

Reference: VARIOUS
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To Know the Love of Christ

Purpose: To meditate on the extent of Christ's Love for His Children and to challenge us to fervent love and zealous service in return.

1. Introduction

Jesus loves you! Staggering statement!

One part of church trivializes/commercializes – bumper sticker

One part cares mainly about feelings - emotionalism

Our part (Reformed) tends to drive emotion out of the faith

In danger of loving doctrine but not Christ of whom it teaches

Being satisfied with intellectual stimulation of a truth

And not enraptured with the Savior on whom it sheds light

We stop at the teachings and don't progress to the Teacher

We admire the Puritans and boast of reading them

Instead of following their gaze to Him who inspired their work

Doctrine becomes an end instead of the means to an end

Our Christ becomes the result of logical formulae, not a person

We grow cold, formal, intellectual, arrogant.

Our religion is to be a matter of experience and power!

It most certainly should affect our emotions – or else not real

How can we avoid this very real danger?

We are going to meditate on the Love of Jesus for His people

This is a love that should be known, that should be felt

Should stir our hearts – emotion! Should infuse our lives

This is what Paul prays in our text

Has reviewed the spiritual history of Ephesians in Ch 2

Were dead but by God's love and grace made alive by faith

Were far off but have been brought near to God

Were at war but Christ is our peace

Were strangers but now are of God's household

Begins Ch 3 "For this reason..." Then sidetracked until v14

Ephesians 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, **16** 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.

He prays for power - Christ dwelling in them by His Spirit

That they may be rooted and grounded in love

And they may understand the extent of Christ's Love

The breadth, length, height and depth of it!

And that they may know this love that surpasses knowledge

Also a prayer for us – "all the saints"

Will break the subject down:

- What is the extent of Christ's love for you?
- How should we live in the light of this love?

2. What is the extent of Christ's love for you?

2.1. *How broad is Jesus love?*

His love is very wide. There are none who feel no effects

Wide enough to weep over Jerusalem

Luke 19:41 When He approached *Jerusalem*, He saw the city and wept over it,

Matthew 23:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

Wide enough to weep over the affects of sin in the world

John 11:32 Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." **33** When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her *also* weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, **34** and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." **35** Jesus wept. **36** So the Jews were saying, "See how He loved him!"

Wide enough to pray for His enemies as they crucified Him

Luke 23:33 When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. **34** But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

Saving love wide enough to reach those who are unlovely

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Saving love wide enough to reach all ranks of men

1 Corinthians 1:26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; **27** but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

Saving love wide enough to reach all nations

Isaiah 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Didn't choose all the intelligent, or rich, or famous

Didn't choose all rulers, all Jews, all good people

His love reaches out to all peoples, tribes and nations

2.2. How Long is Jesus' Love?

His love extends over all ages

Psalms 103:17 But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,

When did His love for us begin? It has no beginning!

He loved us before the foundation of the world

Ephesians 1:3 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, **4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

When will His love for us end? It can have no end!

He will still love us in New heavens and the new earth

When this creation is long gone

Romans 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** 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.

2.3. How High is Jesus' Love?

2.3.1. As high as heaven itself,

He entered in His body—glorified humanity has entered heaven!

He has opened the way for us – there is a way for man to rise!

There He is as our representative

Our great, sympathetic High priest, knowing our weaknesses

Bearing our names on His breastplate

Appearing before God on our behalf

Pleading the merits of His sacrifice, bearing marks of passion

Ever living to intercede for us

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

He sanctified Himself for our sanctification (Jn 17:19)

Will He forget to pray for any of us?

Will He fail as our representative?

Will any be lost for whom He shed His precious blood?

No – He loves us from the heights of heaven!

2.3.2. High Enough to Overcome All enemies

He defeated the Devil and the flesh in His life (temptations)

He disarmed him on the cross and triumphed over him

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Now He waits for His enemies to be His footstool

1 Corinthians 15:25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. **26** The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

When will death be abolished?

When all the saints are raised! No more their enemy then

None will thwart His plans to have us with Him in glory!

2.4. How Deep is Jesus' Love?

2.4.1. Deep enough to stoop from heaven to earth

To empty Himself – last week's sermon

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. **8** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

2.4.2. Deep enough become a slave to His own disciples

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. **2** During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, to betray Him, **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. **5** Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

2.4.3. As deep as the Hell he endured to save us

He not only stooped in coming to earth
 He not only came as a servant and took place as slave
 He endured the wrath of God on the cross
 The agonizing suffering that your sins had merited
 The separation from God that your sins had brought about
 The infinite torment and torture you would have borne
 He sweat great drops of blood at the prospect
 The Devil offered Him ways out –
 Why do this? They don't love you!
 Many want you dead
 Your disciples have all run away. Why do it?
 Are they worth it?
 But He remembered it was His Father's will
 In love for us, He would not be deflected
 The joy set before Him was to be with us in heaven!

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

2.4.4. Deep enough to move Him deeply

Philippians 1:8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

The reference is to His insides – bowels of compassion
 Also references to “deeply moved” – Lazarus' death

2.5. Love that surpasses knowledge!

To summarize, His love could not be greater!

John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

No one has greater love here on earth
 Than to do what Christ has done for each one of us
 His love is like the love the Father has for the Son:

John 15:9 “Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

He has held nothing back - has freely and fully loved us
 But He is God, so this full love cannot be fully known
 Yet Paul asks that we know that which surpasses knowledge!
 We shall never exhaust this love, never fully grasp it
 There will always be more to find out
 More to admire, more to praise Him for.

3. How then should we live?

We should love this Christ who has so loved us!
 The more we love Him, the more we will keep His commands

John 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

We should love all those whom He so loved!
 In loving more, we will actually be keeping His commands!

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Ephesians 5:2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

So the more we love, the more holy we will become
 How can we love more?

Remember His love for us is the source of our love

1 John 4:19 We love, because He first loved us.

So to love more, we should know more of His love
 Meditate on His love!

How can we love like Christ loves?

Imitate His love in its breadth, length, height and depth

It should become as much as possible like His

This is the key – the very heart of our Faith

Without this, we have only cold and powerless form

As Paul said, without love, we have nothing, we know nothing

We are nothing
We need to know Jesus and His wonderful love to us!
We need to press on to love Him more
So we can press on to live for Him more!

4. Conclusions

Don't settle for less than this – to know this love!
Don't settle for mere doctrine – know His love!
Let the doctrine lead you to love Him more
Don't settle for mere Puritan writings – know His love!
Let their writings inflame your love for Jesus
Know his love as fully as you can
Meditate on it – morning, noon and night
And then love Him back BUT:

Don't have a narrow love for Christ
– His love is broad enough to encompass even you!
Don't love Him in fits and starts for brief periods
– His love is long enough to love you everlastingly!
Don't have a low love for Christ
– His love is High enough to love you from heaven, defeat foes!
Don't have a shallow love for Christ
– His love is deep enough to pull even you out of Hell!
Don't have a cold love for Christ
Don't have a lukewarm love for Him
– His love for you is hot, passionate, fervent
You cannot have a disobedient love for Him
If you love Him, you will keep His commands
Just as He loves the Father and does all the Father's will

If you will love Him, love Him well!
Love Him passionately
Love Him hotly
Love Him with every fiber of your being, which he purchased
May God help us to do so!