

Love's Four Prepositions

by Steve Mays

Pastor Steve Mays explores the profound dimensions of God's love through four key prepositions that illustrate its progression in our lives.

Duration: 30:47

Scripture: 1 John 3:2-4

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Steve Mays discusses the supernatural progression of God's love for us. He explains that God's love has always been directed towards us, but now it desires to be in us so that we can be vessels of His love to others. Pastor Steve refers to this progression as Love's Four Prepositions: directed towards us, given to us, manifested in us, and made perfect with us. He emphasizes the importance of loving others and how God's love transforms our hearts and enables us to love as He loves. The sermon is based on verses from 1 John chapter 4, highlighting God's love for us and His ultimate expression of love through sending His Son to give us life.

Transcript

It's the 2010 Summer of Sermons with Steve Mays. Today, Pastor Steve Mays talks about the supernatural progression of God's love for you. God's love has always been to you.

Now, God's love desires to be in you. So that through your life, He might be able to save that child. To minister to that person.

And God is looking to move in. To dominate your life. Love.

How can such a little word be so vast in meaning? Love's a noun, it's a verb, it's strong affection, devotion, admiration. Love is also a progression that's shown in the way God loves us. The Lord's love is directed toward us, given to us, manifested in us, and made perfect with us.

That's what Pastor Steve calls love's four prepositions. Let's listen. 1 John chapter 4. If you're taking notes, jot down love's four prepositions.

And there are four verses I want to share with you. Verse 9, verse 12, verse 16, and verse 17. Great verses.

9, 12, 16, and 17 of 1 John chapter 4. Last week we took a look at 1 John chapter 3. And it is one of those unique chapters that had to deal with really loving people. So, if I say that I love God and do not love my brethren, how dwells the love of God in me? Or, if I see my brother have a need and shut up my vows of compassion, how does the love of God dwell in me? Or, if I hate my brethren, how can I say that I love God? John has really gone after this one issue over and over again. But one thing I didn't tell you, that I want to tell you today, is in 1 John chapter 3, verse 2. Notice it says, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.

But we know, underline the word know, but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Now notice verse 14 of chapter 3. We know, underline we know, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brethren abides in death.

So in verse 2, underline we know. In verse 14, we know. Now check this out, verse 19.

And hereby, underline we know, that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. And one more, in chapter 3, verse 24. And he that keepeth his commandments dwells in him, and he in him.

And hereby, guess what? We, what? Know, that he abides in us, by the spirit which he has given us. There are two words for the word know. One is, I know about the church, or I know about a building.

The second is the word know, by Adam and Eve, by a relationship, by an intimate relationship. It says Peter, when he ran into the tomb, he was able to see, or he gazed. But when John ran in, it says he knew.

Now the two different words for knowledge is one, eh, okay. The other one is, man, he is really risen. One is, yeah, okay, the other one is, man, we're gonna have a baby.

An intimate relationship, I know my wife. Well, it's important to realize that when John is speaking about Christianity, he says here in chapter 3 verse 2, I know that he is coming. And then in verse 14, I know that I am going to heaven because I'm loving my brethren.

And then in verse 19, I know the truth. And then in verse 24, I know I abide because he abides in me. It is the strongest knowledge that you can get.

So if I'm wavering with the Lord's coming, or wavering in the sense that I don't really have a lot of love for people, or kind of wavering that I really don't know what truth is, then Christianity needs to really take a big dive up towards heaven. Because carnality isn't really sure. Christianity knows.

So when you come to chapter 4, something happens about this knowledge. And in chapter 4, there are four verses. In verse 9, his love towards us.

Underline the word towards us. A preposition. And then in verse 12, in us.

Again, the preposition in us. And then in verse 16, to us. To us.

And then in verse 17, with us. So we're going to be taking a look at really the importance of the love of God. God's love for me.

And God's love directed towards me. So we would say that God has directed his love towards us. But then we find that God has initiated a deeper relationship.

He desires to come to us. He knocks at the door. And then we find that God wants to take habitation.

He wants to live inside of us. And lastly, he wants to be all over us. He wants to be the Lord of our lives.

So let's take one of these at a time. It's kind of really a fun study. Very simply.

But his love towards us. And I want to speak to you really about the love of God today. In verse 9. So the direction of love is towards me.

In this was manifested the love of God towards us. Because that God sent his only begotten son into the world. That we might live through him.

Another translation. And God showed his love for us. By sending his only son into the world.

So that we might have life through him. Or one other translation. And the amplified.

In this the love of God was made manifest. Or displayed. Where we are concerned.

In that God sending his son. His only begotten son into the world. That we might have life through him.

Now you will find as you read through 1st John. That it says for this purpose. Was he manifested.

And then again it says for this reason. He came. So we know that in 1st John 2. It says for this reason he came.

That he would be able to share. And forgive sin. Then it says for this purpose he came.

To destroy the work of the devil. So two things are very important. Within my Christian walk.

Why did Jesus Christ come? He did not come to establish a kingdom. He did not come to reinvent. Or try to recorrect the Roman government.

It is really interesting. That he never went after the Roman government. Never dealt with them.

Never really talked about them. Never told his disciples. How to be politically correct.

We know that he said give to Caesars. What Caesars? Give to God what is God's. But his mission in life.

Was coming to take away. The sins of the world. And secondly to destroy the work of the devil.

And we know that to be true. When the man was let down through the roof. Jesus said your sins are forgiven.

And they went crazy. And then he said pick up your bed and walk. Because the spiritual healing.

Was more important than the physical healing. And where we go wrong in our life. Is that often times we think.

That if I could just change the husband. Or change the kids. Or get out of the situation.

Or get a better job. I would do so much better. And that's not really true.

I choose. To live the way I'm living. Because I choose not to trust God.

And that's a hard pill to swallow. In today's society. We want to blame somebody.

And that's why we're not on fire for Jesus Christ. We want to say that something happened to us. Therefore that's why we're drinking or sleeping around.

Because we've been hurt by somebody else. When in reality. I need to come to a saving knowledge of God.

Now Jesus said he came to destroy the work of Satan. And he did. Oh death where is thy sting.

Oh grave where is thy victory. In other words he annihilated Satan. No longer can he bite you.

He can gum you to death. But Jesus Christ has knocked his teeth out. And all he has is gums.

He can put the fear in you. But it's only a shadow of death. He cannot touch you or kill you without God's permission.

And you remember the time that Jesus came to the Gadareans. They ran up and the demon said we know who thou art. Thou art the holy one of Israel.

What do you want from us. They knew who Jesus was. Christ came to redeem you.

And to save you and I from our sins. And to destroy Satan so that Jesus could take you back to heaven. So the first thing I realize his love is towards us.

Now you say well I don't understand. Well sometimes wives get really upset with their husbands. Because they're not loving enough.

Well let me put it a different way. Is he trying? Well I guess he is. So he is trying to love you.

Yes. So then you would say that his love is towards you. Yeah I guess I could say that.

Then that's good. It's not towards another woman. It's not towards alcohol.

It's not towards something else. He really is trying to do the very best he can. Okay I can buy that.

Maybe your kids are not home and they don't really want to come home. But they are calling you once in a while. In other words you're not off the planet.

You're close. But every once in a while they think about you. So would it be safe to say that their love is towards you.

Not a hundred percent. But at least they know where mom and dad live. Sure it would be.

It's not what you want. It's never going to be what you want. But at least the love is directed.

Well God's love has always been towards you. Before the foundations of the earth Christ died for sinners. If you go all the way back and you look at the counsel of God.

It was predetermined that the only thing that made sense was the cross of Christ. So it was God's way of loving you. Justifying God's nature.

Taking you into heaven because of the ignorance of our sin. So while we were without Christ alienated from the world. Mad at God his love has been towards us.

That's all I want to say. So see God doesn't hate you. God isn't against you.

It was Jacob that jumped up and said if I only knew that he was in this place. He was. It was Joseph that said all these things are for me.

If you met them to be evil. God met them to be good. So the first step of understanding any type of a relationship.

Is it towards you? But no matter where you go in the Bible. God's love has always been towards his people. He picked them up out of the street.

He clothed them. He reached out to them. You remember with Hosea.

And all the way through concerning. Israel's sinfulness. It was God that reached out.

God has always been towards me. When I was in sin. When I was shot.

When I was taking drugs. God's love was towards me. I was preordained in my mother's womb.

God chose me. God called me. God knew I'd be with them one day.

Now no one's ever done that. Sometimes people love me. Sometimes they don't.

Sometimes people want to see me. Other times they don't. But God has always been towards me.

The second thing I find is. His love is to us. Not only is it towards us.

The direction of God is towards you. But secondly. His love is to us.

In verse 16. The intention of his love is to me. Notice it says in verse 16.

And we have no one. The same word. That relationship knowledge.

We have no one. And believe. The love that God has to us.

God is love. And he that dwells in love. Dwelleth in God.

And God in him. Another translation. And we ourselves know and believe.

The love which God has for us. God is love. And whosoever liveth.

Is loved. Lives in union with God. And God lives in a union with him.

I like this the very best. The amplified. And we know.

We understand. We recognize. We are conscious of.

The observation. And by experience. And believe.

To put our faith. In the love of God. Because God loves us.

The second thing is. To us. Now.

When we go back to this. Tiny little relationship. Honey I'm coming home.

My love is towards my wife. Now when are you coming home? That's what you say. Now.

You say now. Is that an hour from now? Ten minutes from now? Hey I'm coming home. What does that mean? Okay we won't go there.

I'm coming home. My heart is to get home. There's traffic.

Things happening. I want to get home. So I get home.

And she's glad to see me. My dog is much happier to see me. No doubt.

He comes to the door. He doesn't. I haven't kept him waiting.

You know. He's excited. So we're sitting around.

And it's kind of cool. But all of a sudden. She's cooking.

I walk over and put my hand on her shoulder. Begin to massage her back. Oh.

Now. I'm home. You see.

I was heading towards home. But now. I'm actually touching her.

And I think sometimes in your life. God looks towards you. And God sees.

And you say well what is he doing? But God wants you to know. That you can touch him. And you can see his love in a very.

Very powerful way. And I think it's important to see that. He says here we ourselves know and believe.

The love which God has for us. So. Are you willing to let God touch you? And this is the love that God wants you to know.

That he is there. Call on me. And the day of trouble.

And I will be there. It's very important. Look to the heels.

And I will be there. Throughout the Bible. God is asking you.

To call. And he will always be there. He'll never leave you.

Nor forsake you. So the first preposition is towards us. The second is to us.

The third is even better. In verse 12. His love is in us.

Notice the habitation of God's love. Verse 12. No man has seen God at any time.

If we love one another. God dwells in us. And his love is perfect in us.

Now let me read this again. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another.

God dwells in us. Now that's a key. Another translation.

No one has ever seen God. But we are loved each other. God lives in us.

And his love has brought us to full expression through us. In other words. Now.

Something really is happening. First of all. Yes God.

I know you love me. Well Stephen. I'm knocking at your door.

More than I love you. I want to be next to you. Better yet.

I want to come inside of you. Now if God's love comes inside of me. Then the love of God is going to be shed abroad.

If the love of God is shed abroad. There is your love. To love people with.

You say well I don't have that type of love. I don't know how to love people. I don't trust people.

We're not talking about that. We're talking about the experience of you and God. That God's love has always been directed towards you.

You didn't know it. Secondly. God's love has always been to you.

You didn't know that. Now God's love desires to be in you. So that through your life.

He might be able. To save that child. To save that husband.

To minister to that person. And God is looking. To move in.

To allow his love to dominate your life. That is such a powerful thing. It's unbelievable.

You begin to look. How you can be a blessing. I don't know what happened.

But this is pretty easy for me to do this stuff. I just. We had dinner last night.

They took us out. There was a woman that had listened to my Bible studies. And Jerusalem.

And Galilee for so many years. This is so funny. And there were like 80 people listening to my minor prophets.

And so here I am at Outback. And the owner of the Outback kind of goes here. So we kind of have built a relationship.

And so I was there. And we were a little bit late. And we walked in.

And we both kind of ran into each other. And I said, I'm sorry. She goes, you're Steve Mays.

I said, well, how do you know that? Well, your voice. Well, who are you? Well, I'm from Israel. From Galilee.

I'm the one that sends you all those letters. And you send me all. Are you kidding me? I was shocked.

Well, we went on talking. And I had to do my birthday thing. And I was sitting there.

And I thought, you know. I think we'll buy him dinner. And so we just paid for the dinner.

We didn't tell them. I mean, I don't care about my reward. That's not the issue here.

But it's just that it was the moment that I felt like, how can I love them? How can I help them? How can I be a blessing to them? And so the bill came. I said, let me have the bill. I signed the bill.

And we went off. And I went home. And the way I look at it is, you know, I didn't have to pay for my birthday dinner.

And so I paid for that dinner. And it was just so cool. I loved doing that.

But there was a time that I would shoot somebody. So which do you want? Me buy you dinner or me shoot you? You see, that's the option here. You say, you're kidding me.

No. The option was me carrying a gun going crazy or me having Jesus loving people. Well, see, even when I was carrying a gun, chasing my mother down the street with a machete, doing all these horrible things, God's love was still directed towards me.

God was still after me. And because there was a time at San Pedro when we were like, you know, in ninth grade. I was stoned.

And Aunt Mildred said that God was going to use me. She had a dream that I was going to be a pastor in South Bay. And we laughed about it.

And she ruined my whole trip. I mean, I was no longer stoned. And then I found out they gave me these books on, you know, this guy called Ironside on Ephesians.

And that was their favorite. Well, that's the best commentary you can get. And so when I was in sin, shooting and drugs, I had commentaries and people giving me things and telling me I was going to be.

So his love was directed. And then one day God knocked on my heart. But the day that I said, come in, God filled my heart.

He took away the bitterness. Took away the resentment. Took away the anger for that person who molested me.

Took away the victim attitude and called me to be his son. Which leads me to the fourth point. Number one, his love was towards me.

Very simply, his love was directed towards me. Second, his love was to me. A very interesting, his intention was always me.

Third, his love is in us. He desires to live inside of me. And lastly, his love is with us.

The perfection of love. Notice verse 17. Herein is our love made perfect.

Or complete. Or mature. That we may have boldness in the day of judgment.

Because as he is, so are we in this world. Another translation. As we live in God, our love grows more perfect.

So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment. I like this one. Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on the day of judgment.

And what he's saying, very simply, is that when you are loving God's way, you will never, ever be afraid of anything. Remember Paul said, very simply to Timothy, God has not given to you the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Second Timothy 1.7. Now here, John is saying, be perfected in that love.

So yes, your husband might not treat you right. But you need to perfect that love of God. So what he doesn't give you, God will give you.

But if you're too mad to see it, and too sad to go after it, then you're going to allow your heart to be bitter. So we're not talking about human experience. We're talking about you and God.

That there was a time that God looked at you. He came and died. He knocked on your door, and very simply, he said, I'm talking to you.

You opened the door. He came into your heart. And now he wants to perfect his love in your life in a very powerful way.

Why? Because if I say I love God and hate, I deceive myself. This is real Christian living at the highest. If my kids come back, and they have taunted me, but they said they're coming back, and now they're in town, and they called me, well, they're still closer.

Well, they're not here yet. You know, maybe God won't send them because of your lousy attitude. How about, Lord, if you want them here, bring them.

And when they walk through that door, I'm going to love them. I'm going to love them the way you loved me, with an unconditional love. So just remember, how God loves.

He has directed His love. He has made it very personable to you. He has taken residence inside of you.

And He'll never leave you nor forsake you. God's love directed toward us, given to us, manifested in us, and made perfect with us. Pastor Steve Mays, talking about love's four prepositions.

And right now, we'd like to reintroduce a book that apparently has been a real big blessing to thousands since its release. It's called A Heartbeat from Hell. And in this great book, Steve shares the events that brought him to faith in Christ.

Desperate and hopeless and literally sleeping in gutters is where Steve was at one point. And then one day, the Lord took him from the gutter to grace. This incredible account has people talking.

One comment at our website reads, Thank you, Pastor Steve, for sharing your testimony. It's encouraging to hear someone who has been through rough times be transformed by Jesus. I personally find it very relatable.

One other listener said, Your story inspires me to look to Christ and His word. He has taken your past and brought about such good fruit. To Him be the glory.

A Heartbeat from Hell is an inspiring example of how God can use us to the fullest, even when we're weak and disabled. Is there someone in your life who could use this kind of encouragement? If so, why don't you get in touch today and ask for a copy of A Heartbeat from Hell or the Spanish version Un Latiro del Inferno. Call 1-800-339-WISE.

We'll give you all the details on Steve's book A Heartbeat from Hell or Un Latiro del Inferno. That's 1-800-339-WISE. Also online at lightoftheword.org That's lightoftheword.org Or write to us at [lightofthewordbox300](mailto:lightofthewordbox300@lightoftheword.org) Torrance, CA 90507 That just about does it for right now but join us next time when we once again dive into the Light of the Word.

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