

Jesus Loves Me

I do wish to thank the Lord for the Lord's table that brought us together, and there were several prayers that said, "We belong to the Lord forever, from eternity to eternity." That really touched my heart. So I want to share on this matter of the heart of God and the heart of man. When we look at the heart of God it is eternal. That is why I say we belong to Him from eternity past to the time to come, and we have to recognize it. So hopefully we can share something because the Lord has already opened the curtain, and by the Holy Spirit He will enable us to see something in eternity. I think that is what we really need these days.

Ephesians 2:4: "But God, being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us."

Notice the word, "His great love." That is how He loves us—with His great love. As far as His heart is concerned, there is great love. Now as far as we are concerned, our need is to respond to Him. There is no use for Him to love us if we do not respond. Our response to His great love actually is from the Old Testament, but it appears in the New Testament in the gospels three times. And I have chosen the Scripture from Luke 10:27: "You Shall Love The Lord Your God With All Your Heart, And With All Your Soul, And With All Your Strength, And With All Your Mind; And Your Neighbor As Your-Self."

The key word here is ALL. It is a very small word, a three-letter word, but it is with all your heart. It is not a partial heart, not a divided heart, but a whole heart.

Let's commit the time to the Lord:

Lord Jesus, we do want to thank You that indeed You have gathered all of us around Your table to once again show us Your heart, that eternal love in Your heart. Lord, we are so grateful to come to know that we are Yours forever. In the same way You are ours forever. Lord, we appreciate that. We just want to pray for this time together. I do want to pray for clarity that this matter of language will not be a barrier. Lord, You are able to break through. We pray that the sharing will be clear, that you will anoint it and use it to have an impact in our lives to produce fruits hundred-fold for Your glory. So we commit this time back to You. It is something that we are very familiar with, but we do pray, open our eyes, Lord, that we may gaze into eternity and really see Your heart and how we can respond rightly from our hearts. Lord, we commit this time unto You. We do thank You for Your speaking to us in these days. In Jesus 'name. Amen.

I just want to tell you a little story. In our group there are a lot of children that come to the Friday night meeting. And because there are lots of children we often ask them to sing together children's 'songs. One of their favorites is "Jesus loves me." I think it is amazing to hear this word from the little children. Sometimes we adults feel, Oh I know that Jesus loves me so much. I have heard it often and often and it is no longer fresh to us. May that word be fresh in us every day. Jesus loves *me*. Jesus loves *us*.

In the same way, in the last couple of months we have had a chance to Face Time with our grandchildren in Texas. It was really a blessed time. We have time to talk, we have time to share, we have time to pray together, and we have time to sing together. And when they sing, they have

all these hand motions which I can learn. Even Jesus loves me. They know how to sing, and when I hear them singing, I think, "Oh, the Lord reminds me that unless we are childlike we will not enter into the kingdom of God. So this all came about from the little children. I just want to say the Lord Himself speaks to us in many different ways, even through the little children.

Jesus loves me. What a simple song; what a simple expression. We begin with Ephesians 2:4 which says because of His great love He loves us. So we begin as individuals by getting saved. At some point in time God shows us that He loves *me*, and that is very personal. That is our starting point, but in time the Holy Spirit reveals to us that He is not only loves me, but He actually loves His church. He loves brothers and sisters, and that is a bigger circle.

I think we are all familiar with John 3:16: "God so loved the world." So His love is not only for the church; He loves the people He created, the people of this world. He loves them also. So that love is really extended to a much bigger circle now. It is not only the church, but it is the people of the world. He wanted to bring them into salvation into the kingdom of God.

Finally, John's letter reminds us that love is not apart from God. In John's letter he said, "God is love." Can you fathom that? God is love. Love is not a thing; love is God. Love and God cannot be separated. Love is intrinsic in God. Therefore, you cannot separate the two.

I also mentioned the heart of God. When you see the heart of God, what do we find? Love. So we say that people with no heart means they have no love. So the heart of God is what we need to see these days.

When I spoke of the love of God, I really meant the love in the Godhead. You might say, "Are you talking about the love of the Father? Are you talking about the grace of the Son? Are you talking about the Holy Spirit? Altogether. And we find that in II Corinthians 13:14 in the very last words Paul said, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

They are altogether in the Godhead, and that love is there. Grace is an expression of God's love, and the Holy Spirit brings it into us so that we may have fellowship. Fellowship is the communion, that union life, and it is brought to us by the Holy Spirit. So all of God is included.

Then there is this little word faith. Jesus loves me, this *I know*. I sit back and really ask myself the question, "Do I know?" The children seem to know. In their heart they know that Jesus loves them. Do I know Jesus loves me? Now I am not talking about that outward knowing. I am talking about knowing that Jesus loves me in the heart.

The next question that arises in my heart is, what is my response to His great love? If we have that inner knowing of the heart of the Lord, something will happen in us. As we prayed this morning, we are forever His. We do not want to leave Him. We do not want to be apart from Him. We want to be with Him forever. So it is so vital that we know the heart of God.

This song so touches my heart. "For the Bible tells me so." You remember the words after the Lord was crucified and resurrected? The two disciples of the Lord were leaving Jerusalem going to Emmaus. They knew Jesus had been crucified, and they had heard about His

resurrection, but on the way they were really disheartened. “Oh, we trusted the Lord. Now we do not really know what will happen. He was crucified, but we thought He was the Messiah.”

The Lord came alongside and walked with them, and He opened up the Scriptures and spoke to them (Luke 24:13-34). He used all the Scriptures, and we would say, “All those in the Old Testament (which was all they had at that time) were about Him.” They are about the Lord Himself. When you look into the New Testament in Revelation 19:10 it says, “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” So what is the Spirit of prophecy? The prophet spoke of the will of God. So the word of prophecy really speaks of and testifies of Jesus. Both the Old Testament and New Testament speak to us of Jesus.

When we read the Bible, what are we looking for? I have to ask myself that question: What am I looking for in God’s Word? Do I look for blessings? I am sure you will find blessings in there. You will have lots of blessings. Do I look for promises? You will find promises in the Scriptures. Do I look for a word of comforting? You will find those also. No question about it. But we have to ask the question: What is the intention of God regarding the Scripture? It is really meant to reveal Christ in us. So beyond all the things, all the benefits, as we search God’s Word there is one vital thing we have to arrive at. It is really set into our heart—the Bible reveals Jesus to us. And He shows us His great love and His mighty heart. That is the theme of the Bible from beginning to end.

Many years ago I came across a book by T. Austin Sparks, “His Great Love.” It is really a good book. We often think Brother Sparks spoke about the eternal purpose or many high things, things I cannot understand. However, this book, “His Great Love” really touched my heart. In the introduction he talked about John 3:16, and he said that we take John 3:16 as the heart of the gospel. Yes, it is the heart of the gospel, but it is more than that. It is the heart of the universe. We oftentimes look for a real purpose or a power that brings into beings, but when you get to the bottom of it, it is the heart of God, and everything rises from the heart of God. So what do we focus on? Are we focused on the acts of God? Or are we focused on the heart of God? He really wants us to know His heart.

So today there are four things. The first one is on the love of God. In the Bible you find God’s love everywhere. I want to focus on two things, two aspects in this case. In Jeremiah 31:3 God told Jeremiah to speak to the Israelites: “I have loved you with an everlasting love,” eternal love. So I want to share on that.

The second thing is from John chapter 13:1. The Lord is going away and He wanted to encourage His disciples and He said, “I loved you to the uttermost,” or “I loved you to the end.”

We have to look at the days we are in. The book of Revelation, especially the seven letters in chapters 2 and 3, give us some idea of the condition of the church. I cannot do all seven letters; I really cannot do even one, but I can pick up two things in two of the churches. The Lord is speaking to us in these days about how He is assessing the condition of the church on earth in our time.

The first one comes from Revelation 2:4: “But I have this against you that you have left your first love.” That is something very serious to have the Lord against us, but they are His words. So

we will fellowship on that, and the other one is the last letter to the church of Laodicea especially Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to him and dine with him, and he with me."

To the church at Ephesus He said, "You have left your first love." Now when it comes to the last letter, we find that the Lord Himself is outside the church. I do not know what happened. The declension began at Ephesus and the saints left their first love, maybe a little bit at a time. Then toward the end they did not even realize that the Lord Himself was outside. But thank the Lord, that was not the end. The Lord knocked on the door and said, "Let me in, let me in. Open the door, I want to come in."

Brothers and sisters, do we see the heart of the Lord there? that love, that heart, that great love in Him? He wants to come in and dine with us; He wants to be with us.

The third area I want to talk about is in the words we have in Luke 10:27, and it is this matter of loving the Lord with all our hearts. We are addressing that because loving the Lord is not in words, it is not just saying, "I love you." It has to be real; it has to be in our experience. So I will share something that helped me, and I hope it will help all of you.

The last area is in the book of Revelation. Now in Revelation many things happened, many different scenes, all the seals, and so on. But one thing I want to concentrate on and really try to address the question: "Is the Lord telling us what is in His heart? And what will satisfy His heart?" It is beyond the four horsemen; it is beyond all the judgments. The Lord is telling us something that He has in His heart, what He wants, His deep desire. So we will spend some time on that one and then the conclusion.

We know that the whole Bible talks about God's love from the beginning to the end. Again, as I mentioned, we find God's acts in the Bible; we love God's acts. We love God's protection, and we thank Him for His protection, His covering and His provision for our needs. Yet one thing we have to know when we come to the Scriptures: Do we know His way? Do we know His heart?

So I want to share two aspects. The first one is that His love is everlasting. Actually, I want to say it this way. His love is timeless; it is beyond time.

On Friday night we fellowship on the book of Ephesians, and usually when we think about Ephesians we say, "Oh, it is God's eternal purpose. That is what it is all about." Yes, it is about God's eternal purpose, but that is not what it is all about. We take the book of Ephesians and look up the words love, grace and mercy. They all speak of love in this case. If we look that up in the book of Ephesians, you will find that those three words appear in twenty-five verses. That is how important it is. But not only does the Holy Spirit want to reveal to us the eternal purpose, He really wants us to see God's heart, God's love. So Ephesians is all about God's eternal purpose, but it also speaks to us about His love, and His love is eternal. It is not for a time; it is eternal, it is timeless.

In Jeremiah 31:3: "Jehovah hath appeared from afar unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

This was applied to Israel. We see in the Old Testament how unfaithful they were. Yet God would like to have the Israelites to be His wife. God had betrothed them to Himself, but yet they played the harlot, adulteress, unfaithfulness and turned away from God. What was God's reaction? From His heart He told them through Jeremiah: "I saw all these, but there is only one word I want to give you. Tell the people I have loved them with an everlasting love. Everlasting has no end, it is timeless. I think that is amazing. I hope that touches your heart.

On this matter of timeless, eternal, there is one thing we come to know. Jesus Himself was crucified two thousand years ago and we have verses in I Peter 1:19-20 that gives us a glimpse of what happened in eternity past. They say, "Christ was foreordained as a Lamb before the foundation of the world." So that love of Christ, who loved the church, did not begin when He came at His birth. Christ loved His church; Christ loved us in eternity past. No question about it. We have to think about eternity. So we will go all the way to the ages to come.

In Revelation 21 John saw the new heaven and earth. What else did he see? In chapter 21:9-10 he was shown the new Jerusalem. Not only that, he also said, "Come, look, what do you see?" It is not only the Holy City Jerusalem, but there is also the bride, the Lamb and the wife of the Lamb. What do the bride and the wife of the Lamb speak to us about? Love. So I hope I have made the point that God's love to us and God's whole heart to us is eternal from eternity past to the ages to come; it is timeless. Not only it is timeless, it also means it changes not; it cannot be changed; it is timeless. It is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Why is this so critical in the time we are in? We are really in a great time of turmoil. Everything seems to be shaking. Things we have counted on before are no longer solid. We used to count on jobs, help, relationships, government, schools, societies, but we know that in this time everything is shaking. There is nothing we can put our hands on that seems to be eternal.

We are also reminded that many believers are being persecuted. They are in countries where they are more persecuted than we are in this country, but the Lord's Word is that if you belong to Me you will be persecuted. There is no question about it. There will be times when the situation gets so bad that even heaven seems to be closed. You will be in a situation that seems there is nothing from the Lord. There might be times that the enemy will whisper to your ear and say, "God has abandoned you." Of course, that is the enemy speaking, and it is not true; it is a lie. But that is why today may the Holy Spirit work into our hearts about this great love of God that is timeless and never changes. When the situation comes, we can go on with the Lord even though everything we see, everything we feel, everything we are going through is really contrary, it is opposite and very difficult. We have to see beyond what is outward to the mighty heart of God. One point that I think is critical to us is to know that His love is eternal. Because the way we are as human beings, when we encounter a situation, our eyes focus on it rather than upon the Lord who is someone that is eternal and who will have mercy on us. Look into His heart; it is eternal. His love is eternal.

The second aspect that I want to talk about of His great love is, He loves us to the uttermost (John 13:1): "Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end, (to the uttermost)."

Psalm 139 tells us that God is everywhere. There is no place that God cannot reach. So far as God is concerned, no matter what the circumstances are there is His love. And His love is able to penetrate all circumstances. So I say to myself: His love knows no bounds, no limit, no bounds.

There are many examples of this in the Bible, and I have chosen two in this case. The first one is Peter. On the Feast of Passover the Lord said to Peter, "You will betray me." Actually, the Lord said that to all His disciples. And Peter proudly said, "Even though all may fall away, I will never fall away." That's Peter, right? But we want to look at the Lord Himself. The Lord knew that Peter was going to betray Him, no question about it; He knew that. But what did the Lord do? The Bible says, "The Lord prayed for Peter that his faith may not fail, and afterwards Peter would repent and be restored and be helpful to his brothers and sisters. So on the night Jesus was taken captive, Peter denied the Lord three times: "I do not know Him." After the third time the Lord's eyes looked at Peter. That look from the Lord to Peter melted his heart. Now that was not a look that said, "Peter, you denied Me!" No, that was not the case. It was from a heart of love that the Lord looked at Peter. And the Bible says that Peter went away weeping. We know that after the resurrection the Lord appeared to Peter first and restored him. At the end of John's Gospel we see that the Lord has restored Peter, and He asked him to care for the sheep and lambs. The Lord fully restored him.

It is the same story with Paul. Paul was a persecutor of the believers, and his testimony is in Acts 22:4-10. He was going to different cities and arresting the believers, even putting them to death. The Lord knew that, but yet on the road to Damascus the Lord appeared to Paul in a bright heavenly light. The Lord said two things: "Why are you persecuting me? I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." Those words were not angry words. They were from the tender loving heart of the Lord Jesus Himself. Immediately, Paul turned around and repented. Instead of being a persecutor of the Lord's believers, Paul was recovered to be a servant of God. He was a captured man in love with Christ. Paul was greatly used by the Lord as an apostle to the Gentiles. This really demonstrates that God's love knows no bound, no limit. However, God created man with a free will. Even though He loves you, if you reject Him, there are consequences.

In the same chapter, John 13, it tells us that Jesus washed His disciples' feet. Now Judas was there, and the Lord knew that Judas was going to betray Him. Nevertheless, He came to Judas and washed his feet tenderly in a loving way. He wanted to express His heart to Judas so that he would repent. But Judas' heart was hardened, and he refused the Lord's love. He went out and betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. So may that be a lesson to us.

In Hebrews chapter 3:7-8: "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS." God gives us a new heart when we are saved, and He took away the stony heart. It is meant to be tender, sensitive to the Lord Himself, sensitive to His heart. But yet we grieve Him by rejecting what He has given to us. Our heart can be so hardened that we turn away from Him. So let us pray for one another that we would have a sensitive ear to hear His voice and a tender heart that is sensitive to the touch of the Lord.

So we see these two aspects of the Lord's love and kindness. His love knows no bound, but when the Lord walked in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, what did He see? We have to ask that question. He saw many things in those letters. It spoke of the declension of the church.

It spoke of the testimony that was entrusted to the church. It spoke of the overcomers. But one thing I felt in my heart that is very special. It actually shows us when the Lord looked at all these conditions, His heart was grieved. I do not know if you sense that in reading the seven letters, especially the first and the last one, but I sensed the Lord's grief.

Sometimes we think of all we do, so if we fail the Lord, if we sin against Him, it only affects us. No, that is not the case. It not only affects us; it actually affects the Lord. He grieves; He is grieving because of His great heart of love. Do we really want to grieve the Lord? That is the question.

Revelation 2:4-5 is the first letter, and it is to the church in Ephesus. It says, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent."

When we look at the church at Ephesus as recorded in Revelation chapter 2, we see that they had good deeds; there were many outward works. They seem to do the right things. They had good testimonies, and the Lord took notice of those things, but there was one thing they lacked. And the Lord said, "I have this against you that you have left your first love." It seems to me that we can have all the deeds and all the works, but if those are not coming out from first love for the Lord, the Lord sees that as the key element that is missing—first love. Your first love for the Lord Himself is what He is looking for. And the challenge is a really strong word from the Lord. He said, "Unless you repent and return to the first love, I will remove the lampstand." Now that is a big deal. The lampstand stands for the function of the church, the testimony. When the lampstand is gone, the testimony is gone. The church has no purpose.

When we read this letter, what do we see? The Lord's desire is that we should be immersed in His love and respond in like manner. Otherwise, everything becomes external. Everything becomes outward form, becomes routine, a matter of duty and not motivated by love. First love is being substituted with deeds only. That is a very sad situation. In this letter to the Ephesians I wonder if we just see the elements in this letter. Or do we conclude that the church in Ephesus at that time did not know the heart of God. They thought they could do all the activities and works without first love, and that is very critical in our days. Do we know what the Lord is after? He is not only after works; He is not only after all these, but He is after all these as long as it is motivated by first love.

Secondly, we will look at the last letter to the church in Laodicea. Now these two letters, the first one and the last one are the bookends of the seven letters. It is so awesome especially in terms of love. Now in the last letter to Laodicea the declension of the church had progressed from the church at Ephesus, who had left their first love, to a really bad situation.

Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

We see the condition, and the Lord is outside. No question about it, and the saints in the church actually do not know the Lord is outside. They just do not know. The Lord's assessment of the church is that you are blind and naked, you cannot see. But they say, "We are not blind, we

are rich, we can see.” What a contrary view. When they began to stray away from God’s first love, they progressed a small step at a time until they came to the point that the Lord was left outside, and they did not even know it. I do not want to concentrate on the acts of the church, but indeed we have to look into the heart of God. What does the letter show us regarding the love the Lord has for His church? The Lord put outside the door?” What did the Lord Jesus say? He did not walk away; we know that. He was there; He was at the door, and He knocked. The Lord never left. He knocked and He said, “Hear my voice; open the door and I will come in.” Do we see the love in the Lord’s heart? Do we see that? That is the way He is.

I want to bring up a story in Luke 15, the parable of the lost son. What happened when the youngest son returned home? My son was lost but now he is found. He was once dead, now he is alive. Let’s celebrate! That was the reaction of the father. In the same way, the Lord is looking for us to open the door. He is saying, “I so want to come in and dine with you. All you need do is hear My voice and open the door.”

We do thank the Lord for His great heart. He loves us and He never gives up, not even in the case of the church at Laodicea, not even when the saints leave the Lord outside, He is still knocking. When you think about the lost son in Luke chapter 15, we might wonder after he returned home, after he was recovered, after he was restored by the father, what would he do? Do you think he would leave home again? No, I think he would never leave again. The same thing is true with the church at Laodicea. If we open the door and let the Lord in, that’s it. We will be all together, and I do not think we would leave because we have experienced the love of the Lord and it has touched our hearts, and that makes a difference.

I want to share on our response. We know times are quite difficult; I do not have to tell you that because we all know it. The Lord is coming soon. We all know that also. And that brings us to the verse in Matthew 24:12, “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.” This is foretold by the Lord Himself. The word ‘love’ here is ‘agape’. So He is not talking about the general population; He is talking about His people. And the Lord does not say just a minority of God’s peoples’ hearts will grow cold, not a minority, not some, but He said, “Most, *most* of God’s peoples’ hearts become cold.” I think that is a tragedy. We really must see that it is not only knowing, but there has to be a response. *There has to be a response*. Otherwise, even though the love of God touches us a little bit, it seems to be fading away. The love never fades away, but it is our knowing of it.

The Lord really burdened me with the words of Luke 10:27b: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” All these have to become practical. And the word is ‘all’, not partial, not ninety-nine percent; one hundred percent, everything. That is what it is.

And we see as an example of when Peter and Paul’s hearts were touched by the Lord Himself. They were forever the Lord’s even unto death.

We have read the story of Count Zinzendorf and how he wrote love letters to the Lord. He loved the Lord at a young age, and his heart was really captured by the Lord, and he served Him with all his heart.

Loving the Lord with the whole heart has to be our experience. There is no escape, and I must emphasize that a partial heart is not sufficient. You will find out that if you love the Lord ninety-nine percent and love someone else one percent, soon that one percent becomes five percent in time, then ten, and very soon it will become one hundred percent. You no longer love the Lord anymore. Therefore, it has to be a life experience. Loving the Lord with all my heart is a reminder to myself of my relationship with the Lord. When we pray for one another we can bring this up. It is a way that speaks to me, and I hope it is a way it speaks to your heart.

Practical Experiences

On this matter of practical experience, the first one I have is to receive Him. In John 1:11 it says that the Lord came to the Israelites; He came to His own but they who were His own received Him not. That was a sad story. He came to the Jews, and they did not receive Him, they did not welcome Him. I think the Lord must have been grieved. But when the Lord was on earth He finally found a home who received Him. He went to a place called Bethany, and in this home were Martha, Mary and Lazarus. And the Word says in Luke 10:38: "Now as they (the Lord and His disciples) were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha received Him into her home."

It is a sad situation if we do not receive the Lord or if we do not welcome the Lord in our midst. Put it another way, if the Lord Himself becomes a stranger to us, that is not receiving, right? So it really reminds me that we need to have that relationship with the Lord. In our daily life, whether we are assembling together or whether we are at home as individuals, we need to welcome Him. Just with a simple gesture, welcome the Lord into our midst. Don't let the Lord be a stranger. He wants to be in the midst of us. He loves us.

Second: love His words. John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep my commandments." If we do not know what His commandment is, how can we keep His commandments? So I think we all remember the story of C. T. Studd. He loved the Lord so much, and every morning early when he woke up, he searched the Scriptures for a commandment that he could keep. That should be a lesson to us. I am not saying you all should get up at 5 o'clock, but we do need to pray that we would have that hunger for the Word of God and love for His Word.

Third: John 13:23 says, "There was reclining on Jesus' breast one of His disciples (John) whom Jesus loved." We can read that as something physical. John was there and he was leaning on the Lord's breast, but you can see the picture there. We can lean on the Lord Himself, we can get as close as possible to His heart of love to hear His heartbeat, to know His heart, to hear every word of love, and to be a man after God's heart.

Fourth, love to abide in Him." In John 15:4 the Lord said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me."

In this matter of the vine and the branches, sometimes we concentrate on the branches. What happens if I am breaking away, and I am no longer connected? That is a good focus, but

that is not the sole focus. Think about the vine. What happens to the vine when the branches break away? The vine, of course, is the Lord. How would the Lord feel if He has missing branches, missing brothers and sisters that are no longer attached to Him? We have the sense of grieving His heart, and our goal is not to grieve Him. So we love to abide in Him, to have that union life with Him. Is that our desire?

Fifth: love not the world. I John 2:15: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

A lot of times we think loving the Lord and loving the world are about priorities. So if we are ninety percent loving the Lord and ten percent loving the world, what is wrong with that? He said, "Anyone that loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is contrary. If you can do both, that is only a fantasy. That is not the way of the Lord. We cannot love the world and the Lord at the same time. So love not the world.

Sixth: We are to love one another and serve out of love. Again, 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." Loving one another is His new commandment. But loving one another does not translate into just doing things for one another, good deeds. It is more than that. We all remember I Corinthians 13 which is the chapter on love. In the first three verses, the Lord said, "You can do all these deeds, all these acts, but yet without love, it counts for nothing." Loving one another is the Lord's commandment, but do not mistake serving with loving. We need to serve, but we cannot serve out of duty. We should not serve out of duty. We serve one another out of love.

In John 21 the Lord asked Peter the questions three times: "Do you love Me more than all these?" That is how we serve one another. We have to love the Lord more than all these things which are important but yet secondary. We have to love the Lord more than all these.

Seventh: love the people of this world. I think we do; we have to because John 3:16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Do we feel that the love of God upon the people of this world is in our hearts?

II Peter 3:9 says that the heart of God is not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance. So may the Lord give us the compassion to pray for our family members, our neighbors, people around us, people we know, even people we do not know and to share the gospel, share God's love, God's desire is for all to come to repentance.

Eighth: Love His appearing. Remember what Paul said at the end of his life in II Timothy 4:8: "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." There is a crown of righteousness for those who serve Him and who love His appearing.

The Lord is coming, and that has to be our focus as we serve Him. We set our eyes upon His coming and we love His appearing.

II Peter 3:11-12: "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God."

That is the way we should live today. May we have a heart that really loves His appearing so that we can live such a life of holy conduct and godliness.

At the end of Revelation we see the new Jerusalem come down, and we see the holy city, the bride and the wife of the Lamb. They are not different; they are one and the same. At the end we will see that. In eternity the Lord gets His companion of love, but now we are in the process.

In conclusion it is vital to know the mighty heart of God, His great love and then our experience is to respond to that. Thus the goal of responding is to satisfy the Lord's heart. The Lord's heart has no limit, it is timeless, it is beyond time, it has no bounds, and we must see that in the time in which we live. There will be many challenges, but may we keep our eyes on what is eternal. The way we live today I have mentioned a couple of things that can remind us in practical ways of how we can be exercised to really love the Lord with all our hearts.

In Revelation 1:3 it says, "For the time is near." In the next to the last word in the Bible the Lord said, "Yes, I am coming quickly." What is our response? May our hearts say, "Amen; come Lord Jesus." That is what the Lord is after, that each one of us altogether have that heart. That is the goal. We need to emphasize the experience of knowing the heart of the Lord so that we can satisfy Him. We do not want to be concentrating on things that are only temporary, but we want to continue to look at what is eternal. May we be looking to His heart, His heart of love, looking to what grieves Him, so that we can repent and really come back and satisfy His heart in these days.

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, we do want to give thanks to You as You have torn away the curtain and we have some sense of what is deep in Your heart, that mighty heart of Yours, that love You have. It is beyond us when we read of Your love of the church and of your love for the people of this world. Lord, we just want to bow down at Your feet and give ourselves back to You. You have put all this in our hearts so that our eyes would not be on something that is temporary, but our eyes would be on what is eternal, what is deep in Your heart. Lord, enable us to exercise and to respond to You and to Your great love that we may love You with all our hearts. Work that in each one of us. Our goal is that Your heart would be satisfied not only for today but for eternity to come. Lord, have it Your way. Lord, we do thank You for Your loving kindness. You are still knocking at our door in these days. You want to come in, You want to be with Your people together. Oh Lord, what a heart that is. Touch our hearts with Your great love so that we would return unto You and never leave as that younger son did. Lord, we thank You for Your great love. We thank You for this time. In Jesus 'name we pray. Amen.

