

What Do You Think of Christ? (Matthew 22:34-46)

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- [0 : 00] Alright, we're going to read Matthew 22, verses 34-46. Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.
- One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question. Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus replied, The son of David, they replied.
- He said to them, How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord? For he says, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.
- If then David calls him Lord, how can he be his son? No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.
- This is the word of God, and I'll pass you through to Pastor William. Cool. Thank you, Daniel, for reading that. And thanks to everyone who's been contributing in service so far, and for yourselves as well.
- [1 : 35] Each of you have been praying. And again, it's lovely to see some of you back from holiday. Some of you who have started school. Who's now, surely everyone started school, right?
- Okay. I was chatting to someone. Unfortunately, they've been at school for three weeks. Wow. It's been hard. It's been hard. So, let's pray.
- Let's ask God to help us as we encounter him through these living words that we've just heard. Let's pray. Our gracious Father, what a wonderful question.
- What do you think of the Messiah? And as we start a new year, whether we have started new jobs, whether we are continuing on with the calling you have for us, whether there's a new season in our life, whether there's a new year of school, whatever our situation, help us to come to these questions before us in the passage with joy and with hearts willing to be changed by you.
- We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the things you encounter on your first week back at school, right, are all the questions, aren't they?
- [2 : 47] So, take your mind back. So, imagine rocking up to your first week of school and you come with, I don't know, you might know your timetable, but then it's just got, you know, random numbers and letters, right?
- So, you're like, who's my teacher for this class? I don't know. It's some SV or something. And then you might be, oh, who's SV? Or maybe you're in a different school and maybe everything's just laid out for you.
- But then you still have questions, right? What's my year going to be like with this particular subject? How were the holidays? You might be talking to each other. We come to a new year with questions.
- If you're at work, there are, of course, all kinds of other questions, but they come from lots of different directions. What did you do over the summer? Who's resigned and who's joined our company?

Right? Who's changed roles? Of course, there's also the deeper questions that we have in our hearts, whatever stage of life you're in.

[3 : 45] Will this year go the way that I've planned? How will my holidays go coming up? And maybe some of you are here today and you have harder questions.

Maybe there's been a crisis in your family. How long will this pain continue? Maybe there's an ongoing problem or conflict. How will this be resolved?

All of us come to our stories in life with questions. And I want to suggest that in our passage, actually hangs on questions. In fact, two specific questions. Did you notice when Daniel read it, there was kind of two sections, right?

Maybe your Bibles might break them up. And each section had a key question, right? And so I want us to spend some time considering these two questions. First, we hear Jesus answer a question from one of the experts of the law.

And then he asks a question of his own. The first question, right, led to the answer that we've been trying to memorize this week. A lovely summary of every follower of Jesus' true purpose in life.

[4 : 50] Love God. Love neighbor. And then the second question that Jesus throws at us as we hear it is even more foundational. Challenging us.

What do you think about the Messiah himself? A lot of things are starting back up, right, in the month of February. For some reason, it's the month when politicians suddenly appear.

It's like they've been hiding on holiday. And then they come back on our screens and our news. They're trying to make big announcements to get the ball rolling, trying to show you that they're active. It's not every day that you can successfully silence a group of politicians.

But actually, this is what has just happened in our passage. Did you see that? Verse 34. Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. And that's what Jesus has been doing, hasn't he, with his astonishing teaching that we've been hearing in the last few weeks.

He teaches in parables, but he also challenges directly. And how he dismantled the Sadducees' arguments from last week, remember? That was a really mean-spirited thing.

[5 : 56] Whose wife will this, yeah, whose husband will she be married to? They gave a hypothetical question about the resurrection. They weren't really interested in an answer. They just wanted to trick Jesus.

And yet, he showed himself to be the teacher king. Able to dismantle that person's argument. And able to be trusted when he teaches.

Here it was the king worth knowing, worth listening to, worth trusting. So that's the context. Remember, this section of Matthew's gospel is very, very packed in terms of time.

Jesus actually only has a few more days, chronologically speaking, before his earthly ministry will end at the cross. And in a few days' time, we will see it will be actually his actions that speak loudest.

And so every word of his teaching, as we come to the end of his kind of teaching section, matters. So this section here, at the end of 22, chapter 22, it's the last time he speaks to his accusers.

[7 : 01] And then we'll hear a final judgment on them next week in chapter 23. And then after that, there are words for Jesus' disciples, right? The ones who have been following him, trying to make sense of who on earth Jesus is.

But really, for those who oppose Jesus, here are some of the final words in the story. And we need to remember there's a growing contrast that Matthew is trying to show us, right?

Here, Jesus is just super confident. He's the judge. He's the giver of the law. He's able to silence all these politicians, as it were. And he's able to astonish the crowds.

But in just a few chapters' time in Matthew's gospel, Jesus will be the silent one. Everyone else will be judging him. The enemies will all be taking him and accusing him.

And Jesus will be the silent one. It's flipped in a few chapters' time. He offers himself up as a substitute for sinners. So that's a context around us. I hope that helps you to make sense of where we are in Matthew's gospel so far.

[8 : 08] So in our passage, I think we can sum up this section in two simple questions. First, there's a question for Jesus, right? What is the greatest commandment?

Have a listen again. Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question. Teacher, what is or which is the greatest commandment in the law?

Here we wade into a longstanding rivalry. I don't know what kind of rivalries you see. Sometimes in TV dramas, people root for one main character over another, right?

We talk about shipping. Sometimes it's sports teams, right? So now there's actually two professional football teams in town in this country. So it's either the Wellington Phoenix or it's Auckland FC.

Or it could be the Blues versus Crusaders. There's a bit of a rivalry here. There's the Sadducees and the Pharisees. All right? And every story hangs in a good rivalry.

[9 : 10] And here is one for the ages. A bit of background about these two groups. The Sadducees were the practical atheists. Okay? So these were people, as we heard last week, they didn't believe in the resurrection.

And they also don't believe in angels or things that are supernatural. But they just were keen to hold on to their privileged religious positions. They're people who wanted to look religious.

But did not believe in all the supernatural stuff. So that's the Sadducees on one side. And then the Pharisees, they were the ones who felt that they were experts in the law.

We see one that said they're an expert in the law. They felt like of all the rules of Moses and so on, all the books of the Bible, they knew it best. But then they also knew all the man-made rules and teachings that other people had come up with.

And they knew all those too. And so we need to understand that there's these two camps. And, you know, once the Sadducees were signed by Jesus, the Pharisees were like, Ah, that's great.

[10 : 12] That's great. See, they don't know what they're talking about. Let's see if we can prove Jesus wrong. And so you see the lawyer's question to Jesus wasn't just, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

It's not a question that he was, you know, earnestly seeking the answer to. Because, in fact, look at verse 35, right? One of them, an expert in the law, what does it say?

Tested him with this question. Do you see that in your Bibles, right? Hopefully you have it in front of you. Tested him. That's his true motivation. And the word test or tempt, again, should remind us, okay, of something that's happened already in Matthew's Gospel.

We see echoes of the evil one, right? Satan himself. What did he do? Early on, when Jesus was in the wilderness, right? Forty days. Satan tempted him. He wanted him to doubt God's word.

He wanted him to redirect his loyalty, not to God, Father in heaven, but to trust this guy. He was giving him another set of words, badly spoken.

[11 : 19] Tempting. Right? And here, a human this time, is doing exactly the same thing. Testing Jesus with this question.

What is the greatest commandment in the law? Perhaps he was trying to say, look, whatever you give me, the answer, I can give you another answer.

Perhaps there was a bit of rivalry saying, well, whatever Jesus says, I'll know more than you. We're not sure. But what's more important is how does Jesus respond. All right? Look at verse 37.

Jesus replied, and we should be getting familiar with this. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.

[12 : 15] It's amazing how simply Jesus teaches, isn't it? Two simple principles for life in Christ. Let's think about that first part of Jesus' answer. Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

Does anyone know where he's quoting from? What he's referring to? Because he's referring to something in the Old Testament. Anyone? Anyone? One of the most foundational instructions given by Moses.

Here he's quoting words straight from Deuteronomy 6, verse 5. Deuteronomy is the fifth book in the Bible. So there, by that time in God's story, you have the Israelites, God's chosen people.

They're at the edge of the promised land. They're about to go in and to see and claim God's promises and blessings to them. And they've been through a lot.

They've been wandering in the wilderness. They've rejected God and they've tested him in the wilderness. And actually a whole generation has died. And it's the next generation. They're about to go into the promised land and they need to listen as Moses gives them a farewell speech.

[13 : 27] And when their great leader was giving his final speech to this group of people, in the midst of that sermon, he tells them what's called the Shema, right? Which is the first word of this section.

Hear, O Israel. Hear meaning Shema. Hear, O Israel. The Lord is our God. The Lord is one. And then Moses says, You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

This is what Jesus is referring to here. Foundational words for God's people then. And foundational words for God's people in Jesus' time.

So much so that if actually you go to a synagogue, still, a Jewish synagogue, almost every one of them has these foundational words, maybe printed on the top of their worship space as well.

You shall love the Lord with all your heart, your soul, your strength. But what does it mean to love? As Isaac was asking in that prayer before. What does it mean to love?

[14 : 32] Love is a little bit like an aerosol word. What it means is that you just kind of spray it around and anyone can do it. But you don't really know where it goes.

We use this word so often, don't we? Love is love. And yet we struggle to explain what it really means. The original word here for love that Jesus is drawing on is much more than just an emotional idea.

Much more than just a romantic feeling. In fact, if we go back to the Shema, what Moses is talking about, this is a word in Hebrew used for covenant commitment.

It's a word that says, I'm showing my loyalty to one who has rescued me and saved me. It's how we respond to a God who has already saved me with grateful, thankful obedience.

That's what it means to love. Far deeper, far richer than what the world says. And what does it mean to love God with all your heart?

[15 : 40] Again, we need to track back to how Moses would have taught it. The original word for heart for Jewish readers was more than where our emotions come from, as we think of it in English.

The word here for heart refers to the center of your being, the real you, where you think and feel and reason. And that's why I think it makes perfect sense for Jesus to say, love God with all your mind, because your mind is involved as well.

We don't separate heart and mind when we go right back to how Moses talks and thinks about love. Just to emphasize, to love God is more than just a rush of emotion.

We can whip it up, can't we, if you're in the right circumstances. Oh, I love God so much because I'm in this environment, or this is my favorite space, or I've just been reminded of this wonderful thing.

But love includes thinking true thoughts about God after him. It's all linked together. And so in this way, Jesus, he is interpreting the law and the prophets rightly.

[16 : 50] It's absolutely right that every command and instruction God gives to his people must have the love of God at its foundation. One author puts it this way, love is the grand secret of true obedience to God.

Look, when we feel towards him as maybe a child feels towards their dear father, then we're going to just delight to do his will, won't we? Then we won't find his commandments grievous.

We won't just think, oh, not again. We'll work for him, not like slaves on the lash, but we will take pleasure in doing his will, in following his commands.

And we would be sad when we don't obey them. You know, when you love your parents, I'm sure, who doesn't love their parents? Don't put your hand up, it's fine. When you love your parents, you naturally want to do what they want, right?

You'd be happy to hear what they say. When you love God in the same way, it's exactly the same. Do you see what he's saying here? Jesus is saying, life in Christ is not about following rules.

[17 : 59] It's not about laying down the law and saying, here are all the laws you follow and this is the Christian life. No. Rule keeping without a love relationship makes life impossible. And I'm so sorry if that is your impression of the Christian faith.

If you're here and you think, to be a Christian is just to follow a bunch of rules here about how I live my life, a bunch of rules here about what to do at home, and a bunch of rules here about, I don't know, how I think.

No. That's not it. Right? Jesus tells us it starts with love. The Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul. When we follow instructions from God that are not connected to loving him, no matter how hard we try to keep them, we're either going to fail, and then we'll feel miserable.

But what's even worse? We might succeed in keeping all these rules, and then we'll love ourselves and say, look how good I am. Look how wonderful my self-control was or my strength was.

No. That's still divorce from a true relationship with a heavenly father. And personally, when I look at this verse, right? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

[19 : 14] I find in our day and age, the loving God with all your mind. Now that's hard, isn't it? That's hard. It's challenging. We live in a day and age where we're told what to think from so many different directions.

And we don't even know it sometimes, right? Because it all looks really good. Because we lap it up. Because we don't realize we're being influenced.

Unless, of course, sometimes they say paid sponsorship. But by and large, we don't know. And yet we are being bombarded with messages for our minds. We're tempted as well, I think, to divide our life up.

But, all right, and we're tempted to say, all right, this part of my life, Sunday, 4.30 to 6, is for God. But after that, I can check out, all right? My mind is free to do whatever it wants.

Jesus, does he make that kind of allowance? He doesn't, does he? You shall love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind.

[20 : 17] And he puts this as the greatest commandment because it's still what God's people need today. Notice, though, he also answers the Pharisee's question with a second description, right?

And it's a similar one. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And here, Jesus is quoting a specific command from the Old Testament.

He's quoting Leviticus 19.18. And those of you who have been going through your Bible reading plans, you're in rocky territory when you get to Leviticus. But press on because this is a wonderful chapter, isn't it?

Quoting this verse is no accident. And it shows us that Jesus is far more interested than just kind of like a nice altruism. Like, you know, you do good things to your neighbor just like you would like it yourself.

No. This is a chapter, Leviticus 19, in the book of Moses, full of instructions that tell us how do we live with our neighbor, with people around us.

[21 : 19] Jesus is trying to show us behind all of God's commandments about our relations with one another. Right? We know some of them. Don't steal from your neighbor. Okay? Don't murder them.

Don't covet your neighbor's things. Don't, you know, long for what they have that you don't have and so on. There are lots of more specific ones for God's people back then. But actually, behind every single one of these rules, which are easy to keep, but then there's a deeper principle behind them.

There's a principle of loving your neighbor as you would yourself. Jesus is absolutely right. He drills it back down to the most basic principle. Can you see what Jesus does here when he answers the Pharisees?

He reaches back beyond all the rules and guidelines that the Pharisees were prone to think. Okay. Surely that's a more important law. Surely this is the more important law. They were drilling down into the specifics.

And Jesus just pulls it back and says, here's where they all come from. Love your neighbor. And look, if this is true, if this is how Jesus treats God's law, then I think real Christianity comes not from just rulemaking.

[22 : 31] I don't know about you, but some churches, it's really easy to make lots of rules, isn't it? If you're in doubt about what to do in a situation, come up with a couple of rules and then see how it goes.

It may make us feel good. It may make us feel like, okay, we've got this under control, but maybe that's not what Jesus wants from us. We need to, for every rule we consider, we need to go back to the source, right?

Go back to the source. It's meant to be out of love for God. How does this new thing that we do, how does this change that we make, how does it make me love God more and love my neighbor more?

That's what true Christianity looks like. And love needs to be our motivation, because there are other ways to motivate people to do what you want or to do what God wants, and they're terrible ways, right?

You tell someone to run from a terrible punishment, okay, or terrible danger, they might run, okay, but then they'll stop running as soon as the danger's over or the danger's not so scary or they forget about it or ignore it.

[23 : 42] That's not a good motivation. You might tell someone, hey, if you do this, I'll give you a reward. We call it bribery, or we call it, I don't know, helping someone along. But if you use rewards and prizes as motivation, look, it might get someone going for a while, but they're going to give up as soon as they think the reward's not so good.

Maybe they've already got something better, they already get the reward, and then suddenly they stop. But if we want something that truly motivates people for a lifetime of following Jesus, if we want to raise the next generation well, if we want to actually truly disciple our brothers and sisters, the first thing we have to teach them is to love God as a daily reality.

And if we want good relationships with each other, truly good relationships that impact our families, our neighbors, and our society, the first thing that we need help with is not just what rules do we follow, but love.

How do I love my neighbor more? Now, talking about loving God and loving neighbor, does then bring up the challenging question, right?

Here's a question that comes up. How do we even get this love towards God, towards neighbor, towards our neighbors? Because actually, if we're honest with ourselves, these two actions, loving God, loving our neighbors, they don't come naturally to us, do they?

[25 : 17] When you and I are born in sin, we don't naturally love God. In fact, we are at war with God. In fact, we love ourselves more than we love God.

If there was a throne room, we'd put ourselves on it, and God would be sitting there serving us, blessing us. That's what we're like in our natural state, in our natural fallen state.

And the Bible says this, we're born selfish. We're born selfish and hating one another, Titus 3, verse 3. And so the first step you need, if you want to love God and love neighbor, is to actually know that your sins are forgiven, that you are reconciled to your holy maker, our judge through the love of Jesus Christ.

It's only then, when you truly know this good news, that you can then love God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that you can love your friends and family by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As 1 John 4.19 reminds us, we love him because he first loved us. That's the basis for the Christian life. The world says love is love.

[26 : 28] The Bible says God's love is love, true love. Without God's love, we are shadows of who God wants us to be anyways.

Without God's love, we are lost souls still. We can pretend we have love. We can make it look like people love us. But down inside, we realize and we recognize, this is just all imitations of the real thing.

And some of you have lived that life, trying to crave and get affection from someone. And when you don't get it, you get depressed or angry, hurt.

Look to Jesus. He rightly identifies. Our love problem begins with how we relate first and foremost to God. And look to Jesus. He's the one who graciously opens the way for us to love God and love neighbor.

These are the greatest commandments. And it goes without saying that you and I will have lots of different areas in our life where we apply these two basic principles. But they are foundational answers to the questions we have in life.

[27 : 42] Love God. Love our neighbor as ourselves. That's how Jesus answers that question from the Pharisee, the supposed expert. And in our final few verses, verse 41 to 46, we hear a question from Jesus.

Christ instead. And it's a wonderful question, right? What do you think of Christ? A couple of weeks ago, Isaac put me onto a podcast episode with a guy called Joe Rogan.

Anyone know who Joe Rogan is? I've been living under a rock, so I'm not a big podcast person. Well, I do have podcasts that I like, but obviously, cotton on to this guy, right?

Those who don't know, he's a kind of alpha male guy, interviews lots of famous people like Elon Musk and Donald Trump, gives them all the time in the world, really, to share their ideas and their thoughts.

But one day recently, he invited a guy called Wesley Huff, a Canadian, right? So, yay. And also, someone who turns out to be a wonderful expert in the Bible, right?

[28 : 47] There's a whole long story about how he ended up on this podcast, but it's over three hours and they just talk about the scriptures, right? Joe Rogan's just asking all kinds of questions, right? Is that really true?

How's this work? And then here's Wesley just defending and just saying, look, the Bible's reliable. Here's some ideas. Here's some facts. Here's a piece of papyrus, right?

An old Bible manuscript to show you, right? It's a wonderful example of someone sharing graciously and defending the reliability of the Gospels and of Christ in a winsome and humble way.

But then eventually, you know, near the end, right? Wesley was able to ask Joe a question, all right? And in front of, you know, millions of his YouTube followers. And the question was this, what do you think of Jesus, right?

You know, and there was a bit of an openness, right? Actually, when Joe was, you know, kind of replying and thinking. But that's a great question, isn't it? What do you think of Jesus?

[29 : 50] I think we can be a bit shy. We can kind of say, like, Christianity is about, I don't know, loving God, right? And then leaving it at that. So maybe sometimes when we want to talk about Jesus, we only get as far as, I'll pray for you.

And we get as far as, oh, well, I hope you know God one day. Here's a great question to ask. And we see it right in our passage, right? Verse 41. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, what do you think about the Christ or the Messiah?

That's a great question. One that we ask too infrequently. Now, let's consider the way that Jesus asked this question briefly, and then we'll see what we learn for ourselves, right?

We're still at the temple, still before the crowds, and Jesus has patiently answered all the Pharisees' challenges. And now it's finally his turn to ask a question. And so he asked them, what do you think of the Christ?

Whose son is he, right? He's asking people who are experts in their Bible, what do you think about the Messiah, basically? Messiah meaning the promised one that, you know, all of God's people back in the Old Testament would have been looking forwards to.

[31 : 01] And for some reason, the Pharisees, well, they were able to give a truthful reply. They said, he's the son of David. So that's a correct answer there. But then what does Jesus then do?

Verse 43, he said to them, how is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord? In other words, if David calls the Messiah his Lord, how is he his son?

Because what they're quoting from here is a psalm called Psalm 110. It's a song, one of the songs of the Old Testament.

And it specifically says in that psalm, the Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

So you want to imagine King David singing this, right? And if the Messiah is just, I don't know, the son of David, then why does the son of David here then sing my Lord?

[32 : 03] At this question, the Pharisees are stumped. You see, their idea of the Messiah was some kind of human figure, right?

That's why the crowds were so happy when Jesus came in. They thought, okay, here's someone who's going to, I don't know, deliver us politically, right? From all these Romans that we hate, that we don't want in our country.

But the Messiah is more than just a son, a human figure. Jesus has been shown right through the Gospel of Matthew that he's both the son of David, but the Messiah is also going to be the Lord of all.

Lord of all. What do you think of Jesus Christ? Chapter after chapter, Matthew has showed us, painted a portrait of Jesus as the true Messiah, as God's chosen king.

It's Jesus, right? The spotlight has been on him. When he was born, did you remember, wise men came to him and worshipped him. When he was baptized, God's voice, you remember, pointed to him and declared, this is my son.

[33 : 18] Time and time again, Matthew is just making it plain to us. It's Jesus that is the Messiah. It's Jesus that is God's chosen king.

So, what do you make of him? How do you respond when he shows his divine nature? When he shows that he has the authority of a priest, of a prophet, of a king?

What happens when you look to Jesus' life? What he then does on the cross, his death? What do you think when you are told that Jesus rose again three days later after dying for sinners?

What do you think about where Jesus is right this moment? Where is he now? At the right hand of the Father. Ascended to heaven. What do you think about that? Does it thrill you?

Does it bore you? Does it make you go, man, I'm not sure? How you answer this question is a wonderful and important litmus test, isn't it?

[34 : 23] It shows you who you truly are before God. It shows you maybe where you are at with the Lord. Do you think of Christ as a fairy tale?

Do you think of Christ as just a moral compass to follow, right? I'll pick up some good tips from him for my life, but otherwise he's irrelevant to me? Or do you think of Christ as the Lord and Savior of your life?

Can I encourage you? Don't ignore this question. What do you think of Christ? Until you have a satisfying answer to them. One that will carry you, not just in this life, but in the life to come.

What you and I think of the Messiah is so important. What you and I think of Jesus is far more important than all the questions we have. We have all kinds of questions, don't we?

About love, about marriage. You might have questions about our church. You might have interesting questions about AI or angels or end times. They're all important questions in their place.

[35 : 29] They're all worth exploring and debating. And yet here in Matthew's gospel, we are told the one question that really counts for eternity is, what do you think about Christ? Could you say, he's my rock and redeemer?

Could you say, he is my refuge in my darkest valley right now? Could you? Could you say, he is all of God's promises come true? I believe that.

Could you say, he is my Lord and my Savior and I will live for him until I see him again? Could you say that? God's word is challenging you. It's asking all of us that question.

What do you think of Christ? And if you're not sure, then let me lay it out to you. See how much he loved you when he went to the cross for you.

In every way that you and I are unable to perfectly love God with all our heart, our soul, our mind, our strength, our Lord Jesus, he loved perfectly, did he not?

[36 : 29] He loved perfectly with his arms outstretched, bearing the wrath of God for sins, taking on the punishment that we deserved for all the ways that we loved ourselves rather than God.

In every way that we hold grudges with one another, get angry, lose our temper, refuse to forgive. In every way we fail to love our neighbor as ourselves, our Lord Jesus loved even those who are opposing him right here in this passage.

He didn't deserve to be betrayed, abandoned, crucified. And yet, as the Bible puts it, Romans 5, 8, this is how God demonstrates his love for us.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That's the good news. This is the only true basis for a lifetime of loving God and loving neighbor.

When you know the gospel, when you know that God loved you enough to die for you, that's when you have something to hold on to that will transform your life, make you truly love God, truly love those around you as yourselves.

[37 : 43] And so can I encourage you, if you don't know this love, you need to turn to it. Because your love is not good enough. My love is not good enough. Humanly speaking.

Turn from trusting your own ability to love people. Instead, turn to the one who loved you and freed you from your sins, no matter what you've done. No matter what you're like.

Rely on him. Trust him with your life. I can tell you this for sure. He can handle all your big and small questions because he loves you. And so as we continue living in this world that's longing for love, whatever they define it as, here's God giving us good news of true love, right?

And it comes from Jesus, the answer to all of God's promises. It comes as he empowers you to trust God by faith, to love him with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love one another as ourselves.

Do you know this love? If not, what do you think of Christ? Let's pray. Lord, we are challenged by this passage.

[39 : 02] We give thanks. Help us, Lord, to know the love of Jesus more deeply, perhaps, than we've ever known before.

Lord, forgive us when our love really comes from our own hearts and our own selfish motives or our own strength. Lord, we cannot live this way. We must rely on a love beyond ourselves, one that comes from the Messiah, the promised one Jesus.

All of God's promises come true in him. All the love we hunger for and thirst for found in him. Lord, no one ever loved like he did.

We think of all the ways he poured out his life, how he reached out to those who were outcast and broken. And we think of the ways that he really, truly loved his heavenly father and ways that we want to be able to do.

So, Father, we thank you. Help us as we continue to be led to the cross, to continue to be led to Jesus. Help us come to him.

[40 : 20] Help us to find all our joy, our refuge in him. We pray all these things in Christ's precious name. Amen. Amen.