

Audio Transcript of Sermon

February 26, 2022

It Was The Love That God The Father Had For Us

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Every once in a while listening to the news, I hear segments on churches, and recently paid attention to reporting because I heard it not only on a local news channel, but on national news. It turns out that in one church a priest had used a single wrong word in baptism ceremonies and after this was reviewed it was determined that all of the baptisms using this single wrong word were invalid.

Imagine after decades thinking you were baptized into the faith only to find out you technically were not baptized. Instead of according to the tenants of this church going to heaven, you would find yourself in a state of limbo. There is a part of me that wonders if a crafty personal injury lawyer, or any other type of crafty lawyer could make a legal case out of the matter to bring the priest and church into court. Some would see it as egregious that a legal response would be brought on this matter while others would see the entire situation revolving around one word as an egregious legal response itself. In the end this church can decide for itself as can the people impacted by these actions.

What does the Bible say about baptism and is there any correlation to legalism? And what does this all have to say for the love of God the Father for us? With all matters, I encourage you to study for yourself. I am confident that there is no script provided in the Bible that must be recited verbatim for a baptism to be valid in the eyes of God. We will discover that throughout the New Testament there are similar themes regarding baptism and variations of phrases. We'll start by looking at what is recorded for us in the Book of Mathew, after Jesus was resurrected and prior to His ascension to heaven, what is commonly referred to as the great commission. To the disciples Jesus taught to baptize people from all nations, meaning not just the children of Israel as was God's prior connection to humanity, to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit and to teach these people to observe all things taught by Jesus, and that is a week's long study all by itself. Matthew twenty-eight verse sixteen.

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Matthew 28:16-20

16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

In Mark additional details are given and with Mark's account we find that even after the resurrection of Jesus Christ some of the disciples, the same group who by this time only had eleven, were disciples who lacked belief and were unwilling to change, and all of this after with their own eyes had seen Jesus resurrected from the dead. We don't know which disciples these were, but even these disciples would be the first apostles of the church. Jesus spoke to them about the unbelief that they had among themselves and told them to go to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. While some would look at this as preaching the gospel to household pets and farm animals, likely what was meant was preaching the gospel to all people without regard to who they are, or excluding somebody from hearing the gospel because of who they are. Jesus then told them if they believed and were baptized they would be saved. Jesus mentioned the concept of belief with the disciples because even at this very late stage in the gospels, some of the disciples, the same group who became the first apostles of the church lacked belief. Jesus then told them if they did not shake their disbelief, they would be damned and for us that gives an image of the lake of fire that is shown to us in the Book of Revelation. Mark sixteen verse fourteen.

Mark 16:14-18

14. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So far from the Bible we can verify that people were to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, that these very same people were to be taught to observe all things taught by Jesus, and that without belief, there would be no benefit to baptism. Looking at the words of Peter on Pentecost, we can see there are other elements to baptism, including repentance. In Peter's sermon, he didn't mention being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He just mentioned being baptized in the name of Jesus. Likely, what Peter was referring to was a difference between the baptism of John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, and that it was the baptism through Jesus Christ that leads to forgiveness of sins and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, that this offer was not exclusive to those hearing the message that day. Acts two verse thirty-seven.

Acts 2:37-39

37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Philip, one of seven chosen to care for the poor, was summoned to the desert of Gaza where he came across an Ethiopian eunuch who held a position of authority with Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had previously been in Jerusalem to worship and was returning to Ethiopia, and reading the book of Isaiah. When Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading, he replied that he needed somebody to guide him. The portion of Isaiah that was being read was chapter fifty-three where it reads, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter." The eunuch wanted to know who the "He" was in this verse and Philip took this opportunity to preach the message about Jesus. As they continued in the chariot

they came to a body of water, and the eunuch asked Philip what would keep him from being baptized. Philip told him that if he fully believed Jesus was the Son of God, he could be baptized. After being baptized and coming out of the water, the Holy Spirit directed Philip in a new direction, and that Eunuch did not cross paths with Philip again, and left very happy. From this passage we can easily see baptism does not occur by pouring water on a person, but by being immersed in the water, so that one can come out of the water. Acts eight verse twenty-six.

Acts 8:26-40

26. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28. Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31. And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Within the New Testament, we see a typical pattern of believing Jesus is the Son of God and repentance, baptism, and then the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Holy Spirit comes first, and even when this happens baptism is still in order. Acts ten verse forty-four.

Acts 10:44-48

44. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Forgiveness of sins does not create a license to sin. For example, living in Texas, I know that up until a few years ago, cities would routinely use red light cameras to deter running red traffic lights. Then there was a change in law and cities could no longer use these cameras. With the change in this law there was no license created to run red traffic lights. Similarly in faith, being forgiven of our sins does not create any license for us to live a life of sin.

Because we have been baptized into Jesus Christ, we were also baptized into His death, and for us this means as Christians we are not to be living the life we lived before being called. As Christians, we should experience a life where we do not serve sin, but live a life in Jesus Christ. We need to live our lives as though we are dead to sin and alive to Jesus Christ. Instead of aligning what we do to the ways of sin, we will align ourselves to the ways of Jesus Christ. Romans six verse one.

Romans 6:1-14

- 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?**
- 2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?**
- 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?**
- 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**
- 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:**
- 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.**
- 7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.**
- 8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:**
- 9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.**
- 10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.**
- 11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
- 12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.**
- 13. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.**
- 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

Baptism does not give us a license to sin, but it allows us to live a life aligned to Jesus Christ. Prior to being baptized the only access to God one could hope was the law, and while the law can bring a person to Jesus Christ, it is not a substitute for faith, nor does it provide forgiveness of sins. It is through Jesus Christ we have forgiveness of sins, and it is through baptism we have this access through Jesus Christ. Galatians three verse twenty-three.

Galatians 3:23-27

23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is not different types of baptism, just as there are not different types of Jesus or variations of the faith. There is one Jesus Christ who died so that we can have forgiveness of sins, there is one faith, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for our sins and was resurrected, and similarly, there is one baptism, just like there is one God who is the Father of all. Ephesians four verse one.

Ephesians 4:1-6

1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

We tend to selfishly look at the death of Jesus Christ as only giving us an avenue for forgiveness of sins, and as baptism as the ticket to access forgiveness of sins. When Jesus died, the penalty for sin was removed for us as our sins were forgiven. As we are baptized, and as we think about the death of Jesus Christ, there is one other major concept to consider. When Jesus Christ died, beyond having our sins forgiven, Jesus defeated Satan and as we are baptized and live a life through Jesus we open up a pathway for us, so that we can also defeat Satan. Colossians two verse eleven.

Colossians 2:11-15

11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

When Jesus Christ died, when the just died for the unjust, Jesus defeated Satan and created a pathway for us to eternal life. Jesus went from living a physical life as the man Jesus Christ, and became spirit. It is through Jesus Christ that we have the opportunity for baptism, by His death and resurrection, knowing that Jesus is at the right hand of God with all angels, authorities, and powers given to him. When we are baptized it is more than a bath that washes away physical dirt. The spiritual dirt, the sin is what is removed from our life. First Peter three verse eighteen.

1 Peter 3:18-22

18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

When we are baptized, we are baptized into Jesus, and Jesus like God the Father and the Holy Spirit, is not divided. Among Christians, there is to be no divisions

and sadly we know that is not the case. If we think of ourselves as a Christian through belonging to a church or by a particular minister we are allowing divisions to rule our heart. It's when we start thinking of our faith through a church or minister that we might confuse through whom we have forgiveness of sin. It is not through a church or any man we have forgiveness of sin. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can have forgiveness of sin. First Corinthians one verse ten.

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

11. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14. I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15. Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

It is through Jesus Christ that we have access to eternal life, and through baptism and faith we gain the Holy Spirit. As Christians we focus on the work of God. We frequently lose sight on what is the work of God and focus on strategies of delivering the message of God. Jesus taught that the work of God is believing in Him, believing in Jesus. Believing in Jesus is the work of God, that we believe in Him, that we do all things Jesus taught us. That is the work of God, as described by Jesus. If what we do in our religious practices and teachings does not lead to people believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that we should do all things that He taught us, reflecting on the words of Jesus that this is the work of God, we need to consider if we are indeed doing the work of God. John six verse twenty-seven.

John 6:27-40

27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Paul was able to clearly contrast the difference between believing in Jesus Christ and doing all things that Jesus taught us and being under the curse of the law. The curse of the law was simple. Even with 99.99% obedience, that sliver of

disobedience was enough to bring a person into the curse of the law. Any violation of the law was a violation of the law. However, through faith in Jesus Christ, through baptism comes forgiveness of sin. It is through faith we receive the promise of the Holy Spirit and the gift of eternal life. Galatians three verse ten.

Galatians 3:10-14

10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The law was used without mercy and favored the religious elite. A woman was caught in the very act of adultery and brought to Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees. In reality, they didn't care much about this woman or her sin, they were hoping to use the situation to entrap Jesus so they could weaponize his words against him. They knew Deuteronomy required the woman to be put to death, and Jesus knew that Deuteronomy also required the man to be put to death. Instead of responding verbally to the crowd, Jesus knelt down and wrote something in the ground with his finger. We aren't given clear information what Jesus wrote, and whatever Jesus wrote caused the crowd to disperse rather quickly, so that only the woman and Jesus were remaining. He told the woman that he would not condemn her, and to leave and to sin no more. This shows that through Jesus we are able to sidestep the penalty of the law. John eight verse one.

John 8:1-11

1. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

- 3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,**
- 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**
- 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?**
- 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.**
- 7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**
- 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.**
- 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**
- 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?**
- 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

Many other times the Pharisees sought to entrap Jesus Christ through His words and one time even asked him what was the greatest commandment in the law. They were hoping to get Jesus in a situation where he could be forced to explain that some parts of the law held more weight than others which is another way of saying that some parts of the law can be ignored. Instead of taking their bait, Jesus answered with scripture, and answering with scripture is hard to refute. Jesus showed that the great commandment in the law is loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind. He then added the second great commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself, showing that everything that is taught in the Old Testament pivots on these two concepts. Matthew twenty-two verse thirty-four.

Matthew 22:34-40

- 34. But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.**
- 35. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,**
- 36. Master, which is the great commandment in the law?**

37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38. This is the first and great commandment.

39. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In Deuteronomy, what Jesus showed as the first and great commandment is clearly explained, along with the need to teach what is written in the Bible to your children, and to frequently discuss what is written in the Bible in the many various circumstances of life. As much as the teachings of the Old Testament were to be part of the life of the children of Israel, the teachings of Jesus, what He commanded us to do, His death, His resurrection from the dead, and the forgiveness of sins that is given to us through baptism, should be part of our life today, because without these, there is nothing for us. Deuteronomy six verse four.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

4. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord :

5. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

As we love God with all of our heart, mind, and soul, we need to keep in mind that it is God who is love, and that without love we cannot know God. What is the love that God had for us? God sent His son, His only Son into the world that we might live through Him, and this happened not because we love God, but because God loved us. Because of this act of love by God the Father, Jesus Christ came to the world, died for us, and was resurrected so that we can have forgiveness of sins. We believe, we have faith that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of this world. As we believe and acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, then we have a pathway that includes baptism where we live a life reflecting God and God

becomes part of our life. As we love God there is one undeniable truth, that we cannot hate other people. If we claim to love God, we cannot allow ourselves to hate other people, because Jesus taught us, gave us a commandment to love one another. First John four verse seven.

1 John 4:7-21

7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19. We love him, because he first loved us.

20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

In the Old Testament were these laws that collectively put us under a curse because even with a 99.99% compliance rate, we would still be guilty of breaking

the law and be subject to its penalty of death. Through Jesus comes forgiveness of sin, faith, baptism, and the path to eternal life, and Jesus came to us through an act of love by God the Father, and that love for God, Jesus Christ, and other people is the purpose of the law. Looking at what is written in the Old Testament, the scribes and Pharisees were experts at keeping the law, even if they kept it without love. Today we are told to love, to love God the Father, Jesus Christ, and other people. The love that we are expected to have is not possible without keeping the commandments. We are to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ, who told us in John fourteen verse fifteen, that if we love Him, meaning Jesus Christ, we will keep His, meaning Jesus Christ's, commandments among which that prominently given was the command to love each other. In first John five verse three, John tells us the love of God is keeping His, meaning God the Father's, commandments. When we keep the commandments, it is not legalism, it is love. We are not to masquerade through life in religious theater falsely giving the outward appearance of religion and faith.

It was the love of God for us that gave us Jesus Christ, and it was the love of Jesus Christ for us that through His death and resurrection, faith and baptism that we have this hope of eternal life. Loving God the Father and loving Jesus Christ are not mutually exclusive. One relies on the other and these do not stand by themselves.

When we think of a spirit being with love, we think of God the Father and Jesus Christ, perhaps even the angels. If we were to think of a spirit being without love, we would think of Satan, maybe even the demons. When given the choice between love and no love, we want love.

There is nothing legalistic in love. There are no magic hocus-pocus words that must be said verbatim in order to be baptized or to compel God or Jesus Christ to do anything, because when it comes to our faith, our faith never starts with us, it started through an act of love by God the Father who sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that we could have forgiveness of sins and access to eternal life.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.