

Glory in His Love Part 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 March 2025

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0 : 0 0] John chapter 13, verses 31 to 35. We'll be focusing on 33 to 35, but I'm going to read the whole passage. When he had gone out, that is Judas, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you.

You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I'll also say to you, where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.

Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Elizabeth, oh thank you brothers and sisters so much.

[1 : 2 5] Elizabeth Payson Prentice lived a difficult life. She struggled her entire life with insomnia and severe headaches that left her exhausted.

Probably migraines. She also endured the sorrow of loss. Two of her children died in short succession.

Afterwards, the grieving mother's frail health was nearly destroyed. In the deep distress of her soul, she cried out, Our home is broken up.

Our lives wrecked. Our hopes shattered. Our dreams dissolved. I don't think I can stand living for another moment.

Yet during those dark days and desperate times when her pains and losses led her to think she could not live even one more day, Elizabeth Payson Prentice never lost her hope in the love of God for her.

[2 : 3 6] In fact, during those very days, she began to write a hymn asking Jesus for more of his love. You know this hymn. More love to thee, O Christ, she prayed.

More love to thee. Then she asked God to use her earthly sorrows to teach her how to love.

Once earthly joy I cried, sought peace and rest. Now thee alone I seek. Give what is best.

That all my prayers shall be more love, O Christ, to thee. More love to thee. More love to thee. Let sorrow do its work.

Sin, grief, and pain. Sweet are thy messengers. Sweet their refrain. When they can sing with me, when they can sing with me, more love, O Christ, to thee.

[3 : 4 0] More love to thee. More love to thee. When she despaired of life, what she found was what David said in Psalm 63. Thy love, O Lord, is better than life.

Therefore my lips will praise you. Later she wrote, To love Christ more is the deepest need, the constant cry of my soul.

Out in the woods, and on my bed, and out driving, when I'm happy and busy, and when I'm sad and idle. The whisper keeps going up for more love.

More love. More love. It's impossible to grow in love for Jesus without growing in love for his people.

Do you really want to glory in his love? Then love one another. Last time we saw that God's priority is his glory.

[5 : 00] And seeing and enjoying that glory is the best thing for human beings. In doing so, we are being transformed into the image of Christ, who is the glory of God made flesh.

Charles Spurgeon, that great Baptist preacher of yesteryear, in his book, *The Cross, Our Glory, Reflections on Christ, Triumph and Sacrifice*, says this, almost all men have something in which to glory.

Intelligence, physical strength, wealth, possessions, good looks. To live for personal glory is to be dead while we live. Be not so foolish as to perish for a bubble.

Many a man has thrown his soul away for a little honor or for the transient satisfaction of success in trifles. O men and women, your tendency is to glory in something.

Your wisdom will be to find a glory worthy of an immortal mind. Our passage next, as we continue to talk about the glory of our God in glorying in his love, the next passage, verse 33, tells us Jesus' glory is seen in his leaving.

[6 : 31] His leaving. He's speaking so tenderly, if you have your Bible in front of you, he calls them little children, yell a little while I'm with you. He's speaking so tenderly to his disciples because he knows it will be hard for them to hear what he's going to teach them, what he's going to say.

He's leaving them soon. This appears to be the night of his betrayal and arrest. So he spends that evening teaching, pouring out the truth of God that they may grasp what is about to happen but more, they may live in light of it.

He's leaving soon and he says they can't come. He had told the Jewish Jews before, the Jewish crowds and the Pharisees and whoever, he had told them twice before in chapter 7 and chapter 8.

He had told them that you will, they will die in their sins at one point. But this is the first time he seems to be saying it to his men.

this leaving is either the cross, the grave or his return to the Father. I'm leaning towards the latter, probably a little bit of both.

[7 : 47] I say the latter because chapter 14 begins with some great words, let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. So that's how chapter 14 begins. So I'm leaning toward the fact that he's talking about glory.

D.A. Carson, one of the great commentators on this book says, but although Jesus' followers must come to grips with his departure, the tone of his announcement to them is vastly different from the two passages earlier where the Jews are informed they will not be able to find him.

Rather, they are told he's going to prepare a place for them. They are not told they will die in their sins. Rather, because he lives, they too will live. Jesus' glory is seen in his leaving because he says it is good for them that he goes.

He'll say this in chapter 14 as well. He's saying he's going to the Father and will prepare a place for them. He will give them, chapter 16, the Holy Spirit.

[8 : 58] He will answer prayers in his name. He will enable them to do even greater works than he did, he says. He says all of these things is because he's leaving. And because yet though he leaves physically, yet spiritually, he will pour out the Holy Spirit and will yet be with us.

Without his leaving, we don't get those blessings. If his leaving refers to his death, then without it we are still in our sins. Destined for death and the judgment, just as it was essential for the Son of God to come, it was also essential that he leave, bodily, that he leave.

His glory is revealed in both. You could say we glory in his leaving. In the Old Covenant, if God left, that was a sign of judgment.

Ichabod, 1 Samuel, when the Ark of the Covenant was kidnapped, the throne of God was kidnapped by the Philistines and taken into captivity.

Now, understand, they thought they had kidnapped God, but God let them have the box. And the people, when they realized what had happened, they cried out, the glory has departed.

[10 : 33] Ichabod! But in the New Covenant, if Jesus is the glory of God, then it seems to be a sign of God's blessing that that glory leave.

Why? Because in John 17, 22, he'll say this, the glory that you've given me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.

The physical glory of God, Jesus leaves, but he leaves behind his glory in you. Do people see the glory?

He was glorified in leaving. But also, our Lord says, his glory is seen in divine love. Verses 34 and 35, a new commandment I give you that you love one another.

Here it is, just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. Of course, our Lord Jesus being the Son of God, God in human flesh, when he talks about his love, he's talking about divine love.

[12 : 05] When he says, just as I have loved you, he's describing how God loves us, his disciples. divine love does involve emotions, but it's not mushy.

God's love is not sentimental. It has standards. As the Apostle John will later write after he wrote written his gospel, he'll write later to churches in 1 John 4, 16, he says, so we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.

God is love. And whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. God is love.

Wow. God is the greatest and greatest lover there is. He is the creator of love. Love comes from him.

Love permeates his nature. God is love. Now, if that's true, that also means this. Here's where we miss out.

[13 : 19] If God is love, that means his love is holy, pure, sovereign, meaning all authority and control is seen in him choosing to express his love on whoever he wants.

His love is just and righteous. It always does what is right. his love is eternal. It doesn't end. His love is merciful. His love is gracious.

His love is unchanging. His love is omniscient. He knows everything about those he loves. His love is omnipotent. He has all power to enact his love.

His love is omnipresent. That means you can't get away from his love. His love, therefore, cannot be separated from his other attributes.

And that's where we go wrong. Too many times, Christians will talk about God as love but separate that love from his other attributes and we end up with this mushy sentimentality where God just loves me.

[14 : 20] Oh, and he doesn't care about my sin and he understands. And all kinds of crazy things people come up with when they say God is love and they separate the love of God from his holiness, from his justice, from his peace.

It goes in everything. You don't separate the attributes of God from one another because you end up worshipping an idol, a God in your own making.

You see, that's what happens. When we end up getting sentimental with God's love, he ends up looking like us. And we're mushy, fickle.

I love you now but might not love you later. I'll express love to you now but tomorrow I'm going to be angry with you and say things I shouldn't say.

That's us. But that's not God. His love is constant. Now, this seems to be kind of a strange topic for Jesus to bring up at this moment.

[15 : 27] He's talking about glory and then he starts talking about love. love. I mean, is there a disconnect here? Is there a connection between God's glory and his love?

First of all, the glory of the Godhead, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, is seen in their mutual love for one another. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father and the Holy Spirit loves the Father and the Father loves the Holy Spirit.

there's this mutual love affair that has been going on throughout all eternity and it was before we were here. God didn't need us to express love.

He's always lived in community expressing love back and forth before anything ever came into being. That's why the Father exalts the Son in love and the Son exalts the Father in love.

Second, God is due glory because of his love for us, his covenantal people. He's in relationship with us by his own choosing for the glory of his Son.

[16 : 38] After Solomon finished building the temple of the Lord and offering sacrifices, the Bible shows us that the glory cloud, the glory of the Lord's presence, filled the temple.

In 2 Chronicles 7, here's how it goes. As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Notice, glory brings in love. God's glory, God's love, together. Yes is a connection.

Psalms, Psalms 115, 1, not to us, O Lord. Oh, man, the Imperial sang this years ago. I love that song. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

[18 : 09] Give glory for the sake of your love. Psalm 5, verse 7, but I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, the psalmist says, will enter your house.

I will bow down towards your holy temple in the fear of you. His steadfast love pushes us to worship. Even more that his love is revealed now in Jesus.

We give Father and Son glory. So love is not a minor attribute in God. As the great Protestant reformer, Martin Luther said, God doesn't love us because we are valuable.

We are valuable because God loves us. There's a difference in that statement, by the way. One author put it this way, God loves people not because we are so lovely, which we are not, because of our sins, but because he himself is love.

His love rises from within himself, not from anything inherently attractive in the ones he loves. God loves his people in spite of us.

[19 : 26] That shows his love is merciful and gracious. all that to say, so that when the Lord Jesus says, we his disciples are to love each other as he, the son of God, has loved us, then let's act specifically, how does the son love us?

How does Jesus love us? You know this story. He loved us as we saw earlier. He loved us enough to humble himself to serve us, to cleanse us.

He loved us enough to make the ultimate sacrifice for our greatest good. He loved us enough to reveal our sins, call them out, and call us to repentance.

You see, the love of Jesus does not hide sin, it exposes it. And then he took the punishment that was due us because of our sins upon himself at the cross.

The love of Jesus is able to forgive evil done against God. That's some kind of love.

[20 : 49] That's what sin is, is evil done against God. And the love of Jesus is able to forgive that evil. His love and forgiveness go together.

Psalm 86 5, For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

God's love in Christ is a forgiving love. Are you with me?

So, therefore, Jesus' glory will be seen in our sharing his love with one another. What do you mean? He equips us, therefore, to love each other in his way as we receive and depend on his love in the gospel.

You see, you can't love unless you're receiving love. You can't give divine love unless you are receiving divine love. Our Lord expects this of us.

[22 : 08] I use that word expects somewhat loosely because he knows what you're going to do, but he still calls us to it. 1 John 4, 7 and 8, Beloved, John again, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Whoever loves has been born of God, that means born again, and knows God. That means you're saved. You see, if you're not born of God, then you're not saved. If you don't know God, then you're not saved.

Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love. That's why the hallmark of the church is this love.

Again, the love John is speaking of is the self-sacrificing love of Christ. That's the love John is talking about. That's the only love he cares about. And one of the key ways we express Christ's love for one another, let me say it, is in forgiveness.

When I'm doing premarital counseling with young folk or even whoever I'm doing it with, I always want to talk about forgiving one another because that is one of the key qualities of a good marriage, of a godly marriage, and something we are all called upon.

[23 : 29] If you're married, you know what I'm talking about. If you're going to get married, if you're not a forgiving person, don't get married. Go to Jesus first.

First, in the Lord's prayer, God talks about forgiveness. There are two words used in the New Testament to describe, two Greek words to describe this type of love, Christ's love. First, in the Lord's prayer, that love there, it means forgiveness, two words for forgiveness.

In the Lord's prayer, we forgive us our debts. That word there means to send away, to let go, to give up a debt, to remit. To put it simply, it is acknowledging you are owed a debt because of sin against you, but then you cancel that debt.

Kind of like if your credit card company sent you a notice saying, we forgive your debt, you will be rejoicing in God, believe me. They canceled it, it's all gone, you don't have to pay it back.

Now the second word for forgiveness is found in Ephesians and Colossians. Paul writes, Paul writing both, very similar passages, but listen, Ephesians 4, 32, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, talking to the church now, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

- [24 : 53] Colossians 3, 13, bearing with one another, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also, listen to this word, must forgive.

And this last word, this last, has grace in its meaning, it's actually charisma, charis is in the word there, it's a grace word.

It speaks, forgiveness there speaks of gracious, generous, gifting to one another because you received the same from Christ. So where are we?

Two words of forgiveness, they all apply. They all are expression of godly love, of agape, of Christian love. You let go of debts that are owed you.

Now, we're not talking about money debts per se, we're talking about someone has hurt you or offended you. It's letting it go. That's not the same as reconciliation, by the way, but it is letting it go.

- [26 : 03] It's healing to you because bitterness will kill you. ulcers, migraines, sleepless nights, insomnia, all kinds of things happen to your body when you will not forgive.

But more of the damage to your soul, the darkness that will engulf you, the hardness of heart. So let it go.

So let it go. But it's also you're giving a generous gift to somebody by freeing them from the dead.

Sometimes forgiveness is a process. Are you listening? A process sometimes. Depending on the depth of the hurt, you cannot demand forgiveness from someone that you have wronged.

Don't do that, please. I've seen Christians do that. You're supposed to forgive me. You said you forgave me. No, no, no, you don't demand forgiveness.

- [27 : 07] You're the perpetrator. Only the place you go is on your face before the Lord and that person. You can't demand forgiveness.

But in order to forgive, you have to tap into God's supernatural power. Forgiveness is not natural to sinful people. Revenge, hatred, and bitterness are natural.

To forgive like Jesus, we must bask in the awareness of his forgiveness of our horrible and many sins because he loves us. He bore our sins away.

He canceled the debt you owed to God for cosmic treason. The debt you owed to God was a death sentence, saints. Do you understand? It was a death sentence.

It was a debt you could not pay. You had nothing in the bank. Your credit stank. You couldn't borrow enough to pay. And Christ forgave you.

- [28 : 07] And still forgives you every day when you mess, come on somebody, when you mess up. So when he says forgive as you've been forgiven, that makes good sense, doesn't it?

because anything less than that is hypocrisy. To say I'm forgiven, but I will not forgive you, that's hypocrisy.

It may be a process, that's not hypocrisy, it may be a process, and it's a good process, because you have a goal, you have a goal in the process.

If it's a process where you're working through stuff, pain, and anguish in your heart, but here is your goal, the glory of Christ.

You see, the goal is not necessarily relational connection. That might not come. You want reconciliation, but sometimes people aren't safe to be reconciled to them, because they're still going to do the same thing.

[29 : 20] They don't care. But forgiveness will set you free, so that you can walk in grace and mercy and kindness toward other people. Listen, listen, if you won't forgive, you will treat other people because that bitterness over here won't stay there.

It gets up in you, and it spills over. So I've got to have a motivation, B-Y-L, I've got to have a motivation to forgive that goes beyond you.

I'm forgiving because Christ forgave me. Therefore, I'm forgiving you for the glory of Jesus. That's my goal. That's my focus. And it can be a process now because I'm heading toward the glory.

That's your heart. And see, if that's your heart, oh, the Spirit of God will work. Oh, He'll work in you. He will do the work because your heart is His heart.

Somebody, somebody need to hear this, I think. We need a great purpose. The key way, the key way we express this kind of love, forgiving, and otherwise, self-sacrificial, servant type of love.

[30 : 44] The key way we express the love of Christ is in the body of Christ. Seeing each other as family, forgiving each other.

Let me go through the list. Forgiving and loving each other, serving each other across all barriers. Ethnic barriers, tribal barriers, political barriers, language barriers, national barriers, language barriers.

The love of Christ destroys barriers, not differences. We're all different, and that's good. God made us that way. Hallelujah! I love you, but I don't want to be white.

I'm glad I'm black. I'm good with that. You Irish, Scottish, be good with that. You Latino, be good with that. You Asian, be good with that.

Rejoice. In those places, you bear the image of God, the Imago Dei. Rejoice in who you are by the grace of God. But don't put, but don't make a barrier with it.

[31 : 54] Because Christ destroyed the barriers that separate the body of Christ. Economic barriers. Okay, I got five sent and you got ten. You got more than me.

Whoopee! We love each other. We're family. Okay, what does family mean? It means we sympathize and even empathize as much as possible with one another.

We're sharing in each other's pains and joys. And we will not let anyone divide us because we are family. family. Listen, brothers and sisters, we got to fight against those who would divide us.

General Assembly this year could be interesting because we are being divided politically that has racial tongues to it. And I, for one, if I have to, I hate doing it, I will have to get on the floor of General Assembly and call us on the carpet because no, that is not the kingdom of God.

If anyone comes between me and you, they got to go. The left, I'm sorry, the left foot of fellowship, that's what we're going to give them because you and I belong together.

[33 : 19] We belong. No, no, no. You can't come between us. We're family. If you don't take that attitude, you will allow all kinds of things to get in between there. Guard it like you guard your, okay, that means if you're guarding your marriage well, guard it like you guard your marriage.

Christ died to make us one. I got to finish this up. but I just, I'm just going to. Diane Langbird in her book, When Church Harmed, When the Church Harms God's People, convicting book.

It's a counselor and she says, our Lord gave us a stunning in the flesh example of what it truly means to love and obey God no matter the cost.

Typo. And in giving us that example, he fleshed out who we are to be. He said we should do it as he did for us. He gave us a new commandment, one he embodied.

We are to love one another even as he loved us. We are to flesh out the love of God as he did. And that is how the world will know who he is and that we are his.

[34 : 34] When we glory in his love, family, we love one another beautifully. And God uses our churches, his kingdom embassies. He uses us to save, to heal, and to grow people.

He reveals to the world around us that he is real. Listen, the world is looking for this kind of love, this kind of community, where people of differences don't make, don't let their differences become barriers.

The world is looking for it. And when you, and when our churches reflect that love, it shows that we really are Jesus' disciples. Because he loved that way.

He let no barrier stand in his way. His love crushed barriers. So why does he command us to love one another?

Because that love is a mark of his presence, the fruit of his spirit. And our love will be tested over and over again. The enemy will come after our love.

[35 : 44] He will come after us to divide us, pit us against each other, cause us to not listen to each other, or seek to reconcile with each other. He will do all kinds of tricks and traps to break the love of our fellowship.

Every church deals with this. So how are we to deal with it? Well, Michael M. Litton, his book, Saints, Sufferers, and Sinners helps here, I think.

He says, God ministers to us in love as saints, first of all. Saints who need confirmation that we're the children of God. Saints. He ministers to us as sufferers who need comfort in the midst of affliction.

He ministers his love to us as sinners who need challenge to their sin in light of his redemptive mercies. Everything he does with us all the time, that's what he does.

Now listen, if the love of God is in us, that's how we deal with each other then. as saints, we seek to confirm one another and encourage one another that we're children of God.

[36 : 57] As sufferers who need God's comfort, we surround one another when we're in pain and we help one another. We don't leave no man left behind. Nobody left.

We seek to go and help those who are suffering. And when we sin, again, the brothers, we come to each other to humbly and gently challenge one another regarding our sin in light of God's great mercy, in light of God's word, not your preference, God's word, given to us in Christ.

So it's missional. God's love is missional. It's always moving towards somebody. Is that you? Are you loving in the body?

Are you loving the saints, the sufferers and the sinners in the body? And listen to this. Are you willing to receive it yourself?

Are you willing to receive the love of God? First of all, for him, when he confronts you about your sin, when he comes to you and your suffering and he seeks to confirm you more and more as his child, will you receive that?

[38 : 16] Will you receive that? But if you can receive that, then you have to be willing to give it, too. Will you go to your brothers and sisters across this aisle when they're suffering?

They ain't got to call you. If you know about it, you're going. If you don't know, then you don't know. But if you know about it, you're going. You're picking up a call, you're sending an email, whatever you got to do, you're engaging. When your brothers and sisters are doubting their salvation or having trouble, am I really a Christian?

Will you go to them to help them in the word of God to confirm who they are in Christ? Will you help them? When they've trapped in sin, and you see what it's doing to them, will you just say, well, I don't want to be a hypocrite because I don't want to go because I can't talk.

I got sin, too. Well, confess yours, ask forgiveness and power, now go to your brother and your sister and say, hey, I love you. Can we talk for a minute?

Just sit down, cup of coffee. You say, I know you're struggling. I see this in your life. I know you're struggling. But I'm here to tell you, God wants to deliver you. God wants to cleanse you from that.

[39 : 30] God wants to work in you, and I will walk with you. Here's the word of the Lord. Listen to what God says. Now, let's pray together. You see, that's the love of Christ in us.

Anything less than that, family, I don't know what to call it. I don't think it's Christ's love. Father, help us. Help us to really love as Jesus loved us.

Help us to love with such servant hearts, such caring hearts, hearts moved by your truth, and by your presence, and for your glory.

Oh, God, saturate us. Pour out your spirit with your love. Let your love rain down on us again and again. And help us to forgive each other.

Help husbands to forgive their wives and wives to forgive their husbands. Help parents to forgive their children and children to forgive their parents. Help brothers and sisters in Christ to forgive one another, to confess their sins.

[40 : 39] Lord, give us kingdom reconciliation in our fellowship, in our homes, so that the world might see that we belong to Jesus.

And maybe, just maybe, you'll save some of them because of it. Do it. Do it. Do it. We please, in Jesus' name.

Amen.