

John Chapter 15 v 9 - 17

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

- [0 : 00] Well good morning everybody, it's good to see many of you here.
- So we begin just to quieten our hearts and just prepare for this morning's worship service. We're just going to consider the words of Psalm 121.
- I'm going to read it, it will appear behind me on the overhead. And it's certainly something which you could think of as on Remembrance Sunday that during the war many of the people who were fighting perhaps would have been thinking about this psalm.
- I lift up my eyes to the mountains. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.
- He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
- [1 : 15] The Lord watches over you. The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night.
- The Lord will keep you from all harm. He will watch over your life. The Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and forevermore.
- We're going to sing our first hymn. It's number 115, which actually keeps the same theme.
- It begins, Our God, our help in ages past. So let's stand and sing this wonderful hymn, 115. Yes, our love is your name.
- Thank you.
- [2 : 38] From the stormy past and our eternal home. Redeem the shadow of thy throne, thy saints and wealth secure.
- The mission is my home alone, and our defense is sure.
- The mission is my home alone, and our defense is sure. The mission is my home alone, and our defense is sure.
- They cry for water, as a dream, dies at the opening day. Our Lord, our Lord, our Lord, in ages past.
- Our hope for years to come. We thou have done our troubles trust, and our eternal home.
- [3 : 54] Amen. Now let's come before the Lord in prayer.
- Let's pray together. On this day of remembrance, we come to thank you, Lord, for all those who have given their lives in order to give us freedom from oppression.
- We remember the soldiers and other servicemen and women who were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect both the nation and its individuals.
- But we also remember the countless men and women through the ages who have given their lives in the service of God and his church because of their love for their Savior, Jesus Christ.

It's our duty and honor to remember such selflessness and sacrifice in these days when it's rarely seen so explicitly. How much more then, this morning, we remember the sacrifice Jesus made in going to the cross, dying, and then being resurrected in order to save us, not from war, but from sin, and grant us eternal life if we trust in him.

[5 : 13] We therefore come before you this morning to honor the memory of those who served their nation in many wars, but also to honor and worship our God, who provided a way of escape for all who trust in Jesus Christ and promised us an eternal inheritance in heaven.

So be with us this morning, Lord, and help us to remember all your goodness and the grace you've shown us as individuals and as a nation over the years. Let your Holy Spirit guide us as we seek to worship you.

And may the proclamation of your word challenge and sustain us in the days to come. We pray all these things in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to him be the glory.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[7 : 12] Through years and pains our risen Lord, where justice changed the righteous Lord.

Our reading this morning is taken from John's Gospel, chapter 15. We're going to read the first 17 verses.

It's on page 1083 if you've got one of the new church Bibles. And this passage is headed the vine and the branches.

So John, chapter 15, verses 1 to 17. I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, so that it will be even more fruitful.

[8 : 20] You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself.

It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers.

Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

[9 : 24] Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

You are my friends, if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business.

Instead, I have called you friends. For everything that I learned from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, so that you might go and bear fruit.

Fruit that will last, fruit that will last, and so that whatever you ask in my name, the Father will give you. This is my command. Love each other.

[10 : 32] Amen, and may the Lord bless his word to us. Thank you, Larry, for leading us so helpfully up to this point. Well, we're going to turn back there to the reading in John and chapter 15, and if you do have a Bible to hand, that will be helpful.

So we look at not just one particular verse, but also verses surrounding that. John chapter 15, if you've got the church Bible, that's page 1083.

Today, in virtually every parish, every village, every town, every city, there will be people meeting and gathering around a war memorial or a plaque.

Engraved on that memorial will be the names of those who, from that parish or town or village, died during the past two world wars and in conflicts since then.

But almost on every one of those memorials will also be an inscription taken from the Bible. A verse taken from the Gospel of John, the verse that we've read just a little while ago, verse 13.

[11 : 50] Greater love has no man than this, that he lays down his life for his friends. Now millions of people will see that verse, perhaps read that verse today, and yet the vast majority will not be able to grasp the wonderful and powerful truth that it contains.

Greater love has no man than this, that he lays down his life for his friends. There's probably not any word in the English language which is so misunderstood and misapplied and misused than the word love in our day and generation.

Love is a word which is used as a bribe. If you love me, if you love me, you'll do this. Or a blackmail. If you love me, you won't do that.

The word love is used as a coverall for every sort of immorality, every sort of evil practice in the world today. We love each other, therefore that makes it okay.

So drained of the meaning of the word is love, that now people don't speak just about love, they talk about having true love, real love.

[13 : 12] In some way to distinguish between the distorted word love and something which is purer, something which is better. The question is, what is love?

What is true love? What does it mean? The answer is found in the words of Jesus here and in the verses surrounding and leading up to that verse which is taken and engraved upon memorials of those who've fallen.

Jesus is talking specifically about his own love. It's not wrong in one sense to apply that verse to those who give themselves in self-sacrifice, but ultimately Jesus has in mind only himself when he says, Greater love has no one than this, that they lay down their lives for their friends.

You are my friends. Who are these friends? Who are these friends that Jesus speaks about loving with the greatest love of all?

A love which has no equal, a love which has nothing to compare to it in this world. Well, he describes his friends in this way. You are my friends, verse 14, if you do what I command.

[14 : 33] He then goes on to say to the disciples, I have called you friends and I call you friends. So these words of Jesus concerning this greatest love of all, yes, apply to his disciples there in the room in which they were gathered in the night before his death.

But also they apply to every single person who has come to obey the command of Jesus. It's true of every disciple of Jesus from the moment of the upper room all the way through history and time, through every country and nation up until this day, including us ourselves.

Jesus says, you are my friends if you do what I command. It's my friends that I love. What are these commands?

What is the command that Jesus says that we are to keep and to do, which means that we are his friends, the recipients of his love?

He tells us very plainly, doesn't he, there in verse 12. My command is this. His command is not, keep the ten commandments and then you'll be my friend and I'll love you.

[15 : 47] His command is not, fulfill all that I've taught in the Sermon on the Mount and then you'll be my friend and I love you. It's not a long list of religious activities, duties and ceremonies that we have to perform which are impossible to keep.

No, it's simply this. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. This is the most clear, accurate demonstration that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ, that we are his friends, in that we love those who are Jesus' friends.

It's not that we read the Bible. It's not that we go to church. It's not that we sing hymns. It's not even that we pray. Here Jesus says, my command is this, love each other. If you keep my command, you're my friend.

So the thing that is to mark us out, if we're Christians this morning, the thing that shows that we are disciples and friends of Jesus is that we love those who love him.

Now we might find that a little bit surprising. The world certainly, I think probably would if we were to tell people around and about that this is what the thing God commands of us above all else.

[17 : 05] But that's exactly what Jesus says throughout this meeting with his disciples in the upper room and the rest of the New Testament and the rest of the Bible teaches as well.

Jesus says here, just a few chapters earlier, chapter 13, verse 34, A new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another.

And then here's what we've been saying. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. So it's not how we dress, if I can put it that way, it's not how we walk, it's not where we live, it's not where we go, it is how we love one another that the world will see and demonstrates that we are a disciple of Jesus.

The Apostle John, as he writes his first letter, all the way through his letter, speaks about this truth. But here it is particularly in chapter 3, verse 14.

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. So the person who is passed into the newness of life in Christ is the person who loves.

[18 : 17] The person who does not love is the person who is still dead in their sins. In chapter 4 of 1 John as well, Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. So to be a Christian, to be a child of God, to be a disciple of Jesus, to be a believer is one and the same thing.

It is to be a friend of Jesus which is marked by love for one another. So if you are sitting there this morning and perhaps in your own mind thinking, Am I a Christian?

Have I really come to know this newness of life, this forgiveness of God? Am I a friend? And let me ask you that this is probably the most important self-test that you must place upon yourself.

The most important thing you need to ask yourself is not what will I be doing tomorrow, not where the next meal is coming from, not what I need to buy my friends for Christmas or buy my minister for Christmas.

[19 : 20] I know that's a very important thing that people often think about. But you need to ask yourself, Am I a friend of Jesus? Am I one of Jesus' friends? There's nothing more important than that.

Nothing matters more than that question. And perhaps you're somebody who is able to say, Yes, I know I'm a Christian. I know that I'm going to heaven. I know that my life is right with God.

I know that I'm going to be fine when I stand before God on that day of judgment. Then it's important for you also to ask yourself that question. Am I a friend of Jesus?

And the question comes down to what we've seen already. For me to answer that question affirmatively, as Jesus tells us we are too, is to say that I know that I love God's people.

I love my Christian brothers and sisters. I love those who are the friends of Jesus. Let me say to you, that is a very, very hard question to answer, isn't it?

[20 : 24] It's a very hard question, especially because every single Christian, no matter who they are, has something quite unlovely about them. Don't we?

There's not one of us who is really lovely all the time. Who, in one sense, makes us want to love them every moment of every day.

All of us have characteristics in our lives which make us unlovely. But actually, this command is much harder even than that.

Because the command of Jesus isn't simply love one another, full stop the end. You set the limits. You set the levels of love. You determine what love means in your own view and in your own mind.

No, love one another as I have in the same way as I have loved you. So the level and measure of love is not something left to us.

[21 : 23] See, all of us could, if I was to ask you at the door, we go out, do you love those in the church? All of us could vaguely say, yeah. Yeah, I love them, yes.

Or even we might be able to give the sort of non-committal answer, yes, I love them in the church, but it doesn't mean I have to like them, does it? Or all of us may be able to say, I do love them, most of them, apart from those one and two.

No, Jesus doesn't give us an opportunity to set the level of love. The measure of our love for one another is set with these words, as I have loved you.

It's the pass mark, if I can put it that way, the thing that we're looking for, if we're to search our own hearts, to ask whether we are believers this morning, whether we are Christians, whether we are friends of Jesus this morning, is this, do I love other Christians as Christ loves me?

And to answer that question with an affirmative, yes, with the Lord's help, but a yes nonetheless. And that brings us then back to where we started.

[22 : 36] Well, what is true love? What is the love that we are to have to one another, if it is to be like the love of Christ to us? What does it look like, this love, between Christians?

If our love is to resemble and mirror Christ's love, then we need to have some idea what this love is like. As I've said, in the world today, you can ask ten people what the word loves moves, and they'll give you ten different answers.

What is love like in reality? In the words of Jesus, as he leads up to this commandment, and as he brings that verse, that verse which is engraved upon the memorials of our land, greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends, we have an explanation, and we have a demonstration from Jesus of what this love looks like.

The word love is used in three ways here by Jesus. First of all, it's spoken of as the love of God for his son. Verse nine, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Now remain in my love. It's spoken of as a love in which a person may remain or abide. Verse ten, if you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I've kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

[23 : 57] And finally, of course, thirdly, it is a love that manifests itself in action. It's not simply a feeling. It's not a nice, mushy, woolly, glowy, sort of yummy, yes, I love them.

It is an action. Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one's life for one's friends. And each of these examples of love that Jesus speaks about are united in that they each reveal how Jesus loves us and they therefore set before us the pattern of how we are to love one another as believers.

So first of all there in verse nine, Christ loves us, his friends, just as the Father loves him. Verse nine, as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

Before we go into that just for a moment, before we begin to describe something of this divine love, we need to just stop for a moment. take on board the intensity of what this means.

This astonishing truth. The eternal and holy God loves his Son in the same way that the Lord Jesus Christ loves us.

[25 : 14] Surely the love of God between the Father and the Son must be the pinnacle of love, must be the very perfection, the very heights, the very largeness of love.

There cannot be a greater love in the whole universe except the love that exists between God the Father and God the Son. And incredibly, incredibly, Jesus Christ, the sinless God, loves me with the same love with which the infinite, perfect, limitless God loves him.

just trying to get our heads around that is impossible. Just trying to think that somehow God who is eternal and everlasting and infinite can love me as he loves his Son.

You see, the love that we have in all our relationships, whether it's the love between a husband and wife, mother and son, grandparent and grandchild, that love that we have for one another, is always going to be a limited love.

No matter how much our hearts break, how much our hearts feel full of love for one another, that love is always limited. It's limited by time, of course, because we're only here for a short period, and we see each other for a short period.

[26 : 35] It's limited by our own selfishness, our own sin, because that gets in the way, in the way that we love one another. Well, I want this. It's limited, of course, by our capacity of heart.

We only have a small heart, in one sense, a small capacity, some have less capacity than others, to give love and to receive love. It may be, of course, that in our relationship between a parent and a child, or a husband and a wife, whatever it may be, it may be that one of the people in that relationship wants more love than the other can actually give.

One has more love to give than the other one can actually receive. But you see, when both persons in this loving relationship are infinite, when both persons have no limit because they both dwell in eternity where there are no time constraints, when both have a love which is endless and timeless and limitless, then it must be an amazing, incredible, glorious, above-our-understanding love.

In fact, we could call it an unconditional love. And yet, this love between the Father and the Son, this unconditional love is the love that Jesus declares that He has loved you with and loves you with.

Unconditional love. Elsewhere in the Bible, this unconditional love is spoken of as God's everlasting love. He says in Jeremiah chapter 31, as He speaks to His sinful people, the Israelites, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

[28 : 20] That's what's so great about unconditional love. It has no conditions. It has no limits. It's not a love which demands anything in return.

It doesn't say, I'll love you if you do this or do that or even I'll love you if you love me. This is what the Bible means when it uses the word grace.

Grace means undeserved, unmerited, unearned, undeserved love from God. to those who have not done, cannot do, shall never do one single thing to earn that love or deserve it.

It is love for the sinful. It is love for the broken. It is love for the failing. It is love for the helpless, for the lost.

It is love for you and for me, whoever we are, wherever we've been, whatever we've done.

[29 : 35] Christ's love for his friends is an unconditional love. And Jesus follows on from that incredible statement in verse 9 with this encouragement, this promise, this command, we might say, now remain in my love.

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. So Christ's love for us is a remaining love.

We know that the version perhaps many of us are more used is the word abide. It's an abiding love. See, there never was a time in the whole of eternity when God the Father did not love God the Son.

There's not a time in the whole of the relationship between God the Father and the Son when God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ was not the object of the love of the Father.

There wasn't a time when he was outside of the love of the Father. There wasn't a time when he was removed from the love of the Father. For God the Father to stop loving his Son would mean that God would have to stop being God.

[30 : 58] God would have to stop being himself. He would cease to be God if he could ever cease to love his Son. And Jesus says that the love that he has for us the love that we are to abide in and remain in is the same love.

We shall never be outside the embrace of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall never be a time when you dear Christian you dear child of God you dear friend of Jesus shall ever cease to be the object of his love.

There may be occasions when you feel that way. Occasions when things are difficult or hard or painful. Times when illness may come or upset may come.

Times when in your own heart there is no feeling that you are loved of God. But that cannot possibly change the fact the reality that you are in the love of Christ.

Nothing in heaven above nothing on the earth below nothing in hell that can take us away from the love of Christ. This is what Paul the apostle writes to the Christians in Rome in chapter 8 of his letter to them.

[32 : 28] neither death nor life neither angels nor demons neither the present nor the future nor any power neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God. Now hopefully when you heard those words when you read those words in verse 10 a question popped into your mind but Jesus says in verse 9 now remain in my love if you keep my commands you will remain in my love just as I have kept my father's commands and remain in his love.

Suddenly in your mind there will have popped up the question surely this is not unconditional love. Hasn't Jesus just put a condition on his love for me by saying if you keep my commands you will remain in my love.

Does he mean to say that when I fail to obey this command or his commands in general when I sin when I fall down flat on my face when I give in to temptation are you saying is Jesus saying that then I immediately lose his love.

I immediately am outside of his love. Because of course we know that Jesus never sinned.

[34 : 10] So when he says just as I have kept my father's commands and remain in his love so we know that he always remained in the father's love because he is the only person who never sinned.

The only person who kept God's commandments in thought and word and deed every other one of us sins again and again and fails again and again. Is that why Jesus can remain and why his love does not remain with us?

Let me answer that question because it's an important question. Many of us as Christians at times struggle with that question. We lack the assurance that God's love for us is real.

We lack the assurance that he continues to love us in spite of all that we are and do and we have an enemy the devil. He loves to tell us that God doesn't love us. He likes to tell us and remind us of our sins and our failings and point to them and say how can you be a Christian when you live like that and act that way?

He loves to sow doubts in our hearts and minds because he knows as long as we doubt God we shall never trust him and as long as we never trust him we shall never follow him and we shall never live for him.

[35 : 21] Let me answer this in three ways. First of all, does any parent here only love their child when they do as they're told? Is there any one of us who turns our love on and off according to the obedience and the behaviour of our son or daughter?

Of course not. Of course not. And yet the Bible tells us that we are sinful and selfish even as parents and yet God acts very differently even to us.

These wonderful words of Jesus where he talks about parents. He says which of you if your son asks for bread will give him a stone? If he asks for a fish will give him a snake? If you then though you are evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?

You see the love of God is not even the very best parent even the very best of us falls far short of the love of Christ. Secondly Jesus tells us immediately after these words that he has spoken these things for our joy.

Verse 11 I've told you this this is about how he loves us as the father loved him how we remain in his love as he remains in the father's love. I've told you this so that your joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

[36 : 53] If our remaining in Jesus' love relies upon us keeping his commands then we would never have any joy would we? We'd be consistently constantly worried.

Have I failed in some way today so I'm no longer loved by God? What a terrible way to live isn't it? And there are people who live like that sadly in their marriage or in their relationship with their parents or with their children.

If I don't keep up the standard if I don't do the things that please them they're going to leave me or stop loving me. What a hideous way to live. Does Jesus want us to live that way always fearful that we're going to sin because we think that we're going to lose his love?

Of course not. There'd be no joy in that. The joy is in the love. So what's the meaning of this phrase?

It's very simply this. The keeping of Jesus' commands is the proof that we love him and that he loves us. Simple as that. The keeping of his commandments is the proof that we love him and he loves us.

[37 : 59] That's why he points again to the loving relationship between him and the father as a picture of his love for us. His love remains upon us and it's because he loves us that we keep his commandments.

Not out of fear but out of love. Not out of worry and anxiety but because we love him as the one who loves us with an everlasting love. Jesus has already said something very similar earlier on in chapter 14 verses 23 to 24.

Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.

It's as simple as that. The Christian is not somebody who does what God wants because they hope to earn their place in heaven. The Christian is not somebody who works hard to try and make themselves acceptable to God.

The Christian is somebody who has known and received the love of God poured out into their lives in a gracious way because they know that they are sinners and don't deserve it but he's forgiven them and accepted them and received them and out of that love which is poured into their hearts there is this delight and desire to please God and do his will.

[39 : 17] We never do it perfectly. We never do it perfectly. That's why it's grace. That's why it's God's undeserved, unconditional, unmerited love.

love. So we are to love one another dear friends as the father loves the son not placing limits upon our love.

We are to love one another consistently at all times in spite of one another's failings.

Let me come finally to this verse itself, this incredible verse in verse 13. I think this is a verse which is, dare I say it, a greater verse than John 3.16.

Greater love has no one than this to lay down one's life for one's friends. Christ's love for us is selfless love.

[40 : 20] love. Let's ask another question. How can we receive the love of God? How can God be gracious to us?

How can we be those who are his friends? After all, as we've been thinking, as we look at our own hearts and our own lives, we realize that we are unlovely people.

There's nothing in you or I that deserves God's love. There's everything in you and I that deserves God's anger. Think about how we have ignored him, rejected him, broken his commandments, his laws, how we have treated his world and treated one another.

Think about how we have spent all of our days consumed with really what can I do for me? What's in it for me? How does it make me feel?

See, God is holy, he is pure, he is everything which is beautiful and wonderful and lovely and we are the exact opposite.

[41 : 30] Sinful, wicked, selfish, greedy, the list can go on. When it comes to God, opposites do not attract.

they repel. So how can God ever love us? How can we ever receive his love?

How can we ever know the joy of being loved by him? How can we be his friends? There is only one way that we could ever enter into the joy of the love of God for us and that was if Jesus Christ the God man was willing to die in our place?

That's what this verse is all about, isn't it? The laying down of one's life. We know what he means by that. Jesus says it much earlier on as well, often speaking about, I lay down my life of my own free will.

No one takes it from me. The only way that God, who is just, and men and women who are sinful, could ever be brought together in love, was that the real barrier and problem of sin was dealt with and removed.

[42 : 55] Your sin and mine. God is too pure, the Bible says, even to look upon evil. And the only way that that sin could be removed was that that sin received the just judgment and punishment it deserved.

Now for you and I to bear the just judgment of punishment that our sins deserve must mean everlasting hell, everlasting punishment, because our sins are against an infinite and everlasting God.

Or, that someone who himself is infinite and everlasting took the punishment in our place. And that is what Jesus means when he speaks about laying down his life for his friends.

He was willing to be our substitute. He was willing to die the death that rightfully should be ours, so that we might come to God. Peter, the disciple, later on, understood this so very well when he wrote his letter and said this, for Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God.

Freely giving his life for our life, the great exchange, your sin placed upon him, your death suffered by him, your hell endured by him, the life of the infinite and eternal God in the place of a countless number of men and women.

[44 : 41] That was the price that Jesus was willing to pay so that you can know his love and be brought into the everlasting arms of forgiveness.

The very essence of the word love means to put others before myself, to lay down my rights, to lay down my wants, yes, to lay down my needs so that I can love another.

This is love. This is true love. This is the love that the friends of Jesus show.

That's impossible, isn't it? It's impossible. Of course it is. That's why the only way we can begin to love one another in the way that God loved the Son, in that eternal and unending love in which we remain, with a love which is costly, selfless, active, the only way we can begin to know that love is to have first of all received that love ourselves.

Do you want to know that love? Do you want to know the love of God for you? Do you not feel drawn by that love this morning? Isn't your heart moved when you think of the love of Christ for you?

[46 : 21] And don't you say, Lord, I want that love. I want to know and experience that love, that unconditional love, that forgiving love, that life-transforming love.

Then let us come and take, come and receive, come and ask, as Jesus said, how many of you fathers will give your son a snake or a rock?

How much more will the father give to you what you ask of him? And dear friends, as Christians, we are humbled, aren't we, by this?

And we know that we fall far short of it. And so surely our prayer is, Lord, give me greater love. love, not just to experience and to feel love, your love for me, but so that I might share that love and give that love.

Let's spend just a moment or two in the quietness of our hearts, responding to what God has said to us. Let us respond to him in prayer, whether that be thankfulness, whether that be asking.

[47 : 34] Let's pray. Amen. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Amen. other God. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen... Amen. Lord