

GOD'S CONVINCING LOVE

A Sermon Companion for Personal Reflection

Point of Life Church | Pastor Anthony J. Shetley

God's Love Can Be Known

God's love is more than a religious belief or a biblical concept. **God's love is real.** It is a demonstrated love—a love that can be known, experienced, and trusted.

John writes:

1 John 4:16 — “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.”

Notice the progression: *we have come to know* and *we have believed*. John is not merely saying, “Someone told us that God loves us.” He is speaking from the confidence of someone who has become persuaded of God's love.

There is a difference between knowing *about* the love of God and becoming convinced of it.

As we walk with God, His love moves from something we have heard preached to something we have experienced personally. We encounter His grace. We discover His faithfulness. We walk through storms and find that He has not abandoned us. Over time, we learn to say with confidence: **I know the love God has for me, and I trust it.**

Read further: 1 John 3:1; 1 John 4:9–10; John 3:16–17; Ephesians 3:17–19

Pause and respond: Is God's love primarily something you believe because Scripture teaches it, or have you begun to recognize the ways His love has been demonstrated in your own life? Think back over your journey with God. Where have you seen His love most clearly?

We Know His Love Through the Experience of Grace

One of the greatest demonstrations of God's love is what He has done for us in Christ.

Paul reminded the Corinthians of what some of them had once been, but then declared:

“But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” — 1 Corinthians 6:11

The Christian testimony is not that we made ourselves worthy of God's love. It is that God loved us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8 tells us that God *demonstrated* His love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians takes us even further. We were dead in our transgressions, “**But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,**” made us alive together with Christ (Ephesians 2:4–5).

If you have experienced forgiveness, you have experienced the love of God.

If you have been washed, changed, and made alive in Christ, you have more than a theological argument that God loves you—you have a testimony.

Peter describes those who have come to Christ as people who have “**tasted the kindness of the Lord**” (1 Peter 2:2–3).

There are some things you know because someone taught them to you. There are other things you know because **you have tasted and experienced them for yourself.**

God's grace convinces us of God's love.

Read further: Titus 3:3–7; Psalm 34:8; Colossians 1:13–14; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; 1 Timothy 1:12–16

Pause and respond: Remember who you were, where God found you, and what His grace has done in your life. Have you allowed familiarity with salvation to diminish your wonder at being forgiven? Take time to thank God again for His mercy.

We Learn His Faithfulness in the Trial

Knowing God's love does not mean that life will be free from suffering.

Peter told believers not to be surprised by the “**fiery ordeal**” that came upon them for testing (1 Peter 4:12–13). Trials are not necessarily evidence that God has abandoned us.

Sometimes it is in the trial that we discover just how faithful He is.

There are truths about God that we learn in the sunshine, but there are depths of trust that are developed only when our faith has been tested.

Peter's instruction is remarkable: “**keep on rejoicing.**” The trial is real, but it is not the end of the story. There is a glory and a joy still ahead.

The Christian does not rejoice because suffering is pleasant. We rejoice because suffering cannot overturn the promises of God.

Read further: James 1:2–4; Romans 5:3–5; 2 Corinthians 4:7–18; 1 Peter 1:6–9; Isaiah 43:1–3

Pause and respond: What has a past trial taught you about God's faithfulness that you could not have learned any other way? If you are presently in a trial, ask yourself: *What do I know about God that remains true even when I do not understand what He is doing?*

Trusting His Love in the Storm

There are moments when God's love can seem distant.

The disciples experienced that feeling while caught in a violent storm. Jesus was asleep in the boat, and they awakened Him with the desperate question:

“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” — Mark 4:38

Their question was not merely about the storm. It was about whether Jesus cared.

We can ask the same question.

God, do You see this? Do You care? Why haven't You stopped it? Why haven't You answered?

Even Jesus, from the cross, took upon His lips the words of Psalm 22: **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

Psalm 22 begins in anguish, but it does not end there. In the middle of his distress, the psalmist declares, **“Yet You are holy.”**

That little word *yet* is the language of faith.

I hurt—**yet** I trust Him.

I do not understand—**yet** He is faithful.

I cannot see what He is doing—**yet** I know who He is.

Job expressed the same confidence: **“Though He slay me, I will hope in Him”** (Job 13:15).

Mature faith does not deny the storm. It learns to trust God's character in the middle of it.

Read further: Psalm 22; Psalm 42:5–11; Psalm 46:1–3; Mark 4:35–41; Habakkuk 3:17–19; 2 Corinthians 4:8–9

Pause and respond: Is there something happening in your life that has caused you to quietly wonder, *God, do You care?* Bring that question honestly before Him. Then remind yourself of what you already know about His character and faithfulness.

Become Convinced

Paul makes one of the strongest declarations of confidence in all of Scripture:

Romans 8:38–39 — “For I am convinced...”

Neither death nor life, things present nor things to come, height nor depth, nor any other created thing can separate God's people from **“the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Paul was **convinced**.

That is where God wants our faith to grow.

Not merely: *I hope God loves me.*

Not merely: *I've been told God loves me.*

But: **I have become convinced of His love.**

Trials may shake our emotions. Circumstances may confuse us. Prayers may seem unanswered. But none of those things have the authority to change the character of God or separate those who are in Christ from His love.

Read further: Romans 8:31–39; John 10:27–30; Hebrews 13:5–6; 2 Timothy 1:12; Jude 20–21

Pause and respond: Complete this sentence in your own words: “*I know I can trust the love of God because...*” Let your answer come from both Scripture and your own experience of His faithfulness.

Hold On—You Need Endurance

There are seasons when faith simply has to keep standing.

Hebrews 10:35–36 tells us:

“Do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance.”

Sometimes the greatest act of faith is refusing to let go of what you already know.

When circumstances tell you God has forgotten you, hold on.

When the answer has not come, hold on.

When you are weary from waiting, hold on.

When you cannot see what God is doing, **do not throw away your confidence.**

Stand in prayer. Ask God for strength. Remember what He has already brought you through. The God who was faithful yesterday has not changed today.

Read further: Hebrews 6:10–12; Hebrews 10:23; Hebrews 12:1–3; Galatians 6:9; James 5:7–11

Pause and respond: Where are you most tempted to lose confidence right now? Instead of asking only for the situation to change, ask God to give you the strength to remain faithful while you wait.

Weeping Is Not the End of the Story

Psalm 30 gives us words to carry through difficult seasons:

“Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.” — Psalm 30:5

Night is real.

Weeping is real.

But neither is permanent.

David eventually looked back and said, **“You have turned my mourning into dancing.”**

The God who sustained you through the night is also the God who can bring you into the morning.

Your present circumstances are not the final chapter.

Read further: Psalm 30; Psalm 126:5–6; Isaiah 61:1–3; John 16:20–22; Revelation 21:3–5

Pause and respond: If you are walking through a “night” season, what would it look like to trust God before the morning comes? If God has already brought you through such a season, remember it today and give Him thanks.

God Is Still Working

From creation onward, Scripture reveals a God who is working out His purposes.

Even when His work is beyond our sight, God has not abandoned His plan. History is moving somewhere. Redemption is moving somewhere. God's people are moving toward the fulfillment of His promises.

And Scripture points us toward a coming **rest**.

Hebrews 4:9 declares:

“So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.”

Whatever difficulties God's people experience now, this present life is not our final destination. Our hope reaches beyond today's struggle to the completed work and eternal kingdom of God.

Life is brief. James describes it as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away (James 4:14). Therefore, we must not allow temporary suffering to cause us to abandon eternal hope.

We are headed toward rest.

Until then, Hebrews tells us to **“hold fast our confession”** and to draw near confidently to the throne of grace, where we will **“receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”** (Hebrews 4:14–16).

God is working.

God is faithful.

His grace is sufficient for today.

And His promises reach beyond today into eternity.

Read further: Hebrews 3:12–14; Hebrews 4:1–16; John 14:1–3; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18; Revelation 21:1–7; Revelation 22:1–5

A Step for This Week

Take some time this week to build your own testimony of **God's convincing love**.

Think back over your walk with Him. Remember His forgiveness. Remember prayers He answered. Remember storms He carried you through. Remember moments when you wondered how you would make it—and yet God remained faithful.

Write down several of those moments.

Then, when present circumstances tempt you to question His love, go back to what you know.

You may not understand everything God is doing, but you can become increasingly convinced of **who He is**.

“We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.” — 1 John 4:16

A Prayer to Carry Forward

Father, thank You for loving me with a love that You have demonstrated through Jesus Christ. Thank You for Your grace, Your forgiveness, and every evidence of Your faithfulness in my life.

When I walk through trials I do not understand, help me not to judge Your love by my circumstances. Remind me of what I have come to know about You. Give me endurance when I am weary, faith when I cannot see, and confidence to keep trusting You.

Make me increasingly convinced that nothing can separate me from Your love in Christ Jesus. Help me hold fast until faith becomes sight, the night gives way to morning, and I enter the rest You have prepared for Your people.

In Jesus' name, Amen.