

The Fullness of His Love

Sunday Morning Class

A Bible Study Workbook by Matthew Allen



Why This Study?

Why study about the love of Christ? There are many reasons, but lasting and life-changing relationships are built around an emotional connection. Much of our focus on Christianity is more academic in its approach. We know facts, figures, and dates. We study to learn cultural backgrounds, life stories of the Biblical writers, and examine the languages they spoke and wrote. We even go to great lengths to summarize our theology in memorized bullet points. All these things are important and fill our heads with knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

But possessing all the facts and figures in a logical and methodical way will never produce the staying power of the rock-solid connection made through warmth and love. What propelled the apostles to endure the worst of human suffering, rejection, shame, loss of dignity, and loss? What motivated the early church fathers to go to their deaths dressed in sheep's clothing as wild animals devoured them? What is it that keeps Christians today, 2000 years after Jesus' death, enduring life's storms in faithful dependence and trust in the guidance and deliverance of the Savior?

It is our great emotional attachment to Jesus. We are moved by passages like Romans 5.6-8 and 1 John 4.9-10. We are reminded of our rescue from spiritual death in Ephesians 2.1-10. We are amazed at God's abundant and overflowing grace. We are moved by the personal gift of an inheritance, 1 Peter 1.4-5. We long to be delivered from this world, Romans 8.18-20. We can't even imagine what it will be like to be *with Him*, Revelation 21.3-5; 22.3-5. These are the motivations that get us through. And it all goes back to the loving attachment we have to *the love of Jesus Christ*.

Lesson 1

Accepting and Embracing Jesus' Love

Think On It

1. What does it mean to you to accept and embrace Jesus' love?

2. How has the evidence of Jesus' love in your heart changed your life?

What the Savior Said

John 15:9–13 (CSB)

CHRISTLIKE LOVE

⁹“As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.

¹¹“I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

¹²“This is my command: Love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.

In the opening verses of John 15 Jesus references the interconnectedness of His relationship with us. He is the vine; we are the branches. Our connection to Him brings fruitfulness, 15.5. It also brings transformation due to our discipleship, i.e., becoming more and more like Jesus, 15.8. As we grow, we have Christ’s loving leadership to inspire our work inside His kingdom. Submission to Christ is the key to experiencing the blessing and love of God. As we dwell in Him, one of the most amazing blessings we experience is the full and complete joy that is the result of His love. It is the same type of joy He shares with the Father.

That joy originates from our acceptance of His amazing gift of salvation. Without Jesus’ sacrifice we would be hopelessly lost. Through His desire and fulfillment of carrying out God’s plan of redemption, no greater act of love has ever been shown. *No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.*

3. Jesus loves us with the same love the Father loves Him. What does this mean to you?

4. What does it mean to accept or remain in Christ's love?

How would you describe the joy you presently feel because of your relationship with Christ? How does this impact the other relationships in your life?

5. What assurance can you find from what the Savior said?

A Passage to Explore

In the verses leading up to this section, Paul has exulted in the assurance of his salvation. *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus*, 8.1. In this life, the Christian is never truly alone as the Spirit lives in us, supplying us with life and assurance of life in the world to come, 8.10-11. He testifies of our adoption by God and His help as we battle suffering and weakness, 8.18-27. For those who love the Lord, God works all things out for good, 8.28. God is always moving toward His ultimate goal for us, i.e., that we *be conformed to the image of His Son*, 8.29. Glory is our destiny! See 8.30.

Now, beginning in v. 31 and continuing through the end of the chapter, Paul ramps up his thoughts in a beautiful crescendo of good news. In fact, it might be the greatest news ever!

We have been declared *not guilty*. (This is the justification of 8.33.)

Christ intercedes for us, 8.34.

Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, 8.35. Paul knew this firsthand as he had dealt with many troubles, hardships, and outright persecution in his work of sharing Jesus to the Gentiles.

Now, take a few moments to read Romans 8.31-39 aloud:

Romans 8:31–39 (CSB)

THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH

³¹What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? ³³Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. ³⁴Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us. ³⁵Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written:

Because of you

we are being put to death all day long;

we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

6. Look again at Romans 8.31. *If God is for us, who is against us?* What does it mean that God is “for” us?

7. How far was God willing to go to save us? (8.32)

8. As a son or daughter of God, you have been declared *not guilty*. (This is the meaning of “justifies” in 8.33.) When was this declaration made? Is it in force now? When will it happen in finality? Does this fact make you feel loved? How can acceptance of God's assurance derail any lingering guilt you still have?

9. Read 8.34 again. What kind of encouragement do you find from the assurance that Jesus is *at the right hand of God* interceding for you?

10. The fact that Paul was a son of God, did not separate him from the fact that his life would bring many great difficulties. He describes seven different things in v. 35. What important point of

remembrance kept him going during the low points? During bad times, what are some ways to reorient the thinking that says we are alone and/or God has forsaken us?

11. Read 8.37 again. *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* What does it mean to you that we are *more than conquerors*?

12. Read 8.38-39 again. What will be able to separate us from the love of Christ?

Take two minutes and reread Romans 8.31-39. Look for a sentence, phrase, or even one word that stands out as something you need to focus on in your life. Write down something you might want to share with the class.

Take another two minutes and read Romans 8.31-39 out loud. Prayerfully consider how the Spirit may be directing you to apply what you have read. Write something down you might want to share with the class.

Life Application

This week, make some time each day to spend a few moments alone with God. Every day, we will consider Deity's constant care and protection for us. Truly, the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit are inseparable. Take your time with each passage(s) so you can concentrate on what is being said. Use the questions as a springboard for your positive thoughts throughout your day.

Monday

Read Isaiah 41.10, 13. How can the assurance of God's help in supplying you with strength undergird you as you begin the new week?

13. What challenges might you be facing this week where these passages will put you on the right mental track?

14. As a son or daughter of God, how you have you experienced God's holding on to you?

Take some time today to reflect on God's strength and resolve to depend on it even more.

Tuesday

Read 1 Peter 5.6-7. What does God tell us to do? Why does God tell us to do this?

15. *He cares for you.* What are some things about you He cares about?

Take some time today to focus on His care for you and allow Him to pick up your burden of worry and anxiety and carry it for you. Remember, *His yoke is easy and his burden is light*, see Matthew 11.28-30.

Wednesday

Read Ezekiel 36.9. The prophet is looking ahead to a time of favor and blessing. Judgment would pass and renewal would come. In fact, the people would be made to be *better off than you were before. Then you will know that I am the Lord*, 36.11. By the work of Jesus Christ, you have received favor and blessing. (See Romans 8.1, 31-35) Despite your weaknesses, God is working to make you better than you were before. And it's all for His glory!

16. What are some ways God has demonstrated His love by showering you with favor and blessing?

17. How has God worked through Christ to make you better than you were before?

Take some time today to praise God for His work in you, Ephesians 2.10.

Thursday

Read Romans 5.5-8.

18. How have you experienced God pouring His love into your heart? How has this affected you in the things you think and do?

19. How did God demonstrate or prove His amazing love for us? Has this fact gripped your heart?

Take some time today to let what Jesus did for you impact your thoughts. How will this affect your actions?

Friday

Read Galatians 2.20.

1. Because of the love of Christ, what did Paul decide to do? Can you say with Paul that you have died to yourself and live for Christ?

2. What is something you will do today because you live by faith in Christ?

Today, take a few moments to consider how things would be had Jesus not extended His love to you. What would that be like?