

# The Permanence of Love – Part 1

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*1 Corinthians*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 13:8

**Preached on:** Sunday, June 13, 2010

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1 Corinthians 13 is where we are this morning. If you would look there please. 1 Corinthians 13. And we read beginning with the first verse down to verse 8.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."

Let's pray together.

*Father in heaven, we do ask now, Lord, Your blessing upon this time of preaching. Lord, be at work for the glory of Your name and for the good of Your people. Lord, by Your Spirit, move in our midst and work in a powerful way, even as Your Word is at work in its power. Change us, Lord. Grow us. Mature us. Correct us. Encourage us. Do that work in us this day that You know that we are in need of. We will thank You for what You accomplish. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

When Paul began this section, and he meant to teach us about the priority of love, he started by telling us about the essential nature of love. That without love everything else is defective. Without love everything that we would call a work of the Spirit would not be indeed a work of the Spirit. That is you could be eloquent, even possessing the eloquence of angels, but if love is not present, you're just making noise. You can have knowledge. You can understand all mysteries. You can have the kind of faith that could remove mountains. Again, he is telling us this theoretically. He is making a point through

exaggeration. But you could possess all of that, but if love isn't present, you're nothing. And you could engage in deeds of great self-sacrifice, even to the point of giving up your body to destruction, but if love is not present you gain nothing.

Love is most important, because love is most necessary. Without love everything else is empty, meaningless, defective. When you come to the end of this list, verse 7 moving into verse 8 and following, he emphasizes the priority of love in a different way. Not only is love the priority because it is most essential. Love is the priority because it is most enduring. It must be first. It must be most important to us, because it is most abiding. It is everlasting. Out of all the graces and all the gifts that are imparted to us by the Holy Spirit for life in this age, right? You think about the graces that we know by virtue of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in our lives, you think about the gifts that have been imparted, of all that has been communicated to us by God's Spirit for life in this age, living life to the glory to God, the one that is most necessary to all the others and the one that will abide longer than all the others is this grace of love.

"Love," verse 8, "never ends. As for prophecies," and that particular gift is very important, but "as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues," it had its place and its purpose, but "they will cease; and as for knowledge," which is most important of course, but it too "will pass away," the gift of knowledge. "We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." And when those gifts have passed away, what will still be present, still be experienced, still be expressed in the church is love.

In fact, there is a real easy to remember principle that emerges out of this that would help us in all of our Christian life and that is, if you want to focus on what is most important in your life, then focus on what is most abiding. In our life, in so many different areas, there are things calling for our attention, calling for our effort, calling for our energies. The question is what should you make most important in your life. What should you make the priority in your life? And you should ask this question, "Well, how long will this last? This thing that calls for my attention, this thing that calls for my efforts and my energies, at the end of the day, how important is this really? What about this is really abiding? What about this will last forever?" And if you want to focus your life on what is most important, then focus your life on what is most abiding. Why is love the priority for the believer? Because it is necessary to everything else, but also because it will exhaust everything else. It will keep on keeping on. It will be present in experience and in expression when all the rest has gone away. I wonder this morning how many of our priorities fail the abiding test. How many things are we making important in our life that really don't matter, because they really won't last.

This morning and this evening we are focusing on the permanence of love and he begins in verse 8 by simply stating it. The permanence of love stated. He says in verse 8, "Love never ends." Or as I believe the New American Standard has it, "Love never fails." Is that right? Isn't that how it reads? Love never fails. The word there is *pipti*, a form of the word *pipto*, and the word literally means to fall. If a wall falls that would be the word *pipto*. When Paul preached long into the night and that young man fell out of the window and

fell to the ground, do you remember that, the book of Acts? When it says that he fell, it's the word that's used here. The word means to fall. And it came to refer to that which would fall into decay or would collapse. And so it came to refer to something that would come to an end, something that would fall into decay, fall into ruin, fall in the sense of collapse, and so come to an end. For example, it is the word used in Luke 16:17 when it says, "but it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to," *pipto*, "to fail," to fall. The Word of God will not fall. The Word of God will not become useless. The Word of God will not come to an end, not one stroke of it, not one letter of it.

Now what does this mean when he says love never ends or love never fails? Well, first we need to always be clear by contrast concerning what it doesn't mean. Sometimes, people have read that "Love never fails," and they misunderstand the meaning of it. They read it to mean this, "Love never fails in the sense that it will never be defeated. Love always wins out." Or we could say, "Love always achieves its desires." And so someone says, "You know, if I just love, I'm going to win out in the end. If I just love in this situation, at the end of the day I'm going to be the winner. Love never fails." Well, there's a sense in which from the ultimate point of view that's true. You honor and obey the Lord, and you're never the loser for obeying God. So you walk in the love of God in every situation, and there is a sense in which you do not fail. But beloved, we need to be clear: that doesn't always mean you win out in this age. You can genuinely love with the love of God and not be treated right. You can genuinely love with the love of God and from a temporal point of view it looks like you were the loser. I think sometimes people read this verse, and they think it means, "Well, I'm going to win out in this age in every situation if I'll just walk in the love of God." That's not what it means. Or they think this, "You know what, if I just love this person, the result of my loving them will be what I desire. I desire for this person to be saved, and if I just love them with the love of Jesus Christ, surely, certainly, one day they will be converted." Or, "It breaks my heart to see this person captured in this area of sin, and if I just love them with the love of God, and share the truth of God, and the love of Christ certainly one day they will be rescued from this area of sin and be delivered. I mean after all, love never fails." So that's how they think about the verse. Well, everyone who has been a believer for very long, we all know that you can love someone with a genuine love, you can love someone with the love of God, and sadly it would be true to say that what you desired for that person never came to pass. You're going to love people genuinely, and you desire their conversion. Some of those people will perish without Christ. You're going to love people with the love of Christ and desire to see them delivered from certain sins, and sadly there are going to be some people who will die in their sins.

You see Jesus, our Lord, standing over the city of Jerusalem, and He's weeping and saying, "How often would I have gathered You to myself, but You would not." You hear Paul in Romans 9 talking about his kinsmen according to the flesh. He swears an oath so that we will know that he is sincere. He could literally wish himself accursed if it meant their conversion, the conversion of his kinsmen, but sadly many of his kinsmen are going to perish without Jesus. Love's desires are not always fulfilled. That's not what the verse

means. It doesn't mean that love never fails in the sense of always winning out or always having what it desires.

What does it mean then? It means that love is everlasting. It means that love is indestructible. God's love is indestructible. It is durable. It's never ending. Just as I said earlier, just as the priority of love is seen in the fact that it's necessary, the priority of love is seen in that it never ends. That's what it means. The ESV has it right. "Love never ends." It never ends in this age. Let's begin by thinking about this age, this time that we are living in right now. The love of God will always endure in this age. It cannot be snuffed out. It cannot be done away with. At the end of the church age, God's love will still be present in His church, experienced in His church, expressed through His church. In fact, it's not a coincidence that this particular quality, found in the first part of verse 8, follows the last quality mentioned in verse 7 when it says, "Love endures all things." And we saw last time that means love perseveres, holds on. It's stubborn. It keeps on loving. Well how long will God's love keep on operating? Until the end of the age. It will never be defeated in that sense.

In 2 Timothy 2 you see an example of this in Paul. He's a great model for us of what the love of God is incarnated, what the love of God is lived out. And in 2 Timothy 2:8-10 he writes this, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended of David, according to my Gospel, for which," this Gospel, "I suffer hardship, even to imprisonment as a criminal." He says, "They've locked me up." Next statement, "But the Word of God is not imprisoned! You can lock me up," Paul says, "but you can't lock up the Gospel." And then he says, "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen. I realize that," Paul writes, "that God has an elect people, and He's gathering them out of all nations through the preaching of the Gospel, and I am willing to suffer all things including imprisonment." Indeed, before Paul's life is done, "Even to the point of martyrdom I'm willing to endure all these things for the sake of the elect of God, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. I endure it all so that they may be saved and attain through salvation the glory of God."

Where did that attitude come from? What does that attitude express? Well, that is love for God, and that is love for souls. And you can beat him up, and you can fasten him in the stocks, and you can lock this man up, but he will not stop loving God. He will not stop loving souls. He will not stop preaching the Gospel. You cannot conquer the love of God which is present in the Apostle Paul. And that's true not just of him. That's true of all genuinely saved people. The love of God is present in His people, and the love of God is expressed through His people, and it will be to the end of the age. Wherever the Gospel has come under attack, it has advanced. Wherever the church has been persecuted, it has propagated itself. It has been grown. It has been multiplied. Why is that? Because the love of God is unconquerable.

This is because love is personal. The Lord personally sustains His love in His people. If we think about the love of God present in the church, whose love is it? It's the love of God. We could say it this way, it's the love of Christ. And Christ is present in His people, and He is personally sustaining His love in you. He is forming His character in you, and

what do you know about the love of Jesus? It never ends. In John 13:1 it says, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father," listen to this, "having loved His own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." Jesus loved His people to the very end. Christ is now present in His people in the person of the Holy Spirit, and the same love of Jesus, the love that endured to the end, is the love that is present in the church, and it will endure to the end.

Love does not fail. Love does not fall into ruin, into disuse, into collapse. It continues on through the end of the age. That's such an encouraging thought to me as I think about what's going on, not only here, but around the world in terms of the preaching of the Gospel, in terms of the evangelism of the lost, in terms of a fidelity to the truth. As I think about all the things in this world that war against that kind of love, that war against love for God, and war against love for souls, and wars against love for truth, what a comfort it is to know that God is personally sustaining. Christ is personally sustaining His love in His people, and it is unable to be conquered.

But this text where it says in verse 8, "Love never ends," is not just pointing to the end of the age, though it is comforting to know that this love will be present to the end of the age. It is not just pointing to the end of the age. It is pointing beyond the end of the age for the rest of the ages, that is for eternity love never ends. How do you know that? Well, he says, "Prophecies will pass away; tongues will cease; knowledge will pass away. We know in part; we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." He's pointing us to a time when all these partial things will end, and he's telling us that love will go on beyond that time.

What is the perfect? We're going to deal with that in detail later on, but, I can tell you in short, I believe it's the heavenly state. I believe it's the eternal state. And when all these gifts that are meant for this age have come to an end, because we've entered into the next age, the eternal age, then love will still continue. Jonathan Edwards, that great American theologian who wrote so many years ago, he said of the doctrine of this text, listen to how he defined the doctrine found in this text, he says, here it is, the doctrine is this, that "that great fruit of the Spirit in which the Holy Ghost shall, not only for a season, but everlastingly be communicated to the church for eternity by the Holy Spirit is the fruit of divine love." That great fruit of the spirit which will be communicated to the church for eternity by the Holy Spirit is the fruit of divine love.

When we think about all that's communicated to us by the Spirit, when we think about the end of the age, and we think about the eternal state, what of that which is communicated to us by the Spirit is going to endure forever? It is that great fruit of love. So that if we want to focus on what is most important in the church, we focus on what's most abiding, that means we're going to put our focus on the love of God. Experiencing the love of God, walking in the love of God, expressing the love of God. So the permanence of love stated. Love never ends. But where I want us to spend the rest of our time this morning and then this evening is we need to explain that. How is it true that love never ends? Why is this so? How is this so? And we spend the rest of our time this morning with this thought: it is true in the Holy Spirit. It is true in the Holy Spirit. How did we, as God's

people, how did we come to experience the love of God? How did we come to be conscious of the love of God? And we experienced the love of God. How did it happen? The answer is we came into the experience of the love of God when we came into possession of the Holy Spirit. His presence in our lives was the beginning point, his influence, his activity in a saving way in our lives, was the beginning point of our experience with the love of God. Listen. Lost man does not know of the love of God experientially. He is loved by God in a general sense in a gracious way, but he is not conscious of the love of God in his lost state. He doesn't have a right understanding of it. He doesn't know what it is to experience it.

This began with the Holy Spirit's activity in our life. We know that the fruit of the Spirit is love, right? Galatians 5. The fruit of the Spirit is love. And then he goes on to talk about many different expressions of love. So, the fruit of his presence in us is love. This is what He produces in us. But love is not just the fruit of the Spirit. Love is also the gift of God to us from the Spirit. Romans 5:3 says this, "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." When He came, the love of God came. When He came, the love of God was poured out, as Romans 5 puts it. Poured out into our hearts. We knew now for the first time of what God's love really was toward us. We saw God's love toward us in Jesus Christ. So we became conscious of God's love for us, but also in that moment we became conscious of a new love for God's people, and a love for truth, and love for righteousness, a love for the Lord. He poured out this love in our souls by virtue of His presence.

How do we experience the love of God? The answer is the indwelling Holy Spirit. Now listen. How long has the Holy Spirit been given to believers? How long will He be with us? You see, the only way that love could end in the life of a believer is for the Holy Spirit to abandon us. If He is the beginning point of our experience with God, then the endurance of our experience of this love is for however long He is with us. So how long is the Holy Spirit present in the life of a believer? The answer is forever. Christ gave Him to be with us forever.

In fact, if you will look over to Acts 2 and look at verse 32, we are reminded that Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Spirit and with fire. He baptizes with the Spirit and with judgment. And notice what it says here in Acts 2:32, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He," Christ, "has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." When did the church receive the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit? The day of Pentecost is when this began. Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Spirit. He's the one who sent forth that which they were witnessing on this day, had to receive this promise from the Father. What kind of promise? This is a covenant. This is a conversion promise, a salvation promise. Christ would give His life for the salvation of His people, elect from all eternity, and the promise from the Father was this, that upon this people who were purchased by Christ's blood, the Spirit would be poured out. He would become the down payment, the security for all that had been

promised to this people. His presence would be the seal of God concerning the everlasting future of this people. Christ pours out the Spirit, and He becomes the permanent possession of all those purchased by Jesus' blood. So that the only way for the Spirit of God to abandon the people of God would be some kind of failure in the saving work of Christ. He is ours by covenant, a covenant found in God. And He is ours forever. He has come into our lives to be there forever. He poured out the love of God in our souls. How long will we know the love of God? As long as we have the Holy Spirit. How long will the Spirit be with us? Forever. This is why love everlasting. This is why love endures forever.

Which leads to another amazing thought, and that is what kind of love have we come into the experience of? And we say the love of God, and we get that, but it does us well to think beyond that, to meditate on that. What kind of love is this, the love of God? Why don't you look at John 14. John 14. And look at verse 15. Jesus says this, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father," let me just stop there and note this. You recognize that when Jesus talks about salvation he speaks to us in the realm of love, doesn't he? "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper," who's that? The Holy Spirit. "To be with you," how long? "Forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him." Does the world know of this love? No. does the world possess the Holy Spirit? No. This is how we've come to know the love of God, in the Holy Spirit, and He's with us forever. Next statement, "You know Him, for He dwells with you," that's present tense, "and will be," where? "In you." Will be. That's future tense. Why is it future tense? Because the day of Pentecost has not yet come when Jesus speaks these words. He is with you. He will be in you.

Read on. Verse 18. "I will not leave you as orphans." Wonderful statement here, "I will come to you." Do you understand the Holy Spirit represents the personal presence of Jesus in a believer's life? Whose presence is represented by the Holy Spirit's presence in you? Jesus. This is why the Bible could say, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ is present in our lives in the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says, "I will come to you. I won't leave you as orphans."

Verse 19. "Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Here's what I want you to think about: this love that we've been brought into the experience of, that now we have the capacity to express, is the love that's found in the Holy Spirit's presence in our life. But now listen: this love is the same love that the Son has known from the Father, and that the Father has known from the Son and the Spirit. In other words, we have been introduced into a love that truly is eternal. It's a love that has always existed in God. Before God created anything God was, God is. And in the Godhead there was always fellowship, relationship, and the fellowship known in God

was a fellowship of love. So that when we were introduced into salvation, we're going to see it in a moment, we were introduced into this fellowship with God and this fellowship is a fellowship of love. Why is love forever? Because the love that we've been introduced to is an everlasting love from eternity to eternity. It's the love of God, the love found in God, the love enjoyed in God, the love expressed in God from all eternity by virtue of the Holy Spirit's presence. This is the love that we've been given.

We must be very careful taking what is God's love, watering it down to something that is merely human, and then calling that watered down version the love of God. Why is this list that we've been walking through so important? Because it is teaching us that the love of God is of a quality, it's of a kind, that we do not know naturally, right? This is only known in salvation. This is only known by virtue of a miracle called the new birth. This is only possible because of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the ability that He gives. It's not like us in our sin. It's only like us in salvation, in Christ. It's everlasting because it's eternal. It's the love that's in God Himself.

Look at John 17. We'll finish with this this morning and then pick it back up this evening. John 17. And I tell you folks, if you haven't read it recently, you need to read this chapter and listen in as Jesus prays for you because He's praying for His disciples and praying for all those who will be won to faith through their witness. So He's praying for you two thousand years ago when He was here on the earth. And he says this in verse 13, "But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. Father, keep Your people. Keep My People, right in the midst of this wicked world. Keep them from the evil one."

Verse 16. "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth. As You sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." The Son of God sanctified Himself, set Himself apart, for a saving mission so that we would be sanctified.

Verse 20. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their Word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent me." Let me just add a quick thought here. You hear people read verse 21 where he says, "That they may all be one." You hear people read that as though it's a wish. "Oh now folks, let's all be one, because Jesus prayed for us to all be one." That's not what that verse means. Listen. The prayers of the Son of God are always answered. And when He prayed for His people to be one, guess what? They are. How are we one? We are one in the Spirit. We are one in salvation. We are one in our relationship to God. That prayer has been answered.

Verse 22. "The glory that You have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and You in me, that they may become perfectly one, so



that the world may know that You sent me," get this, "and loved them even as You loved me." What does it mean to be a child of God? It means you are loved by God the same way He loves His Son. It means you are loved by God with the same love that He has loved His Son with. How long has He loved the Son? Forever.

Verse 24. "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory." Aren't you grateful that all the prayers of the Son of God are answered? You know what that means? That means you are going to be in heaven. If you know Jesus, you're going to be with Him one day, and you're going to see His glory. That's exactly what He asked for. Notice, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that have given me because You loved me before the foundation of the world." How long has the Father loved the Son? How long has the Son loved the Father? How long has the Holy Spirit been in this perfect union of love? Forever. And this is the union that we have been brought into that we would be one, as they are one. That we would be one in salvation. One in our relationship to God.

Verse 25. "O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent me. I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them." Will love ever fail? Will love ever end? No. Why? Because we came into the experience of this love through the indwelling Holy Spirit. He poured out God's love in our hearts, and He will never leave us. He is a helper that's to be with us forever. And the quality of love that we've been brought into, the kind of love that we've been brought into is the very love of God Himself and how long has that love existed? From all eternity to all eternity. Love never ends.

Last verse. 1 John 1. I think I said last verse. Now, it's my second to last verse. 1 John 1:1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life." John says, "I'm going to give you eyewitness testimony concerning Jesus."

Verse 2. "The life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you," we're declaring the Gospel to you. Why? "So that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." What is salvation? It is entrance into fellowship with God.

Jesus defined it in John 17:3. If you want to look back there real quickly. Jesus defined eternal life in John 17:3. And listen to what He says there. John 17:3. "And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." What is eternal life? It's knowing God. It's being in the fellowship. Listen, in the language of 1 John, you are either in the fellowship, or you are outside the fellowship. You are either in Christ, or you don't know Jesus. If you know Jesus, you're in the fellowship. What kind of fellowship is it? It is a fellowship of everlasting love so that those who know Jesus

love God, and those who know Jesus love all those who love God. It is an everlasting love relationship with God and His people that we've been introduced into through salvation by virtue of the death of Christ on the cross for our sins, His resurrection life, and His gift to His people of the Holy Spirit who is in us and will be with us forever.

Now I ask you, do you know about this love? Have you been introduced into the everlasting love of God by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit? Do you have the Holy Spirit? If you've trusted in Christ in a genuine way, you have the Holy Spirit, but I stress that is if you've trusted in Christ in a genuine way. Listen: where there is real faith, there has been a new birth. Where there's a new birth, there's a new creation. And I warn you that we have countless people on the face of this earth sitting in churches this morning who talk about the love of God, but they are strangers to the love of God. They talk about the new birth, but they are strangers to the new birth. They talk about salvation. They have a doctrinal statement that they can recite, but experientially they do not know what that doctrine speaks of because for all that they know and for all that they say, they have yet to experience salvation. Where there is genuine salvation, there is fellowship with God. Where there is fellowship with God, the love of God has been poured out on the heart. And where the love of God has been poured out in the heart, there is a desire for God and a union with God's people that is unbreakable, unable to be defeated. It will last forever.

Is that what you have? Is that what you have known?

Let's bow together for prayer.

*Our Father in heaven, we thank You for this unimaginable love that would give Your only begotten Son to come from heaven to earth and to die on a cross for our sins, so that all our sins could be forgiven justly and the way could be cleared for us to be reconciled to You and to actually enter into fellowship with our Creator. Lord, You loved us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I thank You that Your Son did not die for good people, because, Lord, we confess in accordance with Your Word this morning that there aren't any good people. I thank You that Your Son died for sinners, and that if today we know ourselves to be sinners, and if we long for the forgiveness that is found only through the blood of Your Son, His payment for our sins, if we long for forgiveness and a right relationship with You that Jesus, Lord, has done enough to save us. That in fact, if we know ourselves to be a sinner and we desire the life that is in Him, we can know that Jesus died even for us.*

*And I pray, Lord, for anyone in this place this morning that has yet to be reconciled to You. May they even now, Lord, be humbled and overcome by the knowledge of Your love for them, a sinner, and Your willingness to forgive their sins and to make them Your very child. And I pray that even now, Lord, that their heart would cry out to Your Son for life, and cry out to Your Son for forgiveness, and know the love of God that is found in Jesus.*

*I pray for us, Lord, as those who profess to be Your people and confess the name of Jesus. Lord, let us examine our lives in terms of our priorities. Let us examine, Lord, in*

*terms of what we're really giving ourselves to. How abiding are those things that we are giving ourselves to the most? Let us make it our first and our chief commitment to love You and to love each other, because, Lord, in that love is that which will last forever. Lord, help us to make what is Your priority our priority. Lord, bless this Word to our hearts. Let us think about it throughout the day and strive, Lord, to live our lives in the light of it. And we ask You this in Jesus' name, Amen.*