

## **UNDERSTANDING THE LOVE OF GOD SERIES**

### **PERFECTED BY LOVE**

We are covering on the subject of love. And you will notice that there is no other way to the perfection of Jesus except through His love. If you try to be perfect by His laws and just by truth alone you will never achieve it. Perfection comes through His love. Through His love we learn His truth. Through His love we began to comprehend truth. Perfection is always through love. We have been singing the song "To Be Like Jesus". If we want to be like Jesus we have to start on the love side not on the justice side. Justice demands judgment. But love demands mercy.

Turn to the gospel of Matthew chapter 5 in the Sermon on the Mount in verse 48. *You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* Definitely it is the will of God for us to be perfect. Otherwise Jesus will not make this statement to His disciples, "Therefore you shall be perfect." God intends for His people to be perfect as our Father is perfect. The only question is how do we achieve that perfection? We will see through this series that the whole Sermon on the Mount is based on love. We will compare the scriptures and we will show that every fruit of the Spirit is found in that Sermon on the Mount. Perfection flows from love. The gospel of Luke records for us the same Sermon on the Mount. But it records a few extra phrases that will give clarification to this passage on how to be perfect. How are we to be like our heavenly Father in perfection?

Turn to the gospel of Luke chapter 6:36 *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.* So now we begin to understand how to be perfect. The Word of God tells therefore be perfect as your Father is perfect. The same word that was heard by a different

disciple he also remembered that Jesus said therefore be merciful as your Father is merciful. We can never be perfect unless we understand the mercy of God. Perfection flows from God's mercy. It was the same Sermon on the Mount. And it is recorded in a different phrase, mercy.

Now mercy progresses from love. Because of God's great love He is able to show us mercy. And if it was just God's justice and law we would all be judged. Justice demands judgment. But love demands mercy. So to be perfect we have to have mercy. To have mercy we have to have love because God is love.

Turn to I Jn. 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.*

Here is a statement that the apostle John made saying that if you know God you will love. It will come forth in your relationship. Many times people claim to know God, know the great doctrine of God, to know sanctification, justification, predestination and all those huge doctrines of God. They know the bible from Genesis to Revelation. But all our knowledge if it does not produce love comes to nothing. In other words it will just remain knowledge about God. To know about God and to know God is different. How many of you have heard of Abraham Lincoln? You know about Abraham Lincoln. We know something about him. He was tall and he was President of the United States. He was assassinated. We know about him. But if I were to ask, "How many know him personally?" None of you will be able to put up your hand. To know about and to know is a different matter. So many times people know about God. But they don't know God. To know about God is just to receive information or knowledge concerning someone. But to know a person is to have a relationship with an individual. So to know about God is just to have a huge amount of knowledge about God. But to know God is to have a personal living relationship with our Father.

The bible says that those who know God will be able to love. Those who do not know God do not love. Or he put it the opposite way. He says those who have learnt to love are because they know God. But those who have not learnt to love do

not know God. And those Christians who do not know how to love one another the way Jesus tells us they do not know God. They may know a lot about the bible. They may know a lot of doctrines. But everything that we know in the end must come down to the level where we could relate to another individual whether they are lovable or unlovable.

As we have said there are four kinds of love, *storge*, *eros*, *phileo*, and *agape*. The first three types of love *storge*, *eros* and *phileo* are based on emotion. But *agape* is based on our will, our decision to love. It is not based on an emotion. So many Christians are confused with the different kinds of love therefore they cannot practice God's love the *agape* love. He who does not *agape* does not know God. He has not comprehended how to love one another. Can you imagine we can live on this life until Jesus comes maybe some of us may live up to 70 and some 120. But as you pass through this life and you go to church and learn the doctrine of God, you could have victory and success on this earth, in the long run it still comes down to whether you are able to relate with people better. So as Christian we must realize that this year you are supposed to relate better with others than last year. And next year you are supposed to relate better than this year. And if you cannot measure your progress you have not grown to know God. You have only grown to have more knowledge. The more you grow in God the more loving you become. If you have not become more loving you have to examine your life because all you are concentrating on is the knowledge of God and not knowledge personally of God.

The measure of our progress in God is our ability to love one another. All of us to a certain extent develop different ability to love people. Some people because as they are growing up they come from broken homes they have no ability to love others. And oftentimes these people grow up to be criminals. They vent their hatred on society. We are talking in reference to human love first. Whereas others who have received a lot of love and attention and affection when they were small, as they grow up to a certain extend they have a larger capacity to love others. Yet we find that human love comes to a certain limit. You can love and love and then you come to a certain limit where your capacity runs out. But isn't it wonderful that our Father God's capacity never run out. His capacity to love us never runs out. It just keeps flowing from His very heart.

We say God's love is eternal, is inseparable. It tells us in Rom. 8 that no angel, no demon, no death, nothing can separate us from the love of God. That kind of love we are talking about is called the unconditional love. It is a love that flows from God's heart and that is not dependant on the recipient. Because God loves us even while we were yet sinners. He saw the good in us and He love us into His goodness.

Here in I Jn. 4 it says in verse 7 *Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and know God.* If you are born of God you are having the ability to love God and then you know God. Verse 8 *He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.* When the apostle John made this statement that God is love he is saying more than God has love. God not only has love. God is love. His love itself is personified. His love is flowing. Every part of His being is love and mercy flowing forth. All those who have come face to face with God like Moses will see His love. Moses saw the back part of God. What did God revealed – His love. God proclaim His long suffering and His mercy. See God Himself is love. Love is a part of Him. Love is His presence. We sing, "Holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty." I remember that holiness of God is filled with His love. To be in the presence of God is to be in the presence of love. So there is no way you could be in God's presence without being in God's love. God's presence and love are inseparable. When we say God has love it means the quality of God's love is separate from His being that He has love.

Let me illustrate here. We say that James has the bible. That means that James and the bible can be separated out. James is a person and the bible is a separate part of his being. He just possesses it. And if I say that James is the bible. What do I mean? That means James is a walking bible. If you ask him any question on Scriptures he would answer you correctly and immediately. He is the bible. It's a different matter. That means there is no way I could separate James from the bible. The bible is him and he is the bible. When I want the scriptures I just read him.

The bible says that God has love. It would have meant the quality of love is separable from God. But when the bible says that God is love, it means that is inseparable. There is no way you could dissect it out. To dissect love from God is to

dissect God Himself. There is no way you could separate the quality of love from God. The bible says certain things about God. It says God is holy; it says God is light. When the bible applies the word "is" about God it means that there is no way you can separate God. Lets look at the phrase *God is light*. When it says God is light then it means there is no darkness in God. Light is a part and parcel of His being. To remove light would be to remove God. And the opposite of light is darkness where the devil is. So its inseparable. God is light; God is holy; God is love. Love and God are inseparable. It is the living force from His being. There is no way you could divide them.

Having understood that God and love are one, then we see that to be in God's presence is to be in His love. Which is why John is saying here the reason he made those statement saying that he who loves know God. They are born of God and they know God. He who does not love does not know God. The reason he say it is because God and love are inseparable. Like the Word of God. If certain parts of the Word of God have become a part of our lives, we cannot be separated from that Word of God because it's a part of our very flesh and bone. Look at Jesus Christ in I Jn. 1:1 It says that Jesus was the Word. He was the Word made flesh. And John says we have touched, we have handled the Word of life. John is saying that Jesus was the Word personified. If you want to see what a walking Word is like look at Jesus. Jesus was the walking bible. Everything that was in the bible came from Him.

When we say that Jesus is the Word lets illustrate here. I Jn. 1:1 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life – the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us – that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

In verse one and two it clearly talks of Jesus as the Word of life. Jn. 1:14 it says He was the Word made flesh. He was the logos. This bible is the written Word. Now the written Word came from the living Word. Which one started first? The living Word. And the living Word was revealed. Let's supposed Timothy is the Word personified. If he said that he is the Word personified it means that he and the

Word is inseparable. When you say the bible you have contains the written Word it means that he for example is the Word personified. Lets say he represents Jesus Christ the Word in person. Jesus Christ puts forth a part of His Word and spoke it to man. So it became the written Word. So the written Word came second. It came from the person who was the Word. And the person who is the Word will always be in line with the written Word. Or rather the written Word will never contradict the living Word.

In the same way love was in God first. God is love, love is God. The only way we could understand love is by what God does. The only way for us to understand the Word of God is by what Jesus did. By His acts and by His spoken words we understand what the Word of God is like. We understand the laws of God; the knowledge of God through His spoken Word. What Jesus did and through all creation and generation, everything in the bible from Genesis right to Revelation when it was spoken it had the Trinity together, The Father the Word and the Spirit. And all of it flows through Jesus Christ. It was revealing Jesus Christ. Everything that have been spoken to man has always has an instrument and a connection to Jesus Christ who was called the Word. So God reveals His Word through the life of Jesus.

In the Old Testament we see glimpses of the Word here and there in a prophet here and there. But when Jesus Christ came to the planet earth and lived and walked and talked among men, men began to see the fullness of the Word. We began to see the fullness of what the Word was like in the life of Jesus Christ. Now if Jesus were the Word, everything He did and spoke would have been the Word. Everything He did would have been the Word. Everything He lived would have been the Word. And all that He said, all that He did, all that He lived was recorded for us in the written Word. It proceeded from the living Word. It says in the Word that God is love. Love is a apart of God's being. There is no way you can understand love without understanding God. Now if God is love every act of His is love because love is a part of His being. Every word that He speaks is from His love. Everything He said and does is from His love because it's a part of His being.

If I say that you are a human being, everything that proceeds from you would be as

the works of a human being. Look at the things around you. This cupboard was the work of a human being. The chair you have is the work of a human being. So we can classify everything as from a human being. You see buildings, you see buses, you see roads, everything around you are works of human beings. Now the works of a human being and the human being are flowing. The works came from a human being and it reveals the existence of a creature called human being.

In the same way God is love. Everything that God does has love involved. You cannot separate love from His acts; love from His words; love from His being. Everything He said and does breathe with the life of love. That is what the apostle Paul meant when he says that the gifts of the Holy Spirit which come forth from the Spirit of the living God has love involved. Here is how you tell a genuine gift of the Holy Spirit from a false counterfeit – love. Jesus talks about false prophets that come. How do you tell the difference between a false prophet and a true prophet? By their fruits you shall know them. By their lifestyle. Because everything that proceeds from the devil have the devil's nature. Everything that proceeds from God will have God's nature. So when the devil sends a false prophet, the false prophet can do some imitation tricks. But there is no way that they could demonstrate a degree of love that is called *agape* love. So Jesus says you can recognize by the product of love. When you see all these false prophets you will find that they always contradict the written Word and they always contradict the nature of God. What they do is never in line with the love of God. Having understood that God is love that His existence is love. In His presence is love. Every time you worship God and you experience God's presence. If you want to know the real presence from the false presence, the real presence of God has love involved. Whenever you are in God's presence you sense the fullness of His love. His love comes forth and there is no fullness of God without the presence of His love.

*Look at Eph. 3:14-19 For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

It says that we have to be rooted and grounded in *agape* love. There is no way you can reach perfection without being perfected in love. The next time you are thinking of getting angry with somebody else. The next time you are thinking of having a bad relationship with somebody else. You have to remember that the poor relationship that you have with another person is going to cause imperfection. It is going to cause you to be beyond or below the standard of perfection. How you relate to another person is going to determine the measure of God's presence in your life. See God's presence and love go together. When God comes love comes because God is love. When God goes love goes. God and love are linked up together. In fact there is no way we could have understood love if God has not sent His only begotten Son to show us what love is like. God demonstrates His love and tells us about love and how it operates. When God's presence comes love comes.

Paul is applying that truth positively when he says *being rooted and grounded in love*. Who did you get grounded and rooted in? God. Many times we want to be perfect and we always put it in a mystical and theological fashion. You say I want to be in God, like God. Tell me how are you going to be in God, like God. See we left it in the theological circle. You go round and say I want to be like God. On the practical aspect there is no way you can be like God without being like love. So Paul is simplifying the process to tell us how to be like God. To be like is simply to be like Him in His love. To be rooted and grounded in love. People go round saying I want to be rooted and grounded in God. To be rooted and grounded in God you got to be rooted and grounded in His love. Love and God are inseparable. So Paul knew the key that is why he knew how to pray. So he prayed for the Ephesians and said I pray that you may be rooted and grounded in love. When you are grounded and rooted in love, you are rooted and grounded in God. See how important your relationship is with another. The test of love is in relationship.

Lets continue. *That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height*, what is he talking about? Love. The bible says the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Which means the whole earth shall be filled with the presence of the Lord. Which means the whole earth shall be filled with the love of God. In heaven love is everywhere because God's presence is in heaven. And everywhere where the presence of God is there is the love of God.

Paul is praying for them that they all may together understand the great height, depth width and length of God's love.

What does width, length, height and depth speak about? Four dimensions, these are all dimensions in human terms. We have to come to a stage to realize that God's love continues sideways, forward, downwards, upwards in all direction. Do you know that we always draw a line where love ends? When they grow up some people draw a line around only their family. That is only *storge* love. Then after that they draw a line among those whom we know. That is only *phileo* love and *eros* love. All these three kinds of love have a limited dimension. *Eros* is only between a man and a woman. *Storge* is among family. *Phileo* is among your friends. These all have a dimension. There is a limit to its dimension. But *agape* love has no limit. It draws a huge circle that covers all of eternity. Which is beyond our comprehension. Which is why Paul says that you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width, length, depth and height, the love of God that is so far reaching.

And some times we draw people outside the circle of our love. How much love do you intend to show to another person is determined by your free will. Many time people say if only I have that love. What they are saying is if only I have that feeling. Do you know that God's love you have to love by faith? Everything that comes forth from God has to be by faith. If its God's love it proceeds from faith for without faith it is impossible to please God. In God's love you love because God loves. You cannot claim that you don't have the love of God in your life if you are born again. Look at I Jn. 4:7 it says that *he who love is born of God*. The fact that you are born of God is the only ability and the only qualification required to have *agape* love. The only qualification to have *agape* love is to be born again. When you are born again God's love is in your heart. You possess God's love. As long as you are born again God's love is in your heart. In Rom. 5:5 it says *and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*. It says that when you are born again the love of God has been, not will be, past perfect tense. It is something that has already been accomplished. When you were born again God's love has been poured. I am sure all of you know the difference between pouring and sprinkling. It did not say that God's love has been sprinkled. It says God's love has been poured that is without any discrimination. Everyone of us who is born again the Holy Spirit has poured God's love into you.

You say, "Brother how can that be?" The bible says that you have received a new spirit and you have the Holy Spirit inside you. Now your spirit is a hundred percent like God. And being like God it has a hundred percent of God's substance of love. You were made in the new image of God. Your whole spirit man is bubbling with love. It is not just a little drip. It is not just a little sprinkling. It is a pouring into your heart. You have more love and you have a greater capacity to love than you are deciding to release. Your capacity to love is enlarged to the capacity of God. Understand this very carefully *eros* love, *storge* love and *phileo* love has a limited capacity. But *agape* love has an unlimited capacity. And when you are born again it says the Holy Spirit has poured His *agape* love into your heart. Not only do you have *agape* love but you have it in abundance. God changed your heart when you are born again. To make you and to give you an ability to love with the same capacity like God which is an unlimited capacity. It will never run dry.

God is telling us to build our homes, build our families, build the churches, build our relationships on *agape* love. You know there are situations in life where you need *agape* love. Your own capacity runs dry tap on the love from the Spirit. Love is the fruit of the Spirit and not the fruit of your flesh. Love is from your spirit not from your head, not from your soul, not from your body. It tells us here that love is in great abundance in our heart. Having settled the fact without controversy. Having settled the fact that there is love in everyone of our hearts. The question is why are people not releasing it? Because they did not see that it is theirs. If you keep on having in your mind the fact that I am limited in your love and capacity to love, of course you will act according to what you believe. By that kind of thinking you limit God's love.

But when you accept the fact that God has put His capacity to love in your heart then your mind get renewed and you began to act in the love of God. It is not a feeling. It's the accepting of what He says. Then you will be able to love whether you feel like it or not. Do you know that the justice of God that looks down on us would have zapped us all if it has gone by feeling? The bible tells us that God loves us while we were sinners. Do you know as sinners we provoke the wrath of God? Do you know that sin angers God? Sin provokes His wrath. If God were to just go by His feelings or wrath we will all be doomed. But His love came forth. His

capacity to see the highest good in our life never ends.

Ephesians chapter 3 that *you may know the width, the length, the height and the depth*. Even among Christians circle sometimes we say love, love, love but when we come to a certain brother or sister, we say he or she cannot into my circle of love. Then we draw them out of the circle and continue with our lives. What we are doing is that we have not understood the length, the width, the depth, the height of God's love. Here is how Paul say how do I comprehend and understand with the rest. For example, you may be able to love everybody but there is a certain particular person that your feelings and your capacity seemingly in the natural seems to run dry. What happens is you have to link yourself up with God. And you have to see God still love this guy. If God still love this person I tap on God's flow of love. See God's love is flowing to everybody. God's love is radiating on everyone of you no matter what you have done. Supposing His love is flowing to Albert. As His love is flowing there and supposing I cannot seem to release love to his life. What I do is get in the flow of God's love and God's love will lead me to be able to love him the way God wants me to love. Just get into the flow of God's love. Look at one another with the eyes of God not with our own eyes. Then we will be able to comprehend the greatness of the love of God.

Eph. 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God*. There is no way we can be filled with the fullness of God without being filled with His love. The result of understanding love; the result of being rooted and grounded in love is to be filled with the presence of God. So there is no way we can release the presence of God without releasing love. There is no way you can release the power of God in your family or in your church life without you releasing love. What will happen when the fullness of God comes? Healing comes, deliverance comes, prosperity comes and blessings come. In the fullness of God we receive all these things.

But how do we release the fullness of God? By releasing love to one another you release the power of God. The fullness of God brings the power of God. We know what the power of God can do. The power of God can part the Red Sea. The power of God can feed three million people in the wilderness. The power of God can cause healing to flow to millions. The power of God is great and awesome. The power of

God is released through the love of God. Love is the key to release the power of God in your family. So husband and wife the love of God in your life needs to flow. And among family members the only way you can release the power of God into your family is by releasing love to each other. And the only way we can release the power of God in the church when we gather together is by releasing love to one and another. That kind of power is always released in a church that loves each other. And we gathered to worship God the power of God manifests. Many times when I travel to a place, and there is a great division and strife in the church the gifts of God could not operate. The power of God cannot demonstrate. All we can do is to just teach them some principles and go off. The power cannot be released without love being involved. Love must be released.

Do you know why our capacity fails? Because we look at each other's past and we look at each other's present. But God loves us because He looks at each other's future. *Agape* love seeks the highest good in your life. And because God has a wonderful plan for each one of you, you can look at each other's future. And those of you in the same family you find it hard to love one another. It is one thing to talk nice things to people who you meet once in a while. But it is almost disaster's time when you are under the same roof. Do you know it's a different thing? And do you know that it's harder to love those who are under the same roof some times than those you meet once in a while. Every time you meet in the church you are just well dressed, you are just loving each other, you always have a smile on your face. But when you go back that's where you live life out. And that's where the person is not up to their best. And that's where some times a person misbehaves. Then when you are at home you find it hard to love. Because your eyes have turned away from whom a person can be to look at who a person is or who a person was. And every time you look at who a person was and who a person is *agape* love gets stifled because *agape* love looks at your potential and your future. The next time you find your love limited you can check on this area it is always there. You are always looking at each other. You know how some couples quarrel? They always say, "You always do this, you always do that. I don't know why you are like this? I don't know why you are like that?" They constantly look at each other as they are. Do you know if God were to look at each one of us as we are, we would be finished? And if God had looked at the way we were sinners, we would all been condemned to the lake of fire. You better thank God that God doesn't look at you the way you are. But God looks at you and say you little saint. He looks at the way we will be. And He brings it out from us. That's the *agape* love of God.

Here is a little tip. The only way you can change another person is by seeing what they can be and loving them into it. You will never be able to change another person by looking at who they are or where they are. Even when you drive a car or when you are walking, do you know you have to keep in mind where you are going? In order to bring someone along where God will be able to deal with their life and they will be able to come into the fullness of God's plan for them is to see who they are going to be in God. Then every time when you see what they can be it becomes natural for you to talk about who they can be.