

Keep Yourself In the Love of God

by Mack Tomlinson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing and experiencing the love of God in a personal and profound way. It delves into the responsibility believers have to maintain their connection to God's love, highlighting the need to settle the issue of God's love for each individual. The speaker encourages continuous belief in God's love and actively experiencing it through prayer and seeking a deeper relationship with Him.

Scripture: 1 John 4:16, Jude 1:20, Ephesians 4:3, 1 John 5:21, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Romans 5:8, Zephaniah 3:17

Topics: "Experiencing God's Love", "Deepening Relationship with God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing and experiencing the love of God in a personal and profound way. It delves into the responsibility believers have to maintain their connection to God's love, highlighting the need to settle the issue of God's love for each individual. The speaker encourages continuous belief in God's love and actively experiencing it through prayer and seeking a deeper relationship with Him.

Transcript

As I said last night, it's good to be home. No place like home to me in all my 47 years of ministry on the road. Now, don't tell people in Denton that.

I'll be in trouble, real trouble. I might end up having to flee here, but it's always more than special to be here. I want to mention these again quickly for those of you who weren't here.

Anyone who doesn't have the life of Conrad Murrell, or while they last, the life of Leonard Ravenhill, please grab one of those. It's a gift to you. And then there are miscellaneous books on the table.

Just take them. I grabbed six or seven copies of Conrad Murrell's Salvation Wind. And there's a variety of things, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Ted Tripp.

So those are there for the taking. Just take them and use them. Give them away and be a blessing.

You know, it's a real delight to see three girls I've known all their life, almost. To use their maiden name, the Boucher's Girls. We just are missing the fourth one here.

And she was texting me this week about coming up here. And I remember about 1984, they came to our house in Denton. And I think you were the first visitors to our new home.

And they left our house and they drove to the Ravenhill's home. And I think if I remember right, he prayed for each of you. And so here we are, 40 years later.

I had hair then, and you were little then. So, wonderful to be together. Well, I want to speak from two verses of Scripture.

I'm just going to quote them. And you can note them, look them up later. Because they are so wonderful.

The first is 1 John 4, verse 16, where John says, We know and have come to believe the love God has for us. We know and we have come to believe the love God has for us. Now, he's not talking about something up here.

He's talking about experiential reality. That the believer has come to know and experience and believe the love that God has for him. Here's the second one, Jude 20.

What strange language. This sounds like an Arminian guy. Keep yourselves in the love of God.

That is amazing. What in the world does Jude mean? It's true. He puts it on us to do something, right? Keep yourself in the love of God.

So, this is what I'm going to speak on today. Continuing the thought of the love of God from last night. Each of us as believers has a maintenance responsibility toward our soul.

You maintain your car, right? I hope. I had to put new tires on my car this week and change the oil. Maintenance is critically important, right? How much more important for our souls and our spiritual journey? Each of us has a maintenance responsibility to keep some things dear.

To maintain them. To steward them. So, we're told in Scripture various places to keep some things.

Paul says in Ephesians, for the believers to keep the unity of the Spirit among you. It's on all of us to preserve unity in the church. The Bible tells us in 1 John that we're to keep His commandments.

1 John 5, John says, the last verse in 1 John, little children, keep yourselves from what? Idols. Keep yourselves from idols. We have to be on guard.

We have to maintain. We have to preserve. We keep some things.

But here, Jude says to keep yourself in the love of God. Is this strange language to us? What do we know of this? Do we do it and how do we do it? Quite an amazing thought to realize. And it's talking about the love of God for us.

It's the love of God toward us and for us that we're to keep ourselves in. I think more and more that there's no bigger and more important truth in all of Scripture than the love of God. Because He loved us from eternity past.

Well, love of God was the motivation in sending the Son of God, right? For God so loved the world. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. The love of Christ was the motivation to go to the cross.

The love of God permeates the Old and New Testament. And it really stands out as a Mount Everest in Scripture. And you know, it's grievous in our generation.

Really, in the 20th century forward, the love of God was cheapened and made shallow and was superficially presented through the church in a way that wicked sinners, unrepentant, who made some decision for Jesus one time by throwing a stick in the campfire at summer camp, can live wickedly. And then they say, oh yeah, God loves me, I'm fine. But the love of God, there's nothing deeper and more profound and wonderful for the Christian to marinate themselves in.

To bask in that sunshine. We must keep ourselves in the love of God in fresh ways. God's love is supremely significant and central.

And yet, you know, sinners will not believe the message of the love of the Gospel until a miracle happens right in their mind and their heart. Blind unbelief. There's a veil over their minds.

Sinners won't believe it until a miracle happens. But you know, sinners are not the only ones who reject or struggle about the love of God for them. Many Christians have a problem personally, regularly, resting in the love of God for them.

They have a problem believing the love of God is for them. Yeah, I know he loves Joanne. Who wouldn't? Yeah, I know he loves Jerry.

But I don't know about myself. I doubt it. God's love isn't real to me.

When I'm honest, I just don't know for sure how God the Father feels about me. You know, God does feel things, right, John? He absolutely feels love toward us. But we're up and down in it.

We don't see how others could even truly love and accept us. So if we don't even have security in others loving us, how much more a perfect, all-knowing God who knows me as I am, warts and all, who knows my sin, who knows my past, who knows my failures, how could He actually love me? This is possibly the biggest single issue for many Christians. Assurance of God's love.

And they are not there with John when he says, we have known, we know and believe the love God has for us. So, John and Jude want us to settle this thing. Am I an owner of, am I a recipient of, do I possess, unconditionally and permanently, the love of God toward me? Do I know it? And am I enjoying it? Am I basking in the sunshine of that love? Even in tears and sorrow, I know the Father loves me.

I think this is a root issue of why many believers struggle so much. They really don't know and believe the love God has for them. So our text this morning, these two verses address this.

To know and believe the love God has for us, and to keep ourselves in that love. Now, when Jude says keep yourselves in the love of God, let's remind ourselves what this cannot mean, alright? It doesn't mean you do anything to keep God loving you, right? No, it doesn't mean that. It doesn't mean our actions keep God's love active toward us.

It doesn't mean we can earn His love by our behavior. I'm doing great one day and God loves me more. And I blow it.

I kick the dog rather than the wife because I'm upset. And I blow it and he doesn't love me as much. No, the love of God is not conditional based on our behavior.

This is why grace is so wonderful. But rather this means keeping ourselves in the love of God means this. We have come to believe it.

We settle it because the Gospel says it. Because the promises of God are so glorious and true and rampant in the Bible, God testifies over and over to us how much He loves us. We come to believe it and settle it.

Lord, You have said this and it's unbelief and it's dishonor to You if I don't believe this. We believe it. And we experience His love.

His love is a constant toward us and our believing it must become a constant to continue to believe His love for us. And more and more, next summer I'll be a Christian 50 years. And this truth more than any other is my joy.

It's the basis of our assurance because of what Christ has done. To keep ourselves in the things and the truths that affirm, remind, and encourage us of His great love for us. Think about it.

Think of how much Paul and Peter and John are always talking about the love of God. Throughout their epistles, Paul starts it and he continues it through all his epistles. John takes up the trumpet.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. And Peter echoes it. And John in the Revelation finishes with it.

Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. The love of God. The love of God.

So we're to keep ourselves in it. Now there's some implications I want to give you briefly. And I'm not going to go long, I hope.

Well, maybe I hope. If the Holy Ghost comes and He settles in and pours out His love on earth, we might be here a while. But I'm going to do my duty.

Implications here. This is a personal responsibility to keep yourself in the love of God. Secondly, it's speaking of Christian experience, not head knowledge.

Thirdly, the focus is on the love of God for us. Fourthly, the issue is to keep ourselves actively in the reality of that love. So, I have two points.

No points, sorry. Two points. And they're simple.

How do we keep ourselves in the love of God? Number one, we do that by believing this continually about us. Faith in the promises of God. Every time you read in the New Testament and you read of God's love, you pause and you pray it and you rejoice.

You say, Father, thank You for Your love. This is from me. And I believe it today in a fresh way.

I exalt in it. I receive Your love. And Lord, I love You because You first loved me.

We believe the love God has for us first. It's a matter of faith, isn't it? That's how we keep ourselves in the love of God. But it's a habitual life discipline.

It's an habitual love discipline of believing this love that God has for you. And you're to do it. Keep yourself in it.

Secondly, we keep ourselves in it by experiencing the love He has for us. When was the last time the love of God was shed abroad in your heart and you were overwhelmed? John says we believe this love that He has for us. It means we believe what God has said, what He's recorded.

What more can He say than to you that He has said already? The declaration, how He is toward us. The Bible is so abundantly clear about His love that there is no excuse for doubt or unbelief. No excuse whatsoever.

Just in 1 John alone. I just want you to hear rapidly and clearly how God says this over and over so we'll get in and believe it. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us.

Love is of God. God is love. In this, the love of God was manifested toward us that He sent His Son.

This is love. Not that we love God, but that God loved us. If God so loved us, so why is John saying this? Because he's driving home the nail deeply to be embedded in our minds that God the Father, His only heart toward us now in Christ, is absolute, pure, radical, deep love.

That's the Father's heart toward us. And you must believe this if you're going to keep yourself in love. In saying that, God inspired John to write those over and over because God is yelling to us, this is what I'm like.

This is who I am. This is who I am toward you. This is how I feel toward you.

This is what is true of Me toward you. This is what I want you to believe about Me. The Father's love is eternal.

If He loved you from eternity past, He never didn't love you. Is that good English? It's good theology. He never didn't love you.

And in love, He predestined you to be His. And you were born on the day you were supposed to be born on. And in the fullness of time, God sent His Son.

And in the fullness of time, on the day Christ zeroed, He came after you. He came pursuing. I'm going to get Him.

And the love of God cornered you. You know, when I was saved when I was 19, I had left church. I wasn't interested.

I had tried. It didn't work. And I was lonely, empty.

And a friend of mine, Kent McElroy, was in the army. Of course, we couldn't call each other. But he decided one day to come back from Colorado from the army.

God had saved him in a rock concert a month earlier. God can do that. He can invite a rock concert, save somebody.

Kent said, I'm going to go find Matt. I decide that day to go home to see my mom. Here come our paths.

Colorado, back to Clarendon, Texas. The last Saturday of July 1973. He sees me.

He waves at me. He says, hey, let's get together tonight. OK.

We get in his little white Volkswagen. We ride around for three hours. And he starts uttering in his loving way the gospel.

We had grown up in church together. I trusted him. Three hours, the love of God became more real to me.

And I was overwhelmed. At 11 o'clock, I finally said, I got to cry out to God. And I began to pray.

And the love of God came over me. In the cross of Christ, what he did for me was so real for the first time. My heart just melted.

And I said, Lord Jesus, I have nothing to give you but myself and my sin. But here I am. And the love of Christ has been real ever since.

Because of his great love with which he loved us, he drew us with cords of love. This became real to me this past year a lot more. And this is important.

When the love of God is mentioned in the New Testament, it's almost always referring to God the Father. Just check it out. When it's Jesus, the writers use the love of Christ, right? But when it says God's love, it's the Father.

For God so loved the world that he gave his Son, right? God loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Jesus said the Father himself loves you. If a man loves me, he will keep my words.

And my Father will love him. And we will come to him. And I love what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13, this benediction.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. It is love in the New Testament for us that's mainly ascribed to the Father. Now, I don't know about you, but sometimes it's easier to think of Jesus loving me than the eternal almighty God the Father.

Do we believe this truth about God which he has clearly told us? So here's a question I want you just to face. Do you today truly believe in your heart the love God has for you? Settle it, brethren. Settle it.

If you're not a Christian, do you believe the love God has for sinners, for people? You have to come to believe this to be saved. You have to know that in love, God sent the Savior and you have to believe that He came and you have to believe that He died for you. I remember, was it Evangeline? And Bob said to her, do you believe Christ died for you? And I think she responded, I believe He died for sinners or something like that.

And Bob nailed her. He said, do you believe He died for your sin that got her? If you're not a Christian this morning, do you believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for your sin? You have to believe it to become a Christian. But why would you refuse it? Why would you reject it? You know too much already.

Come to know and believe the love God has for you. We keep ourselves in God's love when we believe, accept, and receive the record that God has stated about His love. Amen.

Secondly, second point, we keep ourselves in the love of God by experiencing His love. I'm talking about experiencing it. To pour our love out from our hearts on Him in prayer and to tell Him.

And us to tell Him, Lord Jesus, I know You love me and I receive it. Love me more. Fill my cup.

I want more experience of Your love in my life as I go, as I grow, as I live. I want to be a vessel of the love of God. Pour into me that I can pour out to others.

To let the love of Christ rule us in our view of Him about us. To enjoy His love and affirm it daily. To camp out on it.

To bask in the sunshine. You know, when the clouds are the darkest outside, above them, the sun is shining brightly. The love of God doesn't change.

To pour our love on Him. To tell Him that we love Him. To seek to be filled with His love.

To pray that His love would be fresh and real to us and would be poured out upon us. The triple failure of Peter. Three denials.

The restoration was three affirmations. Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you love me? Peter, do you really love me? The love of God is a restoration. If you're far from Him this morning, He says, you love me? Then just run home.

The welcoming, loving arms of the Father for you. Have you settled the issue of God's love for you? This is full on bright, glorious sunshine. Beloved, we must know and experience His love.

I love John Owen's words. Listen to this. Many disturbing thoughts are apt to rise in us regarding the Father's love.

Do you ever have that happen? Doubts about His love? Many disturbing thoughts rise in us regarding the Father's love. And few in faith carry up their hearts and minds to rest their souls in the love of God. But faith must embrace that the will of God is for the Father to be viewed by us as a tender, kind, loving person.

The love of God, the love of the Father is the only rest for our hearts. And it really is. The big test is, do I believe it? Do I receive it? And am I willing to experience it regularly? His love must govern my view of the Gospel.

His love must govern my acceptance in Christ. The Father's view of me must be governed by the love of God. My assurance is rooted in the love of God toward us in the cross.

My joy thrives on it. And if He rejoices over us with singing, can we sing with joy about the love of God toward us? How great the Father's love for us. How vast beyond all measure that He would send His Son to die to make a wretch His treasure.

Brethren, major much on the love of God. I close with Paul's words. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.

What a thought. That's experience. And he says, be of good comfort.

Be of one mind. Live in peace. And the God of love and peace be with you.

Oh, the love of Jesus. Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free. I want us to sing in closing in the White Book 140.

And as she goes to the piano, let's pray. Father, thank You for the great love You've shown. Lord, we just want to confess today we believe it because You've declared it.

You've done it. Help us, Lord, to experience Your love more and more continually. Fill us today with the love of Christ.

Pour Your love out in our hearts. And make us a channel of love to those around us into a needy world. In Christ's name, Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Z3JULHk3cbc.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/mack-tomlinson/keep-yourself-in-the-love-of-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net