

GOD'S EVERLASTING LOVE
FOR HIS ELECT

Hear the Son of God, my brothers and sisters in this world, and rejoice! — *“Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me!”*

- What a pillow upon which to rest our heads!
- What a comfort for our poor, aching hearts!
What a glorious theme for daily meditation!
- What a cause for adoration, praise, and worship!

We may be despised, misunderstood, abused, and hated of men, but we are loved of God! God our Father loves us even as He loves His darling Son.

Now, read verse 24, and hear the Son of God declare that God the Father has loved us as He loves His Son from eternity! — *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.”*

I want us to meditate upon this one blessed, glorious, soul-cheering sentence that fell from the lips of our Savior — *“Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me.”* Here He declares, *“for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”* With those words He

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declares that **GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS ELECT IS AN EVERLASTING LOVE.**

“God’s everlasting, unchangeable, and invariable love to His elect, through every state and condition into which they come, is written as with a sun-beam in the sacred writings.”

John Gill

I am again in water that is way over my head; but I never did like to wade around in puddles. I like to swim in deep water. When we dive into the ocean of God’s everlasting love for His elect, there is no possibility of us sounding its depths. So, when I have finished talking about it, there will be plenty of room for meditation and study. I can do nothing more than bring up a few nuggets of gold from this deep mine of infinity. **Let me show you five things about God’s everlasting love for us in Christ.**

1. THE ETERNALITY OF IT

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God's love for us did not begin yesterday. It is not something born in time. His love for us does not begin with our love for him. — "*We love Him because He first loved us*"(1 John 4:19). God's love for us springs up from eternity, and is the ground of Divine predestination, of our election and redemption by Christ, and our calling by the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 1:4-6; Ezekiel 16:8).

(Jeremiah 31:3) "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

(Ephesians 1:3-6) "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His

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will, (6) To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”

(Ezekiel 16:8) “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”

“The Father loved us ere we fell,
And will forever love;
Nor shall the powers of earth or hell
His love from Zion move.

‘Twas love that moved Him to ordain
A Surety just and good;
And on His heart inscribe the names
Of all for whom He stood.

Nor is the Surety short of love;
He loves beyond degree;

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No less than love Divine could move
The Lord to die for me!

And O what love the Spirit shows!
When Jesus He reveals
To men oppressed with sin and woes,
And all their sorrows heals.

The Three-in-One, the One-in-Three,
In love forever rest;
The chosen shall in glory be
In His love ever blessed.”

—**William Gadsby**

All God's acts and works of grace performed for us before the world began arise from and are demonstrations of His everlasting love for us.

Election was an act of God's eternal love (Ephesians 1:4).

(Ephesians 1:3-4) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath

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blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:”

The covenant of grace was established by the triune God in eternity because of His great, everlasting love for us (2 Samuel 23:5; Romans 8:28-29; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 13:20).

(2 Samuel 23:5) “Although my house *be* not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although He make *it* not to grow.”

(Romans 8:28-29) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the

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image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

(2 Timothy 1:9) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

(Hebrews 13:20) “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”

Trusting our souls into the hands of Christ as our Surety was a work of God’s eternal love (John 6:39; Ephesians 1:12).

(John 6:39) “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

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(Ephesians 1:7-12) “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [even] in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

2. **THE IMMUTABILITY OF IT**

There is no possibility of change in our God (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17). God’s love does not change. It cannot be taken from us; and it cannot be destroyed, neither by us nor by hell itself (Romans 8:35-39).

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The famous Arminian preacher, founder of the Christian Missionary Alliance denomination, **A.W. Tozer**, made these statements about the love of God. — “God must love and will love man until hell has erased the last trace of the remaining image (of God in him). Men are lost now. But they are still loved of God...I believe that God now loves all lost men...(But) the day will come when lost men will no longer be loved by God Almighty...I believe the time will come when God will no longer love lost human beings.”²

Such fickle, useless love may be worthy of fickle, useless man, but not of the great and glorious Lord God. **Our God does not love today and hate tomorrow!** His love is unchangeable!

Nothing could be more dishonoring to God than failure (Numbers 14:11-16); **but “He shall not fail!”**

² The Tozer Pulpit, Volume 8, pp 23-25

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(Numbers 14:11-16) “And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. 13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear [it], (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) 14 And they will tell [it] to the inhabitants of this land: [for] they have heard that thou LORD [art] among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and [that] thy cloud standeth over them, and [that] thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now [if] thou shalt kill [all] this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, 16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.”

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God's love, like all His gifts bestowed upon men, is without repentance. He will never cease His own to cherish. Those who are loved of God have been loved of God from everlasting and shall be loved of God to everlasting. His love is eternal both ways. He will not depart from the objects of His love nor cease to do them good, for He cannot change (Jeremiah 32:40; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17).

(Jeremiah 32:38-40) “And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: (39) And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

The salvation of God's elect does not stand upon a precarious foundation of time, but upon the immutable foundation of God's everlasting love.

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- We change often, but there are no changes in His love.
- Our love is sometimes hot and sometimes cold; but His love is invariably the same.
- God graciously and wisely changes the dispensations of His providence toward His people, hiding His face and chastening us because of our sin; but His love never changes (Isaiah 54:10; Hebrews 12:5-11). — His chastisements are evidences of His love.
- Even when we sin against him, as we often do, God's love does not change!

Illustrations: *David — Peter*)

This is the thing I want us to get hold of: — **God's love toward His elect is from everlasting, and never changes to any degree or for any reason** (Psalm 89:19-37; John 13:1).

(Psalms 89:19-37) “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is mighty*; I have exalted *one* chosen out

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of the people. (20) I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: (21) With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. (22) The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. (23) And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. (24) But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. (25) I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. (26) He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. (27) Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. (28) My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. (29) His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. (30) If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; (31) If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; (32) Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. (33) Nevertheless

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my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. (34) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. (35) Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. (36) His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. (37) It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”

(John 13:1) “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

3. THE GIFTS OF IT

Love gives. The gifts of God’s free and everlasting love are too many for us to calculate. Let me just show you three things that are clearly revealed as the gifts of God’s everlasting love to His elect. In

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comparison with these three all others, great as they are, must be considered to far, far less.

- The Lord God has given us **Himself** because of His great, everlasting love for us (Ezekiel 37:27). — “*I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*”
- The gift of His **Son**, the Lord Jesus Christ, to suffer and die as our Substitute was and is the great commendation of His love to us (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-10; 1 John 3:16; 4:10). — “*Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!*” (1 Corinthians 9:15).
- The gift of His **Spirit** to regenerate, call, and seal us in His grace in “*the time of love*” is the gift of God’s everlasting love to us (Ezekiel 16:8; Titus 3:3-6).

“Indeed, all that God does in time, or will do to all eternity, is only telling His people how much He loved them from everlasting.” — **John Gill**

“‘Twas not to make Jehovah’s love
Towards the sinner flame,

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That Jesus, from His throne above
A suffering man became.

‘Twas not the death which He endured,
Nor all the pangs He bore,
That God’s eternal love procured,
For God was love before.

He loved the world of His elect
With love surpassing thought;
Nor will His mercy e’er neglect
The souls so dearly bought.”

— *John Kent*

4. **THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF IT**

Let me spend a little time here. It is utter nonsense to talk about God loving all men. I sometimes hear preachers try to soft peddle God’s sovereignty by assuring people that there is a sense in which God loves all men with a love of benevolence though not with a love of complacency and delight. They say God loves all men as His creatures, just as He loves

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trees and toads. If you can get any comfort from the idea that God loves you like He loves a frog, I guess I shouldn't take that away from you, but it simply is not the teaching of Scripture.

God loves His elect distinctively. — God does not love all men. I would not emphasize that fact, were it not for the fact that those who teach that God's love is universal are guilty of three horrible crimes.

1. They make the love of God changeable.
2. They make the love of God meaningless.
3. They destroy the greatest motive there is for godliness and devotion. Try telling you wife that you love all women alike. See if that inspires her devotion to you!

The Word of God tells us in the plainest terms possible that God's love for His elect is a special, sovereign, distinctive, and distinguishing love (Isaiah 43:1-5; Romans 8:29; Romans 9:11-24).

(Isaiah 43:1-5) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed

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thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. (5) Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;”

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. (29) For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom He

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did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

(Romans 9:11-24) “(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth;) (12) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (14) What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. (15) For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (16) So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (18) Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will *have mercy*, and whom

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He will He hardeneth. (19) Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? (20) Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? (21) Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (22) *What* if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: (23) And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, (24) Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

God loves His people delightfully. — I mean by that that God delights, takes pleasure in, and is complacent with His elect because of His love for them. God so loves us that He smiles on us perpetually, even when He appears to be frowning upon us!

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It is high time that all attempts to divide the love of God into categories, stages, and degrees be laid aside. They do nothing to help men and only obscure the glory and grandeur of our God. If God loves me, He delights in me. If He does not delight in me, He does not love me. Again I say, **try telling your wife,** “Honey, I really do love you. I wish you well. I want nothing but the very best for you, and am willing to do anything I can for you. But you do not please me. You are offensive to me. I do not enjoy your company. In fact, I really do not want to look at you.” If you still have a wife tomorrow, let me know.

Our God loves us as He loves His darling Son. That means He is well-pleased with us (Matthew 17:5). The Father and the Son are one; and the Son of God tells us that His “**delights**” were with us from eternity (Proverbs 8:31). He could not have used a stronger word than this to express His love for us. The word “*delights*” expresses the most intimate, sweet, ravishing pleasure. Can you get hold of this? **Our God so delights in us that He says, “Thou hast**

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ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes” (Song of Solomon 4:9).

5. **THE EFFICACY OF IT**

God's love is more than a wish or desire in His heart to save sinners. God's love for us is an effectual love. That simply means that **those who are the objects of God's love shall be saved precisely because they are the objects of His love.** Otherwise the love of God is an utterly useless thing.

- **God's love is sovereign** (Romans 9:16-18).

(Romans 9:16-18) “So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (18) Therefore hath He

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mercy on whom He will *have mercy*, and whom He will He hardeneth.”

- **God's love is sacrificial** (1 John 3:16).

(1 John 3:16) “Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

- **God's love is saving** (Ezekiel 37:27).

(Ezekiel 37:27) “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

- **God's love is steadfast** (John 13:1).

(John 13:1) “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

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- **God's love is for sinners** (John 3:14-18).

(John 3:14-18) “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. (18) He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Application: I will finish my message as I began it, by reading John 17:23-24 together.

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved

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them, as thou hast loved me. 24 ¶ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

(John 17:23-24)

What an amazing, stupendous revelation of God's love for us! Men tell me that such teaching as this promotes licentiousness and antinomianism, that it discourages godliness and good works; but that is absurd.

When I think of the things we have been meditating upon in this message, that God loved me when I hated him, that He loved me before the world began, that He loves me as He loves my Savior, that His love for me will never cease, never change, and never vary, these thoughts compel me to love Him, and lay me under the greatest obligations possible to reverence Him, worship Him, devote myself to His glory and His will, and serve His interests while I live

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in this world (1 John 4:19; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Titus 3:5-8)

(1 John 4:19) “We love him, because He first loved us.”

(2 Corinthians 5:14) “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

(Titus 3:5-8) “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (8) *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

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Amen.