

Love of God & Christ for Church & Each Other II

(Feast of Tabernacles—Day 2)
Michael Heiss—October 10, 2014

Good morning once again, everyone! Today we're going to be continuing on in talking about the love of God and the love of Jesus.

Today we're going to look more into the relationship of the love between God the Father and His Son, and the then between the Son and the Father with us, and us with Them. We will see that the relationship is an incredible one, an awe-inspiring one where God says:

- we are His friends
- we are His children

I know about having God as our friend. In fact, one of the great American founding fathers—Benjamin Franklin—at the Constitutional Convention when he gave that memorial speech calling upon our asking that great friend of ours: 'Do we not think that we still need His help.' Of course, He was referring to God.

We sing songs like *What a Friend We have in Jesus*. This is true. He is our friend, but He's more than our friend. Yet, God says, we are *His* friends. So, for me to have God as my friend is one thing, but for Him to say to me and to all of you that we are *His* friends, that says an awful lot.

John is the apostle who wrote a lot about love. He was the apostle who leaned on Jesus' breast during the final moments of the last supper. He was beloved of Jesus. He was very special, and he wrote and said some amazing things.

John 15:9: "**As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love.**" Let's get this straight. He says, "...the Father loved Me..." and as much He loved Me, and still does, 'I love you.' That's almost mind-boggling when you stop and think about it.

To further expand on it, in John 17 we really have what is known as the Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer that He uttered to His Father at that final Passover celebration.

John 17:20: "I do not pray for these only... [He is talking to His Father; not praying only for the disciples who are there with Him, but for all of us.] ...but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word... [it has come down to us] ...that they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You..." (vs 20-21). Jesus is saying that He wants all of us to be at one with each other in:

- mind

- spirit
- understanding
- devotion

"...that they also may be one in Us, in order that the world may believe that You did send Me. And I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me..." (vs 21-22). Let that one sink in! Here is Jesus saying, 'You gave Me glory and that same glory is now given to them' and to us on down. Of course, we're not going to get the full measure of it until the resurrection into the kingdom, but nevertheless, He says:

"...I have given them the glory that You gave *to* Me, in order that they may be one, in the same way *that* We are one" (v 22). We can understand how the Father and Christ are one; we're supposed to be one with each other in the same way, with the same love and the same spirit.

Verse 23: "I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one; and that the world may know that You did send Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." Did we all catch that one? Jesus is saying that ***the Father loves us no less than He loved His own begotten Son!*** That ought to be humbling and inspiring.

Verse 24: "Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me may also be with Me where I am, so that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me; because You did love Me before *the* foundation of *the* world. Righteous Father, the world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You did send Me. And I have made known Your name to them, and will make *it* known; so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (vs 24-26).

We're talking about an incredible family relationship here. I wonder if we really deeply understand what that means.

John 15:9: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love.... [v 12]: ...This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. **You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you.** No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father" (vs 9, 12-15). That's remarkable! To show what Jesus did about laying

down His life, because Jesus said, 'Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends.'

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus; Who, although He existed in *the* form of God..." Remember something: when it says that *existed in the form of God*, that's another way of saying He *was* and *is* God. ***You don't exist in the form of God without being God!*** Which is, of course, what the Jewish leaders were just furious about. They said, 'You make Yourself equal with God.' He was, because He was, indeed, equal with God. They didn't like that! 'There's but one God, one being'; they didn't understand.

"...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross" (vs 5-8). *For us!* 'Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his neighbors.' Jesus did that!

- How do *we* do that?
- Does God want us to die for each other?

Maybe once in a great while that might have to happen, but generally not! Let's look at some examples of what it means to 'lay down your life for each other,' or to *do* for each other.

We're going to look at one of the classic ones. We can't do this to the extent that this man did it, because it's a different day and age. There are legal considerations. But you've all heard of the 'good Samaritan.' Let's take a look at this 'good Samaritan.' We're all familiar with it, but it's always good to read it again. A remarkable story and parable:

Luke 10:25: "Now, a certain doctor of the law suddenly stood up, tempting Him [Christ] and saying, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And He said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read *it*?' Then he answered *and* said, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly. Do this, and you shall live.' But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" (vs 25-29).

Verse 30: And taking *it* up, Jesus said, 'A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was encircled by thieves; *and* after they had stripped him of *his* goods and inflicted *him* with wounds, they went away, leaving *him* half dead.

Now, by coincidence, a certain priest went down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side" (vs 30-31). 'I'm not going to get involved with this Gentile, this Samaritan'; a priest of God, one was to represent God, but that was his attitude.

Verse 32: "And in like manner also, a Levite, when he was at the place, came and saw *him*, and passed by on the opposite side.... [same approach, same attitude] ...But a certain Samaritan..." (vs 32-33). One of those lowlife despised Samaritan from Mt. Gerizim, a pagan temple, a Samaritan.

"...*as* he was journeying, came to him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. And he went *to him* and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he put him on his own beast *and* brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And when he left on the next day, he took out two silver coins *and* gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him, and whatever you may expend above *this*, I will repay you when I come back.' Therefore, which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor of him who fell among the thieves? And he said, 'The one who showed compassion toward him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'You go and do likewise.'" (vs 33-37).

We can't do exactly as this good Samaritan did, because if you did find someone lying in the street or who was beaten, and if those guys were still around, they could do harm to you. But you can call 911. And if you came upon a person who was injured lying in the street, you'd better be careful, because if you move him in any way and try to help him and he becomes worse, you get slapped with a lawsuit.

So, we're not exactly in the same capacity as this Samaritan. Remember what he did and let's see what Jesus said to us in Matt. 25 and compare the two. One simplifies the other.

Matthew 25:31: "Now, when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the Holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon *the* throne of His glory; and He shall gather before Him all the nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at *His* left. Then shall the King say to those at His right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from *the* foundation of *the* world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; *I* was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and

you came to Me” (vs 31-36).

Verse 37: “Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and fed *You*? Or thirsty, and gave *You* a drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and took *You in*? Or naked, and clothed *You*? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to *You*?’ And answering, the King shall say to them, “Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you have done *it* to Me” (vs 37-40).

That’s what we can do! It means taking time to help each other. If someone is sick, maybe visit them. If he/she is in the hospital, pay a little visit and say, ‘Hi, how are you? Is there anything we can do for you.’ A little consolation. Someone just got through maybe giving birth to a child, can’t quite get up and down; maybe cook a meal and bring it to her. Maybe for some people, maybe mow the lawn once or twice for them.

All these things that we can give, that’s what Jesus meant when He said, ‘Laying down your life.’ It doesn’t mean literally dying or being martyred, but it means giving of your time and your effort to help. This is what Jesus was referring to.

Now, give this some thought: What is God had seen us in our state, full of sin, vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. He saw that once in the days of Noah. What if He had said again, ‘I’ve had it with mankind. That’s it! Enough! They have blown it! They rebelled against Me and, they killed My own Son, whatever it is, forget it, let them die!

If God had done that, if He had said that, would He have been righteous? Would He have been justified in saying it? *Yes!* Remember the penalty? Mayor LaGuardia paid that \$10 fine. Someone had to pay it. Well, someone had to pay the penalty for sin. God would have been fully justified if He had let all of us die to pay that penalty, but He didn’t; He so loved us!

He did decide to die, and let’s see it specifically. Romans is an incredible epistle. If you ever want to get a feel for the doctrines of the Church and the beliefs of the Church that way, in an organized manner, read Rom. It is magnificent, well organized. But in this case:

Roman 5:5: “And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. For even when we were without strength, at the appointed time Christ died for the ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But

God commends **His own love to us** because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (vs 5-8). So, He did! And now He calls us *friends*.

You know, someone else was a *friend of God*. God called him *His friend*—Abraham, and Moses, too. Yes, God spoke to Moses face-to-face, but in particular I want to look at Abraham. We’re going to just very briefly and then we’re going to see an interplay between Abraham and God, how they spoke to each other respectfully. God and Abraham, almost face-to-face. We will see what a master diplomat Abraham was.

Isaiah 41:8: “But you, Israel, *are* My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, **My friend**.” That is quite a title to have, *the friend of God!* So, let’s see one of the reasons why Abraham was a friend of God and how he acted.

Gen. 18—this is a time when God came down and was going to check out Sodom and Gomorrah. He promises Sarah and Abraham about having a son.

Genesis 18:16: “And the men... [the two angels that accompanied God] ...rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham was going with them to send them on the way. And the LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For **I know him**...’ (vs 16-19). Not only does God say that Abraham is ‘My friend,’ He says, “...I know him...”

“...that he will command his children and his house after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him.” (v 19).

One of the reasons: God says of Abraham, ‘He kept My laws, My statutes, My commandments; **he obeyed My voice**’ (Gen. 26:5). That’s why Abraham was a friend of God.

Verse 20: “And the LORD said, ‘Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which has come to Me. And if not, I will know.’ And the men turned their faces away from there, and went toward Sodom. But Abraham still stood before the LORD” (vs 20-22)—alongside Him.

Verse 23: “And Abraham drew near and said...” Mind you, he’s talking to the God of heaven and earth in human form; and Abraham *knows* he’s

talking to that Being. Read his words:

“...‘Will You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Perhaps there are fifty righteous within the city. Will You also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? **Far** be it from You to act in this manner, to kill the righteous with the wicked. And **far** be it from You, that the righteous should be as the wicked. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’” (vs 23-25).

- What is Abraham doing?
- Chiding the God of heaven?

Remember, Abraham and God are close, they were friends, and God respected Abraham. What did God say? He didn’t take umbrage, He didn’t take offense; this is friend to friend.

Verse 26: “And the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.... [but Abraham isn’t through, yet] ...And Abraham answered and said, ‘Behold now, I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD—... [he knew Who he was talking to] ...I who am but dust and ashes’” (vs 26-27). Talk about tact and diplomacy! Abraham is truly the master diplomat. He really was! If you were a king and you wanted somebody to represent you before another king, another empire, believe me, Abraham would be your man!

Verse 28: “‘Perhaps there will be five lacking from the fifty righteous. Will You destroy all the city for lack of five?’ And He said, ‘If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*.’.... [Abraham is still at it]: ...And he spoke to Him yet again, and said, ‘Perhaps there shall be forty found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not do *it* for forty’s sake.’ And he said, ‘Oh let not the LORD be angry, and I will speak. Perhaps there shall be thirty found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not do *it* if I find thirty there.’” (vs 28-30). Does Abraham know when to stop? *Apparently not!*

Verse 31: “And he said, ‘Lo now, I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD. Perhaps there shall be twenty found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy *it* for twenty’s sake.’ And he said, ‘Oh do not let the LORD be angry, and I will speak only once more. Perhaps *only* ten shall be found there.’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy *it* for ten’s sake’” (vs 31-32).

Talk about driving a bargain! Abraham was magnificent! He really was, and God was gracious, because Abraham was His friend. God wasn’t going to ‘diss’ him, God wasn’t going to put him down. God doesn’t do that!

Verse 33: “And the LORD went His way as

soon as He had left off talking with Abraham. And Abraham returned to his place.”

I, in my own somewhat perverted or twisted way, look at this and sometimes think to myself, ‘I wonder if God was thinking to Himself, *I am getting out of here before Abraham talks me out of the whole thing!*’ I don’t know; maybe not. Maybe that’s my imagination running away with me.

We know the story. God couldn’t find ten, couldn’t find five! Four theoretically, but in reality maybe only three, Lot and his two daughters. Unfortunately, his wife wasn’t much of a prize; she turned back, she looked back.

Understand something: In the Hebrew when it talks about looking back, it doesn’t mean that she turned and said, ‘We’ve got to get out of here.’ *No!* The Hebrew implies she didn’t really want to leave. ‘I really want to go back; is there any way I can go back?’ That’s what is implied. God didn’t turn her into a pillar of salt because.... He wasn’t going to be like the truly great baseball player Satchel Page. He was incredible. No one knows how old he was because the records were destroyed as to when he was born. Some say he was 34, 44, but he was still pitching and throwing strikes. He was famous for saying, ‘Don’t look back, you might find something gaining on you.’

If Lot’s wife had just been running away and taking a quick look back and kept going, God would never have done that. She really didn’t want to leave this world, she didn’t want to leave Sodom; that’s why she was turned into a pillar of salt. Sometimes we have to understand the background of why God does certain things. You might say that God just haphazard, He’s just arbitrary. *NO!* God is never arbitrary.

Jesus called us His friends, but we are more than friends. John makes a marvelous statement, and inspiring one: 1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2).

John says to look at this glorious love, God is our Father, He has begotten us, we are His children, not just friends—*family!* Oddly, one of the most effective forms of government is that of an institution, an organization known as Cosa Nostra—the Mafia. Why is the Mafia perhaps the most effective form of government on this earth? *It’s*

family! It truly is family. There's a don sitting, talking, explaining what he wants done. Sometimes there are some of the younger ones coming up and saying, 'This is crazy. This is stupid.' And practically gets up and shouts into the don's face. The don just sits there listening patiently.

Why? Because the don knows their family, and the don knows that when he finally makes his decision, these young bucks, so to speak, roustabouts, will obey him. They will follow his instructions. But in order for the family to function properly, he has to let them blow off steam. And he does. Finally, he says, 'I hear you. Yes, you have some valid points, but this is our overall objective. This is how it must be. This is my decision.' They go back and they all work together, because it's family.

That's why family is the most important, the most effective form of government in existence. And we're all going to be part of the family in the Kingdom of God, and if we have an idea or two, we may go directly to the Father. We're all going to be there and He'll listen. He may say yes, He may say no. If you will remember, the Lord is pictured by the Prophet Micah of having a council in heaven.

Trying to get Ahab go up so he could follow Ramath-Gilead in his war. God had had it with Ahab. He said, 'How are we going to do this? Who will do it?' God was asking for suggestions. One guy finally comes up, one angel—probably a demon, because after all Satan does have access to His court—and says, 'I will be a lying spirit in his mouth.' What does God say? *Good! Go do it!* It was done; it's family. That's the point, we are family.

We're going to be like Him; we're going to see Him as He is. Well, how is He? What does He look like? Let's rehearse it again. We have a description of Jesus Christ of Nazareth glorified.

Revelation 1:10: "I was in *the* Spirit on the Day of the Lord; and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet behind me, saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, and what you see, write in a book, and send *it* to the churches that *are* in Asia: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.' And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands; and in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *One* like *the* Son of man, clothed in *a garment* reaching to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden breastplate. And His head and hair *were* like white wool, white as snow; and His eyes *were* like a flame of fire; and His feet *were* like fine brass, as if *they* glowed in a furnace; and His voice *was* like *the* sound of many waters"

(vs 10-15). That's what we are going to be like.

To further show that, let turn to the Prophet Daniel, who has something very similar to that. Daniel was truly beloved by God, a remarkable individual.

Daniel 12:2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever" (vs 2-3). That's what we will do.

In fact, the Apostle Paul said in essence, whatever Jesus Christ inherited from His Father, we inherit the same. Nothing more and nothing less. If that isn't awe inspiring, I don't know what is.

Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the* children of God. Now, if *we are* children, *we are* also heirs—truly, **heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**—if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (vs 16-18).

We are "...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..." That Greek word means *joint, together, that we rise with Him as He is*, so we shall be. That's His goal! That's what He wants for us! It is His love for us that He will then use us to spread His joy, His love, His law, His way into all the universe. ***That is the relationship of God the Father to the Son, the Son to the Father and both of Them to us, and us with Christ!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 15:9
- 2) John 17:20-26
- 3) John 15:9, 12-15
- 4) Philippians 2:5-8
- 5) Luke 10:25-37
- 6) Matthew 25:31-40
- 7) Romans 5:5-8
- 8) Isaiah 41:8
- 9) Genesis 18:16-33
- 10) 1 John 3:1-2
- 11) Revelation 1:10-15
- 12) Daniel 12:2-3
- 13) Romans 8:16-18

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Genesis 26:5

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Love of God & Christ for Church and Each Other #2
(FOT-Day 2)

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