

## "Christ's Loving Mind"

If you really want to know what love is all about, look at Jesus Christ. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're hoping to see a little of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. From the time that we were little children, we've sung the song, "Jesus loves me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so." Jesus Christ Himself in Scripture assures us, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). When we love Him and keep His commandments, the Lord Jesus promises to make His home with us (John 14:23). Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

I've been blessed to have loving parents, a loving wife, loving children, loving grandchildren, loving brothers and sisters, and many, many dear friends; but no one has ever loved me like Jesus Christ. Only Jesus ever died for me; only Jesus endured the cross and died for my sins; and only Jesus could forgive me. Jesus has put up with my weaknesses, prayed for me, and never gave up on me. 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says that "Jesus Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." One can hardly imagine all the suffering that Jesus endured on the cross, so that you and I might come to God and live with Him forever. Such love has no equal.

The Lord Jesus personified love. And you could see it in everything that He did during His earthly ministry. Parables of the prodigal son and the Good Samaritan reveal how God loves us and how we should love each other. Jesus tasted death for every person (Hebrews 2 and verse 9), because He loved us. The gospel is for all people in every nation. And we can all be one in Christ Jesus, because of His love and grace.

Now this is an important study on the love of Christ, and we offer it free. If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org) and on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Ephesians 3:14 to 19, and explore the loving mind of Jesus Christ.

Our reading today comes from Ephesians chapter 3 verses 14 to 19, and there Paul is praying for the people in the church of Ephesus. "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." And oh how badly we need to know the love of Christ.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that in Your word you give us a glimpse of the great love of Jesus Christ, His heart, His compassion, and His willingness to forgive our sins. Help us Heavenly Father to love Him, and to be obedient to Your word. In Jesus name, Amen."

According to John 1:1 to 4, the Lord Jesus was the Word and He was of course God, and He existed with the Father from the beginning. Now He created us and now sustains us (Colossians 1:15 to 17).

And He prayed in John 17:5, “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Now until Jesus came to the earth, He lived in all the glory and beauty of heaven with the Father. Have you considered what Jesus gave up by coming to earth? 2 Corinthians 8 verse 9 says, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” Jesus gave it all up, so that you might share the glory and riches of heaven with Him. Jesus left eternal glory and comfort to suffer on earth.

Ephesians 2:4 to 7 reminds us, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he has loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.” Jesus wanted us to share with Him the glory of the heavenly places. He gave up heaven for a time, so you could enjoy it forever.

Now to save us from sin and redeem us was not a cheap thing. Colossians 1:13 to 14 says, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” We certainly live in a dark and confused world, just as it was in the first century, but the Lord’s love saw our hearts and wanted to redeem us. He knew we couldn’t save ourselves by ourselves, that He had to redeem us. He knew that we couldn’t be good enough to earn heaven; that we had to be redeemed by His blood that was sacrificed.

And when Jesus came to this earth, “He came to His own, (but the Bible says) that those who were His own didn’t receive Him” (John 1 verse 11). Of course, God knew this would happen. In the seventh century before Christ, Isaiah the prophet said in Isaiah 53:3 to 6, that “Jesus was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we’ve turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Though Jesus came with love to redeem us and to bear our iniquity, the people of this time and many people today have never accepted Him. He bore the sins of people who despised and rejected Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head, spit on Him, slapped Him repeatedly, bloodied and weakened Him with a cruel whip, mocked Him, and condemned Him unjustly. They put nails through His hands and feet and hung Him upon a cross. The worst in men did this to the holy and innocent Son of God. He willingly endured the suffering and the cross because He loved us.

The Lord Jesus was as good as His word. He never commanded us to do anything He was unwilling to do. The Lord Jesus said in John 15:12 to 13, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

Peter explained the heart of Jesus and His determination to do what was right and what was needed despite the cost. 1 Peter 2:21 to 24 says, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; and while suffering, He uttered no threats, but He kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” For Jesus, it was all very personal. He didn’t send

others to die for us; He paid that price Himself. He didn't take vengeance on those who caused His suffering, but entrusted Himself to God.

Jesus defines what love is all about. He didn't just talk love; He lived it and died to demonstrate it. 1 John 4 verses 8 to 11 says that "Anyone who doesn't love doesn't know God, because God is love. And in this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." That big word "propitiation" refers to His loving sacrifice in order to atone for our sins. He was our sin-offering that we might have peace with God.

Now without His gracious death, we can't have the forgiveness of sins. Because He lovingly sacrificed Himself for us, He appeased God's wrath on sinful people. His blood washes us clean and frees us from the penalty of sin. And if you aren't cleansed by His sacrifice, then your going to have to pay the penalty for your sins yourself. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Without the blood of Jesus, the wrath of God abides on you. The Lord Jesus is the only way to the Father, and only His blood can wash away our sins.

And Jesus was willing to pay that extreme price of suffering and crucifixion for our sake. 1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." He was a righteous offering, so we could become righteous. He wanted to transform our lives, so that we could imitate Him and become the people that God intended for us to be. He wanted us to live with love in our hearts and lives. 1 Corinthians 16:14 says, "Let all that you do be done in love."

Jesus wanted His people to love everyone, people they didn't know, and even their enemies. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:43 to 48, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." I must confess, that this is a very high bar. It goes against being self-centered, but it gives us the path to peace.

Loving, even when we aren't loved back, was in the heart and the life of Jesus. Jesus again lived up to His own teaching. He cared about the hateful and indifferent people who sent Him to the cross. Luke 22:33 to 34 says: "And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they're doing.' And they cast lots to divide his garments." Jesus prayed for the very people who stripped Him, nailed Him to a cross, and gambled for His clothes.

Ephesians 5:1 and 2 urges us, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Churches not only meet to worship but they also meet to encourage one another, to encourage each other to love and to do good works. Hebrews 10:24 and 25 says, "and now let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." Now if you're one of those folks who have abandoned assembling with the church, you're robbing yourself of a relationship with God's family; and you're cheating yourself out of much good.

You might ask, "Well, what is Jesus doing for us now?" Well first, Jesus is interceding for you. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." Second, the Lord Jesus is your mediator with God. 1 Timothy 2:3 to 6 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time."

Third, Jesus is your advocate with the Father. 1 John 2:1 to 2 says, "My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation (that atoning sacrifice) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." The very one who died for you, to atone for your sins, is the One pleading your case before the Father in heaven to forgive you.

There's no doubt that you will suffer heartaches and struggles. Please don't imagine that these things mean that God doesn't love you. If you're a faithful Christian, there will never be a time when God and the Lord Jesus have turned against you. No matter what happens, God loves you.

Romans 8:35-39 says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Have confidence in God's love. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul said in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Yes, one day He's coming for us.

Let's pray. "Father, we're thankful for the promise of Your constant love, that You intercede for us. Father, we're thankful for Jesus, and for all that He's doing to bless our lives and to give us a home in heaven. And Father we pray that we will always love You and serve You. In Jesus name, Amen."

If you ask, "Phil, why are you a Christian?" I could give you many intellectual reasons to believe in Jesus Christ. I've spent a lifetime studying a defense of my faith, and the arguments are very convincing. My reason for serving Jesus Christ, however, comes from John 12 verse 32, where the Lord Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." My love came from His demonstrated love for me on the cross and His blessings given to me day by day. 1 John 4:19 says that, "We love, because He first loved us." I serve Jesus, because I love Him.

To be united with Christ, we must respond to God in faith, love, repentance, and obedience. We obey Christ when we're baptized. In baptism, God acts on us. Romans 6:3 to 7 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we've been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." Now God acts upon us in baptism through the death of Christ, burying us and raising us with Christ, so that we may be freed from sin. Now if you believe and love the Lord Jesus Christ, let God act and free you from sin when you're baptized.

We hope that today's study about Christ's Loving Mind has stirred you to love and serve Him. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). You can watch SEARCH on our website or anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And as you watch our programs, be sure to like them; because that helps spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us, don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. You see, everybody needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.