

# GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



## GIG254 – The Love of God is Forgiveness

I want to minister to you something that has been in my heart. It actually started just before I came to Israel. It has to do with this thing of love, and I am sure it is part of what the Lord is doing in my own heart in preparation for this time here. But I think it reaches out beyond that to a real need we all have in the steps that we are taking in these days that are before us; and so, I want to talk about His love. Gosh, we always talk about God's love, we talk about the love of Christ; and yet sometimes I feel like it is those subjects that are so common to us that do not impact us to the depth that they should. And I think there is something that God wants about His love, and it needs to really get to us, because it is in us that it is important, and coming out through us. But if it gets stuck in us, then there is a problem.

As I said, this started before I got here, but after being here, I just thought, "There is no other solution to all of these things that are going on in Israel and in the world; there is no solution other than God's love." There is a power in His love that, if turned loose, really will bring the solution that is needed. So that is the focus of what I want to talk to you about. There are several Scriptures here, and I am going to try to read a lot of them and you can go back over them later. I just pray, Lord, that let this be really an impartation to people's hearts, because it is such an impartation to my heart right now of what I believe You are speaking.

I am in Romans the eighth chapter, and I am just going to read a few verses; but as you all know, there are several verses around this that you could go in and read that are really dealing with this topic. I will start reading at verses 37-39. It says,

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

My concern is this idea of breaking almost what is like a chain of God's love. God is ministering His love to us, and Paul goes on to say how powerful it is and that nothing can stop that love from ministering to us, and nothing can separate us from that love. I think we believe that. I think we know that. But what I think happens is not necessarily separating me or you from the love of God or from knowing the love of God, but it is what it is supposed to do as it impacts us. That love of God has to come and impact us in a way that brings the change. It brings forgiveness for us, but it also allows us to forgive. Part of this that is so explosive to me is to realize that the power of God's love always ministers forgiveness. In other words, that is the outworking of God's love. Wherever you find His love, you are going to find forgiveness, you are going to find the deliverance. It is one thing for us to know that God loves us and even to feel that love, and to feel like God has forgiven us in ministering through Christ His love to us; but it has to go deeper than that, in that it has to create in us that love. It has to impart to us that love. And when it imparts to us that love, then the forgiveness and that love come out of us. And where it starts is with us.

I think one of the places this gets stuck – and we will keep going through these Scriptures – but I think God’s love gets stuck because we still cannot forgive ourselves in so many areas. I think this becomes a huge issue. If we cannot forgive ourselves, then I know, as this word is saying, that nothing can separate us from the love of God; but we can stop that love of God from really doing its work in us because we will not accept it or be impacted by it on a level that it allows me to forgive me, it allows you to forgive you. It is one thing to know that God has forgiven me; it is another thing for me to be free and delivered by His forgiveness in that I am able to forgive myself.

I know that if we look into our hearts, we all find areas where this is a reality to us; that I know I am forgiven, but I can never be what God has called me to be, I can never be the instrument of that love, if I cannot forgive me. So we kind of divert around it and say, “Well, God will move here, and this will happen there”; but it only works when it is worked in us to the point where we are able honestly to forgive ourselves. The way it started for me was just over some stupid thing. I mean, it was so stupid of a mistake I made, but I realize that the whole thing was just God putting His spotlight on this. You know, whenever He is talking to you, it is just like this big spotlight that He is putting on something that yesterday you would not even have noticed, but now it is just like the whole world is this focus. But I was literally amazed at how I could not drop it, and I thought, “Why can’t I drop this?” I realized that I cannot drop it because I cannot forgive me. I know the Lord has forgiven me, I know the person involved forgave me, but I cannot forgive me. And I thought, “Oh my God, this is really blocking the whole power of God’s love moving in the earth.” Certainly it does not allow me to be who He has called me to be; and He has called us to be those who through His predestination have been conformed to the image of His Son, and we will read that.

Verse 39, “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ....” We have to get that point. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus except our own mind, heart, spirit. We can do that. We can separate ourselves from the power of this love. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” In other words, God is love; and the love that He is, the love that He has, came to us to forgive us. He forgave us before we even wanted forgiveness. We were forgiven before we asked for forgiveness. We do have to ask for it at some point and accept it and receive it, and that is an important step. We call that salvation, because we open our hearts to believe and to know that Christ did come because of the love of God, and He came in order to forgive. That is what He does. That is what love does. God does forgiveness because that is what love does; that is what love is, it is forgiveness. And so, Christ died for us before we asked for forgiveness, and that is the thing that we know when we have that deep meeting with God and we are saved. But this is another step of where that love becomes so alive in our own heart.

See, if love is forgiveness, and if that love is dwelling in me just as the love of God, then I have to forgive me; it is going to have that instant result. And so, when I was going through this I thought, “My gosh, so if I cannot forgive me, that means there is something really lacking in the depth of that love dwelling in me, becoming me. I have to become the love of God that has done these wonderful things.” I am aware of it, I know it, I am forgiven by it. I believe in it with all of my heart. But it is not a matter of faith, it is a matter of becoming. I have to become that love of God in my own heart for it to do its work. And the first thing it has to do is it has to be me forgiving me now. God has forgiven me. Christ has forgiven me. People have forgiven me. But have I forgiven me? And that is where I think we get stuck sometimes in this.

I am still in Romans 8, let me read verses 28-32. It says,

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

He has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. Everything is right here. It is all packaged as we receive Him, and it is there. And then he goes into verses 33-35, after talking about all that He has and all that He is,

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

That is the question that just hits you, "Who separates me from the love of God? Who brings that condemnation? Who brings the charge against God's elect?" Well, I find in my own heart that it is me. I bring the charge against me. He has forgiven me; so if there is anything still there that is like in the back of our mind, in the front of our mind, if there are problems that we are dealing with, how much of that is just us accusing us? When the point of the Scripture is, if God has forgiven us, if God has freed us, and if He is creating us into the likeness of His Son, then who can bring a charge? Who can criticize? God justified. And I think, God justifies me, but I some point have to not just say, "Okay, I know God has forgiven me"; I have to justify me. That love in my heart has to justify and say, "No, I am forgiven," and it has to wipe away every charge.

Sometimes we just say things like, "Oh, that was stupid." Or, "I'm so stupid." Or, "Why did I do that?" Or, "Why can't I get this?" Or, "Why does that happen?" Or, "Why did I do that again?" And you have to look deeper into that and say, "Why is it that we are still dealing with that kind of self-talk, that kind of emotion in ourselves?" Because everything is about emotion in our feelings, and honestly, it is what kills us; because with every emotion that you have, your body is secreting some type of a hormone or some type of a chemical based on that emotion. Our body understands emotions chemically, not mentally; and so every emotion that we have, especially about ourselves, we have to say, "Are we killing ourselves?" when God is resurrecting us over here. God is bringing resurrection life. We say, "Why doesn't resurrection life work?" Well, how are you thinking? Are we still contending in ourselves with ourselves, or have we freed ourselves? Or do we deal with condemnation? It says, "Who is the one who condemns?" And I think we all know the answer to that question. There is only one person that condemns us, nobody else has the right. Once we are Christians, once He has bought us at the cross, no one has the right to condemn us, to shame us, to try to take away our justification. There is only one person that still does that, and for me, it is myself. I have to realize in this love that God is bringing that I have to stop that. I have to get His love so real in me; and as soon as it is that real in me, the forgiveness will be instantaneous, because that is what love is – it is forgiveness. And we are going to see how this ties out way beyond ourselves as we go on with this, because that is the importance. It is not just our freedom from condemnation, our freedom from the lies and the charges that are brought against us by someone outside of us; it is what goes on within us.

So, who can separate us from the love of Christ? Well, nobody but us, that is who can separate us. And we are going to stop doing that. We are going to dig into this, because the love of God has to be freed, not just to minister to us, but to minister through us. I want to read in First John the fourth chapter, starting at verse 16. It says, "We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." All of that is so true. We have come to know and believe the love that God has for us; but this is another step that we are talking about. Verses 17-18 say, "By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment [see, at some point we have confidence; we know we are forgiven, because not only has God forgiven, we have forgiven]; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." I think we grapple with this.

It goes on to say in verse 19, "We love, because He first loved us." See, that love that He gave us at some point has to spring into a love from us. "We love because He first loved us." When that love starts coming from us, it has to first minister to us. Verses 20-21, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." I think this is where it begins to apply to the world around us. For me, like I said, I was into this before I got to Israel, but just driving from the airport to Jerusalem, it was so real to me that the problem is brotherly love.

Right now, I am sitting here with my clothes on, ready to run for the bomb shelter because there are missiles coming from people that hate Israel, that hate the Jews, that hate the Americans, that hate us as Christians. The Christians are being persecuted all over the earth right now. I know we focus so much on what is going on here that sometimes we lose the reality of that. But why? Why war? War is a product of hate. It is a product of hate so deep that you have to destroy. It is not good enough just to hate or criticize or talk down, you have to literally destroy the thing that you hate. And when I saw the tie-out of this, that love in me, I realized that where we really see this working is when we have a problem with our brother, when we have a problem with our sister, when we have problems with people outside of us. That is what we are going to see in these Scriptures.

It says, "The one who says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar." Well, you could apply that to the land of Israel, because I tell you, you are in a God place here. Everybody loves God, right? Everybody is here. Everybody is about loving God, whether you are Muslim, whether you are Jewish, whether you are Christian, whether you are some other religion, you are here because of the love of God. That is what this place is known for, God and His love; and yet, are we liars because we say we love God, we are here because we love God, but we hate our brother? This whole Middle Eastern conflict comes down to one thing, brother hating brother. I mean, a lot of the conflict that we see between Arab and Jew, these are the children of Abraham; and we, as we know, are grafted in to Abraham, so we become the children of Abraham. And so, this issue of hatred, this issue of jihad, of terrorism, of killing, of massacre, of war, comes down to a simple root of, "Did I let that love of God grow in my heart to the place where I was able to forgive myself?" Because maybe my hatred of my brother is simply a coverup for what I am not thinking within about myself, that I am not loving myself. If I cannot love me, how can I love someone else? It has to start on that plane; and so there is this deep lie that I think we live with where we do not love our brother. "For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this is the commandment we have." We talk about the Law, but this is the commandment that we have, that the one who loves God should love his brother.

I am jumping to Matthew 22 to pick up that point. In verses 35-40 it says,

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

This was Christ Himself saying again that once we have this love of God in us, it should manifest as a love of our brother, of our neighbor. And yet, it cannot happen. Why can't it happen? It cannot happen if I cannot love myself, if I cannot forgive myself, because you love your neighbor as yourself. And that is where this whole thing gets stuck. I know we have probably seen this before, but I think we have to see it in a new way; and I think we have to see it with a drive and an intensity in our heart that we cannot let this go on any longer. Because if we cannot love ourselves, this love of our neighbor, which is the answer to the globe right now, is not going to happen. We are not going to stop this war, we are not going to bring peace to the Middle East, we are not going to bring peace in the world, unless we can deal with this very, very tiny little seed in our own heart of leaven that grows to the point where it becomes hatred for not only ourselves, but our brother.

Galatians 5:14 says, "For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" If we really read this and take it at face value, then what we are saying is that all war, all of the problems, all of the hate in the world, all that we see going on today on college campuses, all the division that we see in America (as the country most of us live in, but we see it throughout the world), it is all an expression of this fact that I cannot love me with this great love that God has, this great power that He gave me. I am not loving myself, I am not forgiving myself, because I only can love my neighbor as myself. And so, you may say, "I can't see what you are talking about, Gary. I don't really see this in me." Okay, well, look at your relationship to your neighbor, because that is really what the Scripture is saying here. If you look at how you are relating to your neighbor then you are going to see what is going on in you, because you can only relate to your neighbor as yourself. So if there is division, if there is hatred, if there is lack of forgiveness, if there is war, if there is any of these things, you see that outside of you; but what we have to understand that He is saying is that the source of it is inside of me, not outside of me. We have to grasp this.

First John 4, verses 7-11, says,

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

This just makes it so plain.

In Psalm 130, verses 3-4, it says, "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared." We have to see that everything about God in His love just brings forgiveness. You cannot separate love from forgiveness, and that has to just be blatant to us. If we cannot forgive, we do not have love; we do not have that love grown in our heart. Not that we do not know that God loved us, not that we do not understand that Christ died for us and forgave us

our sins, that He forgave us; as He is sitting there at the right hand of the Father, He has forgiven us our sins. But it is within us that we are dealing with this issue of His love.

A few great Scriptures about this are in Isaiah 55, because this ties it back into the whole concept of the Messiah. Isaiah 55:3 says, "Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David." You have to read that in the Hebrew to really get what He is saying. When He talks about mercies in this verse, in the Hebrew the word that he uses is *hesed*. Mercy is a valid translation; but it talks about *berit*, the Covenant. The lemma there is *berit olam hesed*; *hesed* is the root of it, the *hesed* of David. And the word *hesed* is so much deeper than saying mercy. It is this depth of realizing the love that God has for people, or situations. When I was taking Hebrew, my professor said that one of the men that was studying with him actually wrote his doctoral thesis just on this one word, *hesed*, and its meaning in the Scriptures.

If I look it up in the Lexham lexicon, it says that *hesed* means "steadfast love." Steadfast love. I think that is really as close as we can get with English. It says, "The core idea of this term relates to loyalty within a relationship. In relation to the concept of love, it denotes God's faithfulness to his people."<sup>1</sup> One of the greatest places that we find this word *hesed* used is in Psalm 136, because it keeps repeating it over and over: "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His *hesed* is everlasting. Give thanks to the God of gods, for His *hesed* is everlasting. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His *hesed*...." It keeps using this word and repeating it over and over to us as it goes along. God is trying to get this thing of *hesed*. But what He is talking about here in Isaiah is interesting, because it is the prophecy that says, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you according to this *hesed* which I had for David." God just loved David; and we know one of the great things about David is this man was forgiven. It was this great sign of God's love. And where does the Messiah come from? Messiah comes directly out of this relationship and this reality of God in His relationship with David.

Let's see if I can find another Scripture. Acts the thirteenth chapter, verse 34. It says, "'As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead [speaking about the resurrection of Christ], no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: "I will give You the holy and sure blessings of David."'" So even the New Testament recognizes that about Christ in the resurrection; what was the power of the resurrection? It was God's love for the Lord. It was God's love for Yeshua. It was that power; and that power was so great that it was able to break death and bring Him up out of the grave, and bring to us resurrection life.

What is resurrection life? It is an expression of that love that God gave through the sure mercies of David, as it is called, through the *hesed* for David. So this covenant with David – sometimes we do not look at this as a covenant, really, and think of it as one of the covenants. We think of the Abrahamic Covenant, we think of Mount Sinai, whatever; but here is a covenant of love. This is the unbreakable, that is what it says about this covenant. This is an unending, it is a forever covenant that will never go away. And what is it a covenant of? It is a covenant of God's love. The love that He brought forth to David brought forgiveness; the love that God brought forth in Christ brought resurrection, it brought forgiveness for us; and now that love is looking to work through us. And as it works through us, it is going to bring a freedom from the hate and the division and all that is not forgiving, all that is dividing, all that is separating.

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<sup>1</sup> Nettelhorst, R. P. "[Love.](#)" Ed. Douglas Mangum et al. *Lexham Theological Wordbook* 2014: n. pag. Print. Lexham Bible Reference Series.

We are to have this love in our hearts in a way that we are able to forgive ourselves to such a degree that we can love our neighbor with that love that we have received and come to terms with. And when we are able to love our neighbor as ourself, the whole world changes. Everything changes. The hate stops. The lies stop. The war stops. The put-down stops. The shame stops. Everything that we do in a negativity of relating to the person and the people outside of us ends with that love. And that is the purpose of God's love – to change this world, to change this age, and to end what we are living in and living through.

As I talk right now, I know I am talking fast through this whole thing because I just keep waiting to run; "I have to run to the bomb shelter and I cannot finish." That is an expression of people out there who cannot come to terms with the true love of God, and therefore all they can do is hate. All they can do in Hamas is create a nation and a covenant of hate, create a constitution of hate. But God is going to come with His great love, and He is going to do it and start it within us.

I believe for this to meet our hearts tonight. And I believe that as we go on this time of solidarity in Israel, we hopefully can be this expression of the love of God to people; and as we are able to express it, it breaks the hatred, it destroys that which causes war, that which causes division. So Lord, we ask that You help us in this, and that You make this real. The Kingdom, as it says, is within you, and boy, this word makes that alive. The Kingdom starts within us, because when this love begins to really minister to me about me and starts to work then outside of me through me, then God has what He is looking for.

Anyway, I bless you guys. I am glad you were here and joining me tonight. Shalom from Jerusalem. We bless you, love you. Silas, maybe you could just seal this with a prayer.

Silas: Lord, deliver us from all the reasons why we do not apply and forgive ourselves. We take this word out of the impartation level that it came from. We take it deeply in our hearts with actions; starting in our own hearts, in our home relationship, our family relationship, and from there, the whole world can be touched by this love. That is transformational. Thank You, Lord, we seal this word in Your name. Amen.

Gary: Amen. Lord bless you and keep you, and we will be drawing on your love and your faith for this time here in Israel. I hope it is a great blessing.