

LOVED TO LOVE - 1 JOHN 4:19

## WILLIAM TYNDALE'S LIFE VERSE

There are few Christian leaders who have had a greater impact upon our daily spiritual lives than William Tyndale. William Tyndale was born in England just before the turn of the 16th century. William Tyndale had a dream - a dream that he just assumed would excite everyone. Little did he know that so many would oppose his dream, and that his dream would eventually cost him his life.

Tyndale's dream was that everyone would have a copy of the English bible to read. *I would like for every ploughboy in England to know the Scriptures better than the priests know them now*, he once said. Now to understand the foundation for Tyndale's dream, we must remember that in his day, the Latin Vulgate was the only Bible besides the Hebrew and Greek. The established church of his day always used Latin. Of course, the vast majority of the people didn't understand Latin. Latin was a dead language. It wasn't spoken anywhere in the world except for in church. So the average person understood practically nothing of what was going on in the church they attended every Sunday. Now Johann Gutenberg had just invented the

printing press. So it was William Tyndale's dream to translate a Bible into the English language and then get it printed so that every person would have an opportunity to have a copy of God's word for themselves.

Tyndale thought that church and national leaders would be supportive of such an endeavor. Was he ever wrong. He received orders both from the palace and the established church that he was to stop any foolish plans of translating the Bible. But William was so convinced of the necessity of this project that he left his native land in a self-imposed exile and sailed for the European continent. He journeyed to Germany to meet Martin Luther who was working on a German translation of the bible. How those 2 must have encouraged each other. Then Tyndale settled down to the laborious task of translating the N.T. from Greek to English one word and sentence at a time. *It is called the New Testament because it is the Last Will of the Lord Jesus Christ in which He bequeaths all of His goods to those who repent and believe*, he wrote. Finally, he finished it. And copies of the new English bible were printed. But how could they to be shipped to England? They would never be accepted as imports. Every government official began to be on the lookout for them. So few by few, in crates and barrels and rolls of

cloth and bundles of merchandise, the Bibles began to be smuggled into England. Immediately, they were gobbled up by the people as fast as they arrived.

The Bishop of London was beside himself in fury. Every attempt to stop the publication of the English Bible had failed. Persecution of Tyndale had failed, stopping the imports had failed. Now he tried one last method that God would ultimately use to spread His word throughout the land. The Bishop of London authorized every copy of this English Bible to be purchased. If he could not stop the Bibles from coming, he would buy them up faster than anyone else and burn them. So he purchased every Bible that he could and he piled them in huge bonfires that lit the London skies. But before the flames of the Bible bonfires had died down, he unwittingly realized that in buying these English Bibles he had now provided Tyndale with the funds necessary to print many, many more - in larger and better printed editions. The English Bible now became firmly established in Great Britain - and the English Reformation was ready to commence.

One might think that the favorite verse of William Tyndale might be 2 Peter 1:20,21 or 2 Timothy 3:16,17 or Matthew 5:17,18 or one of the verses

from Psalm 119 or one of the numerous other verses that speak of the unique nature of God's divinely inspired word.

\*<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

\*<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

\* MT 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

But such was not the case. William Tyndale's life verse as with so many others whom we have looked at this summer was the verse that God used in an instrumental way to bring him into the family of God.

I John 4:19 - *We love him because he first loved us.*

Listen to these words that he once wrote: *We love him because he first loved*

*us. Those words were the pearly gates through which I entered the kingdom. I used to think that salvation was not for me, since I did not love God; but those precious words showed me that God does not love us because we first loved him. No, no. We love him because he first loved us. It makes all the difference.*

Turn with me to I John 4 as we look at this precious passage together this morning.

READ 1 JOHN 4:16b-21 - last paragraph of 1 John 4.

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.*

<sup>17</sup> *In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.*

<sup>18</sup> *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

<sup>19</sup> *We love because he first loved us.*

<sup>20</sup> *If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.*

<sup>21</sup> *And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

Now in this context, we find 2 wonderful results that happen in our lives as we respond to the love of God by loving him in return. The first result is found in the verse preceding verse 19 - it is a change in our relationship with God himself. The second result is found in the verses after verse 19 - it is a change in our relationship with our fellow human beings. Both of these results happen in our lives as we recognize the fact that God has first loved us and as we respond by loving him back in return. Let's look at these wonderful results which occur in our lives together.

1. The first result which happens as we respond back to God's love is fear is removed from our lives. READ 4:18

<sup>18</sup> *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.* <sup>19</sup>

*We love because he first loved us.*

The Greek word which is translated *fear* here is *phobos*. It is the term from which we derive our English word phobia. We all know what a phobia is for we hear this word used all the time. In fact, almost any human malady or weakness is blamed on some kind of phobia today. And if a person has too many phobias, he is in real trouble

\*claustrophobia is the fear of confined places. Agoraphobia is the fear of large, open places. I would think that a person who had both of these might have trouble finding a place where he was comfortable.

\*Zoophobia is the fear of animals. Anthropobia is the fear of human beings. A person with both of these phobias might lead a rather lonely life.

\*Hydrophobia is the fear of water. Microphobia is the fear of germs. Mysophobia is the fear of dirt. A person with these phobias might become pretty frustrated.

\*Nyctophobia is the fear of the dark. Photophobia is the fear of light. A person with both of these phobias might have difficulty finding a place to live.

\*The fact that we have all of these phobias and they are so well defined

and organized today is just an illustration of how dominant fear is in our lives. Fear is the ruling force in the lives of many people today.

\*Now it is not my intent this morning to make light of phobias that people have. We all recognize the fact that these phobias are very real in people's lives and they must be dealt with for there to be mental health. And the simple truth is many very successful people in history suffered from unusual phobias. Alexander Graham Bell was petrified that if the moon shown on him while he was sleeping at night he would lose his mind so he carefully closed every blind before he went to sleep in his bed every night. Erasmus, the Greek scholar who compiled the Textus Receptus from which the King James Bible was translated had an extreme fear of fish. If he saw or even smelled a fish he would almost immediately get a debilitating migraine headache. Napoleon, the famous French general who led his armies in conquest of most of Europe, was petrified of cats. If he saw a cat he would go into a state of panic. So having fears are not unusual at all – many people have had debilitating fears in certain areas of their lives while being considered very successful in others.

\*But we must realize as believers that it is not God's design for any of us

to live lives that are dominated by fear. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that *God had not given to him a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a strong mind. 2 Tim. 1:7.* It is most interesting that Paul speaks of love when confronting Timothy's tendency towards fear because it is God's love that has the power to drive fears out of our lives.

\*Now the natural human response to something or someone much stronger and more powerful is fear. This is God-given. It is normal. If we are out taking a walk around our neighborhood and we suddenly hear a low, growling sound coming from behind us, there is a twinge of anxiety that we immediately feel. This is the reason we have laws to keep dogs on a leash so that we all can feel more secure and safe.

So there is nothing wrong with feeling fear at times - this is a God-given emotional response that we have when we are faced with something or someone stronger than we are, in whose presence we feel that we are in danger.

\*Now if we fear the presence of a strong animal, how much more should we fear the one who created that animal. If we fear an adverse circumstance that has come into our lives, how much more should we fear the author of

history who ultimately has control over all circumstances. You see, the perfectly natural response that any human being should have when confronted with an all-powerful God is fear - for God has ultimate control over our very lives.

\*Now human beings deal with their fear of God in many ways.

\*Some just deny that there is a God. They feel that if they can convince themselves that there is no God, they will alleviate the fear that they feel inside.

\*Others try to reinvent God. They spend their time convincing themselves that if there is a God, he must just be some grandfatherly figure in the sky.

\*And there are many other ways that people find to try and cope with their natural fear of God. But these all fall short of dealing with the real problem. And when circumstances of life get beyond their control, when they face serious illness or death, when they face that situation that they can't handle, they are imprisoned by their fears and anxieties.

\*The Biblical answer to dealing with our natural fear of God is to recognize and accept his love. As we realize the true nature of God, God's

love casts out our fear. Now we will always reverence and respect God - and we should. God is an awesome being worthy of our utmost respect. We are foolish if we do not give to God the honor and glory to which he is rightfully due. But the simple fact is that God already demonstrated His love towards us while we were still sinners. If God loved us that much - to send that which was most precious to him to save us from our sin - how can we doubt that God wants our best interests. And it doesn't matter how powerful a being is, if we are convinced that this being wants our best interests, we are filled with a sense of security, not fear.

\*The smallest child rests in perfect security in the arms of his father or mother because he is convinced that the parent loves him and is concerned for his best interests.

\*So we can rest in the arms of our heavenly father with absolute security as we realize the truth that is contained in the verse *We love him because he first loved us.*

\*So the first result that happens in our life is that our relationship with God is changed. We no longer run from him and hide as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden after their willful sin, but we rather desire fellowship

with God and desire to walk with him in the cool of the evening as they did when they were in a right relationship with God.

2. But let's move now to a second result that is found in the following verses 20,21. Our recognizing the fact that we love Him because He first loved us will also change our relationship with our fellow man. READ 1 John 4:19-21:

*We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, I love God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

\*Now we must admit that the greatest hindrance to our loving one another is found in the hurts that we suffer. We all know that love is a good thing. The world knows that love is a good thing. Love is extolled and sung about all the time.

*\*love makes the world go round; all we need is love; come on people now, love one another right now.*

\*Well, if love is such a valued virtue, why is there so little love in the world? It is because most everyone is waiting to be loved before they will

love back. The average person has been hurt so many times that he has built a wall around his emotions. If you reach out to someone and extend love to them, they normally will respond back with kindness and love in return. If you hold a door for someone going into a store, she will normally thank you for the courtesy. If you smile with a friendly smile towards the person you pass on the street, most will smile back. But most people are waiting for someone else to make the first move. That is the way love operates in the world - with everyone recognizing the value of love, but waiting to be loved first rather than making themselves vulnerable.

\*Now the Christian has experienced a different kind of love from God. God didn't wait for us to love Him first. *God demonstrated his love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5:8.* The follower of God has experienced this love that was initiated by God himself. This enables the Christian to have a different kind of love in his or her life. As we grow to be more and more like God, God's love becomes more and more ours. So we are enabled to extend love to those who haven't extended it to us. Christian love is not just a responsive love, but it is an initiating love. So it should be impossible for a Christian to hate his brother. Because

even if someone else has not extended love towards us, if we are filled with God's love, we should be willing to extend love to them first.

\*Now some will love us back because we loved them first. Others might never love us back. But that possibility didn't stop God from loving us, did it? God loved us first realizing that some would never respond to his love and love him back. But he loved us anyway, because He is love - it is part of his very nature. And as we grow to become more and more like him, love will become more and more a part of our very natures as well.

It would have been easiest for William Tyndale to give up his vision of translating the Bible into the English language. I believe that most of us would give up a dream if it meant exile from our homeland and persecution throughout our lives. But William Tyndale loved people. He knew that the best good that he could ever do for his fellow man was to place in his hand a copy of the Bible in his own, native tongue. So Tyndale was willing to suffer great inconvenience throughout his life in order to extend this kindness and love to his fellow man.

It was in on a cool October morning in 1536, that Henry Walsh sat at his dining room table with tears in his eyes. Henry's wife walked into the room

and seeing his obvious distress asked him the cause of grief. Henry just handed her a letter that he had just received. As his wife read the letter, she too learned that William Tyndale had just been caught by those who had been pursuing him for so many years. They had strangled this great man of faith and burned him at the stake. She knew why this news would touch her husband, Henry, so much for Henry Walsh was one of Tyndale's students at Old Sodbury, while Tyndale was teaching school, before he had pursued his dream of translating the Scriptures. As Henry's wife concluded reading the letter, she noticed her husband had risen from the table and walked over to the far wall and was standing reverently before a plaque that they had always had in their living room. The plaque read: *We love him because he first loved us.* That was William Tyndale's heritage to his students and that is his heritage to us - the bible in our own language. What a demonstration of God's love.