

The Love of Jesus

The Greatest Love, Part 1

☑ **Target:** *Get closer to Jesus and know His love and salvation*

Key Verses

Romans 8:38–39—For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, (39) nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 15:14—You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

Suggested Bible Reading

☐ Galatians 1–5; John 14 and 15

Other Recommended Reading

☐ *From Jesus with Love* (Aurora publication)

Prayer and Praise: “My Soul Thirsts”

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, “Where is your God?” When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. (Psalm 42:1–5)

Meditation—On Getting to Know Jesus in a Personal Way

God made Jesus to show us what He’s like and what He looks like, you might say. It’s too difficult for people to grasp the idea of God. He’s just spirit and they can’t see Him, they can’t feel Him, they don’t know where He is. He’s everywhere, He’s all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present. So God had to show what He was like by making His Son in the form of a man.

It’s so wonderful to know Jesus personally—the very Son of God Himself!

Getting to know someone is a matter of degrees. You hear about them, you are told what they’re like and what they are, and finally who they are, then you become acquainted when you’re introduced and they receive you and you receive them. Once you’ve met them there is a period where you learn to know them personally, and later you can grow into a really intimate relationship that is not dependent on what you’ve heard or learned about them from others. At that stage, you don’t use qualities or titles for their name, but you use their first name that their friends call them. You have a personal relationship with them and they’ve become your personal close friend.

It's that way with getting to know Jesus: We hear about Him, then we meet Him personally, but as time goes on we grow to really know and love Him intimately.

Remember the Samaritans who first heard about Jesus from the woman He met at the well? (John 4:5–42). At first they knew of Him through all the wonderful things she told them about Him. But after they were introduced to Him personally and got to know Him themselves, they told the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

Getting to Know the Bible—The Epistles (Letters) Of Paul (Part 1)

The apostle Paul (previously known as Saul) was a native of Tarsus, the chief city of the Roman province of Cilicia, in present-day southern Turkey. He belonged to the strictest sect of the Jews, the Pharisees. Because Tarsus was a free city within the Roman Empire, he was also a Roman citizen. Saul studied in Jerusalem under Rabbi Gamaliel.

After the giving of the Holy Spirit, the young Church actively spread the Gospel. Jewish antagonism grew. Saul was at this time possibly a member of the great Sanhedrin, and became an active leader in the furious persecution by which the rulers then sought to exterminate Christianity.

But the object of this persecution failed. “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.” Becoming even more angry, and hearing that Christians had taken refuge in Damascus, he obtained from the chief priest letters authorizing him to go there to arrest them. This was a journey of about 130 miles.

The crisis of his life was at hand. He was within sight of Damascus. As he and his companions rode on, suddenly at mid-day a brilliant light shone round them, and Saul was laid prostrate in terror on the ground, a voice sounding in his ears, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” In answer to the anxious inquiry of the stricken persecutor, “Who are You, Lord?” the voice replied “I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:4–5).

This was the moment of Saul's conversion. “Saul” became “Paul.” The zeal with which he had persecuted the church was now turned into zeal for Jesus, and Paul served the Lord faithfully for the rest of his life. He became one of the most prominent leaders of the Early Church. He was arrested and imprisoned by the Roman authorities, released, and finally arrested again and executed in Rome around 66 A.D.

The story of Paul is a wonderful example of the love of God. Look at the length He went with Paul! He struck him from the horse, temporarily blinded him, appeared to him personally, and spoke to him before he'd believe! Paul knew all about Jesus, and he'd certainly heard all that Jesus taught, but he went around persecuting Christians and hating Jesus!—And yet he got saved and had a dramatic change of life!

The Love of Jesus for You

■ God's great love for you

□ Romans 8:35–39; Jude 1:21; Ephesians 3:19

■ Jesus calls us His friends

□ John 15:14–15; James 2:23b; Luke 12:4a; Hosea 2:23b

■ Jesus loves each of us personally, and cares about us as individuals

□ Luke 12:7a; John 10:2–4; Isaiah 43:1b

■ He holds our hands. He holds us in His arms. He is always with us!

□ Psalm 139:7–10; Isaiah 41:13; 42:6a; Matthew 18:20

■ Jesus hears our cries and answers our prayers

□ Exodus 22:27b; 2 Samuel 22:7; Psalm 4:3; 55:17; 66:19; 102:19–20; 145:19; Isaiah 65:24

■ The Lord not only listens, but talks to us too—a faithful counselor

□ Proverbs 8:17; Psalm 85:8a

■ He carries our burdens

□ Nehemiah 4:20b; Isaiah 41:17; Luke 5:15; Matthew 11:28–30

■ He comforts us

□ Isaiah 30:19b; Psalm 119:50; Isaiah 40:1; 66:13a; Matthew 9:22; 2 Corinthians 1:4; John 14:1

■ He strengthens us. We can depend upon His help.

□ Exodus 15:2; 2 Samuel 22:33; Psalm 28:7a; 37:39; Isaiah 25:4; 40:29–31; Daniel 11:32b; Corinthians 12:9–10

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■ In Jesus we find peace

□ Psalm 29:11; 55:22; Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; Philippians 4:7; Hebrews 4:9

■ He takes care of our needs

□ John 14:13–14; Psalm 37:4; Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:33

■ He brings solutions to our problems

□ 1 Peter 5:7

■ He wants us to be happy

□ 2 Chronicles 9:7; Nehemiah 8:10b; John 10:10b; 15:10–11; 16:24; Psalm 100:1–2; 144:15; 19:8a; Luke 10:20b

■ He works things out for our benefit

□ Romans 8:28

■ Through Jesus we receive forgiveness

□ Psalm 103:8–12; 86:5; 130:3–4, Lamentations 3:22–23; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:9; 2:12

■ He came to save us and give us eternal life

□ John 3:16–17

■ His love is unchanging and never ending

□ Matthew 28:20b; Jude 1:24–25; Malachi 3:6a; Hebrews 13:5b, 8

Reflections: “My Heart Belongs to You!”

Excerpts of a message from Jesus

It was love at first sight! The moment I set eyes on you, the very moment you were created—that is when I fell so deeply in love with you, just you! I fell deeply and completely in love with you. I didn’t fall in love with the masses; I fell in love with you, just you, as an individual.

So special and unique is My love, so overwhelming, that I could not bear the thought of being apart. I knew you would have to go and fulfill your mission, your purpose, the plan for which you were created, and yet the thought of not having you close by My side was almost too much to comprehend. The thought of missing you even for a short while was breaking My heart.

I sought for a way to ensure your safe return, for I could not bear to lose so great a treasure, so great a love. It was then, with great precision, slowly, gently and ever so lovingly, that I placed My mark within your heart. With the utmost skill, I gently stroked your heart, fixing My tender, special spot in place upon your heart—creating a vacuum, a void that could only be filled by Me.



Not only did I place My mark within you to ensure your safe return, but I knew it would sustain you on your journey. I knew that when you would discover this token of love, it would be your guide, your inspiration, your desire to return. And so I have created you with this void that only I can fill. This is My assurance of your safe return—My mark upon your heart. This is My assurance that you will not get lost during the journey of life, and that you may find your way Home, back into My arms.

This is My comfort, to know you will one day return to enjoy our happiness and heavenly bliss once again in full, without restraint—the joys we shared from the beginning of time!

Nothing else will ever be able to satisfy this void, this tender spot, for it belongs to Me, your Lover of all loves. All this I have created, because I love you so.

As I suffered, as I bled and died for you, it was My great love for you that sustained Me. Otherwise I never would have been able to bear the pain, the anguish, the heartache and the heartbreak, the horrors of death and dying all alone. Yet, for you, just you, it was worth it all! For I love you, and the very thought of you was My driving force, and this kept Me and gave Me hope.

As Pilate's lashes thrashed My back, with each blow I saw your face, and this sustained Me. As the soldiers spat on Me and mocked Me and thrust the crown of thorns onto My head, I could only see the light of your smile, and this gave Me strength to carry on. As I carried the cross through the streets, and as I fell to My knees, weak and weary with the burden of it all, My vision was blurred. Yet in that moment I could only recall how much I loved you, and in this I found strength to carry on.

As I hung on the cross in shame and pain, and the feeling of defeat welled up inside of Me, yet I was able to overcome when I remembered that through this death I would wake to enjoy your love for all eternity. It was you, My love, just you, that kept Me going—My love for you, My concern for you, and My desire for you.



I love you from everlasting to everlasting, with so great a love! So great a love story is My love for you! And these seeds of love that I have implanted deep in your heart, in this tender spot, I placed there also to sustain you on your journey through life—that you, too, might find strength and faith and hope to carry on. I placed My mark on each one, so that you would know how personal, how individual My love is for you, just you.



Test My love when you feel lonely. When you feel like no one cares and there is no love to be found, that is the time to rest, to lie back in My arms and find peace. And when you are discouraged and you feel like you are a great big mess—look up into My wonderful face and see Me smile upon you, for I love you just the way you are!

When you feel worried or frustrated, run to Me, for I will be your perfect companion. If you feel that no one can possibly understand the trials and tests that you are passing through, that is not so, because I always understand. I long to hear them. I long to solve them. That is the time to run to Me, to snuggle up real big, right here in My strong arms, and tell Me the problems, the burdens, the worries and the cares, and see if I will not give you solutions that will melt them all away.

When you feel weak, I will be strong for you. When you feel confusion, I will give you peace. When you feel fearful, I will comfort your heart. When you are doubting, I will give you faith. When you feel strain, I will bring relief. When you feel lost, I am right here to be found. When you feel useless, I will give you a purpose. When you feel anguish, I will give you joy. When you lack confidence, I will be your assurance. When you feel muddled and cloudy, I will give you clarity of thought. When all seems dark and stormy, I will be your shining light.



When you are in need of direction and guidance, I will lead the way and light your path. When you need to pull back and long to take a little time to just have some fun, I will be your laughter. When you are in need of a gentle breeze, I will be the soft wind blowing in your hair. When you feel tired, I will be your rest. If you feel like you could use a special boost, I'll be there to spark you with My fire. Even when you have no feeling at all, when you feel indifferent or bleak, or puny and down, in those lost, lonely hours when everything seems real foggy, if you'll just sit still and rest here in My arms, I will blow blue skies overhead once again.

So many things will I do for you to prove My love, that you may know that I, and I alone, love you, just you, just the way you are. Anywhere, any time, any hour, every minute, each

moment of the day or night I'll be there to prove My love in some way. In big ways or small ways, I'm always there, ready, willing and waiting to shower you with love.

My love will never fail you. I've been through so much with you up until this point, I'm not going to give up now! Nothing can ever quench My love for you, for with each passing day, it only grows stronger.



Please don't ever doubt My love for you. And if you ever need a reminder, just call, just prove Me. I will never let you down, I promise. I never give up. For to live without you for all eternity—even the very thought of life without you—is something I simply would not be able to bear.

I love you like no other ever will! The moment I set eyes on you, the moment you were created, that is when it all began, when I fell so deeply, so completely, so eternally in love with you. I love you now, and I will love you forever.—Jesus

Meditations on the Love of Jesus

The gift of getting to know Jesus

The story is told by the Persians of the great Shah Abbas, who reigned magnificently in Persia, but loved to mingle with the people in disguise. Once, dressed as a poor man, he descended the long flight of stairs, dark and damp, to the tiny cellar where the fireman, seated on ashes, was tending the furnace.

The king sat down beside him and began to talk. At mealtime the fireman produced some coarse, black bread and a jug of water and they ate and drank. The Shah went away, but returned again and again, for his heart was filled with sympathy for the lonely man. He gave him sweet counsel, and the poor man opened his whole heart and loved this friend, so kind, so wise, and yet poor like himself.

At last the emperor thought, *I will tell him who I am, and see what gift he will ask.* So he said, "You think me poor, but I am Shah Abbas your emperor." He expected a petition for some great thing, but the man sat silent, gazing on him with love and wonder. Then the king said, "Haven't you understood? I can make you rich and noble, can give you a city, can appoint you as a great ruler. Have you nothing to ask?"

The man replied gently, "Yes, my Lord, I understood. But what is this you have done, to leave your palace and glory, to sit with me in this dark place, to partake of my coarse fare, to care whether my heart is glad or sorry? Even you can give nothing more precious. On others you may bestow rich presents, but to me you have given yourself. It only remains to ask that you never withdraw this gift of your friendship."

See Mark 10:45; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:2.

Think of the sparrows

Matthew 10:29–31—Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. (30) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

I sit here and consider the lilies and behold the sparrows and know that as the Lord is taking care of them He will certainly take care of us. Whenever one sparrow falls to the ground, our heavenly Father knows that it has fallen. How much more is He looking after us! Each of us is special to Him.

The Lord's arms

Deuteronomy 33:27a—Underneath are the everlasting arms.

God—the eternal God—is Himself our support at all times, and especially when we are sinking in deep trouble. There are seasons when the Christian sinks very low in humiliation. Under a deep sense of his great sinfulness, he is humbled before God till he scarcely knows how to pray, because he appears, in his own sight, so worthless.

Well, child of God, remember that when thou art at thy worst and lowest, yet “underneath” thee “are everlasting arms.” Sin may drag thee ever so low, but Christ’s great atonement is still under all. You may have descended into the deeps, but you cannot have fallen so low as “the uttermost”—and to the uttermost He saves. Again, the Christian sometimes sinks very deeply in sore trial from without. Every earthly prop is cut away. What then? Still underneath him are “the everlasting arms.” He cannot fall so deep in distress and affliction but what the grace of an ever-faithful God will still encircle him.

The Christian may be sinking under trouble from within through fierce conflict, but even then he cannot be brought so low as to be beyond the reach of the “everlasting arms”—they are underneath him; and, while thus sustained, all Satan’s efforts to harm him avail nothing.

Can we not learn, like tired children, to fall into the everlasting arms and rest, not in what we know, but in Whom we trust?

—Charles Spurgeon

Jesus left Heaven for our sake!

Jesus left the Halls of Heaven for our sakes! Jesus Himself temporarily renounced the rights of His citizenship in Heaven and became a citizen of this world, and though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich. He was human—He got tired, He got hungry, He got weary. He was subject to all these things even as we are, yet without sin, that He might be a good High Priest, have compassion upon us, know how we feel, know when we’re footsore and weary, know when we’ve had enough.

God sent Jesus to become a human being in order that He might better reach us with His love and communicate with us on the lowly level of our own human understanding, and have more mercy and patience with us than God Himself. Think of that!

The Bible says, “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust,” having worn that frame Himself, suffering in it and dying in it for our sakes. He came down to our level that He might take us with Him back up to His. What a miracle!—All for our sakes (Hebrews 4:15; Psalm 103:14.)

One solitary Man

Here is a Man Who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was 30, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family.

He never went to college. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompanies greatness.

He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him.

His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. Another betrayed Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on Earth while He was dying—and that was His coat. When He was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this Earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

Wonderful Love of Jesus

Wonderful love of Jesus, saving my soul from sin,
Lifting me from its shadows, giving me peace within.
Crowning my life with gladness, flooding with joy my way;
How can I keep from singing! Heaven has come to stay.

Wonderful love of Jesus, keeping me day and night,
When I discern no danger, when all my skies are bright.
Keeping, 'mid tempest's fury when I can scarcely stand,
Keeping, securely keeping! Safe in my Father's hand.

Wonderful love of Jesus, choosing a life so small,
Using it for Thy glory, being its all in all.
Wonderful love of Jesus, passing the angels by,
Lost in transporting rapture I can but wonder why!

Wonderful love of Jesus, coming again some day,
Coming perhaps at midnight, or when the dawn is gray!
Even so, come, Lord Jesus, it cannot be too soon,
Come at the golden sunset or at the weary noon.
—Mrs. W.M. Turnbull