

“Loved With an Everlasting Love”
(Jeremiah 31:3)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last week, we considered if you are walking with the Lord from the heart, then every spiritual blessing the Lord has provided belongs to you, including those that took place long before you were even born.
 - a. You have been foreknown by God from eternity.
 - b. He predestined you to be conformed to His Son’s image.
 - c. He sovereignly changed your heart by His Spirit by uniting you to His Son, giving you the grace you needed both to repent and believe.
 - d. He declared you to be not guilty of any wrong and guilty of having done everything right, by giving you the righteousness of His Son, as well as by taking away your sins through your legal union with Jesus.
 - e. He adopted you into His family.
 - f. And He began the work of making you more like His Son Jesus.
 - g. These blessings are already yours, if you are walking with Him this evening.

2. And you have more to look forward to in the future:
 - a. The Lord says He will complete His work in you.
 - b. He will transform you into the likeness of His glorious body when He returns.
 - c. And you will not only pass through His judgment unscathed, you will inherit the New Heavens and Earth where righteousness reigns.
 - d. And this besides the many spiritual blessings that are also yours while you’re here on this earth.
 - e. Not bad for a sinful creature that deserves only hell.
 - f. God’s blessings are as infinite as He is.

B. Preview.

1. Tonight, we’re going to begin to look at these blessings a little more in depth, beginning with God’s foreknowledge.
 - a. If you’ll remember, God’s foreknowledge doesn’t have to do with what He knew about you, but how He felt about you from all eternity.
 - b. Adam knew his wife Eve and she conceived (Gen. 4:1), which doesn’t refer to any facts he learned about her, but to how much he loved her.
 - c. If you are walking with the Lord from the heart this evening, the Lord loved you before you ever trusted in Him, before you were born, before the world was made, even from all eternity.
 - d. He has always loved you and He always will.

2. Let’s look at three things:
 - a. First, the Biblical evidence for God’s eternal love.

- b. Second, why it must be true that if God loves you now, He has always loved you.
- c. And third, the benefit that this blessing will give you in the future.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's consider the biblical evidence for this love. There are many passages that tell us that God loves us. Let's look at three that tell us when this love began, the same we've already read this evening.

1. The first is Jeremiah 31:3, "The LORD appeared to him from afar, *saying*, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.'"
 - a. This was spoken by Jeremiah to Israel – about the Lord's mercy to them in the wilderness.
 - (i) This is either referring to the wilderness they were in when they left Egypt, or more likely, the one in which they were presently – having been scattered throughout the world by Assyria.
 - (ii) It appears to refer more specifically to the elect among the ten northern tribes.
 - (iii) It could also be using Israel as a picture of the church.
 - b. The important thing to see is why they survived, why they found grace in the wilderness, why the Lord appeared to them, and why He will restore them.
 - (i) It was because of His love, more specifically, His eternal love: "I have loved you with an everlasting love."
 - (ii) His actions were directed by a heart that has always loved them.
2. The second passage is from our call to worship, Psalm 103:17, "But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him."
 - a. This broadens His love a bit to include all those who fear the Lord – not just from among the Jews, but also among the Gentiles.
 - (i) He's speaking here about a gracious fear, one born out of love, a reverential fear, not terror – as the hymn writer puts it, "O how I fear thee, living God, with deepest, tenderest fears; and worship thee with trembling hope, and penitential tears."
 - (ii) Godly fear is a grace given by the Spirit to those who truly know the Lord.
 - b. How long has the Lord's lovingkindness been on those who fear Him? "From everlasting to everlasting."
 - (i) It has been from eternity: It never began – it has always been.
 - (ii) And it will endure to eternity – it will also never cease.
3. The final text is Ephesians 1:3-6, "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him *before the foundation of the world*,

that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”

- a. Here Paul is speaking about election.
 - (i) That He chose us in Him (*i.e.*, Christ), so that we would be holy and blameless – notice, not because He foresaw we would be holy and blameless.
 - (ii) That He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.
 - (iii) We’ll look at this in more detail in two weeks.

- b. Notice when this election took place:
 - (i) Before the foundation of the world.
 - (ii) This is simply another way of saying in eternity.

- c. But notice as well what moved God to make this choice.
 - (i) It wasn’t because of what we did – all we did was sin.
 - (ii) It was because of His love, “*In love* He predestined us,” and His kindness, “according to the *kind intention* of His will.”
 - (iii) He chose us in eternity and predestined us to adoption – because He loved us.
 - (iv) His love is eternal.

- d. If you fear the Lord this evening, so that you are turning from all your sins and walking in His ways (growing in holiness), then God has loved you from before the foundation of the world, even from everlasting.

B. Second, let’s consider why it must be true that if God loves you now, He has always loved you.

1. This is something many professing Christians have a difficult time accepting.
 - a. They tend to think:
 - (i) He looked forward in eternity, saw who would receive His Son, and decided to love them.
 - (ii) Or that God loves everyone the same.

 - b. But the fact is that He only loves certain people this way and those He does He has always loved.

2. This has to be the case:
 - a. First, because of God’s infinite knowledge.
 - (i) God knows everything – He can’t learn anything new.
 - (ii) He thinks everything at the same time – all His thoughts are eternal and comprehensive.
 - (iii) If He has thoughts of love and affection towards you now, He must always have had such thoughts, because He never begins to think anything new or changes His mind.

- b. Second, because of God's eternal decree.
 - (i) His decree is His eternal plan based on His infinite knowledge – it's what He has always wanted to do – it includes everything that He will ever do, everything that will take place in this world – His plan never changes.
 - (ii) Since His plan includes everything, it also includes the fact that He has intended to save you from all eternity.
 - (iii) The reason He did – as we've already seen – was because He loved you from all eternity.
 - (iv) Since His plan is eternal, His motive is as well: His eternal love.
 - c. This is further enforced by the fact that God never changes.
 - (i) His knowledge doesn't change; His plan doesn't change; neither does His Being – nothing changes in God, He forever remains the same.
 - (ii) The same is true of His heart – if He loves you now, He loved you then, and that too will never change.
- C. Finally, let's consider the benefit that this blessing will give you in the future.
1. The wonderful thing is, if God's love has no beginning, it also has no end – it is as eternal and unchangeable as God.
 2. This is what the Lord clearly says in His Word.
 - a. Jesus says, "And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).
 - b. Paul writes, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).
 - c. Speaking of the New Heavens and Earth, John writes, "There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 22:3-5).
 - d. You will be the Lord's for all eternity: He will never stop loving you.
 - e. What a wonderful incentive to walk with Him in holiness.
 - f. Do you know that the Lord loves you this evening? If not, then trust in His Son, start walking with Him, and you will. Amen.

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