



FAITH ALIVE CHURCH

PASTOR (MR.) TRACY HEADLEY

THE 'GREAT COMMISSION' OF LOVE

To love God in *this way* is to fulfill completely *all the* commandments regarding one's vertical relationship.

So let's lay the foundation of love by starting in Matthew 22: **The Most Important Commandment** 34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they thought up a fresh question of their own to ask him. 35 One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the Law of Moses?" 37 Jesus replied, "You *must love* the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.'" 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 40 All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

In this text, Jesus references Deuteronomy 6:5 to show that a person's total being must be involved in loving God. Nothing must be held back because God holds nothing back: You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. The word for "love" is *agape*, which is totally unselfish love, a *love* of which human beings are capable, only with *the help* of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:8-9 "But God demonstrates His *own love* toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much *more than*, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." **While we were *still sinners*—these are amazing words.** God sent Jesus Christ to die for us, not because we were good enough, but just because he *loved us*. **Whenever you feel uncertain about God's love for you, remember that he *loved you* even before you turned to him.**

The highest expression of *human love* is when someone gives his or her life so that another person can continue to live. People are able to understand *sacrificial love*, even though it is rarely practiced. This kind of sacrificial gesture is almost always dependent on a relationship that already exists between the one sacrificing (parent, sibling, spouse, fellow soldier) and the one benefited. **Even so, people *do not* readily die for others.** But *God's love* stands in stark contrast to even the deepest expression of human love because God showed his *great love* for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **Christ's death is the highest manifestation of God's love for us.** While we were rebellious and despicable, Christ died for us so that we could come to God, find peace with him, and become heirs of his promises. Christ did *not die* so that we could be made lovable; Christ died because God already *loved us* and wanted to bring us close to himself. **So you can expect God to do the things He does for you, simply because He *loves you*.** The *whole plan* of redemption is based on *His love*. God *didn't send* Jesus to the cross just to *satisfy* the legal requirements of the divine justice system.

He *didn't do it* just because His *righteous nature* required payment of the price for sin. *He *did it* because He *loves you*.

1 John 4:10, NLT "This is real love: *not* that we loved God, but that He *loved us* and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." **This verse can *change your entire Christian life!*** Real love isn't that we love God, but that He *loves us*. **What does that *really mean?*** For many of us, we are often focused on how much WE love the Lord, *our* passion for God, *our* service for the Lord and *our* obedience to Him – while all of those are good things, we shouldn't overlook *that the* real emphasis *isn't* on us!

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The emphasis is on God and *His love for us* - the focus is on how much HE *loves us*, His passion for us, His service towards us and His intensity for loving us! **Life-change happens when you *embrace* that the emphasis is on God *loving us first***. He is the *initiator* and we *respond* by loving Him back.

He chose us, before we chose Him. Think about it - He *loved us* at our most unlovely point. God demonstrated *His love* for us that when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. If He *loved us* then, He *loves us* now! When we know and believe *the love* God has for us, and that *His love* for us came before we ever did anything to serve or obey Him - then you can truly rest in *His love* for you.

Ephesians 3:19, AMP say's "[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!"

Again, isn't it great to know, that there isn't a thing you have to do today to earn *the love of God*? God is absolutely head-over-heels *in love* with you. Do you ever find yourself doing this? **Trying to earn *the love of God*, or trying to do something—anything—that will cause God to accept and approve of you?** Well, none of our silly efforts can do a thing to cause Him to *love us* any more than He already does. I know that is a little hard to grasp, but it's true. **In Romans 5:8 (NKJV) we're told that,** "...God demonstrates His *own love* toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

He *showed* the world, and He *showed* us, that even though we were *separated* from God because of our sin, He *loved us enough* to send His Son to die for us. That's proof positive that He must *love us* without conditions. *Because when we were in our worst condition He gave His all for us.* But that kind of commitment and sacrifice is so contrary to the way this world works, it sometimes just seems like just empty words.

That must be why the Apostle Paul was led to pray that we would, "...come to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] *the love* of Christ." (Ephesians 3:19, AMP). **His prayer is so personal and yet so practical.** He prayed that we would come to know practically, through our own experience, *the love* that Jesus has for us. So, the million-dollar question is, why? Why is it so important that we experience *God's love* for ourselves? It's important, *because* when we fully 'understand and experience' *God's love* on a personal level it will absolutely, completely and totally change how we live our lives.

1 John 4:19 in many translations says, "We love Him, because He first *loved us*." Well actually, the more accurate translation is, "We love, because He first *loved us*."

+ In other words, when we come to 'know and experience' *God's love* on a personal level it affects every area of our lives. When we experience firsthand *God's love* for us, then we can truly learn to *love others*.

So, today I pray that God will find ways to make *His love* for you more real than ever before. I pray that *God's love* will totally rock your world in such a way that *you'll never* be the same.