

“Loving Jesus”
Ephesians 6:24
(Preached at Trinity, May 15, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After describing the essentials of the faith and the essence of the Christian life Paul is about to bring the book to a close which will end our journey that began October 6, 2013. This is sermon number 118. It took Martin Lloyd-Jones 232 sermons to complete the book. I always have a sense of sorrow as I close a series of sermons from a major book of the Bible. It has occupied my attention with much study and meditation for the last two and a half years. Although only 6 chapters in length it contains a wealth of instruction.
2. Last week we focused on **Verse 23**. Paul writes of peace and love with faith. While the primary focus is on our love for one another and the peace we share with one another it begins with our relationship with Christ.
 - A. Paul is writing about peace “from” God that begins with peace “with” God. And he is writing about the love we share with one another that begins as we discover the love of Christ and this is only possible through faith.
 - B. Saving faith produces not only a love for Christ. It also produces love for others who love Him.
3. As we come to the final verse Paul ends by taking us to heights that are beyond our comprehension. He is addressing Christians which is the way he began the epistle.
Ephesians 1:1 NAU - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus"
There Paul describes Christians as those who are holy and faithful.
4. Now in this final verse he describes Christians as those who love Jesus with an incorruptible love.
Ephesians 6:24 NAU - "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love."
 - A. The KJV and NKJV translate it “sincerity” which doesn't put enough weight to the word.
 - B. The Greek word is ἀφθαρσία which is found 7 times in the NT. It refers to that which is imperishable—something not subject to decay.
Romans 2:7 NAU - "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;"
1 Corinthians 15:42 NAU - "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;"
 - C. The NASB translation describes it well. It is an incorruptible love.
5. How can this be? Do we have to have an incorruptible love in order to have eternal life?
 - A. As we search our hearts and examine our love for Christ we must conclude that is not incorruptible. Our love is often fickle. In spite of our desire to love Christ and our firm resolve to love Him more how many times are our hearts drawn away from Him? How often are our hearts divided? Is there hope for us?

- B. The Bible makes it clear that love for Christ is essential for salvation and eternal life.
1 Corinthians 16:22 NAU - "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha."
6. This verse is surely difficult.
- A. It is so difficult that some have tried to connect the word "incorruptible" to the word "grace" at the beginning of the sentence.
 "Grace incorruptible be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ."
 This is a grammatical stretch.
- B. Some look at it temporally—that our love for Christ is everlasting. This is a possibility. Paul uses the word this way in Romans
Romans 2:7 NAU - "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;"
- C. Still others insist that it must have a moral meaning—that Paul is speaking of the purity of the Christian's love for Christ—an incorruptible love.
 This is actually the best meaning.
 But this is a problem for us. Our love for Jesus is not perfect and incorruptible.
7. Our hope rests in the word "grace."
Ephesians 6:24 NAU - "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love."
8. Grace is the fountain from which every blessing from God flows. It is God's powerful work of love upon His people. How can we love Jesus with an incorruptible love? Only by God's grace. God enables our love for Jesus to grow until it is finally perfected in eternity.
9. Although Christians love Christ now our love will not finally be perfect until the resurrection when we will be glorified. Only then will we be finally perfected. Until then we are in need of much grace.
- I. So how is it that we love Christ?
- A. It begins with a comprehension of Christ's love for you
1. As we ponder the Gospel our affections are kindled for Christ
 2. What love would bring the Father to give His only Son to die for sinners?
John 3:16
 3. What love would bring the Father to determine to adopt us as His own children, even though we were most defiled.
Ephesians 1:4-5 NAU - "In love⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself"
 4. What love would lead Christ to leave His place in eternity to enter into the condition of men.
 5. And what love would lead Christ to suffer on the cross for us.
Romans 5:8 NAU - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
John 15:13 NAU - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

6. We need to strive to know His love more. This was Paul's point of Paul's prayer in **Chapter 3**
Ephesians 3:16-19 NAU - "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God."
- B. The love of Christ is known as we enter into relationship with Him
1. As Christians we know the love of Christ personally, particularly, experientially
 - a. We know He died for us – for me. This is the nature of saving faith. We have experienced the love of Christ in His death. We know forgiveness.
 - b. We know He will never leave us or forsake us - He is always with us. We are His beloved. How could He ever forsake one He loves with an infinite love?
 - c. We know we are partakers of His rich inheritance. His death made possible our adoption. We are the beloved children of God.
 - d. We know He is working everything for our good. There are many trials and difficulties in this life – some can seem overwhelming. We know that each has been sent from the hand of love.
 - e. He assures us of His love when we read His Word and He reminds us of His rich and precious promises for us.
 2. Knowing and experiencing the love of Christ enables us to love Him in return.
Ephesians 6:24 NAU - "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love."
 - a. Those who have been forgiven much love much. Christ becomes their greatest treasure; their sweetest love.
 - b. Love for Christ is a true measure of saving faith. It is a true measure of our salvation. A lack of love for Christ marks those under God's judgment.
1 Corinthians 16:22 NAU - "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed."
 c. The love of Christ has had a huge impact upon our lives. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:
2 Corinthians 5:14 – "For the love of Christ controls us" $\sigmaυν\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega$ – It means "to hold fast." It can carry the meaning "to seize" The love of Christ has gripped our hearts.
 - d. As I've pointed out, love for Christ is our greatest shield against the assaults of Satan. His flaming arrows are extinguished as they fly against the shield of our faith along our love for Christ.
 - e. Paul says in **Verse 24** that this love is incorruptible. As we've seen, the word literally means immortal, imperishable. Satan cannot turn our heart away from Christ.

II. How do we demonstrate our love for Christ in this life?

A. By giving Him our best

1. It is easy to give our best for those we love.
2. We must not forget the extravagant love of the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus.
 - a. This was the statement from Jesus
Mark 14:9 NAU - "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."
 - b. In other words, we're not supposed to forget her. She demonstrated her extravagant love for Jesus by giving her best to Him. Love does not calculate the cost but is willing to give all
3. This is what Love to Jesus looks like – it is rich, extravagant, and boundless. It is both emotional and practical. Is there anything in your life more precious than Jesus?

B. We demonstrate our love for Christ by giving Him our obedience. We have received Him as Lord. Those who love their Lord will also love His Law

1. Jesus taught this clearly
John 14:15 NAU - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
John 14:21 NAU - "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me"
2. John testified of this in his First Epistle
1 John 2:3-5 NAU - "By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:"
3. We reflect this in our Church By-laws
 TBC Constitution: Section 3. CONDUCT OF MEMBERSHIP.
 "As members of this church, we recognize our obligation to honor, serve, worship, praise, and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do. Jesus Christ is the head of this church, and, therefore, its Lord and Lawgiver; and those who truly love Him will endeavor to keep His commandments"

C. We demonstrate our love for Christ by loving His people

1. After His resurrection Jesus asked a probing question to Peter.
John 21:15 NAU - "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs."
2. We demonstrate our love for Christ by loving His people
1 John 4:7 NAU - " Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."
3. It isn't enough to claim the vertical love of Christ – to know His love and to return it back to Him. To know the vertical love of Christ demands also knowing what it means to love horizontally – that is to love our fellow man.

4. This is the love marks us. Paul wrote in his letter to Philemon **Philemon 1:3-5 NAU** - "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints;"
5. Our Lord's people are full of imperfections. We have not yet been glorified. And they often are quite different from us. Jesus saves His people from all walks of life, from every culture, from ever economic status. Sometimes it is difficult to love God's people, and yet we are commanded to love them nonetheless.
6. If we love Jesus we will make active participation in a local church a high priority. That is where Jesus' people are. That is where we form loving relationships.

Conclusion:

1. Loving Jesus in this life takes much grace. We are too weak and too affected by sin to love Him perfectly. Loving Jesus demands a transforming work of God's grace in our hearts.
This is why **Verse 24** gives us such hope.
Ephesians 6:24 NAU - "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love"
 - A. There is the recognition of the intensity of our love for Christ, albeit weak.
 - B. There is also testimony to God's unflinching care of us. He gives us grace.
2. We see this in Paul's words of judgment and condemnation in **1 Cor. 16:1**
1 Corinthians 16:22-23 NAU - "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.
 - A. Maranatha is an Aramaic word transliterated into the Greek and then English. It literally means, "Lord, come."
Paul pronounces a curse upon a lack of love for Jesus and then beseeches Jesus to come.
 - B. Then Paul prays for God to bless them with His grace.
1 Corinthians 16:22-24 NAU - "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha. ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴ My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."
 - C. The point is we must love Jesus. We do love Jesus. But we need much grace in order to love Jesus.
3. Jesus is returning. We long for His return when we shall see Him face to face. Then at last we will love Him with incorruptible love.
Philip Ryken writes – "In this life we always seem to be loving the wrong things too much and the right things too little. But a day of perfect love is coming. Our hearts will be all for Jesus, only for Jesus, forever."
4. But we must intensely desire that love now and give ourselves to that pursuit.
What better way to close this wonderful book of the Bible? It ends with a word of hope, of love incorruptible, love for Jesus that will never end.