

"The Gift of Love"

When God sent His Son Jesus into the world, He was sending His very heart filled with love. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to remember the gift of love.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for what God desires. We seek to please the Lord and to follow Him. When we follow the Lord, we know we'll find a joyous, abundant life filled with peace and purpose. God ways are always righteous and kind. They lift up rather than tear down. They give hope rather than discourage. They lead to wisdom rather than to foolishness. And the more you know about God, the more you'll love and praise Him. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

God is love. And everything about Him reveals His love. The Lord Jesus said in John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Jesus didn't come to this world to condemn us but to save us. He knew sin was our real enemy, and He suffered on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

God planned to send Jesus. An angel of the Lord told Joseph in Matthew 1:20 to 23, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." And all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)." Jesus is indeed God with us, and we're so thankful that He came into the world.

Now we offer this study, the gift of love, free. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 John 4:7 to 11, and explore God's gift of love.

Our reading today is from 1 John chapter 4 verses 7 to 11. It reminds us that we need to love others because of how much God has loved us.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

And how true that is. The need to love each other. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for that wonderful gift of love Your Son Jesus our Lord. And Father we pray that it will encourage us to love others and to be kind and to be generous because You were to us. Father we're thankful and we pray that You will bless us and help us each day. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Many people think of the infant Jesus, when they think of God's gift of love. God gave us Jesus to be one of us. He was like us physically and endured all the challenges of growing up in this world. Because He became one of us, He understands all our strengths and weaknesses. John said in 2:25 that Jesus didn't need anyone to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man." Though

Jesus was the Son of God, He became flesh and dwelled among us. The Hebrew writer observed in Hebrews 4:14 to 16, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Because He understands us and was tempted like we are, He can help us in our greatest times of need.

Now God knew that we needed Him! And no one else would do. The Lord Jesus said in John 3:14 to 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." There are many prophets in the Old Testament, but there's only one Son of God. Moses gave us the Law, but Jesus gave us grace and truth. The prophets warned people, but Jesus sacrificed Himself for people. Angels could tell us God's message; but Jesus Himself was God's message, the Word. No one else could do what Jesus did for us. Revelation 5 and verse 12 reminds us that because Jesus was slain as a Lamb for our sins, that He is worthy "to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

The Lord Jesus gave three reasons why He came into the world. First, He came to save us from our sins. He said in Luke 19 verse 10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Yes Jesus came looking for the lost, that He might save them from sin. Now because of sin, we're all lost in sin and needing a Savior. So many of the heartaches of life come from sinful behavior. As we have seen, when people reject God, they fill their lives with every kind of evil. Jesus wanted to bring salvation to our lives so that we could have hope and true life. Now Jesus isn't trying to manipulate us but to bless us. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 20 and verse 28 that, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Now sin separates us from God and it enslaves us to evil; but Jesus redeemed us with the price of His blood. He redeemed us by giving Himself, His very own body and blood. And there could be no higher price, no greater gift.

Jesus not only died for us as individuals, He also wanted to rescue us from this sinful world. Paul greeted the churches of Galatia in Galatians 1:3 to 5 saying, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

One can truly describe this world into which Jesus was born as "evil." The predominant religion of the day was a mixture of superstition with paganism. Because it was a world with a warped understanding of God, people lived with warped values and warped morals. Romans 1:28 to 32 talks about how that, "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, (and) ruthless. (and) Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." Our world is much like the world of the first century; each day it seems to grow more and more evil. More and more people participate in that evil with the approval of others. And how tragic that people think a sinful world is better than a world where God is honored and served!

Second, Jesus said He came to bless our lives with a better way, an abundant way of life. The Lord Jesus said in John 10:10 that, "The thief comes only to steal and (to) kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." In Christ, our lives overflow with His love. Titus 2 and verse 14

says Jesus “gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” Jesus not only saves; He changes people. He transforms them from sinners to saints. And His love, His truth, and His life show us a better way, a better way to live and a better way to treat our fellow man. The Lord taught us kindness, respect, integrity, honesty, and justice. He’s the Prince of peace, the hope of mankind, and the balm of Gilead.

Ephesians 2:8 to 10 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not (of) your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” When people live in sin, they spread misery and heartache everywhere; but when they serve the Lord, they become a blessing to everyone. They encourage, they give hope, they show love, they bring peace, and they spread joy and good news. Christians don’t speak out against sin because of hate but because they know the agony and hurt that sin brings. The Lord offers something better. He was indeed God’s gift of love. And what God gave to us was not things, but a Person.

Third, Jesus said He came to bear witness to the truth. John 1:14 says of Jesus, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Now Jesus proclaimed in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (and) No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jesus was the very embodiment of truth and honesty. Because of Jesus, we know what God is like. Because of Jesus, we know what righteousness truly is; and because of Jesus, we have the ability to distinguish truth from error.

When Jesus appeared before Pilate, Pilate wanted to know if the rumors he had heard were true. John 18:37 reads, “Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” (and) Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. (and) Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” Jesus and the truth God reveals are inseparably bound with each other. If we wish to know the truth, we must listen to His voice.

Our world is filled with contradictory lies, myths and false hopes. Jesus came to give us an undeniable and unvarying path to the truth. And how wonderful to have an unchanging moral and spiritual standard that provides a basis for our values. Since God has raised Jesus from the dead, we can have confidence that the Lord’s teaching is true. You can trust His promises, and you can believe that heaven is waiting for you. 1 John 5 and verse 20 says, “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.” My friends, it’s a marvelous gift to know Who and what is true.

The Lord Jesus wants to bless you with His love. He wanted His sacrifice on the cross to transform your life. And if you take seriously the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins, you’ll come to love Him. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:32, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” Let His sacrifice for you matter! The Lord Jesus was willing to pay the ultimate price to get your attention and to demonstrate His utter love for you. He wanted to draw you to Himself. He wanted you to love Him the way He loved you.

Romans 5:6 to 8 says, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” We were once weak and needed saving; we were once ungodly and didn’t take the ways of God seriously;

and we were sinners who violated God's teaching and were offensive to Him. But in spite of these, the Lord Jesus willingly died for us to show His love.

When we respond to His love and become Christians, our response reveals that the cross matters. Surely, the God who created us and gave us His Son has many more blessings in store for us. Romans 8 and verse 32 says that, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" In Christ, God's love never ends! Romans 8:35 to 39 asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure (I'm persuaded) that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." My friend, nothing can separate you from the love of God; but do not take His love for granted. Never turn away from God, as some do.

When Jesus redeemed you with His blood, He gave His utmost for you. And we must realize how God values us as His children. 1 Peter 2:9 to 10 says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Don't let anyone or anything rob you of a close, loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Love Him, serve Him. Give yourself to Him.

Let us pray. Father we're thankful for that great love that marvelous inexpressible that was given to us through Jesus Christ. In His mercy and grace. And Father help us to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And to love others. Father we're thankful that we have way to walk and to live. And we pray that we may follow You all of our days. In Jesus name, Amen.

Jesus came into the world to save us from sin, to give us a better way, and to reveal the truth to us. Does it matter whether you're saved or lost, whether you live with wisdom or with foolishness, whether you know the truth or whether you've been deceived with falsehoods? You must come to understand this: the Lord Jesus is the most important Person in your life. No one else can bless you, love you, forgive you, give you hope, or save your soul but Jesus Christ. You need Him.

The love of Jesus is indeed a gift. The Lord loved us even when we didn't deserve it, even when we were lost in our sins. He took the initiative and offered His body and blood on the cross, because He didn't want to leave us where He found us. He came to lift us out of darkness and out of hopelessness. Don't take this marvelous gift of love and salvation for granted; it's priceless. Nothing else compares.

If you wish to enjoy the love of God, you must accept His gift of love. Believe in the Lord Jesus, turn from sin that only destroys, confess Jesus Christ as God's Son, and be baptized into Christ. When you're baptized into Christ, you're "crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (Romans 6 and verse 6). Now this baptism in an immersion in water, just as Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, immersed, and just as Philip immersed the eunuch. Now when you're united with Christ, the Lord sets you free from sin and makes you God's child, a fellow-heir of heaven. Will you accept God's gift of love? Will you love and obey the Lord Jesus?

We hope that today's study about The Gift of Love challenges you to respond. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's

Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And be sure to like the programs you watch; because this helps us spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, when you're getting a hold of us, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

So focus your heart on God. And do it by worshiping at church. I tell ya you, just like everybody else needs a church family. A church home. Now I realize some of you for health reasons can't attend worship; I'm speaking to those who can attend and haven't been. We want to you go and to be at worship. And we'll help you find a church that's near you. And there's probably one. We'll as always we say to you because we care about you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.