

God Is Love

by Michael Durham

This sermon delves into the profound concept that God is love, emphasizing the nature of God's love as self-sufficient, undeserved, and focused on treasuring and delighting in His Son. It challenges listeners to love others not based on merit but out of a reflection of God's love in their hearts, encouraging a transformation from self-centered love to a God-like love that values and delights in others for their own sake.

Scripture: 1 John 4:7, John 17:24, John 17:26, Jude 1:21

Topics: "God's Love", "Transformative Love"

Description

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Transcript

The text we pray the Lord be pleased to speak to us from is John's first epistle, chapter four. First John, chapter four, verse seven and eight. First John, chapter four, verse seven and eight.

I'd like to speak on the theme this morning, God is love. God is love. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

He who does not love does not know God for God is love. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I come to you again by the very blood we have worshiped and praised, the blood of your son.

We thank you that that flowing tide has opened up an access to you that is wide and vast, that we all may come, boldly come, that we may ask of you of all of our needs. And there is one Father that is foremost at this moment, the need to experience this sweet love of yours afresh and anew. Lord, protect us from flesh, phenomenon that would distract us.

Give us the reality of the Holy Spirit for you are love. Flow here, flow into these puny and small hearts so that they will be filled to overflowing. Help me now, Lord, I pray in Jesus' name, amen.

How do we define or explain God's love? There's absolutely nothing compelling or lovely about us that he would love us, as I said, last night. There's nothing about you that would attract the love of God. Unlike

you and me, God does not love out of want or need.

We do, but he doesn't. We love because we need. And the more we love something is in proportion to what it does for us, what we gain from it.

We will love things less valuable than our own lives simply because of the pleasure we derive from them. But that's the way we love. We love because we gain from the things we place value on.

For example, I love to hunt, but I don't love hunting more than I love my own life. Why? Because I don't consider hunting as valuable as my life, yet I can still gain pleasure from that, and I can therefore say I love hunting. Human love is solely based upon the value we place on something or someone, and that is in proportion to the pleasure we gain from it.

Now, God may love an object because of its value. He does not love it for what he gains from it, because he gains nothing from anything. As we heard last night from Brother Charles, God needs absolutely nothing.

Our joy ought to be this morning. We have a God who has all within him that satisfies him, and therefore we can be satisfied in him also. He loves not in the way we do.

He doesn't love because he gains something from the thing he loves. He loves me even though there's nothing in me that he gains anything. In fact, the Bible says I'm unprofitable to him, and so are you.

There's no profit in us, and yet he loves us. God perfectly, absolutely self-sufficient loves you, not because of you, because he has no need of anything. He's able to love without finding any value in you.

Now, let's imagine for a moment you too were perfectly self-sufficient, like God. You too would need no one. No one could add anything to you.

Nobody can bring any value to your life, because you have all value, infinite value within yourself. And if that was so, wouldn't you also think that you would place no value on anyone or anything? You have all infinite value. And if you had no one who could bring any value to you, wouldn't you also think that you probably would not have any reason to love them? We need to love because of need and want.

But if you have no needs and you have no wants, why therefore should you love? What reason do you have to love? There'd be absolutely nothing valuable in anyone or anything to add to your existence. But our situation was even worse than this. Not only were we of no value to God, but we were also unholy.

Holy love cannot rejoice in anything unholy, so how can a holy God love us if we were of no value, and then to top that off, we were unholy. Why would God love us? That's the question. And John answers it plainly in three words.

God is love. It's the nature of God to love. But what does this mean? This is what I want us to do this morning.

If at all possible, we can get a glimpse of what does it mean for God is love. How does this help us to understand love in these three words? You can say God is love, but you can't say love is God, no more than you can say light is God, even though the Bible says God is light. So what do we mean when we say God is love? Well, I want to direct your attention to the first of three facts that I want to draw from our text.

God defines love. The philosophers of the ages have grappled with this question, as well as some of the greatest of theologians. How do you define love? And they have all grappled with this question and have come up basically with a blank.

How do you define love, much less God? Jonathan Edwards said this about a definition of love. As to a definition of divine love, things of this nature are not properly capable of a definition. They are better felt than defined.

But yet there may be a great deal of benefit and descriptions that may be given of this heavenly principle, though they are all imperfect. Real simple, Edwards says you can't define love. And especially you can't define divine love.

It's better felt than understood. So if God is love, then surely love must be as unexplainable as God is. That's what Edwards is saying.

And yet John gives us this insight about our God so that we can better understand Him, so there's got to be some handle on this word love that we can grasp in order to get some kind of understanding. And we've heard all the different kind of definitions of love, like this love is loving somebody at the expense of your own needs, or love is a decision. These definitions don't really tell us what love is.

They tell us what it does, and they do that very poorly. So how do we define it? And John tells us God defines love. That's what he's saying here.

God defines it. It is the essence of His own nature. It is who He is.

And without God there would be no love, and all love flows from God. And all of His rational creatures have been given the ability to love as a gift to them, as a part of His image and likeness. But that part of His creation that has fallen, their capacity of love has been perverted.

So here's what I want to do this morning. Taking the Bible's description of God's essence, I want us to come to some understanding of love. I want to give you a simple definition that I believe is warranted by the Bible's description of God and its description of love.

So I'm going to give you this definition, and then I want to proceed to show you its biblical roots. Now, I think Edwards is right. What I'm about to share with you is going to probably be flawed.

And I'm really sure it is, because it's my definition. I've pondered this for years, and this is what I think love is. Love is the ability to treasure and delight in something or someone, period.

Love is simply the ability to treasure or delight in something or someone. And I believe this is the nature of God. It's more than an ability.

It's His very essence. His very nature is to have joy and delight in someone or something. And so, the first question we ought to ask, what is the ruling and supreme love of God? What is that thing or someone that He loves more than anything else? And as we heard last night, the answer is Himself, Himself.

God's ultimate focus is on Himself, seen from a vast resource of scriptures. Let me give you just a few. Psalm 135, verse 6, just listen, don't turn, just listen.

Psalm 135, verse 6, whatever the Lord pleases, He does in heaven and on earth, in the seas, in all deep places. So, God does what pleases Him, what brings joy and delight to God, that's what He does. Isaiah chapter 46, verse 10, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand and I will do all of my pleasure.

Out of this infinite self-sufficient being comes the ability to do everything that pleases Him. Isaiah 48, verse 11, for my own sake, for my own sake, I will do it, for how should my name be profaned? And I will not give my glory to another. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 11 and 12, in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel, the word counsel can be explained as a plan, according to the plan of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

The fact is, you're here today saved because of God's pleasure, and His pleasure is the glory of Himself, as we heard again last night. So, God delights in Himself chiefly and supremely. No argument, right? Well, I want you to turn your Bibles to Psalm 115.

I want us to spend just a few moments here. Once again, we're trying to examine the essence of the very nature of God in relationship to this word love. In Psalm 115, the psalmist does this for us.

The psalmist says in verse 1 of Psalm 115, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Your name give glory. Lord, don't give glory to men here today, this weekend. To Yourself give glory.

But why? What is the reason that the psalmist gives that God should bring glory not to you and I, not to His people, but to Himself? He says, because of your mercy, because of your truth. His prayer is that God would glorify Himself, not His people, because God is so merciful and because of God's truth. Perhaps a better rendering of the Hebrew is this.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and faithfulness. Steadfast love and faithfulness. God is more worthy of glory than we are because of who He is.

This is something we have already agreed upon. But the psalmist lists reasons for bringing God glory to Himself and why He has more value than us, and it's because of His steadfast love and faithfulness. These are the characteristics that the songwriter believes God ought to be glorified supremely for.

In verse 2, he continues, why should the Gentiles say, so where is their God? His concern is that unbelievers would mock and scorn the God of Israel and His love and faithfulness. The idols of the Gentiles, the surrounding nations of Israel, were not loving nor faithful like God. They were often whimsical, very arbitrary, quickly angered.

Of course, we know they weren't idols at all, but the point is the people that worshiped them believed in them, and this was the kind of capricious gods that they had invented. But their gods could not claim what the psalmist claims of God in verse 3. But our God is in heaven. He does whatever He pleases.

Now, somebody might speak up and say, oh, but yes, those Gentile idols claim to have sovereign pleasure also, that they did what they wanted to do. Yes, that's true. Most of the Gentile nations believe that their gods was as strong, if sometimes not stronger than the God of Israel, that they, too, had sovereign abilities.

But notice what the psalmist has tithed, the sovereign pleasure and ability of God, too. This is not what the Gentile idols could boast of. And it's what? He links God's sovereign pleasure to His love and His faithfulness.

He can do whatever He pleases. And He pleases to love and be faithful. In this case, God's pleasure is to love and be faithful to His people.

God delights Himself in His love for others. So, I think we have a clue here how we can understand John, God is love. I'm going to say this repeatedly throughout this morning's message.

So here it is, first time. God is love. From Psalm 115, I think I can say this.

That must mean that God's nature is this. God loves to love. That's what it means.

God loves to love. Moses, Deuteronomy 7, makes the case better than I think even the psalmist does. Moses rehearsed for Israel why God had done what He had done for them.

He explains to them that of all the nations, there was a reason why God had loved Israel. He says in Deuteronomy 7, verse 6, For you are a holy people to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples, but because the Lord loves you. God loves you because He loves you. And because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers.

Steadfast love and faithfulness. You see it again. In the beginning of verse 8, God's love and faithfulness.

Moses says He loves you because He loves you. No other reason needed, friend. You who are struggling with whether or not God loves you and accepts you in Christ.

Why? There is no other reason needed. Don't look to your performance today. It will always disappoint you.

The reason God loves you is because He loves you. You need no other reason. In chapter 10, Moses again brings up the reason why God loved them.

Deuteronomy 10, verse 14. Indeed, heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God. Also the earth with all that is in it.

Then he says these words. The Lord delighted only in your fathers to love them. And He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples as it is this day.

Notice that God loved Israel for one reason. That the Lord delighted only in your fathers. He freely chose to take pleasure in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Not because of anything they had done, but solely because it pleased Him to do so. He delighted in loving Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He enjoyed loving them.

Therefore, God loves us. Not because we have merited His love. It is given to us because God treasures and delights in Himself.

And His perfect nature, which is love. Again, let me say it this way. He loves to love.

He loves to love. Another way to say it is He delights in love. His pleasure is in love.

And another way we can look at this is that love and His happiness are inextricably linked. You cannot separate the love of God from the joy of God. Isn't it interesting that when Paul begins to list the fruit of the Spirit, the first is love, the next is joy.

Right on the heels of love. They're always together. Siamese twins, if you please.

God enjoys Himself and His love in loving others. Now back to my definition. Love is the ability to treasure and delight in something or someone.

God is love, which means it's His nature. Listen now. It's His nature to treasure and delight mainly and supremely in Himself.

That's His nature. To delight in loving Himself. And His delight in you and I and all of His creation is a delight in His creative genius and His creative power.

Therefore, His love for us is a treasuring of His glory reflected in us and in His creation. Psalm 19, 1. Therefore, the heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of His hands.

So, God defines love. That's what John's telling us. Let me direct your attention to the second fact from this text.

There is an eternal object of God's love. An eternal object of His love. If God is love, then it must mean God has always delighted and treasured in something.

Because He's always existed. The eternal God. Having no beginning, no end.

But what did this God who is love delight to love before He made you and I? Before He made the earth? Before He made anything? You say, well, He loved Himself. Yes, but it's a little bit more complex than that. There are some who think, wrongly of course, that God got lonely somewhere in eternity.

Which is a misnomer to even state it that way, but that's the way we think, linear. That God somewhere in the past got lonely, so that's why He made man, so He could have somebody to fellowship with. But that's not true for at least three reasons.

Number one, He probably had already created the angels before He made man. And therefore, He had them to fellowship with. However, my second reason is, God is completely self-sufficient.

He didn't even need the angels to love and fellowship with. Listen, God needs nobody or anything to be happy. You don't serve God to get God's favor or pleasure.

Because He is most happy in Himself, you're not going to add to that. There's no deficit in God's joy. The deficit of joy is in me, and in you.

That's where deficit of joy is, but not in God. And if you think, when you introduce the word need to God, you have destroyed the biblical presentation of God. For the Bible describes God as one who is not worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives life to all breath and all things.

You may say to me, but if God is love, didn't He too have a need? The need to love something. That's a good question. If God is love, then there has to be something that God loves.

The very nature of love demands giving. So didn't He really have a need to give, to love? This leads me to my third, and I think the best reason why God was not lonely. That is that He loved the Son of God, and was perfectly satisfied in Him.

There was not one I owed of displeasure at His side. Perfect, complete, full satisfaction and joy in Jesus Christ. If God is love, then yes, something must be the object of that love.

Love does delight in giving, but I'm telling you, the object that God delighted in loving and giving Himself to, was unashamedly the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead. I want to invite you to turn your Bibles to the 17th chapter of John's Gospel. We're going to spend a few moments here, because this text in John 17 helps us with 1 John 4 and our text.

Same author, and I think there is much integration between these two texts. God had an eternal object of His love. He always did, and it was His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice what Jesus prays in John 17, 24. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Do you see that? Jesus is acknowledging His pre-incarnate existence here.

This is remarkable. In order for God to be self-sufficient and need nothing, He must be a Trinity. Had to be.

Love does have to have an object. Love must delight in giving. And the Son of God existed eternally with the Father, and these two were in a love relationship with each other that exceeds imagination and capacity to even enjoy.

That is for you and I, that is. It's not easy for us to understand this concept, God being one, yet three persons. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

But friends, that's the revelation of Scripture, and so we believe Scripture's revelation. We must believe what it reveals. It reveals God in three.

And these three were in a love fest one with another. They co-eternally existed in perfect love and fellowship. In John 17, 24, Jesus is acknowledging this fact.

God the Father loves God the Son most and best because there's nothing of greater value to God. Nothing that brings Him more pleasure than His Son. I know we're supposed to please God.

I know we're supposed to obey and bring Him pleasure. But boy, that can mess with your mind if you're not careful. And you'll get on this rat wheel just going around in circles trying to please God because you have erroneously mistaken the way God loves for the way you love.

And how do we love? We love in proportion to the value and the gain we get from things. God doesn't. There are some of you here this morning that are struggling with God's love because you are wanting to think God loves like you do.

Doesn't. His Son pleases Him totally, completely. What are you going to do in competition to the Son in pleasing the Father? Come on now.

Nothing. What pleases God, what you do that pleases Him is simply this, trusting His Son. Taking joy and delight in the thing that God the Father delights in.

If sin is coming short of the glory of God and who is the glory of God? Jesus Christ. Then that must mean sin is not delighting in the Son who is the glory of God like the Father does. Not delighting in Him and taking pleasure in Him like the Father does.

Now watch this. Jesus is the express image of God. It's what the Bible says.

Colossians 1.15, the image of the invisible God. The author of the book of Hebrews says of Christ, He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person. When I was preaching to the book of Hebrews, I let out a colloquial phrase.

He's the spitting image of the Father. Somebody told me after the message, I'm glad you said it that way because it made perfect sense when you said it. He is exactly like His Father in every way.

Don't believe me? Listen to what the Apostle Paul says of our Lord and His glory. That He is the image of God, the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. And that is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness.

Who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus says to Philip in John 14, If you've seen me, Philip, you have seen the Father. Now as amazing as all of this is, it's even more amazing what Jesus prays in the preceding verse, verse 23.

John 17, 23. I in them, and you in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me. I think it's important we understand what this means.

I don't know that I can really grasp it completely. Does God love us identical to the way He loves His Son? Does He love us as much as He loves His Son? No. I don't think that's what He's meaning by this incredible statement.

I know you could argue with me and say, Well, we are in Christ because of our union in Him. Therefore, the Father's love towards us is exactly the same as it is towards His Son. But I have a problem with that simply because that is true.

I know He loves me because of the Son. That's where I'm going with all of this. But I'm never going to be divine.

Jesus is divine. I'm never going to be the express image of His person, the Father. Jesus is.

So I don't think that's what He's saying. Here's what I think Jesus is saying, and it ties in with our text. He is saying that to be a Christian, a true believer in Christ, introduces you into this love fest between the Father and the Son.

You're loved because of God's love for His Son. And therefore, you're given the Father's love as a son. Just like Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

His love for you is no longer this universal, this general benevolence as a creator to the created. Now you are brought into the family of God. You are now given the love of a Father.

That's what He's praying here. That you would experience fatherly love towards a child. No longer loved as the Son of Adam, a work of His creation.

Now you are a believer in Christ Jesus. You're brought into this love of a Father. You're now loved as the younger brother of Jesus.

I think that's what He's meaning. But the prayer continues to amaze. Look at verse 26.

After He asked the Father that believers may be with Him in Heaven, to see the glory of the love which the Father had for the Son before the world ever began, He then asked in verse 26, that the love with which you loved Me may be in them and I in them. In other words, Jesus prays that the love that God the Father has for Jesus the Son will be in you and I also. He's asking that we get to share.

He's asking on our behalf that we get to participate and share in the Father's love for the only begotten Son. Now listen closely. This is what distinguishes true Christians from those who profess to be Christians but are still lost.

This is it. There are many other things, but this is it at its core. The distinction is that true believers love Jesus with a love that's like the Father's love.

And how does the Father love the Son? We said earlier that He loves the Son because, number one, there's nothing as beautiful or more valuable to Him than the Son. And second, He loves Him supremely, preeminently, above all other things. Beloved, if you're a Christian, you love Jesus for who He is.

Gloriously worthy, as we heard last night, of all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength. Because that's exactly how the Father loves the Son. He loves Him with all of His might, all of His being, infinite.

We're not infinite, so thankfully we don't have to love Him infinitely. Not capable, but I can love Him with all of my person. Why? Because I've discovered that there's nothing in all of my travels, in all of my experiences, in all of my pleasures, anything more pleasurable than Him.

And there's nothing more valuable and worthy of all of my devotion and adoration than Him. That is in the heart of every true believer because Jesus prayed for it. And He gets what He prays for.

He's asking that the Father give to you and me this kind of love for the Son. And so, I want to ask you some questions. I want you to be honest for your own soul's sake.

Do you love Jesus as much as you do your husband or your wife? Mamas, I want to ask you a question. Do you love Jesus more than you love your babies? Do you really love Him more than success or pleasure or fame or possessions or good health or entertainment or sex or food, homes, cars, iPods and computers and iPhones? The only way you can know for sure that you love Him more than these things is if you see Jesus more valuable than these things. And listen now, watch this.

And the only way to know if you see Jesus more valuable than these things is if Jesus makes you happier and more joyful than these things. Do you delight and enjoy in Him more than these things? That's the test. That's it.

You can lie. You can answer in the affirmative. But your pleasures will betray you or justify you.

What is it that you enjoy most? If the Father's love for the Son is in you, it will be the Son. It will be the Son. Because God the Father loves His Son more than anything else.

Some of you are saying, but I don't do that all the time. In fact, I don't feel that most of the time. Yes, you do.

If you're really a Christian, you do. And here's how I know you do. Because you grieve that you don't.

You grieve that you don't. Why would you grieve? Because you see Him as more valuable than anything else. You see Him as the treasure that exceeds all of your other possessions and treasures.

And you know that your heart's so fickle and feeble that it does chase after these other things from time to time. And it grieves you. Because you feel in your heart the heart of a betrayer.

I know what it's like to betray the love of somebody special and unique to you. I know what it's like to betray that love in the most dastardly way. And when the reality of that betrayal comes to you, I can tell you there's not a pain like it.

Not a pain like it. The Christian life is a remarkable life. It's a paradoxical kind of life.

Rejoicing yet sorrowing. These two are always in tension with the other. There's joy in Him.

But there's also this sorrow that I do not love Him with all my heart and soul and mind and strength. And that very grief is love in the nostrils of your Father. Because there's something about your heart that hates it.

Because the Father's love for the Son's been invested in you. My third and final fact I gather from this text. God's nature is invested in us.

And if His nature is invested in us, what does this mean? God's love is in us. I said John 17 is related to our text. Verse 23.

Jesus prays that His followers would be perfected as one. If we've experienced this God of love, then the evidence will be. Number one, we'll love the Son with a love that sees Him preeminent and worthy.

Above all other things. That's how the Father loves the Son. But there's a second evidence here.

We will also love each other. Each other. Let's return to our text now.

First John 4. Let's tie all of this together now. Before we bring it to a conclusion. May I read the text one more time? First John chapter 4 verse 7. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God.

And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. There you go. He who does not love does not know God.

For God is love. If God's love has been put in our hearts for Jesus, then John is saying also that God's love for His people is also in our hearts. And when you and I experience this love that God has for Jesus, it will transform us.

And the more you experience love for Christ and the love of the Father for the Son in your heart, the more you will love others for their own sake. And not what they can do for you. And when I began this message, I told you that we naturally do not love like God loves.

We love out of need. We love others because we see the value they add to our lives. And the more value they bring, the more we love them.

But God wants us to move beyond this self-centered love to a God-like love. He loves us. Not because we add anything to Him.

He loves us because He enjoys loving us. Undeservedly, as I said last night. He loves undeservedly.

And that's the way you're to love one another. That's the way you're to love one another. You're to love them not because they have deserved it, or because they add anything of value to your life, even though they might.

You need to be free to love them because the joy and delight of God rules in your heart. And you can love them for no other reason because you want to for their own sake. Do you see this? You can love others for their own sake.

Not what they bring to you. You're free to love them whether they deserve it or not because you have been loved by God this way. You're free to love like He loves.

This is crucial. Many of you are not free to love like this. You are still demanding others to meet your expectations, your conditions.

And when they don't, you withhold love. You don't show the affection. Just watch how you operate with your children, or your wife, or your husband.

That's selfish and ungodly because He doesn't love that way. You love undeservedly and you love that person for the sake of that person. Is this kind of love in you? I want to conclude and I want to say that the key to loving others is not you trying to love like this way.

I don't want you to go that route. The key is not trying real hard to love people for their own sake. No, no, you'll never be able to achieve that.

The key is the experiencing of God's love for you. That's how you'll have love to love like this. That's what John's saying.

Love one another. Why? Because God's loved us. Those that are born, those that love are born of God because God is love.

You want to love like God? Experience His love. More and more. Now listen, when you don't love like God, or you withhold love from a person because in your opinion they don't deserve your love, it means one of two things.

Now please listen. It means number one could be you're not really a Christian. Because you've not experienced God's love for you.

You don't have the nature of God deposited in your heart to love others for their own sake because you don't delight to do that. Or, secondly, you can be a Christian, but it's been a while since you've experienced the love of God in your own heart. You're not living in the love of God.

You're not doing what Jude 21 says, keeping yourselves in the love of God. And so what do you do? You revert back to the flesh and its kind of love. You're living with this false and unbiblical view of God's love.

You wrongly think you deserve God's love and therefore people ought to deserve your love and earn it. You've forgotten how God loves you. And you need to experience that this morning.

Right now. Right here. Because He is here.

And God loves to love. A couple of Sunday nights ago, at our Sunday evening prayer meeting before the evening service, our men's prayer meeting, those of us that were there experienced this undeserved love of God in a very special way. And our hearts were filled with love for one another.

It was just amazing. This just seemed to click for me. I saw it.

But I've been studying and thinking and meditating. God just gave me a demonstration of it. It was beautiful.

As God moved into that room and poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, His love for us personally, something happened. All we could do was embrace one another and love on each other. My heart was so full for these dear brothers that I had to embrace each one.

But just not embrace. I was so strongly moved to express my love to them with a holy kiss on their cheek. And I didn't care what they thought at that moment.

I couldn't help it. Something was in my soul. The love of God.

God's love for me. And what was amazing, we had done nothing for each other. We all had just went around the room praying individually to God.

We value each other. Yes, we're brothers. We know each other.

We love each other very much. But our love that evening was not based on the other, what they contribute to each other's lives. It was based on the love of God that we had experienced that evening.

And thus with tears we embraced and expressed the joy of God by a delight in each other. Wouldn't you say you need to experience God's undeserved love again? Because there's some people in your life that you don't love because in your estimation, they don't deserve your love. Might be a son, might be a spouse, might be a friend, a neighbor.

But the warning's clear here, my friend. Please listen. I believe it's been made clear to each of our hearts this morning.

How can you say you love God and have been loved by God if you don't love Jesus supremely and others for their own sake? Oh, God, give us a taste of your love. Help us to savor it. Bring us back, Father, into this love fest with you and your son and cause our hearts to be full to overflowing towards one another yet again.

This is the prayer of our Savior. This is what he's asked for. And all that are born of God experience this.

Oh, may we experience it here again anew and afresh so that the son is glorified as praying in faith, giving what he has asked for. Amen. Amen.

Let's pray. Thank you for your love. Lord Jesus, I thank you not only for dying, but for praying.

Thank you for this prayer. That I'm loved by the father as a son. And the father's love for you has been put in my heart.

Thank you for this. What a gift. Unspeakable gift.

May the corresponding joy come in this place now. Please, Father. We desperately need it.

That the prayers of your son be answered in us for his sake and glory. Be with us in the remainder of this day. Help each man to proclaim.

Help each one of us to receive the love of God. In Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

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