

The Love of God Indwelling Us

1. INTRODUCTION. GOD'S LOVE DWELLS IN US

Passage: I John 3:1–18.

Obviously God's love dwells in us as His person—I John 4:8, 16 . See John 14:23, then see Romans 5:5 and Ephesians 3:14–19. Love of God, love of Christ, love of the Spirit, filled with love by the Spirit. These verses are profound. We can be—and are expected to be—filled unto all the fullness of God. Who, in Christ, can claim he is poverty-stricken? Who has not inexhaustible riches out of which he can give?

2. GOD'S LOVE CONSTANTLY SUPPLIED TO US BY THE SPIRIT

Romans 5:5, with Acts 2:33 and Galatians 3:1–3. Christ goes on supplying the Spirit of love to us. So there is the perichoretic flow into us. God's Presence being constantly communicated to us. See I John 3:24 and 4:13, where we see the indwelling is by the Holy Spirit. We are conscious of God dwelling within us.

Look at the early Church and learn from them—how they had compassion and supplied out of their combined resources the needs of their people. It was their habit to give according to their resources and also beyond their resources. You find the New Testament talks like this without lauding and praising givers. It is always more blessed to give, even, than to receive. Philippians 2:1–11 tells us that we must ever be on the alert for the sake of all others. We must consider them better than ourselves and be concerned with their interests. We must love them.

3. DO FOLK SEE US—OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR SOCIETY—AS LOVING?

'He that has this world's goods.' We certainly have those. The history of the Church down through the ages. Always supplying—hospitals, education, physical relief. That is not necessarily love. 'Though I give all my goods to feed the poor . . .' Do we, in fact, love? The kind of love in I Corinthians 13:8. The story of the UP Missionary in Pakistan; 35 years of ministry and 'I have never loved the Pakistanis'. Frightening. The Church at Ephesians in Revelation 2:1ff., 'You have abandoned your first love'. Do you think back to your first love of your spouse, of your children. Greatly tested. Do you remember your first love to Him? How much of our work and behaviour is dictated by our church culture and how much is it the leading of the Spirit of love?

4. WE WHO HAVE THIS WORLD'S GOODS

Most of us in Australia are wealthy by the standards of living of Third world countries. Everyone is comparatively wealthy or comparatively poor. Compassion for the poor is shown by practical action, by sharing. The early Church shared. Right through Acts and often the Pauline Epistles we find this is the case. This is love bearing and believing and hoping all things. To the degree we can help, love will help us to give. To the degree to which we can pray, we can call on God's resources. We become the hilarious givers. I am not trying to catch you in the net of your practice and bring you down, or to give you a

high standing. All that is between you and God, and so not even one hand knows what the other is giving. If we are conscious in giving we will quickly forget. We are only passing on God's bounty. If we discover the biblical truth of blessing and giving, of giving and receiving, then we will be in that wonderful and terrible world according to where love takes us. We cannot deny the thrust of love. The text we have taken tells us that our hearts will condemn us if we withhold what we have to give. How much more will God condemn us? Don't cry, 'Grace! Grace!' and think it will cover our deliberate sin.

5. WE WHO HAVE MORE THAN THIS WORLD'S GOODS

How rich we are. One simple Christian has more than the Murdochs and Packers of this world. He has received more, can receive yet more, and can give more than they can give. It may seem like putting verses together to talk of 'the inexhaustible riches of Christ' and 'in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge', but it is true. The simplest has everything by God's free giving and by his faith receiving. At the most terrible moments he has supplies which are inexhaustible.

I am thinking of the riches which our teachers give out so richly. Paul speaks of 'the riches of His grace'; and says that this is grace which He has lavished upon us. How many of us have gone 'on mission' and been meagrely served by the situation, yet at the point of giving it has surely been the River of God which has flowed through and we giving those riches of His grace to men, women and children. Not that we are not rewarded!

I want to tell you a few stories here to illustrate God's Indwelling Love

The **first** one is of a missionary in Pakistan who had laboured in the heat and dust, smells and a different culture for thirty-five years. I saw her become convicted by the Spirit of God and she cried out in agony, 'I have been here for thirty-five years and yet I have never loved the Pakistanis'. I believe she received the River of love into her life and work and did love them. How could she not have loved them before?

The **second** is the story of the Rice Cakes. I was there when it happened in a prison camp. I was the one who saw that even when you don't have this world's goods—I mean enough to give from them—that you can give in the face of death to lay down your life for the brethren. It is a special story to me. You need the Spirit of love to take the least and to give your brothers just that opportunity to live longer.

The **third** story is of two missionaries on two different occasions, who had thought themselves to be filled with love—and I think they were—but they wept because they had not gripped others by that love. They were then told, 'Yes you have. You have truly loved us', and that declaration set going the response of gratitude and a new look at the gospel and God's love, and so a revival came into being.

The **fourth** is a story which happened recently, to me, and I want to share it in detail. It concerns a Japanese student, Kazuo Sekine, who came to visit me, and brought with him three other Japanese. One was a neurosurgeon, one an artist therapist and one the coordinator of the team of the four of them. Kaz told us of a book he had written showing the love which had come to him when he entered the Adelaide Bible Institute, of which I was Principal. Here, however, are some of the details. The sum of it all was that Kaz experienced such love that when he wrote it down for fellow Japanese to read they wept at

the narrative. How can such a simple act cause a subterranean stir in the minds and hearts of readers so that they weep. It was then I saw this nation of Japan as composed of millions, who if shown the love of God would weep. I know that, for I ministered in Japan back in 1970, and they had told me Japanese do not weep. Well they do. So do others of other cultures. The Cross gets to the heart of a man and makes a sweet and profound difference.

How could we not give when we are filled unto all the fullness of God, when God dwells in us?