not a proper motivation. And it doesn't honor God. To be afraid of him.

We shouldn't be afraid of him. Now, Peter expressed the same thing under different words in Acts chapter 15. Acts chapter 15.

There came a time when the Judaizing teachers told the young converts, young Christian people, that they had to go back to the law of Moses for their rule of life. We read in verse 1 of the 15th chapter of Acts, And certain men which came down from Judah sought the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small disagreement, Therefore, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension or disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

Being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Pinnas and Samaria declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received at the church and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sects of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was necessary and it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God which knoweth the heart bare them witness giving them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us and put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by keeping the law? No, by faith.

The law is not in the picture. Now, Cornelius and his apostles believed as the Spirit of God descended upon them the moment that they trusted Christ. Now, Peter's reasoning is this.

They got the Spirit, didn't they? How did they get it? By keeping the law? No, by putting their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how they got it. And then Peter goes on.

Notice his reasoning. Verse 10, Now therefore why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? It was a burden. It was a bondage.

The law was a bondage. Peter says neither we. Now, isn't he honest? Isn't Peter honest? He says now why put the law on the back of these Gentiles? They got the Holy Ghost.

Now, as Paul reasons in the Galatian epistle, now that they've begun in the Spirit, are they going to be made perfect in flesh? No. They got saved without the law. They got saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Peter says now why trap a burden which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? It was a burden. Now, the Old Testament states kept the law and served God through keeping the law because of fear. Is that the proper motivation? No.

That is not the proper motivation to serve God. We serve Him out of love. Now, there are people in the world today that feel that the law has teeth in it and if you really want to live a righteous life, just obey that law.

I'll tell you one thing, the Spirit of God will do more in our hearts for helping us live a godly life than the law could ever do. Now, let's turn to Romans chapter 8, in this respect. This is good, fundamental teaching about our motivation.

Verse 1 of the 8th chapter of Romans, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak to the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us how? By keeping the law? No, by walking in the Spirit. Now notice please, Romans chapter 13.

Romans chapter 13, and verse 8. O no man anything but to love one another for he that loveth one another hath fulfilled the law. Now that's simple, isn't it? He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is greatly comprehended in this saying namely thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. All right, where does the love come from? Where does the love come from? It comes from the Spirit of God. We might read that in Galatians chapter 5. It's so lovely, I wouldn't want to leave out a single thing.

Galatians chapter 5, verse 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, neatness, temperance, against such there is no law. Why? You don't need it.

Love will seek God's object and black that object. You don't need a law. And that's what Paul said.

Against such there is no law. It's not required. You don't need it.

They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections of none. Oh, that people might see this. Against such there is no law.

You don't need a law to regulate love. Just let it loose. And let it bless its object.

Now the Spirit is the one who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. Love is the fulfilling of the law. And the Spirit gives us that love.

There are lots of Christians that are afraid. I think there are people in the world today that aren't becoming Christians because they're afraid that they can't live up to it. They think the standards are too high.

Well, believe me, the Spirit of God the Spirit of God will help you. He'll be the power. He'll give you the love.

And that love does not need a law to regulate it. You don't need that sort of thing. If the love of God is shed abroad in your heart.

It just seeks on its object and blesses those objects. Now my concentration I think if I'm led by the Spirit of God is the Spirit of God going to occupy me with the law? He is going to occupy me with Christ! And I'll tell you you'll be more challenged by looking at that wonderful, wonderful Spirit than you will be challenged by looking at the law. Now I know the Old Testament saints just had the law.

They didn't have Christ to look at. But it's not so with us. We see Christ.

And you know you you do tend to imitate those that you love and you do tend to imitate those that you admire. And you know there is an old saying, and I think it's true that a couple lives long enough together that they can look like each other. Have you ever heard that before? No offense intended.

I think it's true. I'm going to tell you a little experience I had. Years ago there was a man that I greatly admired by the name of A. N. O'Brien.

Some of you people, some of you old fish here, I'm dating myself, I know, but that's all right. I'm not ashamed of it. There was a man, a very godly man by the name of A. N. O'Brien.

I never met his wife. She lived up in Duluth. And Mr. O'Brien came down here and he ministered the word of God.

We had a Bible conference in Omaha years and years ago at 45th and Hamilton. And I saw a lady there that I never saw before and I looked at her and I said there is Mrs. A. N. O'Brien. And do you know it was Mrs. A. N. O'Brien? I was right.

Nobody told me that she was there. I saw her and I said that is Mrs. A. N. O'Brien. And it was Mrs. A. N. O'Brien.

They loved each other. We do tend to become like each other. We mold into each other's lives because we love each other.

And you know the Spirit of God will accomplish that in our lives. And you don't need law to regulate love. Just let it loose and let it go and it will bless its objects.

Now that applies to the Lord and that applies to our neighbors. And the Spirit of God is the force. But the Spirit of God will not occupy us with the Ten Commandments.

It will occupy us with Christ. And He magnifies the law and made it on the law. Now you and I don't need it.

I'm sympathetic. I got some Adventist literature this past week. This is influencing things in life, I know.

But just suffer with me, please. I've got those dear, dear people. I've got something better to look at than the law.

I've got Christ to look at. And if you admire a person, you want to become like that person. I think that imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.

I think that any parent is proud if he sees his little boy or his little girl acting like the parent. I think it flatters you, absolutely flatters you. I could tell you a few incidents, but I'll spare you.

We tend to mimic people that we love. And isn't it wonderful that the Spirit of God brings, that's His ministry to bring Christ before us. And I'll tell you, He thrills your heart and you can't see Him without desiring to be like Him.

You can't love Him without desiring to serve Him. Love is the secret of a godly life. And the Spirit of God begets that love in our hearts.

And you don't need the law to regulate it. Just let it loop and let it go. And certainly you and I have that privilege of loving the Lord.

And He says, If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. Now, beyond this, love is the motivation for our service. We've already stated the Israelites served God out of fear.

He was motivated by fear. We are motivated by love. I think you can readily see what the better motivation is.

Now, as regards to our service, let's be specific. John chapter 21. John chapter 21.

Peter and Thomas and Nathanael and James and John and two other of His disciples, after the Lord's resurrection, were wading up around the Sea of Galilee because the Lord had told them to go up there. He says, I'll see you in Galilee. Not using those exact words, but He says, you go up to Galilee and I'm going to see you up there.

Well, here they are. They're waiting for the Lord to come. They have nothing else to do for the moment.

So Peter says, I go fishing. So the other says, all right. We've got the time.

We'll go with them. They fished all that night and they didn't catch a thing. And the Lord stood on the bank of the Sea of Galilee.

And He yelled out to them, children, have you any meat? And they said, no. It's cast on the right side of the ship. I understand that they fished out of the left side of the ship.

The port side. the port is left and the harbor is right. Any sailors here? All right.

They did exactly as the Lord said and they all went home. Well, John said right away, it's the Lord's blessing. So they got out and you know the Lord had breakfast all ready for them.

There was a bed of coals and there was bread and there was fish and He said, come and dine. They didn't ask Him who He was. They knew who He was.

And after He had filled their stomachs, you know that's a good time to get people to react after you've fed them. Verse 15. So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me more than thee.

He said, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, feed my land. He said to him a second time, again a second time, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me.

He said unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, feed my sheep. Now there is something that is not quite apparent in the English translation here.

When the Lord asks Peter, do you love me? He uses a very strong word. He uses the word for Agatha, love. And when Peter answers, he does not use the Lord's word.

He uses a lesser word. To put it into our language, the Lord asked Peter, Peter, do you love me deeply? Peter answered back to paraphrase it, Lord, I'm fond of you. He was afraid to say, Lord, I love you deeply, right after he had denied him.

It was still hurting Peter. The Lord said it a second time, Peter, do you love me deeply? Peter still says, Lord, I'm fond of you. So the Lord comes down to Peter's level the next time.

He says, Peter, are you fond of me? That hurt Peter, but the Lord had to downgrade it. And he says, yes, I'm fond of you. Peter was grieved in verse 17, because he said unto him the third time, love is from thee.

And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus says unto him, see my sheep. Love is a motivation for our service.

It not only controls our godly life, and will produce a godly life, but it will be the motivation for our service. Notice, please, what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 13, For whether we beside ourselves, it is of God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. I'm not going to go into that verse as to what he means, because I want to go right on to the next verse.

For the love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And he that died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Now, this is a very strong expression of Paul.

The love of Christ constrains us. The love of Christ presses us onward. The love of Christ indeed is the motivation for service.

Now, the Apostle Paul was probably the world's greatest Christian. The world's greatest missionary. The world's greatest servant.

He says, the love of Christ, it's the love of Christ that presses me on. He speaks about, he uses the same word in the third chapter of Philippians. The word constrains.

And that means strain with everything that is in you to reach the Lord. And it says, the love of Christ does that to us. It presses us.

It urges us. It's the motivation for our service. He told Peter, Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep.

And he said, no, that's the motivation for our service. And Paul knew that love. Oh, how he knew that love.

And then I think we ought to go away from individuals and look at it in a collective sense. First chapter of 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians.

We've seen two examples. The example of Peter. The example of Paul.

Now let's look at the Thessalonians. I think we'll just begin at first verse. Paul and Silas and Timotheus under the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all making mention of you in our prayers remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father. The Thessalonian church was a young church.

Paul went to Thessalonica and he reasoned with them three sabbath days out of the scripture and a good number of them got saved. And then the Jews came along and they raised such persecution that Paul had to leave. He had to leave that young those young Christians saved in Christ.

He had to leave them and they had to go on his way. He was forced out. He went on to Athens.

He sent Timothy back to see how they were doing but he had to leave them as they were in their first love with the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know the Lord loves that. He wants us in our first love.

I noticed coming down the road the other day we were coming and I noticed in the car, I didn't mention it to my wife maybe I should have, but anyway I noticed in the car behind me there were two people coming and they were sitting very very close together. Just sitting just about as close together as they could sit. And she was sitting over on her side of the car because of course that's where you sit if you're strapped down and were going to be wearing the belt soon or a face mask to be safe.

And I'm perfectly satisfied that she sits over there but she doesn't complain and I want her over there. I really do. But you can't tell a young couple in love that.

You better not. Just let love have its way. Let her sit close to you.

And I just watched them and it's a situation that didn't change. And I thought bless their hearts. They're risking an accident but that's alright.

Let just let love have its way. But you know these young Catalonians, they were in love with the Lord Jesus. They'd just been saved and they were in their first love.

What does it do? It affects their service. Remembering without facing your work of faith and labor of love. Labor that was motivated by love.

And if we love the Lord we're going to serve Him. We're just going to serve Him. And oh how great that service is.

That's the best motivation in all the world. If we love the Lord. I'm going to stop asking people if they're saved.

Oh I don't know. I'm not going to promise to say it that way. Because if I if the Lord exercised me I'd have to ask Him are you saved? But what I'd like to ask Him is do you love the Lord? And of course what are they going to say? Well they may say well I try to.

Try to? Suppose that you were to ask me if I love my wife. Well I try to. Would that get by? Would that satisfy you ladies? If somebody were to ask your husband if he loved his wife and he would say well I try to.

Now do you think that would satisfy the Lord? I try to. Let's ask ourselves the question. Do we love the Lord? Now don't try to.

That's not in the picture. If we don't why don't we? If we do it's going to have a profound effect on our lives. I'll tell you He's lovely.

He's not hard to love. He's lovely. And if we really love the Lord it's going to show in our daily walks.

It's going to show in our service to the Lord. There was a labor of love. We should be exercised about this.

We really should. The Lord threatens two churches in the book of Revelation of excommunication. The first church was Ephesus and the last church was Laodicea.

The beginning and the ending of the seven churches. And the first church was they had left their first love. There's no substitute for it.

If we cease to love the Lord why? It's because I think that we have reverted our attention to other things. Now this is speaking to my own heart. Don't think it isn't.

This is not unfelt. Now love is the foundation for worship. Think of what John says in the book of Revelation.

Revelation chapter 1. John is the same writer that wrote 1 John 4 and 19. John refers to himself all through his gospel of John as the one whom Jesus loved. We read in verse 4 John to the seven churches which are on Asia.

Grace unto you and peace from him which is and which was and which is to come and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us kings and priests unto God and his father to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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