

Matthew 22:34-40
The Principles of Salvation Part 3 ~ The Performance of Love
also Ezekiel 36:25-27

We are still in our Matthew text of Matthew chapter 22 verses 34 through 40. This is our third time through. The first time through we took The Promise of Love. Last week we took The Presence of Love. This week we study The Performance of Love.

Matthew 22:34, **But when the Pharisees heard that He silenced the Sadducees, they were gathered together there. And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, in your whole soul, and in your whole mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' In these two commandments the whole Law and the Prophets are hanging."**

Confronted by the Pharisees, a sect of the Jews just like the Sadducees, He was confronted through one of the lawyers or scribes who the text says was testing Him and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" So he wanted to debate the greatest commandment in the Law with Jesus. He wanted to test Him. Our focus was on what Jesus said to him, **"'You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, in your whole soul, and in your whole mind.' And the second commandment is like unto it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"**

I have been emphasizing to you that in the Greek text, the original language, *you shall love* is in the future tense, yet it is presented as a command. The future tense - future active indicative means that it is a fact. It is a certainty. You shall love the Lord. You shall love your neighbour. But yet it is a command. He is not giving it as a challenge, but rather stating it as fact, a certainty. It being a command, yet it is in the future tense, as I have mentioned to you the last couple of weeks this expresses The Principles of Salvation taught to us in Ezekiel 36:25-27. Those texts are in the next page in your study guide, page 7, Ezekiel 36:25-27.

We studied, first of all, The Purification of our Sins. **And I will sprinkle upon you clean waters, and you shall be clean from all of your uncleanness and from all of your idols I will cleanse you.** This purification happens when we go through the transformation process of verse 26.

It says in verse 26, **And I will give to you a new heart, and a new spirit I will give within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh.** Give you a heart that is sensitive to the things of God, rather than a stone heart that is cold against Him.

We saw last week in one of our Scripture texts that we took in Titus chapter 3 verse 5, **It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.** The moment the person experiences this change, this transformation, a person is cleansed, the washing of

regeneration. *Regeneration means to acquire a new nature, to be born again, to be born anew.* And the washing and the renewing of the Holy Spirit is an inner transformation that takes place when this transformation takes place. It is inner. It is new. So this washing of the purification of our sins happens when He gives us a new heart, when He puts His Spirit within us. God makes a radical change of a person's inner nature by putting His Spirit within a person. This happens when a person receives Jesus Christ. His Spirit goes to dwell in a person.

We saw last week in II Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5 that Paul said, **Examine yourselves** (that means, *put yourself to the test*) **whether you are in the faith, prove your own selves, do you not know your own selves, that Christ Jesus is in you, except you be disqualified.** So when Christ comes in you become a new person, a new nature within. And a person is washed and cleansed of all their sins. But this new nature comes when a person receives Christ.

Thirdly for today, The Performance of the Christian Life, in verse 27. **And I will give My Spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and you will have done them.** So he repeats from verse 26, **I will give My Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will,** not *you might*, **you will keep My judgments and you will have done them.** Notice the translation of that last perfect tense, **you will have done them.** You have done them already, but you will do it, yet in the future.

So God's Spirit comes into a person who receives Christ, but God's Spirit does God's work. The Spirit of Christ within produces the things of God. In particular the Holy Spirit produces love. The performance of love is by the Holy Spirit that has come to dwell within. The Holy Spirit being the Spirit of Christ when you receive Christ.

Now it is important to know what love means, understand its function, and how it is applied. **You shall love the Lord. You shall love your neighbor.** The first thing we have to know in our understanding is, what is love? What does love mean? There are four prominent words for *love* in the Greek language:

- 1) One of them is **ἔρως** (eros) which is where we get our English term *erotic* or *sensual*. That is not found in the New Testament.
- 2) Then the word **στοργή** (storgē), which is family love, love between children and parents. The negative of this word is found in II Timothy 3:3, where it says, **In the last days people will be without natural affection.** People will be without this kind of **στοργή** (storgē).

Then there are two prominent words used in the New Testament for the word *love*: the word **ἀγάπη** (agapē) and the word **φίλος** (philos).

- 3) **φίλος** (philos) means *friendship*, a friendship kind of love.

4) But **ἀγάπη** (agapē) is *divine love*. Not **ἀγαπάω** (agapao). **ἀγαπάω** (agapao) is the verb form of **ἀγάπη** (agapē), it does not mean *divine love*. But **ἀγαπη** (agapē), the noun, means *divine love*.

In fact I John chapter 4 verse 7 through 12 gives us a good Biblical definition of **ἀγάπη** (agapē). In 1 John 4:7-12 it says, **Beloved, we should be loving one another: because love is from God; and every one that loves is born of God and knows God. The one not loving does not know God; because God is love.** There is your definition of **ἀγάπε** (agapē) love. God is **ἀγάπε** (agapē). It is not a human action. It is not a human feeling. **ἀγάπε** (agapē) is God Himself. It is His nature. It is His essence.

The one not loving does not know God; because God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation, which is a Biblical word meaning *satisfaction*. He is a propitiation on behalf of our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to loving one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we should love one another, God dwells in us, and His love has been perfected in us. *Perfected* means *brought to its conclusion*. So John in I John he is connecting - we are going to see a lot of verses from I John this morning. But John is connecting salvation and knowing Christ with loving God. If you are saved, you love God. If you are not saved, you do not love God. If you do not love God, you are not saved. That is what he is saying. He is connecting the two together. So **ἀγάπε** (agapē) is God's nature and His essence.

And then secondly, its function. In Romans chapter 5 verse 5 it says, **And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.** So the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes in a person's life that person is filled with the love of God.

But then it also tells us in the Scriptures that love is a fruit of God's Spirit. Galatians chapter 5 verses 22 and 23, **But the fruit of the Spirit is love.** That is **ἀγάπε** (agapē). So love **ἀγάπε** (agapē) is produced by the Spirit. It is a fruit of God's Spirit, not a work of human beings. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control: against such things there is no law.** So once God's Spirit is in the person, God's Spirit produces the fruit.

As a matter of fact, it says in John 15:5, Jesus said, **"I am the vine and you are the branches. The one dwelling in Me and I in him, the same is bringing forth much fruit: because without Me you are not able to do one thing."** So Jesus says - a statement of fact - Jesus is the vine, we are the branches. The one who is dwelling in Christ is bearing much fruit. Not should but is. Because that is the function of the Spirit of God.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7, **By their fruit you shall know them.** Not by their religion, but by their fruit you shall know them. Because God's Spirit dwelling in a person produces fruit.

Now that we have studied The Function of Love and The Meaning of Love, now we want to study The Application of Love. And with that we have several texts in I John. You can follow in your Bibles if you have it, if not I will relay it to and give you a literal translation.

I John 3:14-18 is our first text. **We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brothers.** I know I am saved because I love the brotherhood. It is what God's Spirit produces when you are saved. **The one loving not his brother abides in death. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that every murderer does not have eternal life abiding in him. In this we know the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso has this world's goods...** The word *world's goods* there in verse 17 of I John 3 is the *sustenance of life*. **He who has the sustenance of life and should see his brother have need, and should close up his bowels of compassion from him, how does the love of God dwell in him?** It does not. **My little children, we should not love in word, neither in tongue; but in work and in truth.** It is not something we say. It is something we do. It is something that is live and working in truth in a person's life.

In I John chapter 3 verses 23 and 24 it says, **And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and we should love one another, as He gave us commandment.** We have been studying that back in Matthew 22. He gave us a commandment. So therefore if we belong to God, we should be loving our brothers. **And the one keeping His commandments dwells in Him (that is, Christ) and Christ in him. And in this we know that He dwells in us, through the Spirit which He has given us.** I know He dwells in me because He has given me His Spirit. It is His Spirit that is giving me a love for the brotherhood, for the brothers and sisters who are in Christ.

In I John chapter 4 verses 16 through 21, **And we have known and believed the love that God has towards us. God is love; and the one dwelling in love dwells in God, and God in him.** God is love. So if you dwell in God you are dwelling in love, and love is dwelling you. **In this is our love made perfect, that we might have confidence in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world.** He is in me. I am as He is, as He ministers through me and manifests through me. **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear is torment. The one fearing has not been made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us.** So following God out of fear is not love. Responding to the Lord in obedience to Him is based on love. Love for Him and the desire to please Him. **But we love Him, because He first loved us.** It is His love that has come into us first. And then our love back. It is a reflection; it is response to His love. We did not make it up ourselves. **If any man should say, "I love God," and should hate his brother, he is a liar: for the one loving not his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that the one loving God loves his brother also.** It is a statement of fact. It is a commandment to love God and love your brother also.

I John chapter 5 verses 2 and 3, **In this we know that we love the children of God, whenever we should love God, and keep His commandments.** My love towards you is shown towards you, manifested out of my life toward you, when I obey the Lord. The highest act of

love that I can do for you and to you is to obey the Lord and do what the Lord wants me to do. If I compromise and I do not do what the Lord wants me to do but I am afraid of what your reaction is going to be, so I compromise my obedience to do what the Lord wants me to do, that is not love. **By this we know that we love the children of God, whenever we should love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, in order that we should keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous,** literally *burdensome*. His commandments are a delight to the person who desires to please God. To love God and do that which is pleasing in His sight is not burdensome. If you love someone or something whatever you have to go through to fulfill it, is not a burden. So it is with the things of God. The things of God are not a burden to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

So there we have a combination of being saved and having the Spirit of God dwell within and having **ἀγάπη** (agapē) love dwell within. Both happen at the same time. You cannot do one without the other. You cannot have one without the other. If you have the Spirit of God, you have love. And that love is manifesting itself to the brothers. If not, John clearly says in his texts, "If you hate your brother then you do not have God. He does not dwell there." That is why the I John book in the Bible is controversial. Because you read through I John and he makes it as a statement of fact: if God is in you, then His love is in you. And if His love is in you, then His love is performing in you. And His love is doing the performance.

Now there are a couple of responses to these over the years that we have had.

Someone might say, "If I waited on the Lord to do His work, nothing would happen. Because if I do not do it, it will not happen. If I just wait on Him, then nothing is going to happen." Well, if a person is filled with the Spirit of Christ, it is impossible for nothing to happen. If a person is filled with the Spirit of Christ, it is impossible for Him not to be working and moving. You are talking about the Spirit of God that created the universe, that holds the entire universe together, that came and died for our sins on the cross and then came to live within. We have Him, according to Paul in Colossians chapter 1 and chapter 2, that we have Him in His fullness. **Christ in you is the hope of glory and you are complete in Him.** We have all of God living within. For someone to say, "Yeah I do nothing with human effort, if I wait on God nothing happens." Well, you have got two things happening. Either God is not doing anything, or you are not saved. Because it is impossible to have Christ, and nothing be happening. No ministry going on and especially love, the performance of love. God's Spirit performs that love.

Secondly, we cannot judge the work of God's Spirit by evaluating human performance. You look at my human performance, my human nature does not love. There are people I do not get along with, believe it or not. There are people that I do not love in the human but that does not mean I do not have love. It means that God's Spirit is performing that love in me. By self-sacrificing, by laying down one's life for someone else. We try to love people with human effort, and it just does not work out. We fail. It seems like we succeed at times, but we just fail. God's Spirit is loving, it is ministering through us, if indeed we have the Spirit of Christ.

So, The Performance of Love and what Ezekiel said in verse 27 of Ezekiel 36, **And I will give My Spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in My statutes.** I will make you. I

will cause you to walk in My ways. **And you will keep My judgments and you will have done them.** I will cause you to do it. It might be someone that you as a human being do not love, but God's Spirit within you will and will make you and cause you. It is that making and causing. The reason why He has to make us and cause us is because the human flesh, the human nature just does not do spiritual things. Only the Spirit of God does God's work and only God's Spirit does the things of God.

So that is why many times, if not often, I have a duel going on between my not getting along with someone versus the love of Christ causing me to get along. It is a dual role, but that is what the Scripture is saying. I cannot evaluate God's love in me and His dwelling in me based on my human effort. My human effort will fail. My human effort will not love as the Scripture tells me to. But God's Spirit says He will, He will make us. He will cause us. That is the evidence, that is the fruit of Christ dwelling within, and a person dwelling in Christ.

Let's close with prayer.