

## Herein is love - radio

I have two scriptures I would like to read for our sermon today. The first is found in Matthew chapter 22.

*“34 when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:34-40).*

The Pharisees did all that they did for show. They loved the praise of men. Jesus did nothing for show. He did all that He did out of pure love to His Father and love for His people. He sought only to glorify His Father. His life and death were spent to save His people. But because the Pharisees coveted the praise of men, when they saw that Jesus did not covet man’s praise, and yet that the people flocked to Him, they envied Jesus and sought to destroy Him. In this scripture, they sent one of their own to Him, a lawyer, to Jesus. He asked Jesus “Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” His motive was not to

learn. He was confident in his self-conceit and blind arrogance. He thought he was wiser than the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ! His motive was to catch Jesus in a fault to discredit Him before the people and to gain a victory over Him in their eyes. But he was caught in the trap he set because Jesus answered from scripture. His answer therefore proved the lawyer's guilt And it exposed his hypocrisy. And His answer does the same even now. It proves our guilt and exposes all us all. What is the first and greatest commandment? What is the most important? What is that one commandment, which if we keep, we actually keep the whole law? It is this. We must love God with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind and all of our strength. And the second commandment, "*thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*" is like it. Jesus said that on these two commandments hang all of the law and the prophets. Surely, therefore, if we keep these two, we have kept them all. But if we fail to keep these, if we fail to love God with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind and all of our strength, then we have not only broken the first and greatest but we have broken the law of God. Jesus said, "*He that is not with me is against me*" (Matt. 12:30). We are either all in or we are all out. We either love God with all that we are, or we do not love Him at all (James 2:10). This lawyer failed to keep the first and greatest commandment. His heart was full of hatred against Christ. Hating Christ, he hated God. And so do we if we fail to keep this commandment. The apostle James said, "*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and*

*yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”* (James 2:10). But who among us can stand before God and claim to have loved Him with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind and all of our strength even one time?! If we cannot keep this commandment one time, then we have failed to keep it all the time. And we prove that in ourselves, we are nothing but sin. The fact is, in Jesus’ response, two things are accomplished. These two things are accomplished throughout the word of God. First, we, as this lawyer, are proven to be guilty of breaking God’s law. Not only in the least, but in the first and most important commandment. Secondly, the Gospel shows us that Jesus’ answer and our guilt is actually the starting point for understanding the love of God. And this is where I would like to spend the rest of this sermon. In 1 John 4:10 we read this most important text of scripture. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10). In these two scriptures, Matt. 22:37-38 and 1 John 4:10, we find the Gospel of God’s grace in two ways:

**First**, in ourselves, we have failed and continually fail to love God. We are guilty of breaking the entire law of God all the time.

**Second**, love can only be known by God’s love in Christ. To know the love of God in Christ is the gift of God’s grace, the

gift of His own Spirit, who gives us faith in Christ to know the love of God.

I've entitled this sermon by the first words of 1 John 4:10, "*Herein is love.*"

In 1 John 4:10, the first thing we see is our need. God is just. We are sinners. God sent His Son. Salvation by every other means was therefore impossible. Had there been another way, God would have never delivered up His Son to death (Gal. 2:21). If God's love required so great a sacrifice from so great a Savior, it can only mean that our sin is evil beyond comprehension. If God required Christ to die, God must be holy beyond all of our ability to understand. We need this love because God is holy, our sin is bad, and our eternal life depends on the love of God in Christ!

We cannot know the love of God until we understand something of our own sinfulness, our failure at all times to keep God's law (Rom. 3:19-20). Our text from Matt. 22 proves our failure. But 1 John 4:10 proves our failure. God says, "*Herein is love, not that we loved God.*" There we have the very fact. We do not, in ourselves, nor have we at any time, loved God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Ironically, and this is God's amazing grace, we cannot even know the love of God unless we know something of our sinfulness before God for not loving

Him (Rom. 5:6-10; 20-21). “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 4:10). God’s love is seen in making propitiation for our sins by the death of His only begotten Son!

What is propitiation? Propitiation is a wrath-appeasing sacrifice made to God. It is a sacrifice made to His justice. It is an offering and a sacrifice, which God, in all of His uncompromising holiness, finds satisfying because it is in accord with His perfect justice. But why is propitiation needed? Our sins and our sin nature demand that God, in His inscrutable, unfathomable justice, pour out His unmitigated, undiluted wrath upon us for our sins, unmixed with any kindness (Rev. 14:10; Ps. 88:7; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:9). Think of it! The measure of the evil of our sin is the measure of the sacrifice God required to pacify His wrath and satisfy His justice (Rom. 5:10)! And what is the sacrifice that God’s justice demanded? Why, nothing less than the free, voluntary offering of His only begotten Son! The sacrifice God requires is Christ Himself, offering Himself to God, with His whole heart, His whole soul, His whole mind and His whole strength. It is Christ offering Himself in love to God and in love for His people, bearing the full cost of what God required to answer His holy justice, to appease His righteous wrath, and to fulfill His eternal and holy will by His one offering of Himself in the place of His people. That is the offering Christ

made by His death on the cross! *“Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”* (Heb. 9:26). The evil of our sin is seen in the sacrifice God required to make satisfaction for it! Christ Himself is the measure. *“It is Christ that died”* (Rom. 8:34)! Never let that thought leave your mind! Hold it before everything else. *“It is Christ that died!”* The holy Son of God, equal with the Father in all things, did, in the counsels of eternity, engage His heart to approach His Father as Surety for His people. *“Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD”* (Jer. 30:21). *“Jesus was made surety of a better testament”* (Heb. 7:22). He became Surety to His Father for His people, to stand in their place, to answer for them with Himself (Gen. 43:9; 44:32-34; Philemon 1:12,17-18). He owned their debt as His (2 Cor. 5:21; Ps. 40:12; John 18:8). He humbled Himself (Php. 2:6-8). He took our nature. He bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24). He made full payment for the sins of God’s elect by His sufferings and death under the wrath of God and the cruel hatred of men. God dealt with Christ in strict justice and received from Him an answer of full satisfaction to His justice (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:12). This is the measure of God’s justice (Matt. 23:23). This is the measure of our sins. But most importantly, this is the measure of the love of God! *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 1:10)!

Now, by hearing from God's own word what He thinks of sin by the sacrifice He required to make compensation for it; in seeing that we, in ourselves, were the very objects of God's just condemnation and wrath; in seeing that we failed in every point to love God; then, in seeing Christ stoop from the heights of glory, from heaven's throne to Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross, only then can we see and know the love of God. "Herein is love!" Look upon Christ! See your hateful self in the estimation of God in the punishment that He brought upon His Son! And consider that it was for God's love that He stood as Surety for His people! God, in His wisdom, found a way to abundantly lavish grace on hell-deserving sinners, which you and I are! Now, considering this truth from this scripture, find Christ to have made a full answer to God! Find His obedience in His death to be the complete righteousness which God owns as His very own righteousness (Rom. 1:17) and which He gives to all of His people in Christ (Rom. 5:17). Then, with these things in the bosom of your conscience, go to God and take His words and join the chorus with His people and say, "Herein is love(!), not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (Rev. 1:5)!

From 1 John 4:10 we first see that **God's love is giving**. He gave His only begotten Son! And we see that **God's love is holy**. He required full payment for our sins: nothing less than propitiation by the blood of His own dear Son! We also see that **God's love**

**is gracious.** He sent His Son for sinners, to make propitiation for their sins! And from scripture, we also see that **God's love is eternal.** Christ is the Lamb who was foreordained before the foundation of the world to be the propitiation for our sins, but is now set forth and made known in these last times to sinners by the Gospel of God's free grace (Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:20)!

Moreover, we see that **God's love is unfailing.** Propitiation has been made! God is well pleased with His Son (Eph. 5:2). The sins of His people have actually been put away in the death of Christ! God is propitiated because it is Christ has died in just proportion to what justice demanded! His wrath is now appeased. Listen to what Psalm 85 says, "*2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.* *3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger*" (Ps. 85:2-3). The love of God covered a multitude of sins! God's love does not hold our sins to account because Christ bore them away. In all of this, we see that **God's love is saving.** He made propitiation for our sins. He has forgiven the iniquity of His people. He has turned Himself from the fierceness of His wrath against His people because He fully expended His wrath in His Son! Christ made full reconciliation for sins (Dan. 9:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). And in Christ, God made peace between His justice and His people because of their sins. And next, we see that **God's love is unfailing.** "*Many waters cannot quench love*" (Song 8:7). God's love is unfailing. Therefore, in Zeph. 3:17 He said, "*He will rest*



*in His love*” (Zep. 3:17). Jesus said, “*Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*” (John 10:16). **God’s love is longsuffering.** For thousands of years God refrained from destroying this world for the sin of Adam and for our own sins. And when His justice called for destruction, His love already had found a Savior. Before the world began, before there was a sinner, there was already a Savior. “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*” (1 John 4:10). He found a ransom in Christ (Job 33:24; Matt. 20:28). How many years has God withheld His judgment from me and you? And why? For one reason only. Because, His love will not be satisfied until He saves all of His elect! He must and He shall have them! When justice cried to destroy the world by flood in the days of Noah, scripture says that “*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*” (Gen. 6:8). The LORD said, “*Them also I must bring.*” And since the days of Noah, when God’s justice cried out to destroy this world by fire, the love of God has said, “*Them also I must bring.*” He must and He shall have all those on whom He set His love from eternity! He must and shall have all those He gave to Christ by His eternal election to save! He must and shall have all those for whom Christ gave Himself, for whom He poured out His own blood, for whom He made propitiation for their sins to God! “*Herein is love!*” “*Them also I must bring!*” Not one of them shall be lost. “*Not a hoof shall be*

*left behind*” (Ex. 10:26). **God’s love is therefore unfailing.** It is unstoppable. He will and shall bring to Himself all whom He loved from everlasting. “*In the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:7). The end of His work will prove that the foundation of it was His great love wherewith He loved us (Eph. 2:4). God’s grace will be fulfilled to His elect in Christ, and His everlasting kindness and love to them will be proven by all of His grace towards them throughout the ages of eternity. The end of God’s work will be the perfection of His chosen people in Christ. Every son of His eternal choosing **will** be brought to glory. His love for them from everlasting will be seen in the final accomplishment of our redemption! “*In the ages to come, He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His lovingkindness toward us through Christ Jesus!*” “*Herein is love!*” And **God’s love is not puffed up** (1 Cor. 13:4; Isa. 57:15). God humbled Himself. He reconciled His people to Himself by the death of His Son. They made themselves His enemy in their minds and by their wicked works (Col. 1:21). And Christ humbled Himself. He took our nature. He forever took our nature into union with His divine nature (John 20:28; Php. 2:6-11). He who sits on heaven’s throne is both God and man. God does not seek His own (He seeks His own glory, but it is His glory to give His Son for the redemption of His people). He humbled Himself. **Love does not seek its own.** Christ did all that He did, not seeking His own benefit, but seeking the glory

of God and the salvation of His people! His chief desire was the glory of God and the salvation of His people (Eph. 3:17-19). His desire was to have those upon whom He had set His eternal love (Prov. 8:22-30). **The love of God is not puffed up.** He gives, not for selfish reasons, but to have His people and give Himself to them, that we might have eternal life and see His face. Eternal life is in Christ. And it is enjoyed in seeing and knowing our great God and Savior (John 17:3)! God's love does not selfishly seek His own. By seeking His glory in the salvation of His people, His love is magnified for the eternal good of His elect! **And God's love is holy. He does not rejoice in iniquity.** *"He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* He accepted Christ as our Surety, not only to answer every demand of God's justice against us for our sins, but to fulfill all of our righteousness. *"Their righteousness is of me"* (Isa. 54:17). *"This is the name wherewith He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"* (Jer. 23:6)! The love of God rejoices in righteousness, because it was in love that He made Christ righteousness for His people (1 Cor. 1:30). The righteousness that God required is the righteousness God provided in Christ for His people (Rom. 10:4)! All God gives to His people, He has given them in Christ (Eph. 1:3-6; 2 Cor. 1:20). All that God requires of His people, He has provided for them in Christ (Col. 2:9-10; Jer. 23:6). The everlasting righteousness that Christ established by His obedience unto death is the righteousness of His people in Him! That is love! God's love loves righteousness.

The love of God does not compromise His righteousness or His justice to show grace to sinners. It is a love that establishes righteousness and magnifies justice by the propitiating death of the Lord Jesus Christ! *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins!”* And **God’s love is in Christ**. *“Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 8:35)? **God’s love is particular**. God does not love every person ever born to Adam. Christ did not die for every person ever born in this world (Rom. 9:13). He hated Esau (Rom. 9:11). His soul hates all workers of iniquity (Ps. 5:5). The love of God and the people for whom Christ died is a particular, chosen people out of all the peoples of this world (Rev. 5:9; Rom. 8:32-34). If God loved all men, if Christ died for all men, then all must be saved, because God’s love is saving, and nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35,39). *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 4:10). God’s love in Christ is particular. It is saving. It is holy. It is eternal. It is unfailing. For God’s love to be holy, saving, eternal, unfailing and unchanging, it must be limited to those whom God chose in Christ before the foundation of the world. Jesus said it in John 10:16, *“Them also I must bring”* (John 10:16). *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”*

God's love did not give Christ to be an example. God's love did not give Christ to motivate us to love. His love gave Christ as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." God's love in Christ is not merely an example or a motive. It is salvation by His blood (Heb. 9:26)! God the Father put away the sins of His people in the death of His Son. He actually made propitiation for our sins. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10). God sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9). He did not send Christ to make life possible through Him! He sent Christ in order that we would live through Him! "Life" includes of all that we have in Christ. "This is the promise that He has promised us, eternal life" (1 John 2:25). "And this life is in His Son." (1 John 5:11). Because the love of God is in Christ, **nothing can separate us from the love of God.** "I am persuaded (that nothing) shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39)! Life cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ (Rom. 8:38) . Death cannot. Nothing in the present and nothing in the future can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ. Angels cannot. Devils most certainly cannot. The puny rulers of this world cannot. Nothing in the world to come can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39). Nothing can separate us from the love of God, because the love of God is

in Christ Jesus our Lord. When scripture says God's love is in Christ, it means that God has given all blessings and all life to His people in Christ alone. Christ is Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). God has put all things into His hand (John 3:35). "*He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" (Eph. 1:3; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). Not only all blessings, but God has provided and received fulfillment of every requirement for His people in Christ (Heb. 10:5-18; Rom. 10:4).

How do we come to be "in Christ?" If all blessings, if eternal life, if the love of God is only in Christ, then how do I get into Christ? Must I make a decision? Should I exercise what men falsely call their "free will?" Must I raise my hand? Is there anything I can do to get into Christ? To all of these God answers, "NO!" Only of God are we in Christ. "*Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus*" (1 Cor. 1:30). Having been chosen in Christ and given to Christ, God, in His everlasting covenant of grace, made Christ to be "*Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*" for His people (1 Cor. 1:30). The love of God is in Christ. His love is everlasting. His love is unchangeable.

If we were to rise up on the wings of faith, and go back as far as we could to discover the foundation of our salvation, what would we find?! Why is it that I, a poor lost sinner, am crying out to the Lord to look upon Christ for me (Luke 18:13)? Why do I constantly implore Him to receive me in Christ and to

receive from Christ all that He requires of me? Why do I look to His promises to receive me, a sinner, as He receives His Son (John 17:21-24; Rom. 10:4)!!? Why do I, a sinner, find indescribable delight in knowing that Christ is everything in my salvation? Why do I believe Him? It is because He has given me His own Spirit of grace in the new birth to believe Christ (John 3:14-15; Col. 2:12; 1 John 4:13-16). Why am I born again? It is because the Spirit of Christ lives in me and points me to Christ crucified for me, propitiating God for me and persuading me that Christ is my all. But why did God give me His Spirit? It is because Christ died for me! *“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”* (Gal. 4:4-6). He redeemed me from all iniquity. He redeemed me from the law, with its bondage and its curse. He redeemed me from the wrath of God and from death. Therefore, He sent His Son into my heart because I am His son by adoption (Eph. 1:4-6; Gal. 4:4-6)! But why did Christ die for me? Listen to these words from Jeremiah: *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee”* (Jer. 31:3)! When we go back as far as we can, when we search the word of God for the foundation for why God saved us in Christ, we must come to this place and read this writing on the foundation of all foundations. It was the love of God! God is

love. Herein is love! His love for His people finds no explanation or reason in them. It finds reason and foundation only in Himself (Deut. 7:8). Nothing came before God's love. He loved His people from eternity. And He loved them with an everlasting love! "*Therefore*" is the word Jeremiah used. Everything springs from God's everlasting love to His people in Christ! "*I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee!*" As the hymn so endearingly echoes:

*Loved with everlasting love,  
led by grace that love to know;  
Gracious Spirit from above,  
Thou hast taught me it is so.*

*O this full and perfect peace,  
O this transport all divine!  
In a love which cannot cease  
I am his, and he is mine.*

*His for ever, his alone!  
Who the Lord from me shall part?  
Ah, with what a rest of bliss  
Christ can fill the empty heart!  
Heaven and earth may fade and flee,  
Firstborn light in gloom decline,*



*But while God in Christ shall be,  
I am His, and He is mine!*

May the Lord direct your heart and mine into the love of God and the patient waiting for Christ (2 Thess. 3:5). May we see and know ourselves to be sinners, helpless and in need of the love of God in Christ. May we see that God's love to His own in Christ is eternal, unchanging, saving, gracious and unfailing. May the prayer that the Spirit of God uttered by the mouth of the apostle Paul be fulfilled to you and me: *"17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"* (Eph. 3:17-21).