

# COMING TO PERFECTION IN LOVE

## **The Shape of the Love of Jesus** *from the Last Supper discourse*

I have loved you just as the Father has loved me.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you,  
and your own joy may be made perfect.

This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

No-one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I shall no longer call you servants,  
because a servant does not know his master's business.

I call you friends,  
because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.

You did not choose me: I chose you,

and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last;  
so that the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.

My command to you is to love one another. *John 15:9-17*

## **For perfection, following preference isn't enough** *from the Sermon on the Mount*

You have heard it said *You will love your neighbour* - and hate your enemy.

But I say this to you: *love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.*

so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, who causes his sun to rise on the bad  
as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike. For if  
you love those who love you, what reward will you get?

Do not even the tax collectors do as much?

And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Do not  
even the pagans do as much?

You must therefore be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect. *Matthew 5:43-48*

## **The Path to Perfection** *Paul*

This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every fatherhood, whether  
in heaven or on earth, takes its name: in the abundance of his glory may he, through his  
Spirit, enable you to grow firm in power with regard to your inner self,

so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith: and then, planted in love and built on  
love, with all God's holy people you will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the  
length, the height and the depth, so that, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond  
knowledge, you may be filled with the utter fulness of God. *Ephesians 3:14-19*

## **The Path to Perfection** *John*

My dear friends, let us love one another,

for love is from God,

and everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

Whoever fails to love does not know God,  
because God is love.

What reveals God's love to us is his sending his only Son into the world,  
that we might have life through him.  
This has taught us love: not that we loved God,  
but that God loved us,  
and sent his Son to expiate our sins.

My dear friends, If God has loved us so greatly,  
we too should love one another.  
No-one has ever seen God;  
but as long as we love one another, God remains in us,  
and his love comes to perfection in us.

The proof that we remain in him and him in us,  
is the share he gives us in his Spirit.

We ourselves have seen, and bear witness,  
that the Father sent his Son as Saviour of the world.  
When anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,  
God remains in him, and he remains in God.  
We have recognised for ourselves, and have put our faith in  
the love God has for us.  
God is love,  
and whoever remains in love remains in God,  
and God in him.

Love comes to its perfection in us  
when we can face the day of judgment without fear  
because, even in this world, we have become as He is.  
In love there is no room for fear -  
perfect love drives out fear -  
because fear implies punishment;  
and no-one who is afraid has come to perfection in love.

Let us love, then, *because He first loved us*.  
Anyone who says *I love God*, and hates his brother, is a liar;  
no-one who hates the brother he can see  
can love God whom he has not seen.  
Indeed, this is the commandment we have received from Him,  
that whoever loves God must love his brother.

*1John 4:7-21*