

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 11th September 2022 10 am

Living to please God series

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture

Hymn MP 628 O worship the King all glorious above

Scripture Isaiah 6 (page 690)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk The example of QE II

Chorus MP 825 Faithful One, so unchanging

Notices Care Centre Open Day, Celebration, clubs restarting,
Cad College Chaplains Trophy. Tudor House

Prayer time

Reading Luke 6:27-36 (page 1034) (See also Romans 13:8-14)

Galatians 5:13-25 (page 1172)

1 John 4:7-21 (page 1227)

Hymn MP 1358 There is a hope that burns within my heart

Sermon Living to please God - Love

Hymn MP 522 Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus

Closing Prayer

Close

478 My song is love unknown

Prologue

This morning's sermon has the title "Living to please God". The first in a series. To LTPG is presumably why you are here this morning. You are not drawn by the building plain as it is, nor I suspect our singing, nor I presume you have made an effort to be here today because you want to find out what God is like, what he wants, indeed to find God and thus to live in a way that pleases God.

Exordium and Prayer

- Watchtower letter to JW congregations, from Sept 1st back on the doors. Had a visit? Italy on 3rd Sept three pairs in our road where we were staying.
- A hard work of almost continual discouragement. Their approach is to spend more time learning answers to objections. Again and again, door by door they face indifference, coldness and rejection.
- One day a JW couple found one door was different. A lady answered with a beaming smile, she was kind and patient and welcomed them in. Having made them a drink she sat down and took interest in them as people. She was a Christian and full of love for these two visitors. Anne the lady JW said they had never encountered anything like it. She both were overwhelmed with her kindness and love. This is part, the key part, of how that JW Anne came to saving faith in Christ. She had experienced the love of Jesus through His people.

There we see living faith, the amazing love of God shining through His people to the saving of souls out of this dark, cold and loveless world.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. x2 Yes, a new series "Living to please God". We will continue to look at key Bible events as well as work through Paul's letter to the church in Philippi.

Today, as always, truth is strongly under attack. It is crucial that we in this church do not dishonour the Lord by giving up Bible based thinking and succumb to a secular mindset. Let us stand for the Bible and its teaching! However, x2 - in confronting this widespread decline of doctrine and truth – which we must – but we must not end up minimising Christian experience.

✚ **A Christian is someone who has had an experience** x2

Beware of the knowledge of God which is intellectual only. That is not the same as knowing God. To know God is to love God. x2 MLJ Puritans p40

Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones explains it like this: "Doctrine after all is a foundation, and no more. It is an end, it is only a beginning. It is the means. We must never stop at it. It is always designed to bring us, by faith, into that knowledge, that intimacy, that deep experience of the living God, in which we really meet with Him, know that he is present, and are conscious of the energies of the Spirit in and among us. Let us, therefore, examine ourselves very seriously about these things." (MLJ Puritans p51)

Love for God will show in praise and prayer. To be loving as God is love will show in an obedience to Christ, a love for others, a love for His people, a love for the lost, a love for the gospel and that the world will hear it. p41

✚ This love is not born out of a head knowledge of God - but an experience of God!

This is an inner experience. To live to please God can only happen when you are Born Again by the Spirit of God. It is a spiritual work done by Christ within a man or woman. It is not natural but super-natural.

There are some here who do not know what I am talking about. The language is alien to you because the experience is alien to you. Until it happens it is an unknown quantity only to be guessed at.

Some who know that this is both what the Bible says - and what others speak of search their heart. "Does this apply to me? They think "Has this happened to me? I have always seen myself as a Christian". The result is that they try to connect an event say one when you felt emotionally overwhelmed, maybe even tearful and link the two together and call that your moment of conversion.

They consider a 'spiritual moment' or a 'mystical moment' and try to fit that into what they consider to be Christian conversion. This is to mis-interpret their experience. Or was it water baptism? Was it then? The answer is No.

I had plenty of 'mystical' experiences before I was saved, the Devil will gladly make sure of that. He is the expert in the counterfeit experience.

C.S Lewis ably exposes this in his 'Screwtape letters'. Here the devil advises a demon to persuade his 'patient' to believe he is worshipping the true God when it is only a god of his imagination. It is quite possible to come to church and yet refuse the Lordship of Christ, that is to avoid God.

The passage we read in Gal 5:22 shows very clearly that there are those who have the Holy Spirit and that will live like this – and there are those who do not have the Holy Spirit and they will live like that. There are two natures. And these two natures will show in two ways of living.

The church in Galatia had been hoodwinked into believing that they could live in a way pleasing to God through their own effort, by trying to obey certain laws and rules. 'No' says Paul, the life that God requires is a super-natural life – A life of love. - only that life is the life that pleases God.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love." Gal 5:6

2a

To live as He intends He must first enable you, you cannot do it without Him. It starts with the Spirit, not you - but with the Holy Spirit with God.

✚ The question to ask yourself is "Do I have the Holy Spirit?" – If you think so then when did he come to me?

if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. Ro 8:9

✚ Does it show in Christ's love pouring out of you? For God is love.

See how different the two lists are? read out v 22 compare with v 19.

One is the man or women with God's Spirit - and the other without God's Spirit. Two types of people in this world. The Godly - and the god-less.

At this point you might be thinking. "I do not live like that!"

Good upbringing will curb and control evil thoughts and behaviour. It can to some degree do that. After all we are not at each other's throats, no we are not the worst we can be.... But the root is still there, the potential is there.

An angry neighbour, an aggressive driver, the slightest thing and out comes the old nature: from Adam's pride, rudeness, vulgarity, anger and jealous as you see the fruit of my natural self. It is opposite to what God desires.

Then you look at the other list in verse 22 and you say "Ah, you don't have to be a Christian to do these things? Many people are loving and patient.

Yes they are – in part.

■ A lake by the quest centre near Bala with low water level, the old town can be seen.

There are the vestiges, the legacy of our image bearing quality. We are all made in the image of Adam – who was made in the image of God.

Good is done, sacrifices are made for others. I do wake up and choose to be patient or gentle with that difficult family member. God's common grace.

They are there in this world so that we have a common language, we can understand something of what love is.

The problem with this 'love' is motive. That desire to help another has a personal motive – it is not motivated by a love for God. How can you please a God you don't know! Impossible! ~ Everything should be for God's Glory

The truth is I am not inclined to be loving and patient. Since Adam and Eve sinned against God in the garden that Godly nature / loving nature was lost.

I find a power at work, my mind and flesh spring towards me, a disposition to be religious yet I am sinful, at odds, hostile to God –and I need to change!

2b

Gospel and Conversion

To become a Christian is to meet Him, to know Him, to love Him. I have a new life – and it is in him and I say: **my soul pants for you, O God, My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?**” Ps 42:2

Do you have that desire in your heart? No? If you don't have it - are you now willing to acknowledge your lack of love for Him? Come to Christ, the Saviour, the Lord of Glory who entered this world to save sinners, the one who died a terrible death not for his own sin - for he had none - but for the sins of others, to remove every stain of sin and guilt. Humble yourself, confess to Him. Seek forgiveness, and He will receive you.

“If you think that you deserve forgiveness you will never find it. It comes to the broken hearted. A humble, repentant heart he will not refuse.

Sandy Finlayson says in his biography of Thomas Chalmers that great Scottish reformer that he “was very clear in that salvation was necessary because of sin, and that salvation was only possible through faith in the crucified and risen Christ. He stressed that it was only as people were supernaturally freed from the power of sin and Satan by the work of the Holy Spirit that they were then able to live their lives in the community according to the positive principles taught in Scripture. Chalmers was also eager to show that it really mattered how people lived their lives.” Chalmers p78

Acts 2:38 **Peter** having preached about the death of Christ said: **"Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** There's the promise. Turn to Christ and he will turn to you – he will come and indwell the repentant heart. He enters with his new life to give me life, His life.

The end aim of the work of Christ on the cross is not forgiveness but to empower a sinful man or woman to be able to now live to please God.

This Spirit is the means of this Grace. It brings the power of God to me.

✚ *The Christian life starts with grace, it must continue with grace, it ends with grace. Oh, Grace wondrous grace. By this grace I am transformed!*

Now all my innate hatred of God and my fellow man is transplanted by a new and more powerful nature; the life and love of God through Jesus.

It's a revolution in the heart. I am never the same again. My old self is broken and a victorious new one has the pre-eminence. There's a sudden reversal of direction, of intention, of motivation visible to all around!

3a

The mark of being saved is love. The sign of true conversion is love. In our list love leads the way, self-control keeps up the rear and enables everything to happen, but love is the great motive. Self-control may push - Love pulls

Love – is the sign of true conversion

Love is not about being nice, or being friendly, or being polite. A woman at the counter asking for her money back is nice, yes of course, until she doesn't get what she wants. A man may well be friendly while all is going well with his neighbour - until there's a dispute. That woman is polite to other women when that harsh word comes, then the hacklers are up.

Love is not being just amiable, or wearing a smile - often done for me, I can get my own way more easily with a smile. It is possible to smile at someone and yet hate them. **His speech is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.** Ps 55:21

No, true God given love is different – Christian love comes from the Spirit of love. Rom 15. It desires the wellbeing of others even when they are against you. This love absorbs, this love finds a way to help and heal.

It is easy to slip into being just a little bit different from our neighbours. This love is not brotherly love but the radical God kind of love. It has its own word 'Agape'. A love full of Grace, and grace takes on the failings of others – that is grace.

In 1 John 4 we see what is meant by God's love **“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.”** 1 John 4:9 God gave, God's love gives – and gives the best, His Son. How can we pass on to others what you don't need = not love

■ **Glen Pizor gave money to me for a suit - not one of his old ones.**

When you want to help others do not keep the best and give the worst

The reason God gave is because that is what we need, his concern was what is best for us. Love is other centered.

That is why Anne was so impressed because this X lady gave of herself.

In Matt 25 Jesus commends those who gave time and effort in helping other believers. “When did we do this?” They asked. Then there were those who did not help others, “when did we see you in need?” One group was blind to themselves, their eyes were on others, - the second group was blind to the needs of others – their eyes were on themselves.

He's addressing the 'me first' 'selfi' generation blind to the needs of others

3b

■ Example of the queen true to her word - compare later generations

The gospel must be worked out, Thomas Chalmers: "Faith that remained in the head but did not warm the heart and change lives was not genuine". p82

Jesus's life is the great example of love worked out in practice

Jesus stood firm when the pharisees tried to silence him, Love tells the truth

Jesus goes out of his way to search out the poor man lying paralysed at the pool of Bethesda. Jesus went all the way up to the region of Tyre and Sidon to heal a foreign woman's possessed daughter, Jesus singles out the individual. Love singles out the individual. Love is other centered, Love is active, it searches out to do good, It searches out the lost.

✚ That is a reasons we meet - so we can find out how to help each other

That is how a spirit filled Christian is expected to be. Love cannot stay at home, love cannot stay silent. Love cannot remain passive. Paul who was busy in the Lord's work said; **For Christ's love compels us**, 2 Cor 5:14-15

There's the motive. The love of Christ compels me. The life of a Christian is one lived in gratitude, endless gratitude to Christ our loving suffering Lord and Saviour.

Jesus gave himself to prayer, to serve people, to wash feet, to take the low place. As Jesus was always about His father's business, so too should his followers be, that is what it is to follow Jesus, to deny self, to take up what God has for me and follow Him. That is the outworking of love.

God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." Rom 5:5 see bulletin for image.

The love that God has put into my heart is primarily a love for Him, for others - and especially the family of God's people.

Love has to be worked out in the context of the church.

Peter says **have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.** 1 Peter 1:22

We all spend oodles of time caring for our bodies, let us love and care for the body of Christ of which we are all a part and to which every true believer belongs. Yes we belong to each other! (Rom 12).

Some who profess to be born again have yet to realise we are **baptised by one spirit into one body**, the body of Christ. Do you realise that we belong to each other? As members of this one body we are connected and joined

together, we grow together as each part does its work. To fail to engage, to fail to join together with the Lord's people for the Lord's work is to live in disobedience to His clear instruction.

Your love is displayed as you meet regularly with your brothers and sisters, There's the motive to engage and commit with those so naturally different from you - the glue is love.

How can you show love for your brother or sister if you don't meet with them? That is why it is impossible to live out the Christian life on your own.

This is how the Lord is pleased. This is how everyone around can see what God is like through your love one for another.

Many like me are not that gifted, and for the most part it will stay that way, but here is one area we can grow and change – we can grow in our love.

■

So in all our dealings with each other when we disagree, see things differently, in conversation or in a meeting the bond of love and peace must not be broken.

If you had only 10 words to describe a Christian what would you say? – would you not have to include the word love? Love is the hallmark of a true follower of Jesus.

Yes love is difficult - What has someone else done to you?

Pushed in front, said something that hurt, ignored you? Seek Christ's strength and power. So His love in you will absorb the sin of others, bearing with others patiently. Like a sponge absorbing, soaking up the spills of others. Minimizing sin, hiding it, even taking the blame for it.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 Why not be wronged? Why not be cheated?

■ It is 'covering over' love covers over like a blanket, like a fire blanket.

Think of what Christ has done for you, what he took on for you.

Will you now live to please God? Seek Christ's love, a love that gives then there will be many more like Anne who will be drawn to Christ

■ In C.S. Lewis Screwtape letters the devil complains and concludes that "God does indeed want to fill the world with replicas of himself – those he says whose lives are qualitatively like his own. Those who freely conform to his own life." p45

✚ And that life is the Spirit filled life of love. _____END