

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

**Chapter 10- Luke 10:29-37**

**204- Who is My Neighbor?- Part 3**

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June 2, 2013

## **Luke 10:29-37**

**29** But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

**30** Jesus replied and said, "**A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead.**

**31** "**And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.**

**32** "**Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.**

**33** "**But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion,**

**34** **and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.**

**35** "**On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'**

**36** "**Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' *hands*?"**

**37** And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "**Go and do the same.**"

To the Glory of God

Now we are right in the middle of examining a very familiar Parable of Jesus- "The Parable of the Good Samaritan". And there are two major questions from this Parable that stand out:

- ✓ Who is my “Neighbor”?
- ✓ How do I manifest love to my “Neighbor”?

Now as I said last week- in order for us to grasp what Jesus was actually teaching here in this Parable requires that we examine the subject of love. Just what is Love and exactly how do we manifest love?

Now I really do not believe that most people today understand the word, “Love” very well. You see- we live in a time when the word, “love” can mean anything from enjoying macaroni and cheese to rooting for a favorite football team to how you feel about a spouse; a nation or even God.

So the word, “love” is way overused in our culture and therefore it has lost its truest meaning. For example- a man says that he “loves” a woman when he uses her for his own sexual gratification and treats her with disrespect. But that isn’t love- it is self-centered abuse. So when did self-centered abuse become equal with love?

Conversely people say that they love God when they live in open and blatant rebellion to clear and repeated Commands of Scripture with no remorse and no conviction- even when confronted by kind and caring people. And that isn’t love either- it celestial high treason against God. So when did rebellion against God become equal with love?

So I think that a short primer on the best concept of love from Scripture is needed. Now in the Bible- there are basically four kinds of love described:

1. God’s Love
2. Man’s love for God
3. Man’s love for people
4. Man’s love for things

And all four of those loves are expressed in both the Old and New Testaments- but with major distinctives. And so I would like to go over this with you.

Now as we have discussed over the last several weeks- Man’s love for God is a very special, unique and rare kind of love. Because we are sinful- it is not normal or natural for human beings to love God- it is abnormal. For any human being to actually love God consists of that person operating counter-intuitively against the normal and natural

flow of his fallen nature and the desires of his unredeemed flesh. Therefore Man's love for God is a gift; it is a miracle. Man's love for God is:

- A. Something that must first be initiated by God
- B. Something that grows by virtue of both the Will of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit

But as we have also discovered- God's Love toward Man is not like that at all. God's Love is constant- it does *not* grow- God's Love toward Man was full and complete from before the foundation of the world when God willfully chose to "set it on" Man. And that of course is the fullest definition of the word, "foreknowledge".

Sadly, many people today take the word, "foreknowledge" and they break it down into two words:

- Fore- meaning first or before
- Knowledge- meaning to know

... and they come to the shallow conclusion that when God foreknew someone- He simply "knew ahead of time" something about them. But in reality- when you dig deeper into both the Hebrew and Greek- the words that were translated into English as: "foreknowledge" means more than that God simply *knew* before- but that:

God *loved* before

So there was a moment- way before they were ever born and way before God ever created the Universe- that the Triune Godhead of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit decided to *set His Love* on certain elected individuals- based on nothing that they did or did not do and the finality of that Love would be that- at great Cost to Himself- God would purchase their souls so that all throughout the eons of eternity these people would have the privilege of:

Knowing and loving and enjoying God forever

And all that effort is called, “God’s Love”. So that is a summary of God’s Love and Man’s love for God. But the other two kinds of love are human love that is directed from person to person that this Parable of the Good Samaritan talks about here and love that is directed from a person to things. And when directed toward things- love means: *enjoying or taking pleasure in those things*.

But we must understand that love towards other people is much more complex than that. You see, loving other people *can* mean that we simply enjoy the other person and that we take pleasure in their company and in their personalities and looks and achievements, etc. But there is *another* aspect of interpersonal love that is very important in the Bible. There is the aspect of love for people who are *not* attractive and who are *not* virtuous and who are *not* productive- which is what Jesus was talking about in this Passage.

And in this case- “love” is not a delight in what a person already is- but a deeply felt commitment to helping them be what they *can be* or what they *ought to be*. And so by definition- this kind of love demands time and attention and labor.

And this is the kind of love where there is great misunderstandings and powerful disagreements and where there is not always the desired results and where there may not even be any gratefulness for the effort- which is why this kind of love is so rare. Yet what is amazing is that Man’s love for things and both dimensions of Man’s love for people are richly illustrated in the Bible.

But it is my contention this morning that we *cannot* and we *should not* get our best idea of how we are to love from secular movies or worldly songs or even other human examples- but that we should look to Scripture. And it is also my contention that in order to fully comprehend the three kinds of love that Man has- so we can fully understand this Parable- we need to first understand the one single kind of Love that God has.

Now right here in this Passage that Brother Andy just read to us- Jesus agreed with and said that the greatest Commandment of all was,

**Luke 10:27b**

**... YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND  
WITH ALL YOUR MIND...**

... and the second Commandment was,

**Matthew 22:39**

**Love your neighbor as yourself**

And then He said in **Matthew 22:40:**

**On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets**

... meaning that these two Statements are the entire Counsel of God. Therefore if a person understood and obeyed these two Commandments- he would understand and fulfill everything God wanted to reveal to Man and he would rightfully inherit eternal life.

Of course- as we have discovered- it is precisely because we are all sinners and are fallen that no human being born of woman has either the desire or the power to love God like this or to love people like this either- absent a Sovereign Move of God. And so as much as we might try; as hard as we might push to obey and to love and to do good- we fail to love God perfectly and continuously and we love others only to the extent it is convenient or beneficial.

And of course that leaves all of us- rich or poor; educated or uneducated; cultured or uncultured; man or woman; old or young as nothing more than a transgressor of the law- a sinner- who is in need of a Savior Who *was* sinless and Who *did* love God and people like this; a Savior Who perfectly and continuously obeyed the Law in thought, word, and deed 24 hours every day and seven days every week- to forgive us and impute to us His very own spotless Righteousness. So even though many people look at the OT as being just a bunch of rules and rituals- everything in the Old Testament- when properly understood- aims to transform men and women into people who fervently love God and their neighbor. - he needs both the forgiveness of sin and perfect Righteousness

Now the result of this conversation between this lawyer and Jesus here in Luke 10- was to expose this man's hypocrisy for asking the question in the first place and to show him and everybody else the fact that this man was not right with God but was lost and in spite of all his efforts to earn righteousness by the things that he did- he was in fact-

nothing more than a transgressor of the Law. So even though this man set out to tarp Jesus- he finds himself now being trapped by Jesus and exposed to what love rally is.

Now last week we examined these four kinds of love from the perspective of the Old or the First Covenant and today I want to examine love from the perspective of the infinitely superior New Covenant

## **Love in the New Testament**

Now the New Covenant changes the entire dynamic of love without doing any damage to the original concept of love. And what makes the New Testament really “New” and infinitely *superior* to the First Covenant is the appearance of the Son of God on the scene of human history. In Jesus Christ we see as never before a Revelation of God. As He said in **John 14:9b**

**... He who has seen me, you have seen the Father...**

So the coming of Christ not only brings about the Revelation of God- but by His Death and Resurrection Jesus Christ also brings about the Salvation of sinners. And that Salvation includes the forgiveness of sins; access to God; the hope of eternal life; and a new heart which loves God and is inclined to do good deeds.

Therefore, when dealing with the issue of love in the New Covenant- we must try to relate everything to Jesus Christ and His Life and Death and Resurrection.

You see, in the Life and Death of Christ we have an infinitely *superior* way to understand what God’s Love really *is* and what Man’s love for God and for others and for things *should be*. And through faith- the Spirit of Christ living in us- enables us to follow His example.

## **God’s Love for His Son**

Now in the Old Testament we saw a great connection between the Love of God and the Glory of God and we saw that God loves His Own Glory and that He delights to display that Glory all throughout His

Creation. But an even deeper dimension of “God’s Self-Love” becomes clear in the New Testament.

It is still true that God aims in all His Works to display His Glory for men to enjoy and wonder after. But what we learn now from **Hebrews 1:3** for example is that Jesus Christ reflects:

### **Hebrews 1:3b**

**... the radiance of [God’s] glory and [is] the exact representation of [God’s] nature,**

...and from **Colossians 2:9** we see that

**... in [Christ] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,**

So Jesus Christ is God with a fleshly body and has eternally existed in a mysterious union with His Father since before the world was. Therefore, God’s Self-Love, or His Love for His Own Glory can now be seen in **2Corinthians 4:4** as a love for:

**... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

Now the Love that God the Father has for God the Son is expressed repeatedly throughout the Gospel of John (**John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9, 10; 17:23-26**). But this Love that exists within the Trinity itself is very important for Christians to understand for two reasons:

1. The costly Beauty of the Incarnation and Death of Christ cannot be properly understood without it
2. It is the same Love that the Father has for the Son that the Father pours into the hearts of believers

So now- the ultimate hope of the Christian is to see the Glory of God in Jesus Christ (**John 17:5**), and to be with Jesus (**John 14:24**) and to delight in Him as much as His Father does (**John 17:26**).

## **God’s Love for Man in the New Testament**

Now I want to show you something. Over in **Romans 8:35** Paul asks a question,



## Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

And in verse 39 he answers that question by saying:

[Nothing] **will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Did you notice that Paul changed the words from “**the love of Christ**” in verse 35 to “**the love of God which is in Christ**” in verse 39? Now why did he do that?

This change from “**the love of Christ**” to “**the love of God in Christ**” shows that under the heading “God’s Love for Man” we must include *Christ’s* Love for Man since His Love is the same as God’s Love. But the way that Paul uses this here shows us that Christ’s Love for us is really just an *extension* of God the Father’s Love for Jesus Christ.

Now the most basic thing that can be said about “love” in relation to God is what the Apostle John wrote in **1John 4:8**

### **God is love...**

.. so it’s not just that God *does* love- but that God *is* Love. But we have to know that this does not mean that “God” is nothing more than an old-fashioned name for the ideal of Love. But what it *does* mean is that one of the best words to describe God’s Character is “Love”. You see, God’s Nature is such that in His Fullness- He is utterly complete and has need of nothing. But in His fullness- God overflows in Goodness. So it is correct to say that, unlike any other so-called “deities” of the world’s false religions- it is the very Nature of the one true and living God to love.

And because of this Divine Love- God sent His only Son into the world so that by Christ’s Death for sin all those who believe might have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

So in the Act of sending Jesus to die- we see what real Love is and therefore- it is not our love for God that really matters- but His love for us when He sent His Own Son to satisfy His Own Anger against our sin. Which is what we are “saved” or “rescued” or “delivered” from.

But here is where it gets interesting. It is wrong to assume that the Christ of the New Testament is loving while the God of the Old



Testament is angry or that God is Wrath while Christ is Mercy. That is not true.

**Romans 5:8**

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

Nor should we think that the Father *forced* the Son to die for Man. The repeated Message of the New Testament is that

**Ephesians 5:2**

**...Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us...**

...and

**John 13:1b**

**... having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.**

...and this very same Love of Jesus Christ:

- Guides (**2Corinthians 5:14**)
- Sustains (**Romans 8:35**)
- Reproves (**The Revelation 3:19**)

... His people still.

Another common misconception that must be avoided is the idea that the Love of God and Christ can somehow be merited or earned by anyone or anything that we do or lost by things we don't do. Over and over again all throughout His earthly Ministry- Jesus proved that His saving Love embraced *not* those who thought they were righteous but rather the "poor in spirit" like the tax collector who said,

**Luke 18:13b**

**...God be merciful to me a sinner!**

So the Love of Jesus could not be earned- it could only be freely accepted and enjoyed. So unlike the legalism of the Pharisees- the Love of Jesus was a "light burden" and an "easy yoke" (**Matthew 11:30**).

Therefore- the reason Jesus demonstrated a Love for those who could not merit His Favor is because Jesus was God in human flesh and that is the only way that God has always and will always love.

We must remember that it was Jesus Himself Who taught that God the Father **“makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45)**, and that **“He”- God the Father- “is kind to both the grateful and to the selfish” (Luke 6:35)**.

The Apostle Paul also stressed that the unique thing about Divine Love is that it seeks to save even enemies. He describes it like this in **Romans 5:6-8**:

**6** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

**7** For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

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

Now while it is true that in one sense- God loves the whole world in that He sustains the world (**The Acts 14:17; 17:25; Matthew 5:45**) and He has made a way of Salvation for all who will believe the Gospel and turn from sin- nevertheless- we must know that the Bible is crystal clear that God does not love all men in the same way. The Scriptures repeatedly teach that:

- ✓ God has chosen some before the foundation of the world to be His sons (**Ephesians 1:5**)
- ✓ God has predestined them for Glory (**Romans 8:29-30; 9:11, 23; 11:7, 28; 1Peter 1:2**).
- ✓ God has “set His Love” on these chosen ones in a unique way (**Colossians 3:12; Romans 11:28; 1:7; 1Thessalonians 1:4; Jude 1**) so that their Salvation is sure.
- ✓ These He Sovereignly draws to Christ (**John 6:44, 65**)
- ✓ Makes them alive (**Ephesians 2:4&5**)
- ✓ While God Sovereignly leaves others in the hardness of their sinful heart (**Romans 11:7; Matthew 11:25, 26; Mark 4:11, 12**).

Now there is a great mystery in God's electing Love. Why He chooses one person and not another is not revealed to us. We see that this is the case- but we are left to trust God for the reason. So we are only told certain characteristics about God's electing Love such as:

- ✓ God's election is not due to any merit or human distinctive (**Romans 9:10-13**).
- ✓ Therefore, all boasting is excluded (**Romans 3:27; 11:18, 20&25; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 2:12&13**)
- ✓ God's election is a Sovereign gift of God from start to finish (**John 6:65**).
- ✓ We do not deserve our Salvation since we were all sinners, and everything we have is due to God- Who has freely chosen to show us His Mercy (**Romans 9:16**).

So the way that unworthy sinners find ourselves inside this saving Love of God is by faith in the Promise that **"whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"** (**Romans 10:13**). Then **Jude 21** says, **"Keep yourself in the Love of God"** and **Romans 11:22** says, **"continue in God's Kindness."** And it is clear from **Romans 11:20-22** that this means for us not to simply believe and trust one time when we are initially saved- but to *keep on* believing and to *keep on* trusting God so that we **"stand by your faith"**.

So no one at any time ever *earns* God's saving Love; we remain within it only by *continuing* to trust in the loving Promises of God. And when we get weak in our trusting- we repent and cry out to God for help. And this is true even when Jesus says that the reason God loves His disciples is because they **"keep His Word"** (**John 14:23**), because nobody ever keeps God's Word perfectly- proving again that the very Essence of Jesus' Word is a Divine Call to **"live by faith"** (**John 16:27; 20:31**).

## 2. Man's Love for God and Christ in the New Covenant

Now here in **Luke 10**- Jesus sums up the entire Old Testament in the two Commandments to love God with all your heart and soul and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself (**Matthew 22:37-40**). And the failure to love God like this characterized many of the religious leaders of Jesus' day (**Luke 11:42**). And Jesus said this was the reason they did

not love and accept Him (**John 5:42; 8:42**). He and the Father are “one” (**John 10:30**), so that loving God the Father with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength also *required* loving God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in the very same way.

Now since the “Greatest Commandment” was to love God, it is not surprising that the greatest benefits are promised to those who do. **“All things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28). “No eye has seen nor ear heard ... what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9; cf. Ephesians 6:24). “If one loves God, he is known by God” (1 Corinthians 8:3). “God has promised a crown of life to those who love him” (James 1:12; 3:5; cf. 2 Timothy 4:8).** But on the other side there are grave warnings to those who do not love either God (**2 Timothy 2:14; 1 John 2:15-17**) or Christ (**1 Corinthians 16:22; Matthew 10:37-39**).

Now stay with me on this because we need to ask and answer a very important question right about now:

If all these glorious benefits depend on us loving God and Christ which at the same time depend on faith- what is the relationship between *loving* God and *trusting* Him?

And to answer this question- we need to understand that the Command for us to love God- unlike loving a needy neighbor- is *not* a Call for us to supply some longing or need that God supposedly has. No, our love for God is a deep adoration and awe and respect for His Moral Beauty and His complete Fullness and Sufficiency. It is genuinely *delighting* in God and having a driving desire to know Him better and more fully and having a burning to eventually escape this sin cursed world to be with Him so that we may enjoy Him without any barriers and without any hindrances and without any filters forever!

But in order for us to delight in God- we must have some conviction that He is Good and we must also have some assurance that our future with Him will be a happy one. In other words- we must have the kind of faith described in **Hebrews 11:1**:

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.**

Therefore our faith in God *precedes* or *comes before* our love for God and our faith *enables* or *empowers* our love for God. In other words- Confidence in God's Promise is the foundation of our delight in His Goodness.

Now there is another way for us to try to understand what it means for us to love God in the New Covenant- and that is: not just delighting in Who He is and what He promises- but wanting to please Him. But again we must guard very closely here against actually *dishonoring* God by presuming that pleasing God is the same thing as being His benefactors. **Hebrews 11:6** shows us the way:

**And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**

So here we see that the faith which pleases God has two convictions:

- A. That God exists
- B. That to find Him is to be greatly rewarded.

Therefore, in order to love God in the sense of pleasing Him- we must never approach Him because we want to reward *Him*- but only because He rewards us. In other words- we become the very source of God's Pleasure only to the extent that He is the Source of ours. We can do God a favor only by happily accepting all His Favors. So we best express our love for God- not when we live presumptuously as God's benefactors- but when we live humbly and happily as the beneficiaries of His Mercy. And the amazing thing is that the person who lives *this* way will inevitably keep the Commandments of both Jesus (**John 14:15**) and of God (**1John 5:3**).

### **3. Man's Love for Man in the New Covenant**

Now Jesus' second Commandment was,

**Luke 10:27**

**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**

And we already discussed what this meant back under the Old Covenant in **Leviticus 19:18** last week. But the very best interpretation of this kind of love in the New Covenant is found in Jesus' own Words when He taught two very radical and powerful concepts:

1. The Golden Rule (**As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them,**" **Luke 6:31**)
2. The Parable of the Good Samaritan (**Luke 10:29-37**)

And this means in a nutshell that we should seek the good of others as earnestly as we desire that people would seek the good in us. So we are not to treat others as they treat us- but we are to operate counter-intuitively to our sinful flesh that loves vengeance and that loves attention- and we are to treat others as we would like for them to treat us- *regardless* of how they actually treat us. And this is a Work of God in us.

And right after these two Teachings of Jesus- the most famous passage on Man's love for Man in the entire New Testament is in **1Corinthians 13** where Paul showed that there can be great religiosity and humanitarianism without any love at all.

And this Chapter raises the serious question of what this kind of love really is- if a person could actually sacrifice his own life and still not have it.

And the New Testament answer is that the kind of love between humans that Paul is talking about here must spring from a motivation which always takes into account the Love of God in Christ. Genuine love between human beings is born of a trust in the loving Promises of God. And that is why the Apostle Paul taught that

**Romans 14:23b**

**... whatever is not from faith is sin.**

... which is just another way of saying,

**Galatians 5:6**

**[true] faith work[s] through love**

... or as John put it,

**1John 4:16,19**

**16** We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

**19** We love, because He first loved us.

Therefore, Christian love exists only where the Love of God in Christ is known and trusted and valued. And this profound link between faith and love probably accounts for why Paul mentions the two together so often (**Ephesians 1:15; 6:23; Colossians 1:4; 1Thessalonians 3:6; 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1Timothy 6:11; 2Timothy 1:3; 2:2; Titus 2:2; 3:15; cf. The Revelations 2:19**).

But why is it that faith always “**works through love**”? One of the hallmarks of love between humans in the New Covenant is that it

**1Corinthians 13:5**

**... does not seek its own...**

So this New Covenant love between humans does not manipulate others in order to win their approval or gain some material reward from them. Rather, it seeks to reward others and build them up. So this kind of New Testament love that Jesus is teaching here between human beings does not use others for its own ends- but it rejoices to be a means to *their* welfare.

Now here is the \$64,000 question: If this is the hallmark of love between humans in the New Covenant- how in the world can frail and sinful people- who by nature are selfish-, ever accomplish this and actually love each other?

And the answer from the New Testament is that we must be born again:

**1John 4:7**

**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**

You see, to be born of God means much more than simply praying a prayer- but it means for us by God’s Sovereign Grace to become His



child with His Nature and Character so that when we love each other- it is only because God's Love is growing and being perfected in us.

And the Apostle Paul taught the same thing when he taught that this kind of love between human beings is a

- ✓ Fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22; Colossians 1:8; 2Timothy 1:7**)
- ✓ That is "from God" (**Ephesians 6:23**)
- ✓ That is "taught by God," not men (**1Thessalonians 4:9**).

And the fact that this kind of love is enabled only by God is seen in Paul's prayer:

**1Thessalonians 3:12**

**And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another and for all people**

Now we are in a position to answer our earlier question:

Why does genuine faith always work through love?

Because real faith is the way we receive the Holy Spirit- Whose fruit is love. Paul asks,

**Galatians 3:2b**

**... did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**

...and the answer is clearly by faith. And this means that the essential characteristic of the person who has been born again and is being led by the Spirit of God is faith (**John 1:12, 13**). Therefore, while love is a fruit of the Spirit, it is also a fruit of faith- since we have already discovered that it is by faith that the Spirit works (**Galatians 3:5**).

Now to understand the dynamics of this process more fully- another factor must be brought in: the factor of hope. Faith and hope cannot be separated because genuine faith in Christ implies a firm confidence that our future is secure (**Hebrews 11:1, Romans 15:13**). This essential oneness of faith and hope helps us grasp why faith always **"works through love."** The person who has confidence that God is

working all things together for his good (**Romans 8:28**) can relax and entrust his life to a faithful Creator (**1Peter 4:19**) which makes him free from anxiety and fear (**1Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6**). Therefore he is not easily irritated (**1Corinthians 13:5**) but is freed from self-justifying, self-protecting concerns and becomes a person who **“looks to the interest of others”** (**Philippians 2:4**). Being satisfied in God’s Presence and Promise- a person like this is not bent on selfishly seeking his own pleasure- but rather delights **“to please his neighbor for his good to edify him”** (**Romans 15:1&2**).

In other words, having our hope pinned on the Promises of God frees us from the attitudes that hinder this “self-sacrificing love”. Therefore, Paul said that if there were no Resurrection hope, **“Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”** (**1Corinthians 15:32**). Because if God has not satisfied our deepest longings for life- then we might as well try to get as much earthly pleasure as we can- whether that is loving toward others or not. And this is exactly the mind- set of the lost pagan world and the mind-set of this lawyer that stood before Jesus.

But God has given us a satisfying and confident hope as a basis for a life of selfless love. Therefore we find in **Colossians 1:4& 5** that hope is the foundation of love:

#### **Colossians 1:4b&5a**

**4 ... we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;**

**5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven...**

So I conclude that faith- when understood as a deep contentment in the Promises of God- always works through love. Therefore, the way to become a loving person is to set our hope more fully on God and delight more fully in the confidence that whatever is encountered on the path of obedience is ultimately for the greater “Good” of the Glory of God and the fulfillment of our joy.

So this love that is born of faith and the Spirit is especially manifest in the Christian home and in the community of believers. The Bible teaches that this love transforms husband-wife relationships on the pattern of Christ’s Love (**Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33; Colossians 3:19; Titus 2:4**). It is the fiber in the Christian community that “knits everything together in perfect harmony” (**Colossians 3:14;2:2; Philippians 2:2; 1Peter**

**3:8**). It enables the members to “endure one another” in meekness and lowliness when wronged (**Ephesians 4:2; 1Corinthians 13:7**). But more importantly it is the unstoppable Power behind positive deeds of spiritual edification (**Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:1; Ephesians 4:16**) and the meeting of material needs (**Luke 10:27-37; Romans 12:13; Galatians 5:13; 1Thessalonians 1:3; 1Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; Hebrews 13:1-3; James 1:27; 2:16; 1Peter 4:9; 1John 3:17, 18**).

So Love is not to be—*cannot be*—restricted only to friends. Jesus said in **Luke 6:27**,

**love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,**

... and we see that this same concern was carried into the early Church in verses like **Romans 12:14, 19-21; 1Corinthians 4:12; Galatians 6:10; 1Thessalonians 3:12; 5:15; 1Peter 3:9**. The great desire of the Christian in doing good to his enemy and praying for him is that the enemy might cease to be an enemy and come to glorify God (**1Peter 2:12; 3:14-16; Titus 2:8, 10**).

Toward friend or foe- love is the attitude that dominates the Christian in “**all things**” (**1Corinthians 16:14**). It is the “**most excellent way**” of life of **1Corinthians 12:31**. And since love never does wrong to anyone- but seeks the good of all- it therefore fulfills the whole Law of God (**Romans 13:19; Matthew 7:12, 22:40; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8**; compare **Romans 8:4 and Galatians 5:22**). But this love is not automatic; it can cool and actually become cold (**Matthew 22:12; The Revelation 2:4**). Therefore, Christians must make it their aim (**1Timothy 1:15**) to “**stir one another up to love and good works**” (**Hebrews 10:24**). And we must pray for God to cause our love to abound more and more (**Philippians 1:9; 1Thessalonians 3:12, 13**).

We must concentrate on the examples of love in Christ (**John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Ephesians 5:2; 1John 3:23; 2John 5**) and in his saints (**1Corinthians 4:12, 15-17; 1Timothy 4:12; 2Timothy 1:13; 3:10**). In this way, we will make our call and election sure (**2Peter 1:7, 10**) and bear a compelling witness in the world to the truth of the Christian faith (**John 13:34, 35; 1Peter 2:12**).

#### **4. Man’s Love for Things in the New Covenant**

So on the one hand- the New Testament teaches that the things God has created are good and should be enjoyed with thanksgiving (**1Timothy 4:3; 6:17**). But on the other hand- it warns against loving things in such a way that our affections are drawn away from God- that is what is called, “worldliness”.

The great danger of us loving things is that the love of money (**Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:14; 1 Timothy 6:10; 2 Timothy 3:2; 2 Peter 2:15**) and earthly pleasures (**2Timothy 3:4**) and human acclaim (**Matthew 6:5; 23:6; Luke 11:43; 3 John 9**) will steal our hearts from God and make us insensitive to His higher Purposes for us. John said in **1John 2:15-17**

**15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

**16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

**17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.**

... and James echoed this when he said in **James 4:4b**

**... do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?...**

Now as we have discovered- The “world” is not any particular class of objects or people. It is the system of this world that lays a claim on our affections to be loved and steals those affections away from Jesus.

About 1800 years ago- Augustine offered a prayer that catches the New Testament spirit on this issue when he prayed:

“He loves thee too little who loves anything together with thee which he loves not for thy sake.”

Let's pray