

God's Love

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[0 : 00] on as God would grant his liberty. I'd like to consider with you some words that you find in that portion of scripture that we read. The prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter 31.

I'm reading again at verse 3. Jeremiah 31, verse 3. The Lord has appeared of old to me, say, Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

Therefore, with loving kindness, I draw you. I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness, I have drawn you.

Just very briefly to suggest to you four aspects of that. Firstly, the nature of God's love, which is everlasting.

Secondly, the way in which this love has been revealed to us. Thirdly, the evidence of God's love to us.

[1 : 10] And fourthly, the marks of that love. Its nature, its revelation, its evidence, and its marks. Prophecies in the Old Testament, as you might know, are not written in the order in which they were written.

They seem to be set in the Old Testament book according to their signs. For example, Micah, which comes after Jeremiah.

Micah is a contemporary of Isaiah. Whereas Hosea, Joel, and Neha are in time before Jeremiah and before Isaiah.

Jeremiah himself was writing some years after Isaiah's death.

And as we heard on Sunday, Isaiah himself was put to death by even Manasseh. Jeremiah too suffered martyrdom.

[2 : 26] We have it from tradition that he was put to death by his own people. But we also have, through tradition, that before the Babylonians came to ransack Jerusalem, that God directed Jeremiah to take the Ark of the Covenant and the altar of incense and to bury them on Mount Nabal.

If that is true, we do not know. But the one thing that we do know is that when the Babylonians came, they destroyed the temple and they destroyed Jerusalem.

And since that time, the Ark of the Covenant and the altar of incense has never been seen. Never been seen, never been found. Wherever.

It is. And it would seem that the Lord himself would tend to protect something that was so intimate to his own person.

And so very much part of the worship of our God. Israel, the northern kingdom, had suffered great losses.

[3 : 57] And the northern kingdom of Israel, the northern kingdom of Israel, and now Judah was under attack because of the way in which they had turned their back upon the Lord and upon God's law.

And when we consider these aspects of the history of Israel, a people who have been so much part of God's revelation and so much part of God's dealings with mankind.

When we see the way in which God had more or less destroyed their nation because they turned their back upon them, surely we should be on our hands and knees daily seeking the forgiveness of God for the iniquity of our own people and of our own nation.

There is no doubt that we have departed from God's law, we have turned our back on God as a people. And I believe that God will come on a day of judgment against us as a nation because of the way in which we have been given so much by so great witnesses and so much through his ministers and through his church.

And now we are seemingly turning our back upon him. But not only are we turning our back upon him, but even the real selves who follow the Lord and who are part of the church.

[5 : 57] So much is changing that the church that we joined 40 odd years ago is unrecognizable. It is but a shadow of the church that we knew.

And so we should seek God's mercy because of the way in which we have not and we will not give to the generation coming after us what we yourselves received as God lays upon us as a duty.

But in the midst of the prophecy through Jeremiah, remember this is God speaking. God is warning Judah of what is to happen to him because of the way they have backslidden and turned away from the door.

God is warning him because of the door. But right in the middle of the door there is this great promise that he has not forgotten them. Israel has fallen, Judah has suffered, but the Lord, although he has chastised their sins, in the midst of this affliction he remembers that they are here.

He reminds them that he has not forgotten them. And this is like as if it was a river flowing over the stones, cleansing the stones as it is passing.

[7 : 33] Reminding the people of Israel and ourselves as those who follow after this same God that he has not forgotten us.

And that he will remember in his own good pleasure us as his people and will show his love towards us.

We remember each one of us who have come to know the Lord. We remember when we began to love the Lord. And there is a moment, there is a time, maybe even an expansive time, where we can see that God was bringing us towards himself.

And although we might not remember a day or a time, we might remember a period of time where his love began to draw us.

And whatever amount of time that was, what we can say about our love of God is that it had a beginning. We can say we began to love the Lord at a particular time.

[8 : 50] But you can't say that about God's love for us. He says here, I have loved you with an everlasting love. God's love for us has no beginning.

It is from eternity, it is part of his very being. And when we approach our God, we should remember that his love for us is as much part of his being as his love for his Son or his love for the Holy Spirit.

That love which is within the Trinity. We are part of the Trinity. God's love for us has no beginning.

It is in God and it was there from everlasting. But not only is God's love for us without a beginning, but it is what you might call a Trinitarian love.

It is not isolated to any one particular portion of the Godhead. We had some two great sermons at the weekend on Sunday.

[10 : 12] And I won't try and take away from what Mr. Macaulay hopes to give us next week because he has said that he will expand on the election.

I would expect from chapter 17 of John again. But the first thing that we can say about this united trinity of love is that it is an electing love.

We are chosen by the Father. We are chosen by the Father. Out of his own sovereign will, he deemed that we should be gathering tonight around his world as those who love him.

As those who want to worship him and to glorify his name. But an electing love on its own is of no consequence and no use to us.

He could love us, but we have no way of approaching his throne. We have no desire of approaching him unless there is also a redeeming love.

[11 : 28] There has to be one who would be a redeemer. One has to come who will enable us to come and approach the God.

Even as Lazarus of old, he was lying dead in a grave. And he required a power outside of himself.

Not only to call him out of that grave, but to give him the desire and the ability to get up and to come and to approach the one who was calling.

And so it is with this united trinity. There is a redeeming love. That the one who has loved us with an everlasting love has also given us the desire and the ability and the strength to turn from our ways of this world and to approach the one who is calling us.

To approach the Lord who is calling his people. But it needs to go further than that. And it needs to, we need to have also a sanctifying love.

[12 : 48] By that I mean that although we have been called out of a life of disobedience, to a life of following after our Lord and given the strength and desire to do that, there is also work to be done.

We have been declared righteous at the throne of God because we are now clothed with the righteousness of Christ. But we are still full of sin as we go from bitter experience from day to day.

But there is also this sanctifying love, part of the Trinitarian message towards. He works through his spirit, sanctifying and cleansing and working in our souls so that when the day of our departure comes, we will be declared not only fascist, but we will also be declared holy.

Holiness will be ours and it will be ours for eternity. What is his love like?

There is one of the writers that said that his love is like himself. It is infinite like the sea without a shore. It is unchangeable like an ocean at full tide.

[14 : 14] It is unsearchable in depth, mysterious in grace. His everlasting love is the heart of the church's salvation.

All gifts and blessings can be traced to this. As if we were in the middle of the ocean. It is infinite. We cannot see land.

All we can see is ocean. So is this everlasting love of God. It is as if we were sailing on this love. And when we look around us, when we look in each and every direction, all we can see is God's love.

And when we seek to experiment and just search out this love of God, to find out what it is all about, the more we dig and the more we search, the more mysterious does the love get.

It is mysterious in his grace, in his favour. We can never fathom this love. And it is going to be our duty and our task, throughout the whole of eternity, searching the unsearchable riches of the grace of God toward us, and this great love.

[15 : 41] But he said, for so God so loved the world. It is a danger for us to repeat those words and stop there.

For God so loved the world. But he didn't love them and loved the world without exception. We must remember the rest of the quotation, which says, that whosoever believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting love.

It is necessary for us to believe. This everlasting love, as you might have understood, arose spontaneously in his own portion.

It is from himself. It has nothing to do with us. It has nothing to do with what he would see in us. It has nothing to do with what we would do in this life. It is all about himself.

He chose us from eternity. And we are, in spite of what we are, the kindness of his love towards us, his mercy, his salvation.

[16 : 56] The love coming, as Paul said, to the chief of sinners. But this love is also personal. He is not saying to Israel that he has loved.

He said, I have loved you. And when he comes to us individually, he applies this to us and he says, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

When he wants to make himself known to us, when he wants to converse with us, when he wants to speak to us, so often he does so as one who is our lover.

Not somebody else's, he is our. He loves you, he loves me. And there is no suggestion that we share it with somebody else.

Although we know that Christ is here, that yet, he gives us of his love completely and utterly. In the same way as he places his spirit within our soul.

[18 : 09] That spirit is not a portion of the spirit. It is not a subdivision of the spirit. It is not the spirit being received now and again.

The spirit is there. He is there in his entirety. He is there in all his holiness. He is there in all of his knowledge. He is there completely.

And so it is with my God and your God. He loves you and he loves you passionately. And he loves you with all his heart.

The nature of God is there. What about his revelation? When he says in these verses that he loves us of old and from afar.

That suggests a duration and a distance. A duration, there is no beginning to all of this.

[19 : 17] We cannot tie God down and say, when did you start loving me? Because he couldn't tell you. Because it is from the beginning.

But there is also a distance. What is the distance? It is the moral and the spiritual distance. God is holy. God has no sin in him.

And we are told in scripture that he will not look upon sin. How then could he come and look upon us?

When you think of the favour that God has done towards us. Think of what happened to the angels.

The angels are secure as those who are servants of the church. evil. And you will see in that such a é! ACD.

[20 : 22] And here we have the great lessons. And the church ■ do not be Nvidia. Because if your focus does not do anything innicas... and not have you funded? And the angels held away from the state of faith through death. we too sinned and fell from the state where we were created but God found redemption for us he found favour for us we were created in his image, we lost part of that image and the work of sanctification is the renewal of the image that we have lost or that part of it which we have lost the holiness, the knowledge that we no longer have great favour done to us and this is the way in which God reveals his love toward us in that we see that although as moral creatures we have fallen short of what he demanded of us in the creation that yet he, through his dear son is offering us salvation in Christ he looked at things so despicable that they're described as a dumbhood but in Psalm 113 it says that he raises the poor out of the dust and lifts the needy out of the ash heap how much we know of that that he takes us out of the mighty clay and puts our feet upon our rock establishing our way and each person who has come to know this Christ and to know this God which as it says in Gai koga dis a sa chluuribh oor a hashban b'leh no matter how much we try no matter how much we seek to glorify this name we fall short we fall short but still we see that the one who manifested himself in Christ Jesus is the one who is our God and our Father what then is the evidence of this love?

one first creates that Christ came into that everlasting covenant that in the mystery of eternity that God acknowledged that the ones he was to create would fall and that they would require to have a redeemer and that in that mysterious past Christ was prepared to accept the commission and the cabinet laid upon that as a covenant head he would come to undertake a work of salvation for us and in that covenant Christ says they were you but you gave them to me but it's a very peculiar gift this one as I said the everlasting love means that you were chosen by God in the mystery of eternity as part of his own very being but what is part of his very being he know we see it in the Gospels

Christ says that these people were given to Christ but when we get a gift we receive it it is given to us and we receive it but the peculiarity of this gift is that he was told by the Father the gift is yours but you can't get it until you take down your life for it so that in order to receive the gift which the Father gave he had to come into this world and to suffer that death upon the cross to lay down his life otherwise the covenant would be null and void but although he knew he would lay ahead Christ our Savior was quite happy to acknowledge this gift of the Father and to give evidence of this everlasting love and to give himself as a ransom for his people he entered all of our trials all of our sorrows all of our temptations he took to himself a humanity with all the infirmities of sin he wasn't sinful and there was no sin in him but Adam when he sinned brought on himself an awful lot of infirmities he was sorrowful he could be ill he could be tired many things were brought in by his sin and all of those were laid upon

Christ those infirmities that were sinless they were part and portion of the nature that Christ took to give evidence of the love which God had for us this everlasting love he was found he was found under the sentence of death and the sword was pushed into his side and that which we are told by Isaiah was for the joy that was sent before how perfectly that that should show us evidence of the everlasting love of the Trinity taught us it's evidence of its willingness to give when Christ died he had unsearchable riches but in his death he gave his riches away he was made poor and by his poverty we are made rich we are the inheritors of the riches unsearchable riches of Christ who knows what that is but we know that there is a mansion there is a house prepared for each and every one of his own there is a place prepared for you a place with your name on it and he will bring you to be placed in that place and in that position

I believe as we heard on Sunday that the angels will carry our souls to heaven but once there our soul will be presented before our Lord and we will see him as he is and we will recognize him we will know and he will then direct us to the place which has been prepared for us a willingness to suffer a willingness to cure surely that is evidence of the everlasting love of the Father and just in a word in the end what are these marks these marks are firstly it's an irresistible power what other power would have brought you to a life of faith to give yourself to God the last person on earth in our village that they expected to follow

[29 : 19] Christ and to come into the prayer meeting was myself and as someone said to me the first night I was in church it must have been some power to make you go it must have been but I didn't feel it like that all I felt was that I wanted to be with God's people I wanted I was being drawn by this irresistible power the way he puts it there therefore with loving kindness I have drawn this irresistible power this loving kindness the way in which he brings us it's as if we too are being nailed to the cross we can't get near enough to this cross and we will not move further away and when he draws us he doesn't keep us at arm's length he draws us into his portion and if

I if I be lifted up I will draw all men toward me and he says again who can separate us from the love of Christ we have brought into his bosom and he keeps us there and our prayer to him is draw me and I will run after you our reaction to this insistent power is that we love the one who loved us and all the saints will meet here loving Christ not only in emotion but also in outward expression we try dearly to show that we love this Christ that we have this love within us and that we are written epistles we try to show our fellow peoples that we love the

Christ and that we hopefully would be an example to them an encouragement to us to follow up may God bless those these few thoughts you have ■estro as you can't get him you can't possibly see you his you need to can't Crazy