

# My Burden For NCCF In 2018

by Sandeep Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and embodying the love of God as the foundation for all actions and relationships. It highlights the need to move beyond mere moral discipline and cultural virtues to truly display the love of God. The speaker stresses the significance of allowing the Holy Spirit to pour God's love into our hearts, leading to a life marked by obedience to God's commands and genuine love for one another, especially within marriages and church relationships.*

**Scripture:** 1 John 4:19, 1 John 2:3, 1 John 4:11, Psalms 101:3, Psalms 16:8, Ephesians 6:12, John 13:34, Galatians 6:10

**Topics:** "God's Love", "Obedience in Relationships"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I wanted to share from 1 John chapter 4, verse 19, we love because He first loved us. That's the first thing I wanted to share as I thought about the burden of our church. We must not forget the principle on which everything we live is based off of, and it is off the love of God.

We have zero capacity to demonstrate and display the love of God, outside of God pouring His love inside of us. I want to stop and underline that word zero, you know, because we live in an educated part of the world. We live in a world where we can transform ourselves by good moral discipline.

We've learned to be cultured, we've learned to say yes, please, and thank you, we teach our children to do it. We teach morality, to be kind, to be grateful, to think about others. These are all virtues that, this is not unique to Christians.

Every religion is teaching a lot of the same things. And so it is why I underline that phrase, that we as Christians have to be different from that, and we are different in the very source of everything we do, and we have to keep reminding ourselves that we have, as I said, zero capacity to demonstrate and display the love of God. Not to demonstrate and display love.

If you use love, you've got all kinds of definitions of love, you've got all kinds of explanations of love, you can look at that person and say, hey, he's a very loving person. Our calling is not to display and demonstrate love. Our calling is to display and demonstrate the love of God.

How does an ant display and demonstrate the love of a human being? An ant can be loving to its other ants, but when you ask the ant to demonstrate the love of a human being, it's a very different requirement. And the sooner the ant gives up, the better it's going to be. The sooner the ant says, I have no chance, I have zero ability to demonstrate and to display the love of a human being, then the human being can have a chance, maybe if possible, to give the human's love to an ant.

That's not possible, but that's what God did for us. And so it's a resetting of all of us who live in a very educated part of the world, to not confuse human love with what God wants us to do. What God wants us to do is to demonstrate His love.

And we have to demonstrate, love one another as I have loved you. It's with this divine love that I'm giving you a commandment. And so when I take that commandment and I say, Lord, I'm going to try to love with my human attempts, I'm going to fail miserably, because the best that I'll produce is human love.

But for those of us who will say, I see what you're asking me to do, what you're asking me to do, Lord, is like asking an ant to demonstrate human love. Impossible. An ant just cannot love like a human does.

Why is it, Lord, that I think that I can love like you did? Why do you think I have a chance? Why do I think I have a chance? And when I see that, the absolute impossibility of it, it's when I can also appreciate what God did without me deserving it one bit. Completely undeserved. I can relax, rather than trying to perform before God, I can relax and allow the love of God to wash over me and to flood me.

This is what the Holy Spirit has come to do. This is why God said, I have to give you my Holy Spirit to do it, because you can't produce this divine love. But Romans 5 is such a very important word for us as we begin the Christian life, which is that the love of God has been poured out through the Holy Spirit.

The pouring of the love of God into our hearts through the Holy Spirit is so essential, which is how we need to really, at the very outset, be gripped with the ministry and the need for the Holy Spirit in all of our lives. Not for ministry, not for victory over sin, but for love, for the infinite love of God to be poured into our hearts that takes care of our insecurities, that takes care of anxiety and worry. The ministry of the Holy Spirit first has been given to our lives to fill us with the love of God and to help us to know that we are loved.

Anything we do, the greatest of all the virtues will be love. But we love because He first loved us. So if I don't have His divine love in me, it is going to be impossible.

And the reason we keep coming back to this is because we don't want to confuse in all high standards of what we read about in God's Word, because after all, God is asking us to live like Jesus lived, it's got to be an incredibly high standard. If we don't find the fuel, if we don't find the right source of it, we'll end up extremely frustrated. Which is why knowing the love of God, being secure in the love of God, and constantly realizing, Lord, I have zero ability to demonstrate your love, but you have promised it, that if I come to you like a child comes for food to his parents, maybe he'll get it.

And that's how simply the Lord will give me the Holy Spirit. And what will be the proof of the Holy Spirit? Love. The love of God that says, you're accepted.

You can come into my presence. This love has to be the source of it in everything we do. This undeserved yet lavish love is what we ought to start our Christian life with.

What good is our desire to be good? Useless. It doesn't help. Our good works? Useless.

Our so-called righteousness? Useless. Our mutilating ourselves through all kinds of hardship, self-sacrifice. What good is that? Useless.

That's Galatians chapter 5. What good is it if you offer your body to be burned? What good is it if you give all your possessions to the poor? Useless. If you don't have the love of God. So we have to stop trying to squeeze the rag to try to get a few drops of human love out of it.

We have to recognize the starting point of the gospel, which is it is unmerited. Not because we deserve it. And we have to find our place there.

We have to find our home there. This is not the first time we're speaking about this. This won't be the last time.

We have to build our home, abide in my love for you. That's what Jesus said. Abide.

Build your home in the love of God. And when I build my home in the love of God, I have to throw out all of my righteousness. I have to throw out all of my good works.

I have to throw out all of my self-sacrifice. I have to throw out a lot of things before I go into God's house, which is his house of love. I have to abide in that.

And the only thing that matters then is things that come out as a result of his love. So the only thing that will stand the fire of God when he judges us will be things that are produced out of love. Let all that you do be done out of the love of God.

That is why the output of my life is not my good works, not my sermons, not how much time I read the Bible, but how much came out of the inflow of God's love into my life. Otherwise, you've got a bunch of not evil works, but could be dead works. This is how critical it is for us to make sure that the inflow of everything that's going to come out, the inflow is the love of God.

Otherwise, we'll become religious, we'll become hypocritical, legalist, all kinds of things will come out because the inflow is not the love of God. I remember Bobby, I think, said something earlier this year that we are like a U-shaped pipe. What does a U-shaped pipe mean? If you pour water through one end, something ought to come out on the other end.

What are you going to pour in the one end? The love of God. That must come into us on one end. What must come out on the other end? Something that the love of God has produced.

And what God is asking us to do is to have the love of God, there's a word that I would say is the title of my message, called the love of God being perfected. The love of God ought to be perfected in us. And that's a phrase that's used in 1 John chapter 4. And perfected doesn't mean perfect, but completed.

That means the love of God has complete control over my life. And everything I do is done out of love, out of the love of God. Every ambition of mine is a result of the love of God.

Every passion, desire, burden is a result of the love of God. That's when the love of God has been perfected in my life. It has complete control over my life.

I heard a saint who said, love God and do whatever you want. I would say it this way, have the love of God completely controlling your life and then you can do whatever you want. Because what the love of God will push out of you is things, works, that come out of the love of God.

That is why we have to keep going back and asking ourselves whether we are in the love of God. Being in God's love is so critical because it tells me what's coming out. And so I can see a whole gush of activity coming out of people.

All kinds of activity. I don't know. Time will tell.

All kinds of giving. I mean, 1 Corinthians 13 says you can give all your possessions to the poor and God says useless. Imagine how we would have all looked at such a person.

Giving money, 10%, 20%, 30%, giving 100% one day and we all clap and say what an amazing man and God says useless. Because it wasn't produced as a result of the love of God. That is why being immersed in the love of God is so critical for everything we do, for any self-sacrifice, for anything we do is the love of God.

But then the love of God has to be perfected. And that's what I want as a burden for our church is that the love of God will be completely controlling all that we do. And in 1 John chapter 2, two things happens as the love of God is perfected.

This is how we know that the love of God is being perfected in our lives. 1 John chapter 2, verse 3 through 6. You know that eternal life is to know God as John chapter 17, verse 3. This is eternal life that you may know God the Father and Christ whom He sent. Look at what 1 John chapter 2, verse 3 says.

You want to know if you've come to know God? You'll keep His commands. What about somebody who says I know God but doesn't keep the commands? Verse 4, very clearly. Such a person is a liar.

Such a person is a liar. Verse 5, but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has been perfected. I want the love of God to be perfected in me.

What a beautiful calling. And God says here's how it can happen. Keep obeying the love of God.

Keep obeying the love of God. Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. Boring, daily obedience to God's word.

If God is pouring His love into me, the reason I don't obey is because I don't want to obey. Let me never give an excuse for why I don't obey. God tells me obey.

God tells me keep the commandments. I can't tell you the number of times I lied to myself and I allowed the lie of the devil to save me. I can't do it.

You know why I can't do it? Because you've not allowed the love of God into your life. That's why I can't do it. But as you allow the love of God into your life, you can do it.

No Christian should say I can't do it. I can't keep my eyes off of that, those websites. I can't keep my tongue from controlling itself.

You're a liar. The truth is not in you. You just don't know the love of God.

Don't say you know God. If you know the love of God, you will obey Him. You will obey Him.

So we can't, as much as we are absolutely useless before the love of God, if the love of God is being poured through the pipe, what must come out of it, if you have the love of God coming through one end of the pipe, must be an obedience to the commandments. It must be there. I'm not saying it's perfect obedience all the time, but it must be an increasing obedience to the commandments.

And if year after year we don't find an increasing obedience to the commandments, let me remind us with what we see in 1 John 2 verse 4. You say you know God. You say you know the love of God, but keeping the commandments is not coming out. You're a liar.

The truth is not in you. And so while other people may say, well, there may be many reasons, you know, don't give up. I just want to say get to know the love of God.

Immerse yourself in the love of God. And if you know the love of God, you will keep the commandments. The new covenant life is accessible to all of us right now.

If we don't access it in 2018, if we don't access it in 2018, it's on us. We have to be gripped with that. And we have to take God at His word.

Lord, let me start by telling you that it is impossible for me to live the divine life. Impossible. But you said you're going to pour the love of God into my life.

You said that. That's the starting point. Not because I deserve it, not because I was good, not because I did anything good, but I'm deserved.

You said you're going to pour your life into me. You're going to pour your love into me. Well, if that's the case, if that's the assumption, I know what I should be able to do.

I should be able to obey the commandments. Show me a person who's not obeying God's commandments, and I'll show you a person who doesn't know God. Can we read 1 John 2, verse 4, and agree with that? Ten-year-olds, 12-year-olds will read this passage and understand it.

It's not complicated. Lord, I want to know you. You've come to know me? Well, let me just look.

Are you keeping the commandments? No excuse. No pushing it on till tomorrow to obey God's commandments. Lord, I want your love to be perfected in me.

And the other thing in which the love of God is perfected is 1 John 4, verses 11 and 12. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God, but if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

We heard from Jeremy earlier. Ministering to the Lord is completely obedient and a daily concern for his church, for his people. That's what it says here too.

Those are the two things. Completely obedient, keeping his commandments, 1 John 2. Love will be perfected in us. And then 1 John 4, verse 12.

Loving one another. And I want to make a very important note about who is being talked about when it says love one another. This is not the world.

God is not telling me to love the world and all the people in the world. God is telling me the commandment is love one another. If you remember, in John chapter 13, Jesus says, A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

By this shall the whole world. So he distinguishes between loving one another and the whole world. Jesus could have said, here's a new commandment, love the whole world as I have loved you.

And this is how the whole world will know that you're my disciples. But he didn't say that. And throughout the New Testament and in the New Covenant, God's new commandment is love one another.

And there's a special love that God wants us to have for his people, for his family, which is the church. God asks us to love our enemies. God asks us to love our neighbors.

But there's a special love. Do good to all people, especially to the household of faith. In Galatians 6 it says, there's a special love that we must have for the people in our church.

And I want to show that in this verse and context. This is how the Lord showed me that the love for our local church is essential. God doesn't tell you which church you ought to go to.

God doesn't give you His word saying you must go to this particular church. But God says, go to a church. Get plugged into a church.

Become a church family. But then to that local church, God says I want you to love them in a special way. I got that.

The way the Lord showed that to me is from 1 John 4 verse 20. Later in that passage it says, if someone says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother whom he sees cannot love the God whom he has not seen.

What I learned from this, that's in verse 21 too. That the commandment given from God is that the one who loves God must love his brother. What I learned from that was this.

It is easy for me to say I love God because I never see Him. It's very difficult for me to say I love, but it's a completely different thing to love the brother or the sister that I do see. Everybody can fool themselves saying I love God, I love God.

Well, you never see Him. He never gets into your space. It's easy for you to say you love Him.

Well, what about your brother? He gets in your way. He bothers you every now and then. Well, so let me just stay at a distance.

I'll talk to them every now and then. God says you're a liar. You can say you love God and you don't see Him.

Well, what about the person you do see? So from that I also learned it's easy for me to say I love my brothers in India. How often do I see them? I never see them. Easy for me to love the worldwide church.

Oh, let's pray for the Christians in Iraq. Easy, easy for us to pray for the Christians in Iraq. I never see them.

Now you see how it is getting closer and closer to who are the Christians that you see? Those are the ones God says He loves. Easy for you to tell me to pray for Iraq or for India or for Argentina. What about the brother that you do see? You're a liar.

You say you love God. Oh, God, I spend a lot of time in prayer, reading your Bible. If you don't love your brother and your sister whom you do see, you're a liar.

What do you do to show that you love your brothers and your sisters? This is a special commandment that we have to be gripped with, to have a burden, to ask God to give us a burden for the people who God has entrusted as a family with us. And I want to draw that even closer to the very specific burden that the Lord has given me for this church. It is easy for you to love me whom you see only once or twice a week than it is for you to love your wife whom you see every day or to love your husband whom you see every day.

Much easier for you to love me. I'm a nice guy compared to you. You've never seen me.

My wife may have a different opinion about me. My children may not find it as easy to love me because they see me all the time. It's the same principle of how often you see them.

You get closer. And my burden is that our church will have loving marriages. I fear that 2018 or 2019 or 2020 or whatever it is, there will be breaks in the unity between marriages.

It may not be big, big, big breaks. But little, little breaks. And there may be breaks already in marriages that are in our church.

And this is for me, the Lord has been impressing me on this for weeks, that I'm very afraid that NCCS will become a church where fissures, where breaks happen between marriages. And so take this as a warning from the Lord. Don't say you love God whom you cannot see.

You're going through the Bible. You know all this doctrine of all kinds of wonderful truths. But if you can't say you love your wife, you're a liar.

Look, some of us have a difficult marriage. Some of our wives are not even in the church. I understand those things.

But most of us, our wives are in the church. Our husbands are in the church. Have we embraced the truth that God doesn't look at us as two people? That God looks at us as one? And understand me.

I'm not trying to preach some theology that says God's going to, if one husband goes to heaven, the wife goes to heaven too. No, but there is some significance to where the Bible says the two have become one flesh. And so when I say I love God and there's a fissure in my marriage or there's a little bit of sin that I love where my eyes are not controlled, where my thought life about how I think about other women are not drastically and ruthlessly dealt with for us men, and women, in the way we talk, the way we talk towards our husbands, if there's not a respect for our husbands in the way we speak, we are unbiblical.

And so we can have the greatest Bible studies, women. We can have the Bible studies on Sundays and Tuesdays or wherever we meet. But if we as women have not learned to speak respectfully to our husbands, there's something tragically wrong.

In our marriages. And we as husbands have not learned how to radically love our wives much more than we love our family and our culture. There's something tragically wrong.

And it's in the marriages that we have to really fight to maintain that unity within each other. Way before we try to even take care of the other brothers and sisters in the church. So dear brothers and sisters, I know I'm speaking specifically for married people, but let's not bring dishonor to God's name in our marriages.

Let's work on the opposite end of perfecting love. Let us make sure that 2018 is a year where our marriages became stronger, strengthened. And each of us are responsible for that.

So that we may be perfected in unity. And even for the single people, that you can have a singular relationship with the Lord. That nothing will come in between that.

No career, no other ambition will come between that. That we will all be individually united to the Lord. That is my design.

And let me end with what Bobby also shared. Routine must never replace relationship. How do you brothers and sisters ask yourself whether you're doing well in the Lord? How do you do it every day? Do you ask yourself? Lord, how am I doing? You should.

I try to do it every day. Many times a day. How am I doing, Lord? How do you evaluate that? Don't evaluate it by routine.

Evaluate it by relationship. Evaluate it by the way you are. Allowing the love of God to pour in through the pipe.

And because of that love of God pouring through the pipe, you've seen a love to obey your commandments. A longing to obey your commandments. A longing to love your people.

A longing to love those who have been given to you. To care for them. And if we are not there, let us be honest with ourselves.

Saying, Lord, I am the reason why I have not achieved what I could have in 2017. I am the problem, not you. Not my circumstances, not other situations.

Not my past, not my parents. All that stuff. No, no, no, no.

Lord, I am the reason. I want to end with David. What's called a man after God's own heart.

What does it mean to be a man after God's own heart? I thought about it this way. I want to be a man after God's own heart. Lord, I am so enthralled and enamored and blown away with your heart that I want to copy it.

I want a heart exactly like yours. I am so amazed. Blown away by your heart.

I want your heart. And what I did when I thought about that thought, Lord, I want a heart exactly like your heart. I started reading God's word.

Seeing how God is. I didn't read the commands God sent you to do this. I read the promises of God.

God said, I'm like this to you. And I realized, Lord, you are so full of mercy. You are so rich in love.

You don't take into account all the bad things that have happened. I want that heart. I want to be exactly like God.

Who is so full of mercy. Who is like the prodigal father. Who just welcomed the son home.

I want a heart of God that loves righteousness. A man after God's own heart. Means I'm so caught up with how good God is.

I want to be that good. And it's not an obedience to the commandments. It's a deep admiration for that heart.

It's like you watch a sportsman play a sport. And you want to dribble like he dribbles. And you want to shoot like he shoots.

And you want to hit the ball like he hits. You want to copy it exactly. Because it looks so beautiful.

The way the person hits the ball and dances or whatever it is. And you want to copy it exactly. What about a heart full of love? Read God's heart.

How the Israelites were so evil. And so worshipped all these idols. But then God had compassion on them.

And came and rescued them. And then the other time when they grumbled against God. And God gave them meat.

And God was compassionate to them over and over again. I want a heart to be like yours, God. I want to have that heart.

And it is not an obedience to the commandment. Be like me. It is a deep admiration for God.

That's what God loved about David. He was a man who was just so caught up with God's heart. He looked at God's heart and said, wow.

Wow, what an amazing heart God has. I want that. And I want to have that heart of adoration.

I want to have the heart that admires God so deeply. That it doesn't become an obedience to the commandment so much. It is a deep admiration.

It is a difference between living life under the law. And living life under the commandments. Just as if it is a rule-based life.

I pray that our hearts will be drawn to our spouses. Dear brothers and sisters. That we will be united with them.

As if it was on our marriage day. Dear brothers and sisters, fight for your marriages. And those of us who are single, fight for your devotion to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7, read that chapter at the end of it. It says, undistracted devotion to the Lord. That's the advantage of being single.

The advantage of being single is undistracted devotion to the Lord. And with the marriages that can come, distractions, seek to be one. Seek to be one with your wives and your husbands.

Fight for it. Do not fool. Let us not fool ourselves that we have anything to boast of.

Because we're coming to a good church or we believe good doctrines. If our marriages are squandering. And if 2018 does not result in a better marriage than 2017.

Then the only fault will be on us. So let us take it seriously. And the reason I say this is because underneath.

My concern is underneath all of our being a part of this church. We are hearing such great truths over and over again every week. That our heads can become so big.

Our thoughts can become so massive. And we live in an educated part of the world too. So we're all very smart people.

You've got smart brains and you've got lots of great information. And it can become big, big, big heads. But childish and worse than the heathen in some of our daily actions.

Shouting at each other. Husbands and wives pouting with each other. Husbands and wives not being united with each other.

Longing to be one with one another. Heathens who don't have any concept of God are able to figure this out. How pathetic would it be that if we proclaim all these wonderful truths of the love of God and all of those things.

Cannot obey God's command to say Lord I want to have a blessed marriage. And that we will not tolerate any sin if we are individual Christians. Let us spend a few minutes praying.

And asking the Lord to impress what has been spoken to us. Into our hearts. The source dear brothers and sisters is to know the love of God.

Nothing else. Nothing else. To know the love of God.

This is the source from which everything else knows. Our marriages are not what it should be because we don't know the love of God. Our lives are not a life that's been increasingly freed from stumbling because we don't know the love of God.

And we say Lord I want the love of God to be poured into my life. So let us take many opportunities during the day in 2018. To adore him.

They sing that song come let us adore him at Christmas time. We should be singing it every other day. Let us start 2018.

Let us start today at the end of 2017. With a desire to adore God. To adore Jesus.

Another word is worship. To worship him. In the beauty of his holiness.

To worship him. Because he is God and we are pieces of dust. And God has given us these pieces of dust a chance to obey him.

Let us be so deeply grateful that we have been given the privilege to live a holy life. Let us not stop ever saying Lord this is a difficult life. Let us cut it out from our vocabulary that this is such a high standard that is being preached.

What a privilege it is that God has given us the opportunity to live like him. To have a heart like his. To have his love in our lives.

It's a great privilege dear brothers and sisters. It's not a horrible burden. It's a wonderful privilege to live life blameless and holy.

To live like Jesus. I have set the Lord always before me. Psalm 7 chapter 16.

In Psalm 101 I will set no worthless thing before me. Remove all the worthless things called career. Called vacations.

Called family. Called all those other things. Whom have I in heaven but thee.

I have set you Lord Jesus before me. I want to adore you. Dear brothers and sisters let's use the few minutes that we have to cry out to him, pray to him and ask God to make 2018 radically different.

Father I want to come Lord and I want to be absolutely clear Lord that I'm not playing some game. You say that our wrestling is against principalities and power Lord, spiritual forces. Lord I really want to take this fight seriously.

I don't want to impress men. I'm not fighting against men. But the devil Lord sees a lot more than any man sees.

The devil and his army is my enemy. He sees a lot more than what any man sees. He sees my response Lord to lust.

He sees my response to when my spouse provokes me. And he's not fooled. He sees Lord my attraction to the things of this world.

He sees Lord my attraction to money. And to a good life. I'm fooling myself Lord if I think I can fight him.

And I'm not a soldier in my private life. Lord I want to embrace my calling to be a soldier who's going to have to fight the devil and his forces of evil. So I want to watch Lord my actions.

I want to watch my thought life. I want to watch what I set before my eyes. I want to set no worthless thing Lord.

I want to set you always at my right hand. Protect this church Lord Jesus. We preach wonderful truths of the full gospel Lord.

Protect us Lord from a life of hypocrisy. Protect our marriages Lord. Protect our individual lives.

There's so many things happening in secret. That the devil sees and you see Lord Jesus. And you speak your word to warm your church.

We always go ahead of our church Lord. We pray Lord Jesus that you will take it seriously. Protect this church Lord Jesus.

We want to be a pure bride for you. Be with us Lord in Jesus name.

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