

God's Supernatural Love Was Manifested In Christ



Foundations (Day 215)
by Derek Prince

In his letter to the Romans, Paul defines the precise nature of this divine love, poured out within the believer by the Holy Spirit.

> "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (5:6-8)

Paul points out that even natural love, apart from the grace of God, might impel a man to die for his friend, if that friend were a good and righteous man – just as natural love, in another form, might cause a mother to give her life for her child. Paul then shows that the supernatural, divine love of God is seen in the fact that Christ died for sinners who could have had no claim upon any kind of natural love whatever.

To describe the condition of those for whom Christ died, Paul uses three successive phrases: "without strength... ungodly... sinners." This means that those for whom Christ died were, at that time, utterly unable to help themselves, totally alienated from God and in open rebellion against Him. It was in dying for people such as this that Christ manifested agape – the divine love – in its perfect fullness.

John defines the divine love in a similar way.

> "In this the love [agape] of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 John 4:9)

The divine love does not depend upon anything worthy of love in those to whom it is directed, nor does it wait to be reciprocated before it gives all. On the contrary, it gives first and freely to those who are unlovable, unworthy and even in open rebellion. Jesus expressed this divine love in His prayer for those who were crucifying Him.

> "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)

The same divine love is expressed in the dying prayer of the martyr Stephen for those who were stoning him:

> "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." (Acts 7:60)

The same love is expressed again in the words of one who was an eager witness of Stephen's stoning – Saul of Tarsus, later the apostle Paul. Concerning his own Jewish brethren, who had consistently rejected and persecuted him, Paul says:

> "I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. 9:1-3)

So greatly did Paul yearn for the salvation of his persecuting Jewish brethren that he would have been willing to forego all the blessings of salvation for himself and return under the curse of unforgiven sin with all its consequences, if this could bring his brethren to Christ. Paul acknowledges that the experience and realisation of this love was made possible only through the presence of the Holy Spirit within, for he says, "...my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit."

Devotional

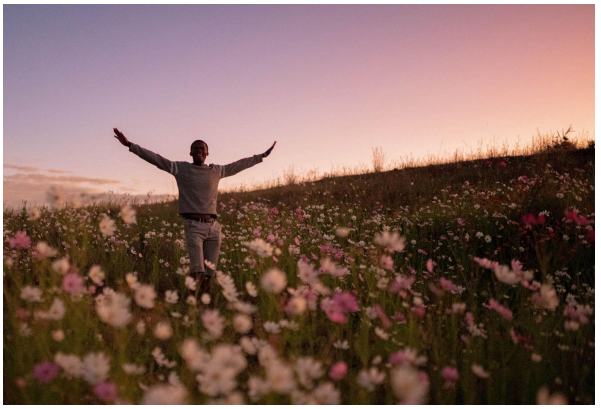
Transcript: WD-B052-215-ENG
Last Updated: 03 Feb 2025
Website: derekprince.com

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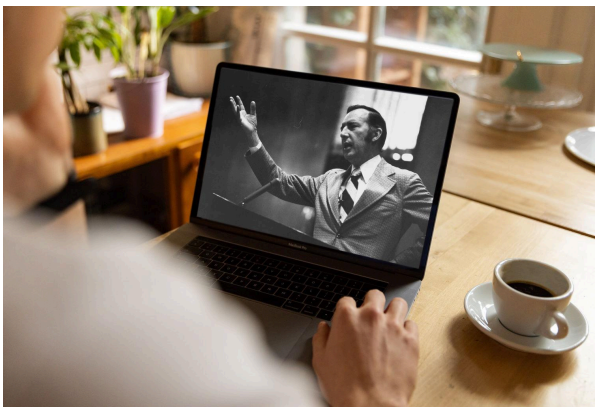
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