

Lessons in Love

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 March 2017

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] We're going to turn now to our Bible reading this morning, and you'll find that in Deuteronomy chapter 6, and I think that's page 150, 151, if you have one of the blue church Bibles.

And I'm going to read beginning at the end of chapter 5, where God, having given the Ten Commandments to Moses, and heard the response of the people, crying out for a mediator. Says to Moses, go and say to the people, return to their tents, but you stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment, the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving to them to possess.

You shall be careful, therefore, to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.

And this is the commandment, that is, the statutes and the rules, that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.

[1 : 30] Hear, therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, as they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates. And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you, with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you didn't dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant.

And when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. It is the Lord your God you shall fear.

[2 : 48] Him you shall serve, and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the people who are around you. For the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God, lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from the face of the earth.

You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes which he has commanded you, and you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers, by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has promised.

When your son asks you in time to come, what's the meaning of the testimonies, and the statutes, and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you? Then you shall say to your son, we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

And the Lord showed signs and wonders great and grievous against Egypt, and against Pharaoh, and all his household before our eyes. And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in,

and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers.

And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive as we are this day. And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.

[4 : 28] Amen. May God bless to us, this is his word. Well, do turn with me, if you would, to Deuteronomy chapter 6, page 151 in the Blue Bibles, if you have one.

And today's chapter is very clearly and profoundly, for us a lesson in loving. What is love?

When I was growing up in the 1970s, there was a ubiquitous cartoon poster that you used to see everywhere, with love is dot, dot, dot. And then these two cartoon characters, male and female, and a little strap line at the bottom.

Apparently, these cartoons earned the artist millions of pounds a year that were so popular in those days. I think they're still around. I looked them up, and they do seem to be still around, although today they seem to have become very, very sentimental.

Love is when he nibbles your ear. Love is a spark between two people. Love is precious moments together. Oh my goodness.

[5 : 44] The older ones actually have much more substance. Love is nursing him through his cold when yours is worse. I don't know why all you wives are smiling, because we men know that the virus has always hit our worst.

Isn't that right, men? Man flu is a real thing, and you girls just have to get to realize that. Or here's another. Love is welcoming your in-laws for a week-long stay. Nothing sentimental about that one, for sure.

Or love is being able to say you're sorry. Yeah, that's realistic, isn't it? Quite substantive. But what is love to God?

Perhaps our text today ought to be from John chapter 21, and the risen Jesus words to Simon Peter, remember, after his great denial. Do you love me? He said to him three times by the lakeshore.

And after saying this, says John, he said to him, follow me. Perhaps we should add another. John 14, verse 15. If you love me, keep my commandments, said Jesus.

[6 : 55] And of course, he speaks the commandment his father has given him, which is, as he says himself in John 12, verse 50, the way of eternal life. I know that his commandment is eternal life.

And that has always been so, and it's precisely what we see here in Deuteronomy chapter 6, where verse 4, if you look, gives us what Jesus himself says is the first and great commandment.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

On this, said Jesus, remember, and on the second, love your neighbor as yourself, which of course is evidence of true love for God.

On this hangs all the law and the prophets, the whole call of the scriptures. That's why he says in Luke 10, do this and you will live.

He's not pretending when he says that. Far from it. The Father's commandment is life. And to love him and to know him is everlasting life.

[8 : 03] But that is what Moses is speaking about right here. How to truly love the Lord your God by responding to his call of grace with absolute loyalty of life that shows itself in following him, his way, under his command, his sole command, none other.

Life, the life that is the gift of his abundant, redeeming grace, it is entered into and enjoyed fully through obedience, through loving loyalty to him and to him alone.

Love that's expressed in loyalty to his whole commandment. Notice that phrase again. Look at chapter 5, verse 31, the whole commandment. That's what Moses hears from God and it's to teach Israel as he's received it so that, verse 32, they will hear it and do it.

Verse 33, so as to walk in his way, the way the Lord commanded us, which is, notice, the way of life, that you may live, that it may go well with you.

And chapter 6, verse 1, this is the commandment, he says, as he begins to lay out and explain what that life looks like. The whole commandment of God is simply the whole covenant of God.

[9 : 25] It's the whole revelation of God's grace to us and it's the whole response that God requires from us in his sovereign call that is upon the life of all of those that he calls to be his own.

Now, I need to say a word about this language of commandment because I don't want us to be confused. Some people might think, well, that's the Old Testament way.

Surely the New Testament way of the gospel is quite different. Not at all. In fact, the New Testament uses precisely the same language as the Old. And I want us to be absolutely clear about this.

In Hebrews chapter 9, we identify the commandment of the law that was given by Moses at Sinai. It's identified as the covenant. And the people were bound to that covenant by the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant.

And the writer goes on in the next chapter in Hebrews 10 to say, how much more then must we in these days, must we not reject the blood of the covenant through which we have received the knowledge of the truth through a better and more powerful word made at last through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[10:41] Much less, he says, will we escape if we refuse to obey him whose voice shakes not only the earth but the whole heavens. And the Son of God says to this, do this and live.

When the Son of God says to us, follow me and keep my commandments, he can hardly be less solemn, less serious than when Moses says it, can it? Again, the Apostle John in 1 John 2, he says that he writes no new commandment but an old commandment that you've had from the beginning. And yet he says it is also a new commandment. Why? Because the darkness is passing away and the light is shining. In other words, these last days of fulfillment of the promises are upon us.

And so this is love, he says in 2 John 6, that we walk according to his commandments. Exactly the same language, isn't it? And in John's vision in Revelation, he reminds us plainly that the saints of God are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14, verse 12. Same again in Revelation 12, 17. That's why Paul can charge Timothy in 1 Timothy 6, the verse that we began the service with, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach.

[12:06] And it's clear in the context there that the commandment is the faith that he is to fight for. It's the good deposit of the gospel that's entrusted to him. It's that through which they are able to take hold of that which is truly life, says Paul.

Life eternal. Likewise, in Romans 10, verse 8, Paul says that the commandment of Moses in Deuteronomy is the gospel. It's the word of faith that we are proclaiming, the gospel of God's grace unto life.

Perhaps just turn with me to one reference just so we're absolutely clear on this. 2 Peter 2, page 1019. if you have a church Bible. 2 Peter 2, just to see that this really is the universal apostolic teaching.

In 2 Peter 2, verse 20, Peter speaks of the escape from this world of sin that comes through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And in chapter 21, he calls this knowing the way of righteousness. righteousness. But look at the second half of that verse, verse 21. He refers to that way of righteousness as the holy commandment.

[13:24] And again, in chapter 3, verse 2, the commandment of our Lord and Savior through your apostles. Indeed, that is a very striking verse, isn't it? Look at it.

He refers to the Old Testament witness of the prophets as predictions, as promises. and the New Testament gospel as the commandments of our Lord and Savior.

That's the very opposite, isn't it, to what some people mistakenly think. Some people think that the Old Testament is all about commands and the New Testament is all about promises of grace. Well, if that's what you think, then the apostle Peter is saying the very opposite here.

What do you make of that? Of course, he's not saying the opposite. He's just saying that the gospel has been the same right since the very beginning.

It is a covenant word of God's sovereign grace and mercy, which both promises grace, unearned, undeserved, uninhibited, both promises grace and commands with sovereign authority loyalty and obedience of faith.

[14:30] If you love me, you will keep my commandments. That's the word of God. And this is love, says the apostle John, that we walk according to his commandments, walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

See the second letter of John. And so, if we are going to walk thus, as children of light, as Paul puts it in Ephesians 4 and 5, as walking in love, according to his commandments, love, and as Paul says to the church in Ephesus, we must understand what the will of the Lord is.

We must understand what loving him actually looks like in day-to-day life. And here is a chapter, Deuteronomy chapter 6, written, Paul says, for our instruction, us upon whom the end of the ages has come, a chapter which gives us clearly a lesson in loving.

And if this word had the place of first importance for Israel way back then under Moses, then how much more important is it that we should learn how to love our God fully and finally revealed to us as he is in the Lord Jesus Christ?

How much more important it is so that we may love him more dearly and follow him more nearly for the sake of his great love for us, which we've known in Jesus Christ?

[16:03] So let's look at this chapter. I want first to try to summarize six things that it shows us about the loyalty of real love, about the loyalty of real love.

Real love to God means utter loyalty in all of life. Notice that the commandment that Israel has to do verse 1, that it has to keep verse 2, that it has to hear and do in verse 3.

Notice that that commandment is first of all a command to love. So that means that love cannot just be an emotion, can it? It cannot be something that we have no control over.

No, it is an act of the will. It is an act of response to the revelation that God has given to us.

Christopher Wright says that the command to love is one of Deuteronomy's favorite ways of expressing the response God expects from his people.

people. And you'll see that if you read all through the book, perhaps most noticeably in chapter 11, which is really the climax of this first section 5 to 11, where repeatedly we're called to love the Lord with all our heart, to love him from the heart.

[17:17] Ex corde caritas, love from the heart. That was my old school motto. Nobody knew on earth what it meant, I'm sure. And as Chris Wright points out, the command to love and to obey are so often linked that they're almost synonymous.

But they're not quite identical because it's not just obedience that God wants, certainly not grudging obedience. He wants loving, joyful obedience from us.

He wants whole hearted self-giving of our hearts to him. And that's the first of these six things. Look at verses 4 to 5. Love is, according to Moses and to Jesus, love is passionate and complete.

Not half-hearted, not double-minded. The Lord our God, the Lord is one, and you will love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Heart and soul just defines the whole range of your being. When Jesus adds mind, heart, soul, and mind, he's just making explicit in the Greek language what's implicit here in the Hebrew language because in the Old Testament the heart is the will, it's the mind, it's the control center of your whole being.

[18:39] And so the command is to love the Lord your God with everything you are and with all your might. Couldn't be greater. And notice that this primary fruit of pure theology is pure love.

Verse 4 is pure theology, isn't it? It's words about God, theologos. It's what the theologians would call theology proper. It's the doctrine of God. This is who our God is. And because our Lord is one Lord, our love is to be one.

It's to be undivided from an undivided heart. There's to be no half-heartedness, that's impossible.

There's to be no double-mindedness, that's what the apostle James warns against.

Remember, the divided heart of split loyalties, the one that hears but doesn't do. The adulterous heart is what he calls it.

Purify your hearts, you double-minded, is James' calling, calling challenge. And we like to think, don't we, that we can serve God today, and yet still keep some room in our hearts for the pet loves that we want to have as well.

[19:54] The things that we cherish, the things we want, the things that we think we can hold on to, and God will say, oh, that's all right, I've got a good chunk of your heart, I'll leave you with the rest of that for all those other things, for your material ambitions, for your career ambitions, for your determination to do things your way and not mine, that's all right.

No, no, no, we need to read the letter of James. We need to read the words of Jesus, we need to read the words of Moses here, that is not so. He demands your whole heart.

Read through the book of Kings, that sorry tale, and there's a constant refrain, isn't there, that such and such a king's heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God. Even the good kings, like Jehoshaphat, who did so much good in the kingdom, do you remember?

There's a but, but he did not remove the high places, the idolatrous places, the other worship, alongside the worship of God.

Only Josiah, remember, the great reformer, were told of him, he turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, unlike any before him and any after him.

[21 : 09] And our God, by revealing himself to his people, claims their whole heart for himself. He claims us.

And if that was true for the people under Moses, how much more does the Lord Jesus claim our whole heart and soul to love him who loved us to the last with a love that was absolutely passionate and complete.

Not the slightest half-hearted, never double-minded. And says the Apostle John, this is how we know that we have come to love him if we keep his commandments.

And that's exactly what Moses says here in verse 6, do you see? Love, he says, is concrete and willful. It's not vague. It's not emotional. Loving God with all your heart means, look, that these here words that I'm commanding you today will be on your heart.

There's no vacuous feeling of love that's in view here. It's very specific obedience. And Jesus and all his apostles make clear that love is a command that you do.

[22 : 28] It's not an emotion that you feel. So to focus on the heart and to give a real heart response to God, according to God himself, means focusing on his words, do you see?

True heart worship is word-centered. And worship that is in the spirit of God is worship that walks by the scriptures. believers.

That's what Paul says to the church in Ephesus and to the church in Colossae. In almost identical passages in Ephesians 5 and in Colossians chapter 4, it's very instructive indeed.

Don't turn it up, but in Ephesians 5, Paul urges believers to walk, that is to live, as children of light, doing what is good and right and true and so pleasing the Lord, understanding his will.

Not in drunkenness and debauchery, but filled with the spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. In other words, it's living like that, as he wants us to live, that is the singing, the making music to God that he wants to have from us, with all our hearts.

[23 : 37] That's the song of love that God wants from you and me. He wants our lives to honor him, to praise him, to sing to him. And in Colossians 4, he speaks so similarly. He says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

Not the ways of malice and slander and anger and obscenity. And do that, he says, by letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, in hymns and spiritual songs, in all wisdom, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Doing everything, doing everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

You see, lives doing his will that are captive to his words, that's the song of worship that God wants from his people. To love him, you see, is to have our hearts, to have the whole center of our lives, to have it ruled by his words and by his voice alone.

And so thirdly, you see, in verses 7 to 9, and also in verses 20 to 25, we can see that love is pervasive and infectious.

[24 : 53] It's not peripheral, it's not private. Derek Kidner comments on these verses, as against most religions which inculcate routines, God looks for knowledge and understanding and sees the home and the common round as its school.

His teachings are to be the very stuff and pattern of a family's life, as gladly worn as a ring or ornament and as obvious as their front door. And that puts it very well.

What's encouraged here is not a rigid, an external conformity to a host of crippling house rules. No, quite the reverse. It's the natural, communicative, conversational life of God's people, just saturated with his being and with his ways.

It's family life that's just permeated with his word and ways. So that everything in the whole household is wholesome, is healthy, is good. It's being shaped by the presence of the Lord himself and by loyalty to him, to his commands, to his ways.

It's a household shaped in every way by the truth of the gospel of God. It's a family life centered on walking in his good ways for him in response to his gracious work for us in our lives.

[26 : 17] Don't miss that. The fact that all that is to be taught to children here is firmly rooted in the grace of God, the mercy of God, the goodness of God.

Look at verse 20. When your son asks, what's the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes and the rules that the Lord has commanded you? When your son says, Dad, why do we go to church on Sunday and not just to the shops, not just to play golf all day?

Why don't we do some of the things that our friends do? Why do we give so much of our money to the church so we can't have the best car like Johnny's dad has? And so on, those sorts of questions. Then you will say, verse 21, because we were slaves and the Lord our God saved us. He brought us out of slavery with his mighty hand. He brought us into his great blessing and he promised us a wonderful, wonderful future of life with him.

And he loves us so much. And he's told us how to live so as to make that love known back to him that we want to give him. Everything our God commands for us is for our good.

[27 : 31] It's for our blessing. It's for our life. He loves us. And he wants us to love him. He wants us to honor him and serve him with all of our hearts.

That's why our family lives this way. You see, that's the way, isn't it, to teach our children. It's the way to teach anyone else the commands of God.

Only as what they truly are, the words of eternal life. If we don't do that, it's so easy, isn't it, to turn them into dead religion, to turn them into deadly legalism.

Indeed, that is exactly what the Jews did. That's what Judaism developed into. They took the words of verses 8 and 9 here, which are so clearly imagery, so clearly similes, as Derek Kidner says, that to be so much part of your life as obvious as your front door, as beautiful as the things you hang around your neck.

But they took them and made them into an absurdly literalistic religion, inventing phylacteries, the bands that they put around their arms and on their head, to stick chunks of God's law on the outside of their faces.

[28 : 44] And as Jesus himself says, just external ritual, to impress others, but with no real thought in the heart of God. You hypocrites, he said, woe to you, for your enormous phylacteries on your heads and on your hands.

That's the very opposite of what Moses is saying here. He wants God's word in your heart and in your lives, in the living obedience of faith, not the dead ritual of religion.

Read your Bibles, Jesus could have said to them. Look at Proverbs 3, verse 3. It's absolutely plain.

Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you. Bind them around your neck.

Write them in the tablet of your heart inside. And we need to be careful too, don't we, in our family life? And in our church family life?

Because it's the living, breathing words of gospel grace that are to be pervasive in all things.

Suffused with the love of Christ that makes obedience sweet, not sour.

[29 : 51] So that we see that his yoke is easy, is kind, not burdensome. That he's liberating in his commands, not harsh, not deadening.

There are, and have been, some Christian parents who have turned, verse 7 here, into a relentless religious regime. Something that is so subjugated, so regulated, so alienated their children, but they have utterly put them off, Christ and his church.

They want nothing to do with them. No, no, no. That's not what this is about. Never must we forget, verses 20 to 24, not in the explanation of why we live as we do, nor in the example of what our children should see in our lives, motivating us, shaping us, in everything that we say, everything that we do.

The fragrance of his grace, his redeeming love, must be pervasive. It must be infectious in our life, not peripheral, not private and hidden away.

That's what our children must see in us. That must be what they hear in us. Not just from immediate parents, but from all the church family. Well, fourth, verses 10 to 12, love is consistent and not forgetful in the good times.

[31 : 21] What a great deal of realism there is in these verses, isn't there? How easily we're drawn to prayer and we're forced to trust the Lord when everything around us is strife, when we're in the middle of battles, when it's a real struggle.

It's easy then not to forget the Lord. But how easy it is to forget Him when His blessings are all around us. Verse 11, houses full of good things. Property, yielding all sorts of wealth.

Tables, laden with feasting. Then, says the Lord, take care lest you forget Him. We always think, don't we, Lord, just give me a little bit more wealth.

Give me a bit more leisure time. Give me a bit more of this or that or the other, whatever it is. And then, then, I'll really be able to serve you the way you want me to. But often, it is actually the reverse, isn't it?

That's why the prayer in Proverbs 30 says, give me neither poverty nor riches, lest I be full and deny you, forget the Lord, or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of the Lord.

[32 : 35] It's why the psalmist in Psalm 62 warns, if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. Because it's dangerous. And the Lord blesses us materially with wealth, either in material things or in time and leisure, whatever it is.

Paul says to Timothy, many have been snared by that very thing and have wandered away from the truth. So Moses warns us here, don't be duped into self-sufficiency by your prosperity.

It's a real warning to all of us in our own lives. It's a warning to us in church life. It's so easy to forget when all seems to be well that everything comes from the Lord alone and not from us.

All His blessings, not just His redemption, not just His salvation, all that He gives us comes from Him. Never forget Him. So our love must be consistent and not forgetful in the midst of good times. just as in verses 16 to 18, it must be contented and not demanding in the lean times. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test as you tested Him at Massah.

[33 : 50] At Massah, you can read it in Exodus chapter 17, the people grumbled at God, demanding that He dance to their tune, demanding that He give them a fresh and noble proof of His existence, of His presence with them, of His power.

Is the Lord really among us? They said. Show us a sign, Lord, or we won't believe you. If you read back there, it is truly astonishing. This is a people fresh out of the land of Egypt.

They'd seen the ten plagues. They'd walked through the Red Sea on dry land. They'd seen the Egyptian soldiers destroyed. God had given them manna from heaven. He'd turned bitter water into sweets so that they could drink it.

He'd given them quails for their supper out of the sky. But that wasn't enough. No, today, we need fresh revelation. I want God to give me a sign today.

I want God to give a special word for me, for my life. I want God to guide me absolutely so that I know the decision I want to make today. God, where are you? Show yourself to me. That's what we say sometimes, isn't it?

[34 : 54] Or people say, oh, I'm feeling spiritually dry. God hasn't really spoken to me powerfully in church for ages. I feel I need something new. I need some new blessing, some new experience from God.

No, says Moses. Don't put the Lord, your God, to the test. And no, says Jesus, by the way. An evil generation demands a sign. Actually, you've had plenty words and plenty signs.

How about the sign of Jonah who preached the gospel of judgment to come and the need for your repentance today and every day? How about that one? Isn't that good enough for you today?

Okay? You see, real love to God trusts the word that he has already given us in abundance.

Verse 17, he's told us all these wonderful things. And we're to trust his promises and to obey his commands knowing that the Lord has promised good to us, that his word our hope secures.

As the hymn says, we don't need fresh things. Don't put the Lord, your God, to the test. Friends, there will be lean times in our Christian lives sometimes.

[36 : 06] Times when it seems as if there is a famine, there's a drought in our life of the experience of the nearness of God. But Paul says to Timothy, godliness with contentment is great gain.

We have God's words, we have his promises of grace. We know God's will, we have his commands for our lives. We know he's here, he's told us he is. We don't need to put him to the test.

That's not love. Love trusts him. Love goes on trusting and obeying him. Real love is contented, not demanding, in the lean times in our lives.

And finally, verses 13 to 15, love is narrow and exclusive. It's not ecumenical and inclusive in days of tolerance.

These verses could hardly be more relevant, could they, in our pluralistic age when we're surrounded like never before with the gods of the peoples around us. Whether it's the religious gods of the many nations and peoples of the world who now live among us here in our country, or whether it's the secular gods, the ideologies that our so-called culture of tolerance forces all to bow down to and worship publicly or else face ridicule and opprobrium and rejection.

[37 : 30] It's highly ironic, isn't it, how illiberal and intolerant our liberal, tolerant culture supposedly is. And today, I suppose, all around us are the gods of sexuality, the gods of homosexual celebration, gods of transgender celebration.

These seem to be the gods parading all around us today, aren't they? Well, says Moses, it is the Lord our God that we are to fear, no other gods.

Him we serve, His name we honor, and He will never yield His glory to another, not ever. And though many in the professing churches today are desperate to work a peace treaty, a power-sharing agreement between God and all these alien challengers, that can never, never be. Look at verse 15, for the Lord, the true God, is a jealous God. And He's in the midst. That is, He's real.

And the one thing that many today who think that way do not believe is precisely what He said here. Look, that He is angry with sin and wickedness, and that He will judge sin and wickedness even among His own professing people if they think that they can treat so lightly His holiness and His dignity and His unique glory.

[38 : 59] Go that way, says verse 15, and He will destroy you from the face of the earth. Now again, lest you should think that this is merely the dark shadow of the Old Testament that's been surpassed in the new through gentle Jesus, meek and mild, you need to go and read Revelation chapters 2 and 3 when you go home.

The risen Lord Jesus Christ saying to His churches, I will come against you. I will destroy you if you do not repent. And if you continue to tolerate idolatry, and it is sexual immorality that is the idolatry that they're tolerating.

It's very hard, isn't it, in a culture like ours that screams for conformity to the so-called agenda of tolerance. Tolerance, which in fact is utterly intolerant and illiberal.

But as Peter said in Acts chapter 4, in the face of exactly that kind of hostility from the state, Peter said, there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved than the name of Jesus Christ.

And when they commanded Him not to preach, not to teach of Jesus Christ, he said, we cannot but speak. Because to love God will mean that at times we must obey God rather than obey men.

[40 : 27] And that may be very costly indeed. But real love to God is narrow and exclusive. It's not ecumenical and inclusive.

And we mustn't waver from that even when the gods of the culture are around and the people all around scream for us to do that and to bow down to their gods. No. That's the loyalty of real love. Real love to God means utter loyalty in all areas of life. love. But as we close, I don't want you to miss the promise of this chapter.

And it is the promise of the liberation of real love. Real love to God really does mean liberation for all of life.

Look at the purpose of this command to love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. Verse 3, you love the Lord like this that it may go well with you in a life of blessing as God has promised.

[41 : 31] Verse 18, that it may go well with you in the inheritance that God has sworn to give you. Verse 24, it's for our good that he may preserve us in life.

It's summed up in verse 25, isn't it? It will be righteousness for us. Not notice our righteousness for him but his righteousness for us so that we can be his forever so that we can stand before him as his saints, as the people that he is saving for himself forever and ever.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, says the psalmist, and stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who doesn't lift up his soul to what is false, to idols.

In other words, the one who loves the Lord with all his heart and soul and strength. He, says the psalmist, will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Don't you know, says Paul in Romans 6, that you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either sin, which leads to death, or obedience, which leads to righteousness.

[42 : 45] You, he says, have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God and the fruit you get leads to holiness and to its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's the gospel. Love him obediently and obey him lovingly and it will be righteousness for us. That's God's promise to us.

Love him whose service is perfect freedom and love will make obedience sweet. love him with the loyalty of your heart and he will lavish upon you the liberation of his heaven.

Jesus said, the father who sent me has himself given me a commandment what to say and what to speak and I know that his commandment is eternal life.

love the Lord friends with all your heart and soul and with all your strength. Do this and Jesus says you will live forever in the presence of the Lord.

[44 : 07] Let's pray. Our father in heaven how we thank you for your great commandment which is a call and a commandment to life.

Give us hearts we pray to receive it with joy and gladness and hearts to love you in return that we might know you and that in knowing you and the father we might know and embrace forever life itself for we ask it in Jesus name Amen