

CALL to PRAYER -

Intro - We have come to the end of Ephesians, and Ephesians ends with a benediction.

Benediction = *a word of blessing*. This letter ends by telling us where blessings come from, and it also gives assurance to a group of people that they are the recipients of God's special & saving blessing. When God gives His saving grace it leaves a mark on the recipient. That mark is love. Love of God and love to the Lord Jesus are a sure sign that the grace of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus have been bestowed upon a sinner. We love Him because He loved us first. <sup>1 John 4:19</sup>

Bo Diddly & George Thorogood had famous songs asking, "*Who do you love?*" I want to ask the same this morning. Who do you love? Do you love the Lord Jesus and if so what kind of love do you love Him with? Do you love Him with a sincere & incorruptible love or is your affection somewhat fickle & finicky... like a passing feeling or season? The Name of the Lord Jesus will get a lot of play this season (and for a season) but love of the Lord Jesus in all seasons, and in all sincerity, is a rarity. Let me just say plainly - if your love isn't right then your life isn't right.

### *Ephesians 6:23-24 - Loving the Lord Jesus*

- *Benediction* = word of blessing. Many NT letters end with a benediction
  - Ephesians ends by mentioning three blessings - *Peace, Love & Faith* - 6:23
- The source of *Peace, Love & Faith* is God Himself
  - These blessing come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ - 6:23
    - Peace -
      - Heb. 13:20
      - John 14:27
      - Isaiah 9:6
    - Love
      - 1 John 4:8
      - 1 John 4:19 (cause & effect)
      - Rom. 5:5
    - Faith
      - Heb. 12:2
      - Rom. 10:17
      - Eph. 2:8
  - If you are in need of *Peace, Love & Faith*...there is but one Source
    - Doxology - "*Praise God from whom all blessings flow...*"
    - These blessings come from the Blessed One
- These three blessings are summed up by the word GRACE- 6:24a
  - Grace = *God's unmerited favor and loving-kindness*
- There is some assurance given to those who have received God's favor and kindness...
  - There is a mark that God's saving grace always leaves behind
    - That mark is love
  - 6:24 Those who receive the grace of God demonstrate love to God

- What is the greatest commandment?
  - Mark 12:28-30
  - Love of God is the top priority in life
  - If your love isn't right, then your life isn't right
- Jesus is God and Jesus is to be loved above all else.
  - Matt. 10:37
  - Jesus is to be our first love
- Jesus is altogether lovely
  - There is no one like Jesus - He is the fairest among 10,000...
  - He is the Rose of Sharon...the lily of the valley....the Bright and morning Star...
    - There is none to compare to Jesus Christ
  - Jesus us without equal and is beyond compare because Jesus is God
  - We are to love Him with all our hearts, souls, mind & strength
- John 21:15
  - Tell me who do you love
- Eph. 6:24
  - Incorruptible love / sincere love
  - *Sincere* = "without wax"
    - Marble with wax fillers to fill in and cover up the defects = insincere
  - Our love of Christ is to be genuine
    - (not a fake or fickle love)
  - When God gives His blessing of love to a sinner that love in incorruptible and so the indelible mark that God's love leaves on a sinner is an *incorruptible love*
    - God loves us sincerely and that love result in sincere love
    - God's incorruptible love produces an incorruptible love
- There is great assurance given to those who genuinely love Jesus
  - Love for Jesus is evidence of God's grace - 6:24
  - John 14:21, 23
    - Those who love Jesus have the sure promise that God loves them and will make His abode with them.
    - John 16:27
    - 1 John 4:19 (if you love the Lord Jesus it is because He has loved you - cause & effect)
- There is a blessing given to those who love Jesus, but the opposite is also true
  - There is a curse given to those who do not love the Lord Jesus
    - 1 Cor. 16:22
    - 1 John 2:15
- Who do you love?
  - If your love isn't right, then your life isn't right
- 1 Peter 1:8-9