

Addicted To Love (Part 1)

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- [0:00] I mean, so many songs have been written about the love of Jesus.
A few hymn titles that you might remember. Jesus, lover of my soul. Love divine, all loves excelling.
! O love that will not let me go. O the deep, deep love of Jesus.
It is in times of hardship that those songs can minister to us. But it's because in times of hardship, this is what we doubt. Does God really love me? Is this love really real?
We sometimes have reduced God's love to sentimentality in a negative sense there. Meaning, it's only appealing to the feelings. It's weakly emotional. It's influenced more by emotion than reason. It's an exaggerated emotional display that leads to no substance.
- [1:24] Al said that, by the way. That kind of love demands nothing. God's love is demanding.
But sentimentality demands nothing. It just wants you to give and give.
Now, I'm not saying that the love of God lacks emotional content. Don't ever go there. Because when you experience the love of Jesus, believe me, you will have some emotions.
Amen. But those emotions and the experience of his love leaves you a real thoughtful, visible, sustained mark on your life.
The love of Jesus, when you become addicted to his love, it changes you. You may not always feel his love, but in the power of the Spirit, causing you to abide in Jesus, you still demonstrate that love in your life.
- [2:42] You can't help it. His love overflows, even when you don't feel it. I'm so happy about that.
So when we abide in the vine, that's the chapter we're looking at, Christ's love will produce a radical love to you and through you.
And that's what he's talking about here in this last part of the vine metaphor. You would think Jesus would get tired of talking about love.
I mean, he keeps coming back to it. He keeps talking about love. He's even repeating himself. Love one another. As I have loved you.
He's repeating himself. Why? Why does he keep talking about this topic? I mean, you could come up with all kinds of ideas.
- [3:46] I'm sure your imagination is just as good as mine. I can come up. But I have to tell you, I got one big one. He keeps talking about love because we don't know how to love.
Not really. See, if you love me, you'll let me. Our love is twisted.
Jesus talks about love so much so he can straighten out our love. Teach us how to love. Demonstrate for us and put his love in us so that we can truly know what it means to seek the highest good of someone else.
So let's get to it. First of all, Jesus' love for us is better than we could ever hope. Really?

I mean, look what he says in verses 9 and 10. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. I mean, let's just stop right there. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

- [5 : 08] Abide in my love. He's emphasizing the experiential source of this love. Jesus says he loves us with the same intensity and permanence and depth that the Father loves him.
- Let me put it another way. The love the Son of God has experienced is the love he passes on to us.
- Now, y'all should be fainting right now. I mean, my knees are buckling right now. I just—do you understand what he's saying? Where did the Son of God experience love?
- Before all eternity, before anything was created, remember, you are not the center of God's love. Before you were here, the Father loved the Son.
- And now Jesus says, the love that I have received from the Father for me, for me. So have I loved you.

- [6 : 24] So let's think about that for a minute. What do we know of the Father's love for the Son? The Father's love for the Son is perfect. Can't improve on it.
- Can't get any better. Can't get any stronger. It's complete. The Father's love for the Son is from all eternity.
- It has no beginning or end. The Father's love for the Son exalts the Son. Jesus talks about—this is back and forth in John.
- The Father's love for the Son does not let evil triumph over the Son. That's the resurrection. The Father's love for the Son is intimate, meaning the Father knows the Son.
- It's personal. Not just in general. It's personal. And then Jesus says to us that this is the love that He loves us with.

- [7 : 34] I mean, back up. A love that is perfect. A love that is from all eternity. A love that exalts you.
- You are seated with Christ in the heavenly places, Paul says. You can't get any higher, brothers and sisters. He loves you with a love that will not let evil have the last word over you.
- Not even death. The great evil. And sin will not have the last word over you. His love for you. His love for you is intimate.
- He knows you. It's personal. It's not just God loves people in general or God just—no, no. It's God loves you because you are in Christ.
- Someone—oh, we'll come back to it later. I'll talk about that later. That love is real.

- [8 : 51] That's why Paul prayed in Ephesians chapter 3 that according to the riches of His glory—he's talking about Christ, God's glory. The riches of His glory.
- Not just a little glory. Riches of His glory. He may grant you to be strengthened with power. How? Through His Spirit. Remember, you're in the vine.
- Abide in the vine. Through His Spirit. In your inner being. So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
- So what happens? How do we experience that? That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length and the height and the depth.
- And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. To know the love of Christ that goes beyond what you can know.

- [10 : 04] Wow. Paul's praying for us that this deep, deep love of Jesus would permeate our being.

That by the power of the Spirit, as we are joined to Christ, we would experientially grow in our experience of His love until you walk into glory.

Into the new heavens and new earth. And then we'll keep on going. You know, the words that He uses here just blow me away.

I mean, I get excited about words, especially the Word of God. He says something here that I think we tend to miss. He says that you may comprehend with all the saints the love.

He's suggesting, no, He's telling us that for us to really grow in the love of God, you've got to be part of the church.

[11:23] I know it's popular today, say we don't need church. All I got is I got my Bible study in my small group. I don't need church. You crazy. You're not biblical at all.

You've been lied to by the enemy. With all the saints, when we come together and we are doing life together in the name of Jesus, when the church of God, which Jesus said, upon this rock I will build.

Not your Bible study, not your small group, but the church of God, the body coming together. He says that will prevail. And guess what? When that church comes together, we can experience the love of God in deeper and ever-deepening ways.

We need each other. This love is beyond our ability to understand.

Even with divine help, we still can't get to the bottom of it. Jesus said, live in this love.

[12:34] Abide in this love. Well, how do we do that? We do what we love. We must ask the Spirit to give us greater love for Christ and his ways.

Because when he says this, abiding my love, he then says, if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. Just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

Jesus says, I demonstrated my dependence upon the love of the Father by obeying him. And then he says, that's true for you too.

You can't get around it. You can't say you love Jesus if you're disobeying him. You're not walking or abiding in his love. Now, we all fail. Yeah, amen.

But I'm talking about the pattern of your life. The pattern of your life. If it's directed to the love that will not let you go. To the love that the cross portrays for us.

[13:39] If it's directed to him who has given us such great matchless love that goes beyond anything we could ever imagine. In order that to be real in you.

For you to continue to experience that day by day. We must get on our face before God and say, Lord, help me to follow. Help me to obey you. Forgive me for my foolishness.

Forgive me for thinking I'm wiser than you. And doing it my way. Dr. Phil used to always say, and how's that working for you?

Even if it is working, it's not. Because it's going to break down. Disobedience to Christ always breaks down.

There's a way that seems right to a man. End. Death. It may feel good.

[14:43] You may think, I'm living my best life now, Pastor Kevin. Following Jesus. I don't know. I know he says, but this thing is mine. This is who I am.

You've forgotten then that if you are in Christ, he is who you are. You see, your identity is now in Jesus.

And because your identity is in Jesus, that should mean then that I want to follow. I want to obey him. Obeying him is my life's blood. Because I'm walking in his love.

It's amazing. His love gives us the ability to defeat sin.

His love transforms. His love will never leave you as you are. He will accept you as you are.

[15:57] But he will not leave you as you are. He's got a better plan for you than that. My prayer constantly is, Lord, don't leave us like this. Please help us.

Help us to walk in this love. Help us to know this love. Help us to know this love. That surpasses knowledge. Help us to depend.

Listen, listen. When you are depending upon Christ's love. When you are abiding in his love. Depending on his love. You know what? You're accepted by him.

I say that because now you don't have to live for other people's acceptance. You see, if you understand that, it kills the power of social media over you.

And some of you need to be delivered. You live for likes. You put something on the media and you sit there and wait for somebody to say like, love.

[17:08] This is an epidemic across the world, especially in our country, where people are living online. You put everything you do online. Everything you eat online.

Every time you go someplace, you put it online. Why do you do this? It's because you're looking for acceptance from people you don't even know. And they don't love you, by the way.

And people are destroyed. When they don't get what they want from people they don't even know. When you are abiding in the love of Christ, you don't need me to say good job.

I'm not saying I shouldn't. If you did a good job, I should. But you don't need it. Some people, you do things in the church and you need someone to come along and say, that was great.

You're living for their acceptance. You're living for your acceptance. Free from that. You are accepted in Christ. You are loved by Jesus. And that is your life.

[18:25] And when you accept that, when you bask in that, when you walk in that, you will be set free from other people's opinion of you. We're becoming a shame culture in America.

America. It's amazing. But we're becoming a shame culture. Because we have become so dependent on what other people think of us.

How does God see you? How does God see you? How do you, if I were to ask you, what does God think of you?

What would you say? Well, I don't know if he thinks, I don't think he likes, I'm a disappointment to him. I let him down.

I don't, I don't know, Pastor Kevin. I don't think he, I don't know. I just don't know. Don't you understand? That if you are in Jesus, if you are in the vine, if you are abiding and resting in Jesus, the Father looks at you with love continuously.

[19:35] Jesus can't love you more. I'm not going to get anywhere I thought was going to go today. See, it's because of you.

Somebody needs to hear this, and I didn't know it, but somebody, I'm assuming. We need to. You love his acceptance.

You live for his acceptance. You seek to please him. And guess what pleases God? Faith. Faith. Trust me.

God just, God is saying to you each and every day, when you wake up in the morning, Jesus is standing there going, I love you. Trust me. Just trust me.

I love you. Walk in my love. Depend on my love. Follow me. Trust me. Come on. I know where I'm going. You know, I got that GPS thing you got on your phone.

- [20:44] And I got Apple Maps. I got Google Maps. I got Waze. I should never get lost. I got everybody on here, man.
- I can even ask AI where I'm going. I got everything on here, man. I mean, you know, and you know, I tend to trust it. And in general, it gets me where I need to go.
- I've used it in other countries. And it gets me where I want to go. Because I trust it. Now, it messes up. There are times where I'm in a cul-de-sac looking at a lake and it says, you've arrived.
- If I was going fishing, yes, but I'm not. But here's the thing. Divine GPS.
- God says, trust me. Jesus says, follow me. Never wrong. He will always get you where you're supposed to go. Did you catch that?
- [21:54] He will always get you where you're supposed to go. Maybe not always where you want to go, but he will always get you where you're supposed to go. You can depend on that.
- Jesus, follow me. He will never lead you wrong. Come on. I'm so glad that when he, you know, I'm so glad that he doesn't just say, follow me.
- But he puts his divine, we're living, his life is in us to help us follow. Because if he just said, follow me, we would never do it. But when I'm depending on his love, when I'm depending on his acceptance, when I'm depending on his life, oh yeah, I want to follow.
- Keep, yes, Lord. Wherever you say, yes, Lord. His goodness has caught us.
- Time.
- [22:59] Time. You know, I like, I just like to study genetics sometimes and different things.
- And one of the things I was looking up is birthmarks. I was asking the question, are birthmarks hereditary? You know? And some are.
- Some birthmarks really are hereditary. You got that mark or whatever because somebody in your family has the same mark. But most birthmarks are not hereditary. I didn't know that.
- I thought they all were. But they're not. But there's a birthmark that God gives his children.
- And we all have it. Unless we're not his children. And that birthmark is love. That birthmark is a willingness to display kindness to those around us.
- [24:13] A willingness to do what is best for someone else. A willingness and not just a willingness but an ability to do. See, it's one thing to be willing.
- I wish I could. No, no, no. You don't just have that. You have the ability to do it. To move you. To care for your neighbor. Jesus said, love the Lord your God with all your heart.
- It's all your mind. It's all your strength. And to love your neighbor as yourself. That's the birthmark of the believer. We have a passion for God. A love for God.
- We give ourselves to God. Because God has done the most amazing thing in saving us from death. And from our sins and from ourselves.
- But see, when you love God. When you're abiding in Christ's love. It flows out of you. We'll talk more about it next week.
- [25:15] But it flows out of you. And it touches those around you. Here's the thing. I keep reading.
- I keep seeing books more and more about church hurt. Things that people feel like they get hurt in their churches. And it happens. It happens. You hear about churches.
- Lord, God help them to do things that they should never do. How to treat people with racism and disdain.
- And all kinds of stuff. Here's the thing. That's a failure to abide in the love of Jesus. The reason our love fails.

The reason we attack one another. And go after one another. And hurt one another. Because it's a failure to abide in the love of Jesus.

[26:10] You can't say you're walking in the love of Jesus. If you're treating your brother with disdain. And disrespect. You lying.

Don't repent first. And let God do a work. Why does Jesus talk so much about love?

Because we, in our own strength, don't get it right. In our own strength, we love ourselves.

We are lovers of, Paul says, we're lovers of pleasure. We're lovers of ourselves. Rather than lovers of God. I'll point it out to you next week.

We'll come back to that. But I'll throw that. So you'll know I'm not making that up. We're talking about the church. But when we abide in the love of Christ together.

[27:13] When we are seeking that love together. When we together are walking in his acceptance of us. Because of his. Because he loves us with the same love.

The father loves him. When we are living in that love. Family. That makes this body sing. And I see it in this church.

I see. People keep telling me. Just today someone told me. How loving this church is. Why? If that's true. It's because we.

Together we are abiding. In the love of Christ together. And when we do. We care for each other. And more than that. We will care for others too. Jesus says.

As the father has loved me. So have I loved you. Abide in my love. Keep my commandments.

[28:18] And you will abide in my love. Is the Lord putting some. His finger on something in your life. Where he's saying. You're not abiding. You're not.

You're not trusting me there. You're not. You're not. Is he putting something. His finger on something right now. In your life. Where you're not loving someone. You're not being. You're not showing.

You're angry. And you're bitter. And you are incapable. Of loving that person right now. Because of your angerness. And bitterness. Listen. Listen. Go back to the vine.

And. And. And. And. And. I'm. We're saying it. I'm surrendered now. I give you everything. Your goodness is running after.

Y'all saying that with gusto. But are you surrendered now? That's an ongoing process by the way. Maybe in that area where you're having trouble loving somebody.

[29:17] That's where you need to say. Lord. I surrender now. In that. Fill me with your love. Help me to love them. Even though they're unlovable.

That doesn't mean you become a doormat. Doesn't mean you let people have their way over you. Amen. So you know what I'm saying. Doesn't mean that. Love is tough. Love got some backbone to it.

You ever hear tough love? Love will tell you the truth. And you ain't gonna like it. But it will tell you the truth in a way. That demonstrates love and kindness. How do you talk to people?

How do you talk to people? I mean. I met people in church. I just say. I just tell like it is Pastor Kevin. I just say what I gotta say. I always speak my mind. At that point I usually run away from them.

Because what's on our minds. A lot of the time. Should not be said. How do we talk to each other? Love.

[30:22] Let your speech be seasoned with salt. That have been ministered grace to the hearers. That's the Bible. That's love. How do you talk to someone?

How do you treat people? Are you demanding? Are you giving? Your goodness is running after.

It's running after me. Did his goodness catch you yet? If it caught you. It caught you in love.

Let us love one another. For God is love. Let us love one another.

Let us abide in his love together. We'll get to the rest of this next week. Father. Father. This was not the plan. I don't even know. Father.

[31 : 20] I just. I pray Lord that you would use this message in some way to bless your people. Father. I have to believe this is what you wanted me to say. This is not what I wanted to say.

And yet Lord I know. You're at work because your word always. Accomplishes your purposes. So Father may your word accomplish its purpose in the hearts of your people.

And anyone listening who heard this message. May your word accomplish its purpose. And may you be glorified. And may we walk together in greater dependence upon Jesus. And upon his love together.

That you may be glorified. In Jesus name we pray.