

The Love of Christ

September 8, 2006

I want to talk to you today about the love of Christ.

The Bible tells us:

Romans 5:6-8 (NKJV)

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. [8] But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

The golden text of the Bible is:

John 3:16 (NKJV)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The **godhead** is a mystery that the human mind has **trouble understanding**.

The clear teaching of scripture from Genesis to Revelation is that there is only **One God!**

Deuteronomy 6:4 (NKJV)

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!

Deuteronomy 4:35 (NKJV)

To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is **none other besides Him**.

When the scribes asked Jesus;

Mark 12:28-29 (NKJV)

"Which is the first commandment of all?" [29] Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

And yet,

1 John 5:7 (NKJV)

For there are **three that bear witness** in heaven: the **Father**, the **Word**, and the **Holy Spirit; and these three are one.**

The One God of the Bible has revealed Himself to us as The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit.

When we talk about the Father, we're talking about God who is **Spirit**, who inhabits the **whole universe** and always **is!** Who is **invisible.**

- **The Bible says;**

Jeremiah 23:24 (NKJV)

"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord.

It says;

Psalms 90:1-2 (NKJV)

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
[2] Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
Even from **everlasting to everlasting, You are God.**

The Father never slumbers, he never grows weary, he never **arrives;** He's already **there!**

- **He said,**

Isaiah 46:9-10 (NKJV)

For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like Me,
[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 My pleasure.'

- **Psalm 147:4-5 (NKJV)** says;
He counts the number of the stars;
He calls them all by name.
[5] **Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;**
His understanding is **infinite**.

That means, He is without **limitations** of any kind.

But in His mercy and grace, He came to this earth wrapped Himself in flesh and dwelt among us!

Make no mistake about it! Jesus was not **another** God or a demagogue or the second in command in a panel of **three Gods**.

He was God Himself, wrapped in flesh. He was Emmanuel “God with us”.

1 Tim. 3:16 (NKJV)

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was **manifested in the flesh**...

- As to His **humanity**, He was the **Son of Man**
- As to His **dwinity**, He was the **Son of God**
- He was outwardly a **Jew**, He was inwardly **Jehovah**

Perhaps the Godhead can best be explained in human terms by looking at H₂O in **three** different forms.

Take a glass of **ice water**, ask someone what it is, He will say it's **ice** and it's **water**. Put that same water on a stove and boil it becomes steam.

So we would say we have three different things, we have **ice**, we have **water**, we have **steam**. But take it to a **chemist** and ask him ; what it is and he will say, It's H₂O, The **ice is H₂O**, The **water is H₂O**, The **steam is H₂O**.

Each has different **characteristics**, each has a different **function**, But each is yet the **same!**

The same it true of the Godhead:

- **The Father** is the fullness of the **Godhead Invisible**, who inhabits the whole universe.
- **The Son** is the fullness of the **Godhead**, manifested in **flesh**, He is the image of the invisible God, He is the **word** who became flesh and dwelt among us.
- **The Holy Spirit** is **God** moving in the **lives of men**.

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are not three Gods; there is only one God who has chosen to function in three distinct personalities.

However, **when we look at Jesus**, we must understand that He was not only **God**, but He was also a **man**.

He was not **half-God** and **half-man**.

As to His divinity, He was **truly God** manifested in flesh.

But as to His **humanity**, he was truly a **man** in **every way**.

The Bible says; He got **thirsty**, He got **hungry**, He got **weary**, He went to **sleep**, He **wept** and He was **tempted** in all points as we are.

He looked like any other man because He was a man.

He felt every **emotion** and **feeling** that you and **I feel**.

When He faced death on the cross, He **felt** the **agony** and **pain** and **shame**.

It took love beyond what we humans can comprehend for the **Father** to send **His only begotten Son** to become a **human sacrifice**.

The picture in the Old Testament which foreshadows Calvary is **Abraham** taking his **son Isaac** to offer him as a burnt offering to God.

We **talk** about the great faith and love Abraham for his son. **But think about Isaac**, he was a teenager; **he knew what was going on**. And yet, **he** was **willing** to lay down his life.

And when I think of Christ, I must think of Him as a **man** not as **God**, when He **died** for our sins.

As a man for men He died!

And for me, **that makes what He did even more amazing and significant.**

God didn't die on that cross, His **human Son died** on that **cross**. The **Lamb** of God **died** on that cross.

And He did it because He loved you and He loved me! Even while we were yet **sinner**s, **He was willing to die for us.**

You say, "Well, he had **no** choices" "He died because he **had** to die."

No, that's not true, He said;

John 10:17-18 (NKJV)

I lay down My life that I may take it again. [18]No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

Before He ever was arrested, He told His disciples what was going to happen, He told them He was going to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed.

Matthew 16:22 (NKJV)

Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

Matthew 16:23 (NLT)

Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, and not from God's."

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter tried to save Jesus from being arrested. He took out his sword and cut off the ear of one of the servants of the High priest. And Jesus said.....

Matthew 26:52-53 (NKJV)

..."Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. [53] Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

Let me tell you something. One angel can destroy a whole army. Twelve legions of angels could destroy every demonic force on earth in a heart beat. Jesus didn't have to die. He could have chosen not to. But He gave His life willingly for you and me.

Why? Because He loved us!

Paul wrote.....

Ephes. 5:25 (NKJV)

Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ also loved the church** and gave Himself for her,

Christ knew exactly what He was doing. He saw the church that He was going to build. He saw those who would be saved and receive eternal life. He saw you even before you were born and He told His Father, "I'll do it! I'll take his place. I'll take her place. I'll be his substitute. I'll die in his place."

You must get a revelation of how much Christ loves you! The gospel is that Christ loves you. He may not approve of you conduct, but He loves you anyway.

Jesus said to the woman who had been married five times and was living with a man that she wasn't married to.....

John 4:23 (NKJV)

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

Who is He seeking to worship Him? Real people....with all of their hang ups and humanness and flaws. People just like that woman. Christ died for her so that she might become a woman who would worship the father in Spirit and in truth. He came to seek and to save those who are lost.

He knows all about your past. He knows all about your present. He knows all about your future. He knows about your failure before you fail yet He loves you and wants to heal you and forgive you and use you.

Sometimes we get the idea that, “Yes, God forgave me when I received Christ as my Savior but I don’t think that He will forgive me now. I’ve blown it. I’ve committed adultery. I’ve gotten drunk. I’ve cursed. I’ve taken drugs. I’ve lied.

I know that He forgave me before but I don’t think that he will forgive me again.

You may look at people in the church and think, “They’re so holy. They never sin. They never have sinful thoughts. I just can’t measure up to them.”

Listen. Every person in this church has failed. We have all sinned and fallen short of the standard that God has set for us. Every person in this church and every other church has done things for which he or she had to ask for God’s forgiveness.

Jesus was always having to correct His disciples. They argued among themselves as to who was the greatest....Peter denied that he even knew the Lord in a crisis situation...Even the great Apostle Paul, the man who wrote most of the New Testament, had to confess that though he aspired to “apprehend”, he had not “attained”.

He said.....

Philip. 3:12 (NKJV)

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

He said....

Philip. 3:13-14 (NKJV)

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, [14] I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

In other words he said....”I know that I am far from perfect. I’ve failed but I know one thing. One day Jesus laid His hand on me. He transformed my life. He called me and I am determined to reach the potential that He saw in me. I’ve failed many times but I am determined to forget the failures and press forward. I don’t want to go backwards. I want to go upwards. To lay hold of that for which Jesus also laid hold of me.”

God saved you because He wants to use you. Don’t let failure defeat you. Jesus still loves you. He sees your flaws and your underdeveloped character and loves you in spite of it. It didn’t surprise Him when you failed. He knew what you were going to do before you did it. He hasn’t given up on you! Just like Peter. Jesus knew he was going to fail. He even told him he was going to fail. And yet He sent an angel to tell His disciples and especially to meet Him in Galilee.

He loved you when you were unlovable and he still loves you.

Paul said....

Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Mark 2:16-17 (NKJV)

And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" [17] When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Jesus said.....

Luke 4:18 (NKJV)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

My friend, you can be confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it. Why? Because He loves you.

Paul wrote.....

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

You may not understand why you are going through what you are going through, but you can have confidence today that in all things....the pleasures, the pains, the suffering, the disappointment ... God is working out His eternal good in your life.

The next verse says....

Romans 8:29-30 (NKJV)

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. [30] Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Your salvation began in the foreknowledge of God....before time began God knew you and He predestined you to be conformed to the image of His son.

Then, in your lifetime He called you...

Somehow, through some set of circumstances, He reached out and got your attention. He sent forth the Holy Spirit to draw you to Him.

Not only did He call you but **He also justified you**. He cleansed you of your guilt. He wiped the slate of your life clean.

And someday, when history is over and time is no more, you will be glorified!

In God's eyes it's already done! He speaks of it in the past tense. Even your glorification! Those He justified, these He also glorified!

Praise God! Our salvation from start to finish is His work!

Therefore Paul says.....

Romans 8:31 (NKJV)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

The answer is, "No one!"

Then he asks the question....

Romans 8:33 (NKJV)

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?

The answer is...."No one!"

Finally, Paul lets it all out. If He were sitting at the keyboard of a great pipe organ like they have at West Point, he would pull out all the stops and push the volume pedal completely to the floor and shout.....

- Death will not pull me away from God's love.
- Neither will life and all its allurements
- Nor cosmic spiritual powers
- Nor anything in time, nor power, nor height of heaven or depth of hell, nor anything else!
- Disappointment, neurosis, disease, a broken marriage, the death of a loved one, a financial crisis, insanity.....
- Nothing! Nada! Will be able to separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

This message is for you today!

Whatever you have done, Christ still loves you. Whatever you may be going through, Christ still loves you!

Don't hide from Him! Run to Him!

If you have sinned, confess it! He's not your enemy. He's your friend.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Give invitation!