

*Sermon #37 — 1<sup>st</sup> John Series*

Title:                    **“THE LOVE  
THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

Text:                1 John 4:16

Subject:       *The Love of God*

Date:            Tuesday Evening — May 28, 2013

Tape#            1<sup>st</sup> John #37

Readings: *Merle Hart and Bobbie Estes*

Introduction:

The title of my message tonight is **“THE LOVE  
THAT GOD HATH TO US”**. Our text will be the first sentence of 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:16. — *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”*

- *“We have known”* by divine revelation and by the sweet experience of God’s saving grace.
- *“We have known and believed,”* trusted, relied upon, lived upon, rested in.
- *“We have known and believed the love that God hath toward us.”*

This is not some impersonal, ambiguous, meaningless notion of love. Oh, no! This is the special, personal, distinguishing loving favor of God to us

— His Elect!

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

- His Redeemed!
- His Called!
- His Children!
- Sinners Saved by Him!

**1 John 4:16** And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

**“GOD IS LOVE”**

Never was anything so deep, so comprehensive, so endearing and so exciting expressed in such few words as that which John declares in the words immediately following that first sentence of my text. — *“God is love.”* But glorious as this truth is, there are few who know it. It is lightly regarded by most. That which angels admire men count as nothing.

**DISTINGUISHING TRAIT**

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

Yet, there are some who know this truth of divine Revelation and are deeply grateful for it. — “*God is love.*” That which is despised by the wise of this world is known, believed, and loved by those who are born of God. **This is one true character of the Christian, which distinguishes him from the rest of mankind. He knows and believes the love that God has for his own.** Whatever may be his condition or attainments in other respects, the child of God delights in the knowledge of divine love. He may be low and illiterate, yet he knows the love of God. He may be great and well-educated, yet he values the knowledge of God’s love above all things.

**LOVE MANIFEST**

Without question, the love about which John is speaking is that love of God which was manifest in the gift of his dear Son to die in the place of sinners at Calvary. In this chapter he is directing our attention to this specific thing. — “*In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God*

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

*sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* Our Lord Jesus himself declares that the Father’s love toward us was the motive that induced him to send his Son into the world. — *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* And the Apostle Paul refers to the sacrifice of Christ as the greatest exhibition that God himself could give of his love toward us. — *“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”* Great, infinite, indescribable as the multitude of God’s bounties of grace in Christ Jesus are, this one gift of love infinitely excels them all! — *“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

**Proposition:** This is the thing John is teaching us in our text. — Every true believer knows the love of God to such a measure of fulness that he rests his

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

entire being on that love.

**Divisions:** Looking at this text and recalling those things which we have experienced, I want to say four things with regard to John’s statement, “*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*”

1. This is the essence of our past experience.
2. This is the summary of our grateful testimony.
3. This is the foundation of our future hopes.
4. This is the one thing that I want for you.

**PAST EXPERIENCE**

In the first place **this is the essence of our past experience.** — As I stand here and look back at all of my past experience, I can, with these words, give you the essence of all that I see. — “*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*” The Apostle John was now an old man. He knew that he was standing at the threshold of eternity. He had one foot in the grave, and the other was slipping rapidly. Now,

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

the old man looks over all the days of his life and says, — “*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*”

**This, I repeat, is the distinctive character of God’s elect.** Every heaven-born soul knows and believes the love of God. There are no exceptions. All who have passed from death into life, whatever else they may be ignorant of, they know the love of God; and no one else does.

Oh, hope of every contrite heart!

Oh, joy of all the meek!

To those who fall how kind Thou art!

How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah! This

Nor tongue nor pen can show,

The love of Jesus – what it is

None but his loved ones know.

**Others may talk of this love with precise doctrinal**

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**accuracy**. An ungodly man may know much about the love of God. He may realize the fact of it. He may see the theory of it. He may even be able to talk like a believer, expressing joy because of it. **But, the child of God alone knows this love**. The true believer has a living faith. To him, the love of God is much more than a doctrinal theory. He has tasted its sweets. He has personally experienced its reality. He knows it practically and experimentally.

- We know the love of God as the source of all our joy.
- We believe, rely upon, the love of God as the foundation of all our hopes.

We all know our Father’s love in differing degrees and none of us know it perfectly yet. **Still, if we have known and believed the love that God has to us, our hearts, undoubtedly, overflow with that love**. It is not possible for a man who has come to know the infinite love of God for his soul, to be unaffected by that love. I know that many object to expressions of feelings and emotion in religion. But I for one

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

delight in the love of God. My very heart and soul feels this love! It is bubbling up within me. It floods my soul. It overflows my heart’s cup.

- **The love of God fills our hearts with wonder and admiration.** With John, we cry, “*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!*” With Paul we exclaim, “*O the depths!*”
- **The love of God fills our hearts with love and gratitude for him.** This is the motive of our lives, the principle of our service, and the rule of our conduct.
- **The love of God fills my heart with praise and adoration.** This is the subject of my meditations and the theme of my praises. Deep down within my soul there are shouts of praise; and they must, at times, break out.

I say that there is, at least, this one distinctive character to God’s elect. We know and believe the love that God hath to us.

**This knowledge of God’s love comes to us by**



**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**divine revelation.** It is not possible for a man to know the love of God unless God himself reveals it. And we who know the love of God for us know it by God’s own gracious revelation. **The love of God is revealed throughout the pages of inspiration.** The Bible is God’s letter of love to us. Upon every page he says, “Behold my love.” **The love of God is revealed to us in the Person and Work of our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.** We read in God’s Book of electing, adopting, pardoning, and justifying love. But in Christ Jesus we see the love of God personified and displayed in our redemption. — *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.”*

Yet, these things were not enough. Because of the blindness of our eyes, the darkness of our hearts, and the depravity of our minds, another revelation is required. **We know the love of God by the revelation of the Holy Spirit** (Romans 5:5). In the fulness of time, God sent one to preach the gospel to us. And he sent his Spirit into our hearts, making the

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

gospel effectual. The Holy Spirit, by the Word of the Gospel, revealed the love of God in us.

**Romans 5:1-5** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; <sup>4</sup> And patience, experience; and experience, hope: <sup>5</sup> And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

**And this knowledge of God’s love, which he has given us, has a very practical result. We believe it.**  
The love of God is so fully and so effectually revealed in our hearts that we are made to rest our souls in that love.

**But, I think that John also means that we know**

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**the love of God experimentally.** Here is the essence of all true Christian experience. — “*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*” John divides the Christian’s experience of divine love into two parts. Sometimes we know the love that God has to us. And at other times we believe it.

**There are times when we know God’s love to us.** We know God’s love to us, because we can see it.

- We see the love of God in his gracious providence.
- We see the love of God after we have come through some great affliction.
- We see the love of God after we escape some great trial. In the midst of our great trials we may not be able to clearly see the love of our Father. But when the trial is over, we look back upon it and see the hand of love. This was surely the case with Jacob.

**But then there are times when we know the love of God for us, because we feel it.** Let me speak from

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

personal experience. As I do, I will speak for some of you. We have had times of such sweet fellowship and communion with Christ that we were made to know his love.

- Sitting with Mary down at the Savior’s feet, we have felt his love.
- Leaning with John upon the Savior’s chest, we have felt his love.
- Walking with Christ, like the two disciples on the Emmaus road, we have felt his love. Our hearts have burned within us.

**Then, at times, we are made to know the love of God for us by the infallible testimony of the Spirit of God.** Yes, the Holy Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are born of God (Romans 8:14-16).

**Romans 8:14-16** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. <sup>16</sup> The Spirit itself

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

bearth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

We do not believe in those visions and dreams of which the charismatics boast. We do not believe in those tales, which they tell of seeing angels and hearing voices, and of being transported to heaven. But we do rejoice in the fact that the Holy Spirit expressly reveals himself to the sons of God and testifies in our hearts that we are born of God!

**But there are times when we cannot so clearly and distinctly know the love of God; but even then we believe the love that God has toward us.** Sometimes the thick cloud gathers above our heads. We look upward but see no helper. We look downward and behold nothing but despair. All around us there is nothing but terror and dismay. To all outward appearance, it seems that God is against us rather than for us. **But then, when we cannot see, we “believe the love that God hath to us.”** This is blessed, God-given faith. **To know God’s love is**

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”***1 John 4:16*

**sweet, but believing is grand.** To feel God’s love is precious, but to believe it, when you do not feel it, is noble. **It takes little faith to know God’s love when all is well, but it requires great faith to believe God’s love when everything visible contradicts it, and those things which are invisible give no witness.** — This was the kind of faith Jeremiah expressed in the third chapter of Lamentations (18-26).

**Lamentations 3:18-26** And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD: <sup>19</sup> Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. <sup>20</sup> My soul hath *them* still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. <sup>21</sup> This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. <sup>22</sup> *It is of* the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. <sup>23</sup> *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness. <sup>24</sup> The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. <sup>25</sup> The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

the soul *that* seeketh him. <sup>26</sup> *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*

**GRATEFUL TESTIMONY**

In the second place, I must say that — **This is the summary of our grateful testimony.** Every believer ought to be a testifier. We are to testify with our heart and our lips. And our testimony to an unbelieving world, and to poor despairing sinners, is just this: — *“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”* This is our testimony. We have experienced it. And we desire to tell it everywhere as long as we live. We hope that we will be able to repeat it with our dying breath. When life is finished and eternity begins, we will say, *“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”*

**We have known that the love which God has for us is undeserved love.** Our hearts grow with constantly increasing astonishment when we think of

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

God’s love for us, because there was nothing in us that could have caused it.

Why was I made to hear Thy voice,  
And enter while there’s room;  
When thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve than come?

‘Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced me in;  
Else I had still refused to taste,  
And perished in my sin.

**There is nothing in us by nature that God could love.** There are a great many things which we may doubt, but we cannot doubt this. This is a sure fact. In us, that is in our flesh dwelleth no good thing.

**Therefore we know that whatever love God has for us springs entirely from his own good pleasure. He loves us simply because he would love us.**



**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

- God’s love is free.
- God’s love is eternal.
- God’s love is infinite.
- God’s love is sovereign.
- God’s love is undeserved.

**Another thing we can thankfully testify is this: We know that the love of God is unconquerable.** In love our Savior stretched out his arms and called us. Time after time he invited us to look unto him and live. But we would not hearken to his calls. We provoked him to his face. We despised his grace. So rebellious were we that when he called us to look, we would shut our eyes. If love could have been conquered, we would have conquered it. But the love of God is almighty, persevering, prevailing, irresistible love.

- The love of God broke my will.
- The love of God opened my eyes.
- The love of God conquered my heart.

Newton put it beautifully —

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

Lord, Thou hast won, at last I yield;  
My heart by mighty grace compelled,  
Surrenders all to Thee;  
Against Thy terrors long I strove,  
But who can stand against Thy love?  
Love conquers even me.

If Thou hadst bid Thy thunders roll,  
And lightening flash, to dash my soul,  
I still had stubborn been:  
But mercy has my heart subdued,  
A bleeding Savior I have viewed,  
And now I hate my sin.

Now, Lord, I would be Thine alone,  
Come take possession of Thine own,  
For Thou hast set me free;  
Released from Satan's hard command,  
See all my members waiting stand,  
To be employed by Thee.

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

Let me bare testimony to another blessed fact. — **We know that the love of God for us is immutable** (Malachi 3:6).

Immutable His will,  
Though dark may be my path;  
His loving heart is still  
Unchangably the same.  
My soul through many changes goes;  
His love no variation knows.

Listen to me, my friends, I have never found an end to his all-sufficiency, or a limit to his omnipotence. And I have never found a change in his love.

- His love is not diminished by the multitude of our sins.
- His love is not changed by our changing affections.
- His love is not broken by our broken vows.

I must give out one more word of testimony in this regard. — **We know that the love of God for us has**

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**been our unfailing support in all our trials.**

Unfaithful I have been, but my Lord has never been unfaithful to me. If I could choose the rest of my life, I would not choose my own way. I would leave it to the unfailing love of my Redeemer to map out my course and appoint my destiny.

Brethren, not one good thing has failed us of all that the Lord promised. He has never left us nor forsaken us. He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Glory to His name!

- In all of my trials, his love has sustained me.
- In all of my sorrows, his love has cheered me.
- In all of Satan’s fiery attacks, his love has protected me.
- In all of my doubts and fears, his love assures me.

**FUTURE HOPE**

We have looked to the past with grateful remembrance of our Father’s love. Now, let’s look to

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

the future. As we do, let his love fill our hearts with anticipation. In the third place, I will say that — **This is the foundation of our future hopes.**

*“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”* What will take place tomorrow? I do not know. But this I know. — *“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”*

**Whatever comes to pass comes from Him who loves us.** Surely he who spared not his own Son to redeem us will not withhold any good thing from us.

**While we live in this world let us serve our God and Savior, being constrained by his love.**

**When we come to face death, rest in his love.**

**When we depart from this world, which is a veil of tears, we shall enter into heaven, a world of love.**

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**MY DESIRE**

Now, my dear friends, my family, **this is the one thing i want for you.** I want you to “*know and believe the love that God hath to us.*” There is no greater desire in this pastor’s heart than that you be “*rooted and grounded in love*” (Ephesians 3:14-19).

**Ephesians 3:14-19** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup> That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; <sup>17</sup> That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; <sup>19</sup> And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**I want you to know the love of Christ doctrinally.**

That is, I want you to know what the Word of God teaches us about his love. But I want you to have much more than a mere doctrinal knowledge. **I want you to know the love of Christ gratefully.** Child of God, every thought of Christ’s love ought to fill our hearts with gratitude and love for him. **I want you to know the love of Christ practically.** Blessed Holy Spirit, give us grace to imitate our God, and walk in love (Ephesians 4:32-5:2).

**Ephesians 4:32-5:2** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

<sup>1</sup> Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

**I want you to know the love of Christ absorbingly.**

Oh, that we may be, one and all, utterly absorbed in the Savior’s love. Being absorbed in his love, we will be filled with all the fulness of God.

**Meditate often and much upon the love of Christ.**

Take time every day, every few minutes, to embrace Christ and to be embraced by him.

**APPLICATION**

I have spoken very practically to you this evening, my brethren, about things which we know. And I have done so with good reason.

- Be thankful for the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus.
- Be confident of your Father’s love.
- Press on to know more of his love.
- Praise and extol our God for his great love.

**Jude 1:21** Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ



**“THE LOVE THAT GOD HATH TO US”**

*1 John 4:16*

unto eternal life.

Some of you know nothing of what I have said. Will you believe our report? — *“We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.”*

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Amen.