

Message Three

The Need to Develop Our Faith in the Lord and Our Love for Him

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 5:6; 3:2;
Eph. 6:23; Heb. 12:2a; Rom. 5:5; 8:39; 1 John 4:8, 16

- 1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- Gal. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith avails, operating through love.
- Gal. 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
- Eph. 6:23 Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Heb. 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
- Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
- Rom. 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
- 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

I. We need to develop and perfect our faith in the Lord and our love for Him—the One whom we have not seen—1 Pet. 1:8; Heb. 12:2a; 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17-18:

- 1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- Heb. 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
- 1 John 2:5 But whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. In this we know that we are in Him.
- 1 John 4:12 No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.
- 1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
- 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.

- A. Jesus Christ, "whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory"—1 Pet. 1:8:

1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

1. Although we have never seen the Lord Jesus, we love Him; at present we cannot see Him, yet we believe in Him—v. 8:

1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

a. It is a wonder and a mystery that the believers love One whom they have not seen.

b. We love Him whom we have not seen because of believing, that is, because of the faith that has been infused into us through our hearing of the living word—Gal. 3:2.

Gal. 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

2. The believers "exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory"—1 Pet. 1:8:

1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

a. We exult with a joy that is immersed in glory.

b. This joy is immersed in the Lord as glory; thus, it is full of the expression of the Lord—2 Cor. 3:18.

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

3. By believing into the Lord and loving Him, we obtain great joy.

4. The normal condition of a Christian is to "exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory"—1 Pet. 1:8.

1 Pet. 1:8 Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,

B. "Faith avails, operating through love"—Gal. 5:6:

Gal. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith avails, operating through love.

1. Living faith is active; it operates through love.

2. Faith receives the Spirit of life; thus, it is full of power—3:2.

Gal. 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

3. Faith operates through love to fulfill God's purpose, that is, to complete the sonship of God for His corporate expression—the Body of Christ—4:3-5; Rom. 12:4-5.

Gal. 4:3 So also we, when we were children, were kept in slavery under the elements of the world;

Gal. 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law,

Gal. 4:5 That He might redeem those under law that we might receive the sonship.

Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

4. Love is related to our appreciation of Christ—Eph. 3:8, 17-18; Col. 2:2:

- Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- Eph. 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
- Col. 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

a. Without such an appreciation, faith cannot operate—Gal. 5:6.

- Gal. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith avails, operating through love.

b. The hearing of faith awakens our loving appreciation—Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2, 5.

- Rom. 10:17 So faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
- Gal. 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?
- Gal. 3:5 He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit and does works of power among you, does He do it out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?

c. The more we love the Lord, the more faith operates to bring us into the riches of the all-inclusive Spirit—v. 14; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19.

- Gal. 3:14 In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- Eph. 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Phil. 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

C. "Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"—Eph. 6:23:

- Eph. 6:23 Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Love with faith is the means by which we partake of and experience Christ—1 Tim. 1:14.

- 1 Tim. 1:14 And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

2. We need faith as a match and support for our love—Titus 3:15.

- Titus 3:15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in faith. Grace be with you all.

II. "Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith"—Heb. 12:2a:

- Heb. 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

A. Faith and love are two inseparable, excellent virtues of the believers in Christ—1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:13; Titus 3:15; Gal. 5:6:

- 1 Tim. 1:14 And the grace of our Lord superabounded with faith and love in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Tim. 1:13 Hold a pattern of the healthy words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.
- Titus 3:15 All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in faith. Grace be with you all.
- Gal. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith avails, operating through love.

1. Through faith we receive the Lord, and through love we enjoy the Lord whom we have received—John 1:12; 14:21; 21:15-17.

- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

2. By faith we receive the Lord and therefore please God; by love we enjoy the Lord and thereby keep His word—Heb. 11:6; John 14:23.

- Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

3. By faith we receive and enjoy the divine life that is revealed and ministered to us in the Gospel of John; by love we love the Lord and those who belong to Him—3:16, 36; 20:31; 21:15-17; 13:34-35.

- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.
- John 3:36 He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.
- John 20:31 But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

- John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
- John 13:35 By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

B. Faith is for appreciating, substantiating, and receiving the unlimited riches of the Triune God—1:12; Eph. 3:16-17a:

- John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
- Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

1. Faith is given to us by God so that by it we may receive Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, and thereby enter into the Triune God and be joined to Him as one, having Him as our life, life supply, and everything—2 Pet. 1:1.

- 2 Pet. 1:1 Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted faith equally precious as ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

2. By faith in the Lord, we receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life—Acts 10:43; John 3:16.

- Acts 10:43 To this One all the prophets testify that through His name everyone who believes into Him will receive forgiveness of sins.
- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

3. When we believe in the Lord, we believe into Him—v. 15:

- John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

a. By believing into Him, we enter into Him to be one with Him, to partake of Him, and to participate in all that He has accomplished for us.

b. By believing into Him, we are identified with Him in all that He is and in all that He has passed through, accomplished, attained, and obtained—1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1.

- 1 Cor. 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
- Eph. 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
- Eph. 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,
- Col. 3:1 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

C. Love is for experiencing, enjoying, and living out the immeasurably rich Triune God—Mark 12:30; 2 Cor. 13:14:

- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

1. Love issues out of faith and enables us to live out all the riches of the Triune God in Christ with those who have believed into Christ with us in order that the Triune God may have a

glorious corporate expression—Eph. 3:19-21.

Eph. 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Eph. 3:20 But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,

Eph. 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

2. Love is for the believers to minister and transmit the Triune God to their fellow believers so that all the believers may love one another with divine, transcendent love and live a corporate life in Christ—Rom. 12:4-5, 10.

Rom. 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,

Rom. 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Rom. 12:10 Love one another warmly in brotherly love; take the lead in showing honor one to another.

3. Our love for the Lord must be absolute—Matt. 10:37; 1 John 2:15; Rev. 12:11.

Matt. 10:37 He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me;

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him;

Rev. 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.

4. To give the Lord the first place in all things is to love Him with the first love, the best love—Col. 1:18; Rev. 2:4.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Rev. 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

5. "To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life"—1 Cor. 2:9, footnote 3.

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

1 Cor. 2:9, footnote 3 To realize and participate in the deep and hidden things God has ordained and prepared for us requires us not only to believe in Him but also to love Him. To fear God, to worship God, and to believe in God (that is, to receive God) are all inadequate; to love Him is the indispensable requirement. To love God means to set our entire being — spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30) — absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life. In this way we have the closest and most intimate fellowship with God, and we are able to enter into His heart and apprehend all its secrets (Psa. 73:25; 25:14). Thus, we not only realize but also experience, enjoy, and fully participate in these deep and hidden things of God.

III. "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us"—Rom. 5:5:

- Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
- A. God has poured out His love in our hearts with the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, as the motivating power within us, that we may more than conquer in all our tribulations—v. 5; 8:39.
- Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
- Rom. 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- B. The love of God is God Himself—1 John 4:8, 16.
- 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
- 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
- C. God as love is the divine essence that has been poured out in our hearts—Rom. 5:5:
- Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
1. The pouring out of the love of God in our hearts is a matter of the essence of God.
 2. Because we have been regenerated, we have love as the nature of God's essence within us.
 3. As believers, deep in our hearts we have something of the divine essence, and this is God the Father in His love.
- D. Because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts, the heart of every believer in Christ is a heart of love—Eph. 3:17.
- Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- E. In our experience and enjoyment of God as the Father in His love, we experience and enjoy the dispensing of love as the nature of God's essence into our hearts—Rom. 5:5, 8; 8:35, 39; 15:30; 2 Cor. 13:14.
- Rom. 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
- Rom. 5:8 But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- Rom. 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?
- Rom. 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Rom. 15:30 Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.