# Loving Jesus with a Passion

**Opening Text: Ephesians 6:23-24** - *Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* **24** *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

**Introduction:** I want to talk about this love today: about loving Jesus, having a passion and a love that is real. I have felt impressed by the Lord for some time now, to talk about this. In all my travels around the world for many years, I have observed, especially in the West that there is deficit of love for God. I don't think the West is short of religious activity, but it is short of passion and of a real love for the Lord. It is my prayer that this message will help all of us see where we are at and become passionate lovers of Jesus.

To love Jesus means giving him our deepest affection, desire, and loyalty. It means making Him the true centre and treasure of our lives.

This topic is even most pressing for us that live in the end-time, as the Bible clearly states that in the end-time *the love of many will grow cold* (**Matthew 24:12**)

1. **Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ**

*Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* **24** *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

***Peace*** (an undisturbed heart)***, love*** (an unfailing type of love)***, faith*** (the substance that moves mountains)***, grace*** (*empowerment, undeserved benefits) …* ***be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ!***

There are promises and blessings that the Bible specifically says it is to those who love Jesus. I have often heard people quoting promises that can't be claimed outside loving Jesus:

- **Romans 8:28** - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*
- **1 Corinthians 2:9 -** *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*
- **James 1:12** speaks of a crown of life to *those who love Him*;
- **James 2:5 -** *Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?*
- **Psalms 37:4 -** *Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*
- **Isaiah 58:2** - *Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching God.*

  **v.14a -** *Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth…*

It is all about loving Jesus.

**Our relationship with God is not contractual; Love is at the centre of it!**

Love is the basic requirement from the earliest of times when God first engaged with man. God initially gave Moses 10 commandments, the first one being about loving God. The Pharisees turned them into 613 laws. Jesus came and brought everything back to loving God and loving people!

**Luke 10:27** - *So he answered and said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbour as yourself.'"*

**Love with all**… *all* our heart, soul, strength, our mind, all of it, every part of us – fully loving God. Everything that defines our being should be engaged in loving God. To be a lover of God should be the priority of our lives.

It is not so with other religions. Love doesn't have to come into it. As long as you appease the so-called 'deities' and tick all the religious boxes, you may ask for protection or some benefit. It is never about love, it is a contractual ritual. Many of us came to Christ from such backgrounds and may still think that way.

However, following Jesus is a loving relationship. Loving God is the essence of our faith. Thank God for His blessings, promises and benefits. however, our love is not even conditional to any of those things:

**1 John 4:19** – *We love Him because He first loved us!*

We were brought into a love that He initiated. He first loved us!

Do you realise that God took a risk in loving us? There is risk involved in loving someone. You see, love must be chosen, and a choice means that a person can say 'no'. God loved us, even though we could say 'no'.

He first loved us, unconditionally. We love Him the same way: no pre-conditions, not as 'long as all my prayers get answered', or as long as things go well with me. No, we love Him regardless of anything and any circumstance.

I love **1 Peter 1:6-9:** *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8* ***whom having not seen you love.*** *Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

Now let us go back to our opening text in Ephesians 6:

*23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all <u>those who love our Lord Jesus Christ</u> in sincerity. Amen.*

2. **Those who neglected their first love**

In our opening passage, Paul was writing to the church in Ephesus. They were of '*those who loved the Lord Jesus Christ.*" They were a church that loved the Lord.

Paul told them to stay rooted and grounded in love:

**Ephesians 3:17-19** - *17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

However, some 36 years after this letter, Jesus told them that despite all their activity and good works, they had neglected their first love (**Revelation 2:1-5**). They had it but they lost it. They were no longer rooted and grounded in love. Jesus told them to Repent, return and recapture that early affection.

This passage is here as a warning to all of us. Reading the strong words of Jesus for this church, we understand how important it is to love Him.

3. **Those with sincere love**

*24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ* ***in sincerity.***

What does loving Jesus look like?

a) **Love for Jesus must be sincere, real, genuine, authentic.**

The Father seeks those who worship Him in spirit and truth. Jesus always confronted the Pharisees because their service to God was void of sincere motives. They offered a counterfeit devotion to God.

**Matthew 15: 8** - *These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*

**Romans 12:9a ESV -** *Let love be genuine.*

We need to love Jesus with real love, pure, uncorrupted, authentic.

b) **Love for Jesus is expressed in obedience**

**John 14:23-24** - *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*

The whole world may go away from the truth, but we keep His word. That is how we love Him.

c) **Love for Jesus comes from a place of deep gratitude for the forgiveness of our sins**

**Luke 7:47** - *Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."*

### d) Love for Jesus is a fire, a flame ignited in our hearts

**Song of Solomon 8:6:** *Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for <u>love</u> is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; <u>its flames are flames of fire,</u> a most vehement flame.*

I love the intensity of this love; it is a different kind of love. It is a love that the flesh doesn't know and the flesh will never encourage you to pursue. However, it is a love as strong as death, powerful and real. We have to make sure those flames keep burning in our hearts until we see Him face to face!

## Conclusion

Here's a wonderful statement Jesus made about what happens when we love Him:

**John 14:21b -** *… "And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

Jesus will manifest Himself. We will have a real encounter with Him.