

God's Covenant Love

Isaiah 43:1-7

Pastor Carl Hargrove, April 23, 2023

Well, good morning, everyone. As many of you know, we've had a full weekend. This weekend, we've enjoyed our Principles of a Healthy Church conference with Pastor Carl Hargrove from Los Angeles, California. On Friday night at 6:30, we had our first session and Carl walked through 1 Thessalonians 5:13, through actually through most of the passage there, you were very ambitious that first night, the whole thing. But let me just read some of it to you so you can get a flavor of what we learned. But it says,

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who labor among you... that you esteem them highly... live in peace with one another. We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with everyone.

And we walked through some principles of what that means for the church. That was the Friday evening session. Saturday morning, we applied that even some more. or Carl did for us. We did a Q&A with him as well. I heard some great feedback from that you really enjoy that. But we've asked him to come and bring the Word of God to us this morning.

Carl is the director of Grace Advance, which is actually the ministry that helped plant our church. In fact, he was the first person from the ministry down there to visit Chilliwack. And they went through a process of looking at the ministry, they thought it would be a good opportunity to plant the church here; they did that throughout the years. They also helped us bring on our first elders; I did an ordination process with the there. So did Kevin and Quentin, did an ordination as well, with their assistance. They brought on, helped us bring on the first deacons anyway, all to say they were very instrumental in those early days of our church. And we've wanted to have him come back with COVID, the border has been closed, we were trying to think of a way to sneak him across on 0 Ave, you know, but he's a big guy, he didn't fit in the back, you know, can't hide Carl when he crosses the border. But we're pleased to have him here. Let me have a word of prayer, and then we will ask him to come up and bring the Word of God, message from the Word of God for us.

Heavenly Father, we have had a wonderful weekend together as a church family. It's always a blessing to come together as the Body of Christ and just enjoy time together and fellowship and hearing Your Word preached. But it's really special when we actually talk about the church. We were all those who were born again, and have been saved by the power of the Spirit and the work of Christ on the cross dying for our sins, we were placed into the Body of Christ together. And I know that so many here have been blessed by the ministry of Grace Fellowship; it's been an encouragement to them. So it was wonderful to set this time aside just to talk about what it means to be unified in the local church.

Lord, thank You for the church, not just here in Canada, but worldwide: the fact that You are building it, that Your son came to die for it, and Your Spirit is continually moving in the hearts of people to unite them closer together. And we just pray that our church would honour and glorify You. We do pray for the other churches in the Fraser Valley that are preaching the gospel, teaching the Scriptures, that You would build them up as well. But in all these things, Father, our goal is, as Carl talked about the first night is to do these things for Your glory. Your name has to be exalted, Your Son is to be placed high on the throne, as we just sang about. He is worthy, and we want to show that in the life of our church. Would you speak through your servant, Carl this morning? We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Okay. Excellent. Hello, everyone. How are you? This wonderful morning here in beautiful Chilliwack. It's no, I mean that sincerely. I mean that sincerely. I really do. I had a wonderful walk this morning. As is my tradition, whenever I'm teaching somewhere, regardless of where I am; so I go for a walk and reflect on what I'm going to teach on, semi broadcast it, if you will. So it is a bit drizzly morning, but I love seeing the cloud covering, even on the mountains; and it was wonderful to see. And as I anticipated coming to you to bring the Word of God to you. And I want us to do that, so why don't you turn with me to Isaiah 43. Isaiah 43. Isaiah 43. And the focus is really, we'll spend most of our time in one verse but we need to understand several verses before we get there. And so we can say it's really verses one through seven, one through seven with the focus on verse four, the first part of it. Let me read this text to you. And it says,

But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob,
 And He who formed you, O Israel,
 "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name; you are Mine!
 "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 And through the rivers, they will not overflow you.
 When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched,
 Nor will the flame burn you.
 "For I am the Lord your God,
 The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour;
 I have given Egypt as your ransom,
 Cush and Seba in your place.
 "Since you are precious in My sight,
 Since you are honoured and I love you,
 I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life.
 "Do not fear, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 And gather you from the west.
 "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
 And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'

Bring My sons from afar
 And My daughters from the ends of the earth,
 Everyone who is called by My name,
 And whom I have created for My glory,
 Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”

A wonderful text, it really is. And you see in the bulletin, the message is entitled “God's Covenant Love,” but we might retitle it this, “Do Not Fear. Yahweh Loves You.” Do not fear; Yahweh loves you. It's a beautiful text because even in the structure of the text, something that you cannot see, but if you were to look at in the language itself, you would see it unfold this way. You would notice that God is stating that He's the Creator in verse one, because notice what He says. “I am Yahweh, your Creator.” But then you see Him going back to that thought in verse seven because He says, “I'm also the one who formed you.” And then what you would notice is that Yahweh is the one who offers shelter. We see that in verse two. Because even as you go through the waters, and the rivers, and the fire, and the flames, “I'm going to be with you,” He communicates. And you see that thought again in verse five, because “I'm the one that's going to gather you,” He says at the end. “I'm going to say to the north, ‘Come.’ To the south, ‘Come.’ I am ultimately your shelter is what He communicates. And then you would notice this thought about God saving. In verse three, the first part of it, Yahweh is the one who saves. In verse three A it says, “For I am the Yahweh your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.” But if you let your eyes glance at verse five, He says, “Do not fear, for I'm with you; I will bring your offspring from the east.”

So He's the creator, but you see the thought at the beginning of the passage, and at the end. And then He says, “I'm the one who showed you.” So you take another step, “I'm going to shelter you,” and you see it towards the end again. And then He says, “I'm the one that's going to save you,” He said in verse three. Then you go back to verse five, and then notice something else that you will see. Yahweh is the One who ransoms you. Notice the second part of verse three, in verse three He says, “I've given Egypt as your ransom, Cush [or Ethiopia] and Seba in your place.” Then if you look at the latter part of verse four, He says, “I will give other men in your place and other people's in exchange for your life.”

So what you have here in the language is called a chiasm. And this chiasm is a structure when you have a thought that is one thought here and it's repeated. Then you move a little bit and it's another thought here and it's repeated. And another thought here and it's repeated, and it's moving towards a centre. So what's the centre? Well notice our texts, verse four, the first part of verse four, “Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honoured and I love you.” That's the centre of verses one through seven.

So the movements have been, “I created you.” He makes the statement twice, in one sentence. “I sheltered you,” He's moving in this direction. Then He says, “I've saved you,” He keeps moving. Then He says, “I ransom you.” And everything is now pointing to some centre, and you come right to verse four, the first part of it. And the statement is that Yahweh loves you. So Yahweh created you, he says,

Yahweh shelters you, Yahweh saves you, Yahweh ransoms you, and in the centre of it all, Yahweh loves you. That's a wonderful consideration, isn't it? So you think about these qualities of God, and these qualities of God that He's communicating to his people, they will overshadow any fear. And they absolutely guarantee that God's redemptive plan will come about. Because what do we notice even in this passage, as well? The idea, He says in verse one, "Do not fear." Then He says in verse five, "Do not fear." And we're going to notice some other texts as well, where He's repeating to the people of God, "Don't fear." So on what basis would they not fear? He says on this basis you should not fear, "I created you, I shelter you, I save you, I ransom you," and at the centre of it all, He's saying, "I love you." So why should you fear if I love you? There's no reason for you to fear. And we're going to focus on that fifth quality of God, although we'll look at the others as we walk through the text.

And I hope that your hearts really should be warmed because you should realize that the very God, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ, the very God of the universe has a loving covenant relationship with you. And so regardless of what life may bring to one, they should not fear because God is saying that I love you.

And what I want to do as well, when we begin to unfold this idea of God's statement of His love is that we're going to, you know, briefly look at some other biblical examples of it through Scripture; and see how God's love is demonstrated even in other books. And then what I want to do is look at what we'll call it, the theological implications of God's love, that is think about a theological idea. And how does that show God's love? Say, for instance, when we think about God's wrath, how does that show God's love? When we think about Christ dying for us and His substitution, how does that show God's love? Even when we think about God's revelation to us, how does that show God's love?

And so it is my prayer when you hear God's word, even with me this morning, as it's proclaimed, that you can in your own heart, say, "Oh, wow, God loves me." If you're a part of His covenant people, I hope that your heart will be encouraged today; and you can walk away saying, "The living God loves me." I've said that so many times. Why is it important? Because that's the centre of the text. It was purposeful. Everything is going to this point, you might think about it as being the point of an arrow, if you will, here are the other portions of the arrow, but it's moving in a direction and the writer, Isaiah under this inspiration of the Spirit wants us to understand that God has this affectionate, loving relationship with us.

Why is it really important? You say, "Well, I've heard of God's love before. Many of us probably memorized verses about God's love before. Many of us probably memorize John 3:16 before we even knew the Lord, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." But yet, what you should give thought to is this. This is a self-declaration of God's love. Because there are many of the Scriptures you will see yes, indeed, God does love and we know that. But it would be a declaration of someone else's saying that He loves. It's the writer that say that He loves, even in John 3:16. It's a statement by the pen of John, "For God so loved the world that." Or you see Scriptures that tell us what?

God is love. Or Scriptures that tell us even as the psalmist, "Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good for His loving kindness is everlasting." But here it is God saying that "I love you." And it's terribly unique. Because if you think about it, where is the statement what God says "I love you"? And here it is. And what makes this so pronounced in Isaiah is this because for one to say, "Well, I love You," one may think "Well, okay, what basis do you love me?" A person may say, "I love you because you are loyal to me. I love you because we have a wonderful relationship. I love you because of many things that we have in common. I love you because you support me in different ways." But here, this statement that God loves the people of God, that God loves Judah is more pronounced, because Judah is not loving God in return. Judah is not being faithful. It is just the opposite. Judah has committed covenant treachery. Judah is in exile right now for their sin against God. Judah is in Babylon when they will be reading this record; and they're in Babylon, because for years and years and years, they have sinned against God. And not only have they sinned against God, but they sinned against God in a certain context. And what is that context? You may remember. The northern tribes had already been taken away by the Assyrians, but then God delivered them, and they are released. And now Judah, you would think that they would have learned from the northern brothers and their sinfulness, but they did not. And they sinned against the Lord and God has patience, and He shows patience and more patience. And eventually He says, "No, you will go off to Babylon." And this is what happens. And God makes a statement here that "I love you." You love a people who've committed covenant treachery? You love people who have sinned against You, despite seeing the example of their northern brothers? You call a people precious, and You call a people honoured? What sort of love is this? This is a great love. And it's a love that we should meditate on and think about. And it's the love that should increase our view of God and who He is. And it's a love that should inspire us to live the Christian life. It's the love that should cause us to say, "Let me discard the things of the world. And let me strive for Christ all the more." That God would show such an affection. They had rejected the prophets. They had rejected the message. They had rejected the moral law. Therefore they had rejected Yahweh, but Yahweh still says that "I love you."

So let's work our way to the point of this arrow, if you will, by first considering these other statements of really, it's a manifestation of God's love. Number one is we can say "Do not fear Yahweh created you." Do not fear Yahweh created you. Go back with me to Isaiah 41, and we'll see this idea of this call to not fear. Notice Isaiah 41:10, He says there, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about, for I am your God, I will strengthen you, surely I will help you surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Notice verse 13, He says it again. "For I am Yahweh your God, who upholds your right hand, who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.'" Notice verse 14, "'Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,' declares Yahweh, 'Your Redeemer, who is the Holy One of Israel.'" And of course we see in chapter 43:5, we've already noted, "do not fear." 43:1, "do not fear." Look at chapter 44. Chapter 44, what does it say here? "But listen, O Jacob, My servant, and Israel whom I've chosen; Thus says Yahweh who made you and formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant.'" Notice verse eight. Again, He makes this statement about not fearing. Verse eight, "Do not tremble and do not be afraid; I have I not long since announced it to you

and declared it? And you are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? Is there any other Rock? I know of none.”

And why is that important? Because notice throughout all these examples where He's telling the people of God not to fear, “I will be with you. I will help you. You are my witnesses.” And you say to yourself, “They're Your witnesses? They're in exile because they've sinned against You. How can You say they're your witnesses when they have been a people that have been scandalous for generation after generation? Because God is a faithful God, and He will return His people again. And they will be a witness again. And we should understand this, God is also saying this, “By Me sending you to exile, and then by Me returning you again, despite the fact that you are undeserving of it, that is a witness to the world that I am a unique God because no other God operates in that way.” All the other gods of the land, the people would have to do all sorts of things to appease their God. And Yahweh is saying, “I am distinct and different and unique.” And how is Yahweh distinct, different and unique by this way? “I save people who are undeserving,” and can't we all say amen for that? Where would we be? I mean, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ, even this morning, where would you be if your salvation was based on you, deserving at or earning it? None of us. Because all we like sheep have done what? Gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. So He says, “I have created you. Don't fear.”

Go back to Isaiah 43, and the statements are made here. He says, “But now, thus says Yahweh, your Creator,” in the language of creation is also in verse one. Because He also says, “I've also formed you. I'm your Redeemer. I've called you.” So we see this language of creation used to say, “I'm intimately involved with you, and I've been intimately involved with you from the very beginning.” And the mind then goes back to Genesis because God did what? God is a creating God. So He creates the entire universe, and now He's saying, that same creating God, “I have created a people for My purposes. Live out your purpose,” is what He is communicating.

And notice as well if you look at verse seven, remember, a thought that's working towards this arrow, and that thought is repeated in verse seven. Notice verse seven, where He says there, “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made.” So He begins to start, “I have created you. I have created you.” But notice, they were created, and I would say then we are created, and all creation being made for one purpose, and one purpose only; and it is to give praise and honour and glory to God. That is the purpose of our life: to live for the glory of God. And it's clearly stated here because it statements “Whom I have formed for My glory.” My glory. “Live from My glory,” and the people of God did not live for the glory of God, and this is why they're in Babylon. They lived for their own glory and for their own satisfaction.

We don't have time to consider it. but this idea of God's self-declaration for His glory, if you might consider Isaiah 43. Well, let's briefly look at it. Look at Isaiah 43:11-13. He says,

I, even I, am Yahweh,

And there is no savior besides Me.
 It is I who have declared and saved and caused it to be heard,
 And there was no strange god among you;
 So you are My witnesses," declares Yahweh,
 "And I am God.
 Even from eternity I am He,
 And there is none who can deliver out of My hand;
 I act and who can reverse it?"

Why? Because God does all things for the glory of His name. And we have the privilege to be a people who can live for His glory. God has saved us for one purpose; a singular purpose is to bring Him glory and honour. What a privilege that is.

Here's the second point of movement towards the point in the arrow: Do not fear because Yahweh shelters you. Notice verse two of 43, Yahweh shelters you. The language here is very picturesque in one sense. He says, "When you pass through the waters, I am with you; the rivers will not overflow you. You go through the fire, you will not be scorched. Nor will the flame burn you," He says. Because He is our ultimate shelter.

And when he says here fire and water. It's a language that it's called a mirrorism. And what does that mean? It means that it captures everything that could possibly happen in their journey and what is it communicating? This is why it says fire and water because when you think fire and water, you think, "Wait a minute, those two are absolute opposites." Because we use water to do what? To quench a fire, if you will. So what He's doing with this language to say, "Whatever you face in life, from fire to water, I will be with you." One might say, whatever you face in life, between heaven and earth, I will be with you. Wherever you face in life, from land to sea, I will be with you. And the language is very intimate. When He says repeatedly, "I'm with you. I am with you," And the people of God may have thought, "Wait, hold on, how can You possibly be with us when we're in exile? How can You possibly be with us, when You have sent us away? We're under the power of the great Babylonians." But God is saying, "I control the great Babylonians; they are serving my purposes." And in God's right time, God will raise up a leader, Cyrus; and Cyrus will come and destroy the Babylonians. And Cyrus will allow the people of God to go back. And Cyrus will even fund the rebuilding of the temple. Because God is the creating God and sovereign over all things. I am with you. It guarantees your survival, it guarantees My word coming true.

Go with me to the psalmist. Notice, if you will, for a moment, the words of the Psalmist. Psalm 66, Psalm 66. Psalm 66, in verse 12, notice what it says there. It says, "You made men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water, yet You brought us out in a place of abundance." So the recognition that the people God are saying, You cause these men to punish us for a period of time. But yet, when Your sovereign plan was finished, we came out and we flourished as a result of it.

The thought perhaps we can look at First Peter, look with me, First Peter chapter one. In First Peter chapter one. Notice what Peter says there, in verses six and seven. In verse five, he says,

who are protected by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

And notice verse six,

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And here, it's just a New Testament sort of look at this idea that God will take us through difficulty and trials, and the language of fire is used, because fire can be used to purify. But in the end, He says, "I'm with you, in the midst of your difficulty." The same thing would be true in Romans 8:31-39, that Paul is communicating to the people of God. Some of you are going to be killed and going to be martyred; but yet, in the end, God is in fact, with us. So He's the one who shelters us.

Here's this third quality for us to consider. Don't fear because Yahweh saves you. Go back to Isaiah 43. He saves you. So He created you, He shelters you, and thirdly, He saved you. Verse three, "For I am Yahweh, your God." And just that small word, is a transition from the thoughts in one and two. Here is the guarantee; here's the assurance that the people of God will not be destroyed. Here's the guarantee that they will return from exile. "For I am the Lord your God. And if I am Yahweh, your God, nothing can harm you." So He makes the statement, "I am your God." And notice what He also says in verse three, "I am your Saviour." So Judah is Yahweh's people, but Yahweh is Judah's God.

The thoughts that you see here, this idea of Yahweh, we will go to in Exodus three and in Exodus six, and it's the thoughts of the great I Am is the one who is going to care for His people. And of course, you remember Moses' interaction with God. And when Moses asked of God, "Well, who should I say, is sending. Who is going to deliver them?" And God made the declaration Himself, "Let them know that I Am." The self-existent God, I will be their Saviour, to be saved. And it implies an obvious need. There are people in the world today, many people, the majority of people don't know their need to be saved. And all of us, before the Lord opened our eyes, we didn't see our need to be saved. We thought that somehow, we could conjure up enough moral quality, that this might get the attention of a holy God. And of course it cannot. You have to come to a point of desperation; you realize that you cannot save yourself. And you have to realize that you have a need for a Saviour because your life has offended a holy God.

Some years ago, we were at a gathering with some homeschool families, and they were at the beach not far from where we where we live. And I couldn't be there for the entire time, but I took my lunch break, and I came down to visit with everyone. The kids were playing and having a blast, and the moms were there. And my youngest son, I have five children. The girls are the bookends, the boys in the middle. And the younger son of the three, he was out with his buddy, and they were swimming and many times we've gone out and we swam a lot. And he was going out and I was just watching them. And I was on the shore, and I had just come from the office. So I didn't have on a coat, but I have a business wear, my shoes on. And I'm watching them and I see them, and he's with his buddy, they grew up with one another and they would always be together. And I'm noticing and I'm thinking, "Hhmm, they're going further out. They're not that good a swimmer to be that far out." But I see motions. but I don't still see them moving in this direction. And I also see them moving this way, not necessarily straight up, but moving away, but in this direction. And I'm thinking "Oh," and in my mind, I'm thinking they could be caught in something. But I thought maybe not. But as I walked a little bit closer even to the water as I saw them moving further out, and I heard one word. I heard one word, and heard "Help!" And that's all it took. Now what do you think I did when I heard help? A dove in. My office clothes and all; I dove in. I began to swim and there was a lifeguard behind us. But when I heard "Help!" I didn't turn to the lifeguard and said, "Somebody said 'help!.'" Well, it was my son and his friend I knew they had said "Help!" I didn't turn to the lifeguard and say, "Can you help?" I dove in, and I began to swim. And I came to them and I grabbed them. And actually one of the other moms had already dove in as well. And I had both of them. And I grabbed my son, and I grabbed his buddy. And eventually the lifeguard got there. And the mom and the lifeguard grabbed the other boy and I had my son, and we got back to shore. And I'm drenched in and there he is but and I have a picture of it; it pops up and he was about so big then. I saved him. But he had to recognize what? "I need help." He had been attempting, he and his buddy, because they told me later, they had been attempting to get back to shore, but they couldn't. And the current was pulling him out and away from us. I think that somehow people are, they're attempting, if I just do good works, and if somehow I can be involved in church and if somehow I can live my life differently. If somehow I can reform my life, and you're just being pulled away by sin and you don't know it. And they had to come to grips, and they simply, I heard one word which was "Help!" And I dove in.

Later on, after everything settled down, and I talked to my son about it and he said this to me, and it really pricked my heart when I heard it. He said, "Dad," he said, "I was about to give up." And I thought, "Oh my," because he said he was tired. He says he was going to give up. And had they given up, hopefully, perhaps we still could have made it there. But I'm not sure. But what's sad is this, some people live life that way; and they will continue to fight against the tide, they will continue to fight, and their pride will not allow them to say you know, "help." And this is what has to happen for anyone to be saved. They have to cry, "help." But Yahweh is a saving God, amen? We're thankful for that. So He says, "I am your Saviour."

Here's this third consideration, notice this, "Do not fear because Yahweh ransoms you go." Go back to 43, notice verse three. The second part of it, it says, "I've given Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and

Seba in your place.” And then the latter part of verse four. “I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life.”

What does this mean? I think quickly, what He's communicating is that I'm going to redeem you as a people. And in part what I'm going to do, Cyrus is going to come, the Persian Empire is growing, but you need to understand and put something in historical context. When the people of God, when this is written, it is 150 years later before they would read this. One hundred and fifty years. And this is why some people don't accept the idea that there's just one author for Isaiah. They say, “How could Isaiah possibly would have even known about the Persians? How did Isaiah even know about Cyrus because there is no rising Persian Empire, there is no King Cyrus at this time that he writes it.” But it doesn't matter what Isaiah understood because notice the language throughout, and we won't go through it all, I would just ask you at some point in time to circle it, how many times you see “Thus says Yahweh. Thus says Yahweh, Thus says Yahweh.” God said it therefore it will be, and the people will have to trust that. So He is saying, “I'm going to allow Cyrus to come and in one sense, I will give him these other nations as he makes his way towards Babylon and conquering, so that you can be free because I love you.”

Here's a fourth consideration. Verse four. And I'm sorry, it really is our fifth consideration. Fifth one, so we have number one, He created you. We have number two, that He shelters you. Number three, He saved you. Number four, He ransomed you. And now number five, He loves you. He loves you.

Notice the first part of verse four, “So here's the reason that I would actually give these other nations for you.” Why would He give other nations for disobedient nation, a nation that's in exile. So He gives the rationale. The rationale is and verse four says, “You are precious in my sight, I'm willing to give up Egypt, and I'm willing to give up Ethiopia, and I'm willing to give up Seba. And I will allow Cyrus to be raised up, and Cyrus would destroy the Babylonians, and Cyrus will allow you to go back since you are precious in my sight. Since you are honoured and I love you.” But we really have to meditate on that precious because you think about something being precious, you think about its treasure, do you not? You think about a relationship, and you said, “Well, that's a precious relationship.” Or you may say to a person, “You're precious to me,” because of affection, because of commitment, because of loyalty. He makes the statement that they're precious and these people are full of rebellion. But this is how God is different.

In the tense that He uses, “you are precious, you have been precious, and you will remain precious.” And notice what He says in my sight in my sight. I'm fully aware of your situation; but I love you,” is what He communicates. “You are loved.”

“

Now we think about God's love throughout Scripture. Let's consider some other books in the Bible and how we can see God's love. I think you can see God's love in the book of beginnings, in Genesis. God and love, because there is love in that God would provide for Adam and Eve, although they sinned against Him, God provides. That's a demonstration of His love. We see God's love in the book of

Genesis, and He would establish a covenant with Abraham; that's a display of His love. It's a display of God's love in the sense that He says He knew Adam and Eve. That's God's love.

We see God's love in the book of Exodus, even. In the book of Exodus, Exodus 33 and 34, God reveals His glory to Moses. Moses wants to see the glory of God. and God makes a statement of self-declaration, that He is a God of loving kindness, which means He's a loyal God, a covenant keeping God, a God that is committed.

We see God's love in the book of Deuteronomy because in Deuteronomy, we see what God is going to show His love towards the people of God, and He's going to elect the people who are not a people to be impressed with. And in one sense, God says, "That's one reason that I elected you, so the nations when they look around, they would say, 'Why would God choose Israel? Why would you not choose a greater nation, a more formidable nation?'" Because God is a God of love that sometimes we can't even fully understand.

And this is why in the New Testament, it says that He chose those that are not many mighty, not many noble, because He did it to say to the world, "I don't operate in a in a pattern that you might think."

You see love in the Psalmist. And throughout, you see something a repeated theme, and the Psalmist, "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His loving kindness is everlasting." And if you were to go to Psalm 136, let's just go there briefly. Psalm 136. What you see repeated in every refrain is a statement of God's love, but it sort of takes you through the demonstrations of His love. "Oh, give thanks." Psalm 136. "For He is good for his loving kindness is everlasting." And you see that in every verse. But notice how His love is actually demonstrated. First, He is a God of gods; He is the Lord of lords. And then notice what He does. He does great wonders. Verse four, verse five, He made the heavens. Verse six, He spread out the earth. Verse seven, He made the great lights. He says, verse 10, now we enter into a part of redemption history here, verse 10, he smote the Egyptians. Verse 11, now here's the Exodus, He brought Israel out. It continues, verse 13, He divided the Red Sea. Verse 14, they went through it, even on dry ground. In verse 15, He overthrew Pharaoh. Verse 16, He led the people through the wilderness. And now we're in Canaan land, and God continues to show His love because of verse 17. What does He do? He smote the great kings. So the people of God come into the promised land, and what does God do whenever the people of God are obedient? He wipes out all of these pagan nations before them. God did it because of His love. Notice verse 21, then what else does He do? He gave the land as an inheritance. What else does He do for the people of God? Verse 23, He remembered us in our low estate. Verse 24, He rescued us from our adversaries. Notice verse 25, He gives food to all flesh because God is a God of love. And then it ends with "For His love is Everlasting." So you see it in the psalmist, as well.

You see it in Jeremiah, Jeremiah 31: 3, it says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

You see it in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 16 God looks at the people of God and He says to them, "There you were, and you were without a husband, you were without a name, and I took you on because of My love."

I mean, if you come to, say for instance, the New Testament you see it in the book of Luke. In Luke you might see God's love demonstrated on the cross. Remember that criminal on the cross? And He said to Jesus Christ, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." And what did Christ say to him? "Today you shall be with me in paradise." This is a display of love. There is no time for that criminal to reform his life. There's no time for that criminal to swim against the tide. There's no time for that criminal to be a better person. It's because His selective love says, "Today, you will be with Me in Paradise. Because I'm a God of love." God of love, He says.

You see it in Paul in the book of Romans. God in Romans 5, God demonstrated His love towards us while we were yet sinners, and while we're yet helpless, while we're yet enemies, He showed His love.

It's throughout Scripture that He is a God of love. We see that God is a God of love, because even in His foreknowledge, that is when God has selected us before we even existed, before there was a creation, God decided that He would love us. We see God's love, even in His mercy.

Look with me in Ephesians chapter two, Ephesians chapter two, Ephesians chapter two. And verse four, clearly communicated in 1-3, that we were all sinners, and we were dead, and we were under the prince of the power the air. But yet in verse four, "But God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loves us." So really, what is being communicated in 2:4 is that God demonstrates mercy. What is behind Him showing mercy? What's behind His mercy is His love. And it's clearly stated. So He is rich in mercy, but notice what He says, because of His great love. So because He has a great love, He would demonstrate mercy. And what is mercy? That God is saying to people who are undeserving, "I will show pity on you, and I will save you."

We see God's love even in His providence. And what do I mean by that? God is controlling all elements of our life, all the details of our life. God is an absolute control in His providence. That's a display of His love. His sovereign working of everything that occurs in our life, that's a display of His love.

I would even say this, God shows His love in that He chastens us. Chastisement, that's the thought of Hebrews chapter 12. He says, "Every son that He received, He chastens him. It is a display of His love. The proverb even tells us that, does it not? From a proverbial standpoint, for the parent who does not chasten their child, it says you actually hate your child. If you love your child, you would chasten them. And the perfect Father loves all of us, so at times, it is necessary that He chasten us. And we can learn from it, and the Scripture says, "Then we produce the fruitful peace of righteousness from that. Fruit comes from it, that's a display of His love. And we might even be able to say, "Lord, thank you for loving me enough to chasten me." Doesn't mean that it feels good at the time, but the result is.

I want us to go to the Gospel of John. I want us to end there because of all the books that I mentioned. You know, Jeremiah; we could talk about even love in the book of Hosea. We could talk about love in the book of Proverbs. We could talk about love in the book of Galatians, and in Peter and Revelation, we can mention many other things. But I want us to end with John because you see so often in John, love communicated, and it builds towards something. Let's kind of have our Bibles open here, we're going to end by looking at a number of texts.

Of course, beginning with John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." But then notice, if you will, verse 35 in John three, "For the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand." Go with me to John chapter five. John chapter five. What does it say in John 5:20, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He himself is doing." He loves the Son. Notice verse 42 of chapter five. "But I know you that you do not have the love of God in yourselves." Go with me to chapter 10. Chapter 10 in John, we see love pronounced even more, and it's building to a point, trust me. "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again." Look at chapter 11, Chapter 11:3, "So the sisters sent word to Him [that is to Christ], saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.'" Whom you love. It was evidence that Jesus Christ had a love for Lazarus. Notice verse five. "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." Notice verse 36 of chapter 11. "So the Jews were saying, 'See how He loved him.'" Now notice, again, these are declarations made by other people and remember in Isaiah, God Himself says, "I love you." But it's evident that He loves people. Look at chapter 13, 13:1, and it says, "Jesus knowing that His hour had come, that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own, who were in the world, He loved them to the end." You see this thought in verse 23 as well, "There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved." Verse 34, "For a new commandment I give you that you love one another, even as," what's the motivation for it? "Even as I have loved you, therefore, you should love one another." Look at chapter 14, it continues this theme of love throughout this book. Fourteen, verse 21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." Chapter 15, notice chapter 15:9, "Just as a Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; and abide in My love." And you see it in verse 10 and verse 12 and verse 13. But go over to chapter 16, another pronouncement of love. "For the Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me, and have believed that I've come from the Father." Chapter 17 again, the idea of God's love comes up again, notice verse 23, He says, "So that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." Verse 26, "So that the love which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But then notice chapter 19, chapter 19, chapter 19.

I said it was building to a point. Like in that chiasm, it's building towards the love. This is all building to a point. It just has some effect in going over those Scriptures and hearing them again and again and again. Because in chapter 19, is the crucifixion. Verse 16, "So then they handed Him over to be crucified;" 17, "bearing His own cross;" 18, "they crucified him;" 23, "The soldiers took His outer

garments and made four parts;" 24, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it;" 25, "therefore the soldiers did these things;" 26, Notice love. "When Jesus saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!'" In the midst of the greatest injustice that man can contrive is love. All of this love and He loved and He loved and He loved and He loved and He loved and He would give His life.

For us, will you love? No need to fear because God loves you. But there is a reason to fear God because He loves you. This great and awesome God. How will you live your life? Will you live your life like Jesus Christ did in demonstrating such unquenchable love? It's evident that He loves us. Do you agree with that? The question mark is behind each of our names and whether or not we will love Him in return. Judah, wretched nation in exile, but God still says, "I love you." Let that warm your hearts and even prepare it even more as we think about His death for us.

Father, you are good and kind. Thank You for your love that You show to us. Amen.