

Works of the Flesh / Fruit of the Spirit

Part 23 (love 2)

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:30-36

INTRO:

Well, this is now the second message on love in looking at Paul's list of fruits of the Spirit of Galatians chapter 5. And just to give us a quick review from the last message. Last time we looked at the love of God and I presented to you that the love of God is a love that always has eternity in mind, meaning that in all the love God shows us, tells us, and imparts to us, is a love that always leads or points us to eternal life and conforms us to His Son.

In that message I gave you the biblical account of the rich man who came to Jesus and asked the question;

"Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

To which the scripture says;

Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

You see, it is the love of God, of Jesus that pointed the man to the eternal life he was seeking. However, at the hearing of what it required, the man turned away. Turned away from that love, away from life, away from the love that was pointing him to eternal life and revealed the truth of his situation, which was the love of his possessions. As the bible says;

But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

We don't know what kind of answer the rich man was looking for, but from his response, what he received was not what he had in mind or was looking to do. The love of God he received from Jesus was something that he was unwilling to do.

What he was probably looking for was a love that would allow him to keep all his earthly possessions and still be settled in his mind as having eternal life in going to heaven. And even if you think that this assumption may be a little too farfetched, we still see the same thing happening in our day.

People can read of God's love, hear of the love that points them to eternal life and yet, if they don't like it, they walk away. Walk away and continue to look for and follow the things they love in this world instead. We see this happening in churches as well, where instead of obeying the love of God; churches are coming up with doctrines and teachings that allow people to live in their sins and then continue to tell them that they are still going to heaven. Because the real love of God is too harsh for them, and as a church, they walk away from it and follow some other love of the world.

You see, I could tell you about the love of God and how it is to look like in the Christian, but one of the things you might miss is how the love of the world is getting mixed up with the love of God, as it is in much of Christianity now days.

And so, to avoid this I want us to look at the love of the world in this message. So that we have something to contrast it to when we come to the love as the fruit of the Spirit that is to be in the Christian in the next one.

{A. LOVE}

2. The Love of the World

So under sub point number 2 we will look at the love of the world. You see the world can love, as I said in the introduction to this second half of the series, the world has love, the world knows what love is, and even in the deepest and most intimate examples of the worlds love it may be almost indistinguishable from the love Paul is talking about here as the fruit of the Spirit.

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Because remember Jesus says in John 15:19;

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own."

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Jesus also says in Matthew chapter 5 verse 46 He says;

*"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"*

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And then also in Luke chapter 6 verse 32;

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."

The world knows about love, the world know how to love and the world knows what love looks like.

Jesus says that even the tax collectors and sinners love those who love them and shows us that the unbelievers of the world know about love. In all of history we see the world give and receive love and sometimes with more passion and dedication than what believers do.

And we can see this by what man has written about love, of the many books that man has written on or about some aspect of love.

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Google says that of the 158 million books that are in the world,

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...about 33% are written with some aspect of love. Everything from William Shakespeare's tragedy 'Romeo and Juliet, and Charles Dickens 'Great Expectations' to Margaret Mitchell's 'Gone with the Wind' and Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' the world knows and has written much about love and continues to do so. And not only in books but also in music, movies, poems, plays; many of them are based or centered around some aspect of love.

To say that the people of the world don't know about love would be like saying people of the world don't know about air. To have a person who doesn't know about some form of love in the world or the lack of it, is probably a person who doesn't use much air either. The world knows about love.

Now granted, much of the worlds modern writings of love is centered much around the feelings of love, and I think much of that is because the English language only has 1 word for love and that is... love, and it is context that must decide what kind of love is being referred to, expressed or written about.

However, if we go back to ancient Greek literature we find that they had many more different words for love, than just love. From an article titled 'The Greeks Had Six Words for Love' it says this in the opening paragraph;

In Western culture, the concept of love has multiple meanings depending on the context. From describing friendship to hobbies to romantic partners, it seems clear that love is all around us. But while the word "love" is often connoted with romance in modern English, the ancient Greeks made the idea of love more specific by establishing six different words to describe different dimensions of love.

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Well actually in the Greek language there are many different words for the different kinds of love in the world, and even from the ones we are looking at today there are many sub words to some of these as well. And I want to take us through some of them to show us that this world has a relatively good understanding of what they mean by love and the different aspects of it. And as we go through them we will not go into depth of all the sub categories but only briefly go over these from the broadest sense to the narrowest, to show us the world's understanding and interpretation of the love it experiences.

And the first and most common love word in the Greek is;

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Agape love, agape love is known as the highest form of love, and as we have heard in the past as a 'love that does what is right' it is the love as the Online Bible Greek Lexicon says is;

To feel and exhibit esteem and good will to a person, or
to prize and delight in a thing,

It is the broadest and widest sense of love as we know it and would be the love that most English uses refer to.

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Number 2 is Philia, or Philadelphia love, is a love that is shared between friends or as a love of brothers and sister in the faith. The word Philos is used to describe it as a male friend and Phile for female friend (and husbands, this is why you can call you wife your ‘Phile’ and not get in trouble for using it, it is grammatically correct, your pastor said so). But this is also a broad sense of love but more narrow than just Agape love.

Now these first two are the ones used in the New Testament Greek scriptures but even there it is the context that determines if it is a fruit of the Spirit or a love from the world.

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Third is Storge love, this is the love that is usually referred to as family love, love that is between parents and children or between siblings, or close friendship that are viewed more as family than just friends.

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Forth is Ludus love, it is what we would call puppy love, or that ‘crush’ kind of love, it is that flirtatious and new beginnings kind of love that we find in new relationships or children and teenagers.

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Fifth is Eros love, Eros is the passionate kind of love, that physical passion that exists between intimate individuals. This kind of love is not to be confused with the sixth which is

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Mania, which is an obsessive kind of love, that deep feelings of dependence or attachment to another person and is often associated with strong feelings of jealousy or envy, and is usually not a very healthy kind of love and leans more to being a toxic relationship kind of love, rather than one that is a loving relationship.

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The seventh is Prag’ma, Prag’ma love is that long standing kind of love, the love or relationship that has endured over long periods of time, it is not the falling into love nor the finding new love, but the staying and maintaining of love in the relationship, as with husbands and wives of many years and of long time relationship of old friends.

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And then lastly there is at number eight is Philautia, more of a sub version of Philia, but it is the love of self. An idea of this form the bible is when Paul talks about husbands loving their wives in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 28 and 29 where he says;

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

It means the looking after of yourself and taking care of yourself, but, it can also carry the meaning of someone who ‘loves’ themselves in the form of self-obsession, or what we would call narcissism, of someone who is narcissistic and the Greeks also knew about this kind of love and used this word to describe such.

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So there you have a very brief history from the Greek language of some of the different words for love and the ways that they are expressed as compared to our one English word of love.

Now again, I give you this list to show you that the world does have an understanding of love. The bible shows us this with the scriptures I read for you earlier, the world shows us this in the secular works of literature in the world and that doesn't even include the movies, music, and plays of our civilization.

Like the internet said 33% of all the books of all the 158 million books written are centered around, based upon, look at or are themed by this thing we call love. And with that you would think that when we talk about love, the world should be an expert on the subject of love shouldn't it?

Because even when Jesus says in John 15:13;

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

The world knows very well what this kind of love looks like. Many wars have been waged on this earth and many people have died in giving their lives for their friends, or their companions, for their loved ones and even their country. Many sacrifices have been made in acts of love, in acts of duty, and in protecting the ones they loved for the values they believed in, and often words like freedom and liberation are associated with such dying acts of this love.

And even from this kind of mind set, many of us would be willing to give up our lives for the ones we love, to protect the lives of our family if certain situation would arise.

But in all of these, there is still one aspect of love that they are missing, the one that Paul is talking about, which is love as a fruit of the Spirit.

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Listen all of the worlds love no matter how genuine, or how real, or how dedicated or sacrificial it is... is not the love of God and is not the fruit of the Spirit.

And I do not say that lightly, much thought and study went in coming to that phrase, it's not just some off the cuff comment. And I'm not saying that the love of the world is bad or some bad thing. Only that there is a fine line that divides all of this love that the world knows about, writes about, sings about and even lives and dies about to that which is the love of God as the fruit of The Spirit.

Because on one hand we must remember that the world knows about love, we have looked at that, we understand that, even Jesus, the passages I mentioned earlier note this when He said;

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own.

And

*"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"*

And then also;

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

But on the other hand the scriptures also say;

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Because there is a line that divides all of this worldly love, from the love of God. And one thing you must note is that you will not find that line or that answer outside of scripture.

It's a little bit like when you are debating creation.

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When you debate or reason over the 6 literal days of creation, you cannot base or argue that truth outside of the bible.

Yes, you can look at creation and say yes it is designed, and if it is designed then there must be a designer but that is as far as you can go. It is only by the word of God that can take that truth farther. It is only from the bible that we can know ‘who’ designed and created all of this, ‘what’ it is made of... which is nothing, ‘when’ it was made and how long it took, but most of all ‘why’ all of it was made.

Now I give you that little side note on creation because most of us can relate to that argument that goes on with creation and know that there are only some answers that you can get from the bible and not from creation itself.

As we have heard before, when we look at nature, at creation, we have what we call a general revelation of God, that it is all designed and created with function and purpose. But it is only from the bible that we receive what we call special revelation, in receiving and understand the answers as to who, what, when and why this is all created. Only from the bible can we find these answers. And the same goes for God’s love.

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There are answers to God’s love that we can only find in the bible and can only be answered by the bible.

Because if we only look at the world's view and definition of love, we will only come away with a general worldly answer, a general overview of its meaning and use in the world, the same as when we try to explain God by only looking at creation itself.

No, that line that divides worldly love from Godly love is only found in one place and that one place is the word of God, and to show us this, the rest of this message will be looking at the worldly side of that line when looking at it through the bible. And the next message will then be looking at the other side of that line when we will look at the love of God and how it is to look like in the Christian as the fruit of the Spirit.

And the two verses I need you to keep in mind as we go through this part of the message are the verses I gave you earlier,

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Matthew chapter 5 verse 46 where Jesus says;

*"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"*

And then also what He says in Luke 6:32;

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

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And the two parts I need you to remember are these; from the first reference the part where Jesus says 'what reward have you' and from the second reference 'what credit is that to you', keep these two in mind and I will keep them up on the screen to remind us as we continue.

But turn with me to Luke chapter 11, here in Luke chapter 11 we have a shorter account of Jesus rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees as to the one that is recorded in the book of Matthew. Luke chapter 11 and I'll start reading from verse 37;

And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat.

38 When the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.

39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.

40 "Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?"

41 "But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you."

From these verses we begin to have an idea of what Jesus is rebuking them about, hypocrisy but now note verse 42

and note what he says about love;

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

Did you catch it, Jesus says that they tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and... the love of God. They pass by justice, and grammatically Jesus says that they pass by the love of God.

If you remember from the last message, what did I say the love of God always points us to... eternity, the love of God always has eternity in mind, and what does Jesus tell us of the Pharisees here? That they passed by the love of God.

Just like the rich man we looked at last time, the one who came to Jesus asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. And Jesus looking at him loved him with that godly love of pointing him in the direction of eternity told the man to go and sell all he had and take up his cross and follow Him. And what did that man do... he went away, he went away, he passed by, passed up the opportunity to allow the love of God to direct him to life.

And so it was with the Pharisees, they passed by the love of God. They passed by the love of God that was pointing them to eternity. And as teachers and leaders of the people, they misdirected the masses to what really was the way to eternal life. think this is why Jesus was furious with them.

They passed by the love of God and not only passed by but also locked up the means of anyone else finding that path, in verse 52 Jesus says;

"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

Not only did they walk away or passed by the love of God, the love that pointed to eternity but they also kept it from the people.

Oh they had love alright, worldly love and even Jesus says it in verse 43;

"Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

And in Matthew chapter 23 verse 5 He also says;

"But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

6 "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

7 "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

They loved the preeminence of their position, they loved the prestige of their looks, they loved to be recognized as the spiritual leaders of the people, they loved all kinds of things that built up their image but one thing they lacked and passed by was the love of God that pointed to eternal life. Why else did Jesus tell His disciples;

"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

Listen what eternal reward or credit do you think these scribes and Pharisees received... Jesus called them white washed tombs, hypocrites, fools, brood of vipers and serpents. Tell me, does that sound like leaders who are leading and pointing people with the love of God to eternity... hardly.

No, what the Pharisees had, or practiced was not the love of God but the love of this world, earthly love, temporal and worldly love of this world.

And in John chapter 5 verse 42 Jesus tells these scribes and Pharisees;

"But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

Pretty harsh words for the people and leaders that are to be in charge of the souls of men, but you see it is the same love that is in the world that was in the Pharisees, as Jesus said they did not have the love of God in them, but the love of the world.

And what then is the love that the world has, shows, gives and receives, well all kinds but the one thing missing is the pointing to eternity.

Why was Jesus angry with the scribes and Pharisees... because they loved the things of this world, the temporal things of this world, the passing things of this world and they passed by the love of God which leads to eternity.

The apostle John wrote of this in 1 John chapter 2 starting in verse 15 he says;

15 Do not love the world or 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, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Listen, John says the world is passing away, and the lust of it, and the love of it. Listen the world knows what love is, that is very evident, but all the love in the world will pass away and will all be for nothing. Every form of love this world can give is earthly, temporal, and passing away no matter how passionate, how loving, how intense it may be, it is all for nothing in light of eternity.

Listen if this is difficult to comprehend, I'll give you an illustration like this.

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Let's say you have a man, one man who believes in living a good life, but he is not a believer,

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he is a worldly man, but he has good morals, good standards, loves the orphans and feeds the poor, this man loves to do what is right and good in society according to the world's view of right and good.

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but does not believe in God.

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Now let's say this man finds a wife

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and then has 10 sons, and he loves his sons, and he imparts to them the same love of doing good and right and he does it with such passion and dedication that all 10 of his sons take the same standards

and teachings of their father, loving the orphans and feed the poor.
and now even the town marvels at the life of these sons.

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but never teaches them about God.

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And then these 10 sons all find wives

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and they too have 10 sons and with the same passion and desire for doing what is good and right in society, impart to them the same standards that was taught by their father, and now there are 100 grandsons with the same love of doing what is good and right in the eyes of their world, loving the orphans and feed the poor, and not only does the town marvel at the integrity and love they all show for doing what is good and right but now it is passed on as a legacy of the family.

But still none of them know God.

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And this goes on for generation after generation creating thousands of men who by their passion and dedication, love in doing what is good and right in society, loving the orphans and feed the poor and yet never heed to the one true God.

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And now with tens of thousands in their number they have become a nation of love and good and doing what is right in their society and yet none of them have ever known God. Let me ask you this, how many of them will be in heaven? NONE.

Now someone may ask... Pastor are you suggesting that all these generations of good people are going to hell?

See this is the dilemma the world's love runs into, surely a loving God would not send all these good people of the world to hell... they loved good morals, they loved good standards, they loved one another and kept each other accountable to that love the first man had. They have built a nation on this love, they loved the orphans and fed the poor, but what is missing in all of this love?

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The love of God that points them to eternity. You see this love that the world has in all its forms is all in vain when looking at eternity.

Now I'm not saying the love of this world is bad, not at all, we are created to love, feel love, express love, but all worldly love never points the person to eternity.

Earlier I noted Jesus words when He said;

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Jesus, was speaking of himself, and yes to give ones life for the life of a friend is the ultimate sacrifice. But think of this, what if neither one was a Christian... what did that great love do for each of them... nothing... they both ended up in hell didn't they. If it isn't a love that points to eternity, it is only worldly love whose end result is nothing.

I listened to an interview of a 100 year old World War 2 marine veteran of the United States Army, and in the interview he broke down in reflecting on the state America is in today and said this;

People don't realize what they have... and nowadays I am so upset that the things we did and the things we fought for and the boys that died for is all going down the drain, our country going to hell in a hand basket.

We haven't got the country we had when I was raised, not at all, nobody will have the fun I had, nobody will have the opportunity I had.

And through tears he said

But this is not the same, this not what the boys died for, It just not the same, this isn't what we fought for...

His thinking is that in as little as a couple of generations, to give one's life for those we love, the nation we love, the morals and teachings we believe in, can all be lost, and that they all died in vain. Lost to the world's ever changing compass of life, morals, duty, and love, all these things change and can be loved and lost in vain.

This is why I said in the introduction message, that man cannot grow fruit, out of ourselves we cannot grow the fruit that points to eternity, all man can produce is a temporal earthly love he is created with, a love that perishes in light of eternity.

Jesus said;

*"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?"*

And

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

What reward do you have, what credit is that to you... what reward or credit does this worlds love give you in light of eternity... none.

What reward or credit does an entire nation of good people have in light of eternity? Even if you would create a perfect world utopia of good people, law abiding people, peace loving people, people loving people, but all that love is only earthly and worldly love and not the love of the Holy Spirit in pointing to salvation, what eternal value or credit are you creating with that nation... none.

Now that sound pretty harsh and you may think surely pastor there is some good that must come from the world's kind of love, isn't there... surely it's not all for nothing...

Well, that is where that fine line comes in, and remember you will not find that line in the world's view of love, because the world's view of love does not point one to eternity. Think about it... is there any love outside of the bible or any non-biblical reference that can point the receiver of that love to eternity with God, not a small 'g' god, but to the creator God of the bible.

Now you may be thinking what about those people who preach the gospel and point men to God when themselves are not even saved, well Paul talked about these people in his letter to the Philippians. In chapter 1 starting from verse 15 he says;

15 Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will:

16 The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;

17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

Now as Paul says the former preach Christ from selfish ambitions, from envy and from strife, but are really enemies of the cross, but as Paul says ‘what then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached’.

Do they preach out of love, no Paul says it is out of strife and envy, so is this a fruit of the Spirit, no, it is a means of gain through selfish ambitions, works of the flesh. But what does Paul say about this, ‘I rejoice and will rejoice’.

It has the same end purpose as what God but it is not done out of love, God will use it and Paul says he rejoiced because of it, but it is not a fruit of the Spirit, a work of the flesh, as he says it is out of strife and envy, that uses the gospel for selfish gain.

These would include people like Charles Templeton, Ravi Zacharias, Benny Hin, Joshua Harris, and any preacher of the gospel who preaches for selfish gain.

We know that people can walk away from the love of God as the rich man, people can pass by the love of God as the Pharisees did, so can the love of this world point people to eternity if there is not fruit of the Spirit?

Well, this is where the line gets really thin, but we must remember selfish ambitions will do anything for selfish gain, even preach the gospel if it helps ‘their’ cause. Is this a fruit of the Spirit, absolutely not, it is a work of the flesh, and where do the works of the flesh lead to and the people who practice them, hell.

And this is why Paul says ‘only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice’.

But the problem that often arises is that it then is often a distorted Christ, a distorted Gospel that is preached and the line gets even more difficult to discern when we come to such things.

But in general when speaking of the love of the world, Jesus said;

"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?"

And

"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?"

You see the worlds love has no reward... eternally speaking, the worlds love has no credit... eternally speaking, and I think this is what Jesus was implying, yes it can be passionate, and real, and move men to give their lives by the thousands, but what eternal reward or credit is there in the worlds form of love? Even those who preach out of selfish ambitions may point other to the kingdom but they themselves do not have the love of the Spirit and are destined for hell.

Isaiah says in chapter 64 verse 6;

*But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our
righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.*

And as Paul said, first in Romans chapter 3 verses 10 through 12;

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

And then also in Philippians chapter 3 verse 7 and 8 speaking of himself he says;

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

And just my opinion the love of the world can also fall into these categories when compared to the love of God. Because the love that is of the world does not point anyone to eternity and credits us with no eternal reward. This is the line, this is the divide, that separates the love of the Spirit from the love of the world.

In that one points to eternity with God, as Jesus tried to show the rich man, the one Jesus said the Pharisees passed by and the other, is only a temporal, created earthly feeling that gets the lost through this life of misery only to die and end up in hell anyway.

Well, this is a difficult thought and I hope I didn't burn out any fuses in your minds today, but I hope that once we get through the next message, we will better understand what the fruit of the Spirit Paul calls love is, and that it is to be in the Christian as opposed to the love of the world we have looked at today.