

Message Date: 17/05/2026 Lighthouse Meeting Date: 19/05/2026	Message Title: The Joy of Loving and Serving God Minister: Pastor Chuka Nwafor
Key Texts: John 4:34, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 84, Philippians 2:12–13, Acts 20:22–24, Acts 21:8–14, Romans 13:8, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:9–10, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 4:11–12, Genesis 29:20	Sub Text:

Please read the entire document and Bible texts before you begin to discuss and answer the related questions. This will help you grasp the overall context of the message, however, remember the Bible is not a discussion book but a decision book. God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions.

INTRODUCTION:

The core theme of this sermon centers on the believer's heart posture. True Christian service, obedience, and love for one another cannot be forced or coerced; they must flow from a heart that finds its ultimate delight, joy, and security in the presence of God. When we genuinely love Christ, His commandments cease to be a burden and instead become the very things we are eager to fulfill.

Jesus showed us that the greatest satisfaction in life is found in pleasing the Father. John 4:34 “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.”

The word “meat” here means nourishment, satisfaction, joy, and fulfillment. Jesus was saying:

“What truly satisfies Me is obeying My Father.” This reveals an important spiritual principle:

Whatever your heart truly loves will never feel like a burden. People naturally make sacrifices for what they love:

- * A mother sacrifices sleep for her child.
- * A musician spends hours practicing joyfully.
- * A person in love gives time, energy, and attention willingly.

In the same way, when believers genuinely love God:

- * Prayer stops being a duty.
- * Worship stops being dry.
- * Fellowship stops feeling forced.
- * Obedience becomes joyful.

(1) KEY 1: JOY REVEALS THE DESIRE OF THE HEART

David’s greatest desire was not blessings, success, possessions, or earthly achievements—it was God Himself. As **Psalm 27:4** declares, “*One thing have I desired of the Lord... that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.*” His heart longed above all else to remain in the presence of the Lord. This reveals an important spiritual truth: **the clearest evidence of spiritual maturity is delight in God’s presence.** Similarly, **Psalm 73:25** says, “*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*” People naturally make time for what they genuinely enjoy; no one has to force a person to pursue what they

love. A football fan will gladly spend hours watching or discussing the sport, a musician can remain in the studio for hours without noticing time pass, and someone passionate about business, fashion, or entertainment will willingly invest energy into those interests. Why? Because joy creates desire, and desire produces devotion. In the same way, when we truly love God, His presence becomes our greatest pursuit. Worship no longer feels like punishment, prayer no longer feels empty or routine, and fellowship with believers no longer feels burdensome. As **Psalm 16:11** reminds us, *“In thy presence is fulness of joy.”* We naturally move toward what our hearts treasure.

The beauty of heaven is not merely its perfection, peace, or absence of suffering—heaven is glorious because God is there. Without God, heaven would simply be another place. The greatest reward of eternity is not golden streets or heavenly crowns, but the unhindered presence of Christ. This is why Paul could say in **Philippians 1:23**, *“Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”* A heart that truly loves God does not merely long to escape suffering, but longs to be with Him. **Revelation 21:3** captures the beauty of eternity: *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.”* Without this inner desire for God, even heaven would feel restrictive, because heaven is entirely centred on His presence, glory, and worship. Where joy exists, time passes quickly and effort feels light; where joy is absent, even simple tasks become exhausting burdens. This is why service to God becomes tiresome for those who have not yet learned to delight in Him. True fellowship with God cannot be sustained by duty alone; it requires inward affection. As **1 John 5:3** teaches, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”* A believer who delights in God will no longer see serving Him as tedious, but as a privilege.

Scripture: *“One thing have I desired of the Lord... that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”* (Psalm 27:4)

Digging Deep/Life Application: *Many believers desire the blessings of God more than God Himself. Yet true spiritual growth begins when the heart reaches a deeper place of surrender and affection, saying: “Lord, even if You give me nothing else, Your presence is enough.”*

(2) KEY 2: "THE VERY THING I WAS EAGER TO DO"

When love truly governs a believer's heart, constant external pressure becomes unnecessary because love naturally produces willingness, initiative, and devotion. A person in love does not need endless instructions to act; they instinctively seek ways to please the one they love. In the same way, genuine love for God goes beyond mere rule-keeping, as obedience is no longer driven by fear, obligation, or legalistic duty, but by affection. Love anticipates what pleases the beloved. This was evident in the Apostle Paul, who wrote in Galatians 2:10, concerning the poor, “which very thing I was also eager to do.” Paul was not reluctantly complying with an instruction; what others required of him was already the desire of his own heart. This is the nature of love it transforms obligation into willingness.

Love also changes the weight of sacrifice. Genesis 29:20 says, “Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.” Though Jacob laboured for seven demanding years, the time felt short because love transformed his perception of hardship. This reveals a powerful spiritual principle: what you deeply love will never feel too costly. Love does not always remove difficulty, but it changes how difficulty is experienced. Where love is absent, prayer feels difficult, service becomes tiring, giving feels painful, and forgiveness seems impossible. But where love is present, sacrifice becomes worship, service becomes delight, and obedience becomes natural. Love removes the heaviness from what would otherwise feel burdensome and gives strength to endure what would normally feel unbearable.

This same principle explains spiritual endurance and the foundation of ministry. When the heart is fully committed, obstacles no longer become excuses to quit but stepping stones toward deeper faithfulness. Though Paul knew suffering, imprisonment, and hardship awaited him, he remained unwavering because his heart was

already surrendered to Christ (Acts 20:22–24; 21:13). Likewise, in John 21:15–17, after His resurrection, Jesus repeatedly asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” He did not first ask whether Peter was gifted, qualified, or strong, because ministry without love becomes mechanical. Before entrusting Peter with the care of His people, Jesus established the true foundation: love must precede labour. The strength of ministry is not first found in talent, skill, or experience, but in genuine affection for Christ.

Scripture: “*Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.*” (Genesis 29:20)

Digging Deep/Life Application: *God does not merely want activity, he wants affection. A believer can: Attend church, Sing songs, Preach sermons, Serve publicly, yet still lack genuine love for Christ. True Christianity flows from relationship, not routine. Many believers struggle with obedience because they are trying to serve God without first cultivating deeper love for Him. Duty can sustain behaviour temporarily, but only love can sustain long-term faithfulness. True transformation begins when the believer no longer asks: “What must I do for God?” But instead asks: “How can I please the One I love?”*

(3) KEY 3: LOVING EARNESTLY FROM A PURE HEART

Genuine Christian love is not merely a natural emotion or human preference, but a supernatural capacity produced by the Holy Spirit within the believer. The moment a person receives the Holy Spirit, they are given the divine ability to love fellow believers beyond personal feelings, personality differences, or outward merit. This love is not extended because others have earned it, but because it is an expression of Christ’s love flowing through His people. As Romans 5:5 declares, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Likewise, 1 Peter 1:22 instructs believers to, “love one another fervently with a pure heart,” emphasising that sincere love must flow from inward purity rather than hidden motives or external performance. Love that is rooted in the Spirit is genuine, sacrificial, and not dependent on convenience or personal benefit.

Craftiness is a form of hidden dishonesty where a person outwardly presents kindness, wisdom, or agreement, while inwardly harbouring selfish motives, manipulation, or harmful intentions. Scripture consistently warns against this kind of double-hearted living because God is not only concerned with outward speech, but with the true condition of the heart. A person may speak pleasant words, offer encouragement, or appear loving externally, yet inwardly be driven by pride, jealousy, offence, or personal agenda. This is why Proverbs 26:24–26 says, “He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him... whose hatred is covered by deceit.” Craftiness attempts to conceal inward corruption behind polished speech, but hidden motives are always visible before God. Jesus also taught that words cannot remain disconnected from the heart. In, Psalm 28:3 warns against those “which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.” Genuine love cannot coexist with manipulation, hidden agendas, or calculated behaviour. God desires integrity where the mouth, heart, and intentions are aligned in truth. A pure heart speaks sincerely, loves honestly, and does not use words as a mask for concealed evil intentions.

Scripture: *1 Peter 1:22 instructs believers to, “love one another fervently with a pure heart,”*

Digging Deep/Life Application: *Believers must regularly examine their hearts and ask whether their words genuinely reflect love, honesty, and purity, or whether they are being used to conceal hidden agendas. As Psalm 139:23–24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart... and see if there be any wicked way in me.”*

Ask yourself: Do my words align with the true condition of my heart, or am I using speech to hide what I refuse to confront internally? God desires sincerity, where the heart, intentions, and outward actions are consistent before Him. A pure heart does not manipulate, flatter deceptively, or disguise evil intentions, but walks in truth, transparency, and genuine love toward others.

- * Refuse gossip.
- * Avoid offense accumulation.
- * Forgive quickly.
- * Delete harmful memories that feed bitterness.

(4) KEY 4: LOVE PRODUCES RECONCILIATION AND UNITY

God's love naturally moves believers toward reconciliation rather than prolonged division. A heart filled with divine love does not find satisfaction in unresolved conflict, bitterness, or emotional distance, but seeks restoration quickly because love values relationships more than personal pride. This is why reconciliation is often difficult when love is absent, pride resists humility, defends personal rights, and prioritises being right over making peace. However, spiritual maturity is revealed in the willingness to forgive, apologise, and pursue restored fellowship. Ephesians 4:32 instructs believers to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward one another, just as God forgave us in Christ, while Colossians 3:13–14 teaches that love is the bond that holds everything together in perfect unity. Love makes saying "I am sorry" easier because it understands that preserving unity is often more valuable than winning an argument.

In practical life, believers reflect Christ most powerfully not by avoiding conflict altogether, but by handling it with humility, grace, and a sincere desire for peace. Every relationship whether in family, friendship, ministry, or church life will experience moments of misunderstanding, disappointment, or offence. The true test is not whether conflict arises, but how we respond when it does. A mature believer asks, "How can I honour Christ in this situation?" rather than, "How can I prove myself right?" Choosing forgiveness, initiating difficult conversations, and refusing to allow resentment to grow are practical expressions of God's love at work in the heart. Where love governs, reconciliation becomes a priority, unity is protected, and relationships become living testimonies of Christ's transforming power.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:32 (AMPC) And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another [readily and freely], as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:13–14 (AMPC)

Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference (a grievance or complaint) against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has [freely] forgiven you, so must you also [forgive]. And above all these [put on love and enfold yourselves with the bond of perfectness [which binds everything together completely in ideal harmony].

Digging Deep/Life Application: Ask yourself: Is there a relationship I need to restore, a person I need to forgive, or an apology I need to offer? True spiritual maturity is often revealed in the willingness to pursue peace for the sake of love and fellowship.

(5) KEY 5: LOVE MUST BE PROTECTED

Proverbs 4:23 teaches, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life," revealing that the heart is the center of spiritual life and the source from which attitudes, actions, and relationships flow. When the heart becomes polluted, love begins to grow cold, relationships become strained, worship loses sincerity, and bitterness quietly takes root. This is why believers must intentionally guard what they allow into their hearts, including what they listen to, dwell on, and entertain in their thoughts. Gossip, offence, resentment, and bitterness are dangerous because they

slowly corrupt the heart, weakening both love for God and love for others. A divided or wounded heart cannot sustain sincere fellowship for long.

This is why 1 Peter 1:22 instructs believers to “love one another fervently with a pure heart.” A pure heart is free from hidden agendas, manipulation, jealousy, hypocrisy, and unresolved bitterness. Manipulation often reveals itself when correction is received with defensiveness rather than humility, this is seen in the life and heart of some leaders. For example, when someone approaches you sincerely to express how your actions have hurt them, a healthy response is reflection, accountability, and openness to growth. However, a manipulative response avoids taking responsibility by subtly turning the conversation against the other person using their vulnerability, emotions, or words as a weapon to deflect attention from the original issue. This may appear through guilt-tripping, reversing blame, emotional withdrawal, or making the other person feel at fault for raising the concern. Such behaviour protects pride rather than pursuing truth and restoration. Genuine spiritual maturity accepts correction with humility, recognising that honest confrontation is often an opportunity for growth, healing, and stronger relationships. Therefore, protecting love requires protecting the heart, ensuring it remains pure enough to love sincerely, forgive quickly, and maintain healthy fellowship with others.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life,”

Digging Deep/Life Application: A guarded heart is not a closed heart, but a disciplined one that chooses forgiveness over bitterness, purity over hidden motives, and peace over prolonged offence. Ask yourself: Is there anything I am holding onto that is quietly polluting my heart and affecting how I love others? True spiritual growth is seen not only in loving well, but in diligently protecting the heart so that love remains sincere, pure, and fervent before God and others.

(6) KEY 6: LOVE GIVES STRENGTH TO ENDURE HARDSHIP

In **Acts 20:24**, the Apostle Paul boldly declares, “None of these things move me,” even while fully aware that suffering, affliction, and hardship awaited him. Paul’s endurance was not rooted in comfort, convenience, or favourable circumstances, but in a heart fully surrendered to Christ. His love for God gave him the strength to remain faithful despite uncertainty and pain. This reflects the attitude seen in **Romans 8:35–37**, where Paul asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution...?” and concludes that believers are “more than conquerors through him that loved us.” This reveals an important spiritual principle: **love produces endurance**. When love is shallow, even small challenges can become reasons to withdraw, discouragement easily overwhelms the heart, and excuses begin to multiply. However, when love is deep, hardship no longer weakens commitment but strengthens it, and sacrifice becomes meaningful because it is connected to a greater purpose.

A heart truly committed to Christ interprets obstacles differently. Rather than seeing difficulty as a reason to quit, love recognises hardship as part of faithful devotion and spiritual growth. Obedience continues even when the path is costly, inconvenient, or emotionally draining, because love has already settled the question of worth. As **2 Corinthians 4:16–17** reminds believers, “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction... worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Likewise, **James 1:12** declares, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” While shallow commitment quickly says, “This is too hard,” genuine love responds with conviction, “Christ is worth it.” The depth of our love for God is often revealed not in seasons of ease, but in our willingness to remain faithful when obedience requires sacrifice, perseverance, and unwavering trust.

Scripture: Acts 20:24, “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus.”

Digging Deep/Life Application: Paul’s endurance came from a heart fully surrendered to God, not from the absence of hardship. In the same way, believers must learn to measure challenges not by how difficult they are, but by the worthiness of Christ. Ask yourself: When facing hardship, do I focus more on the cost of

obedience or on the One I am obeying? Love gives strength to continue when circumstances tempt us to stop, because a committed heart has already decided that Christ is worth every sacrifice.

(7) KEY 7: GOD GIVES BOTH THE COMMAND AND THE POWER

Philippians 2:13 declares, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,” revealing a foundational truth of the Christian life: God never commands His people without also supplying the grace to obey. When believers are instructed to love, forgive, serve, endure hardship, or pursue reconciliation, they are not expected to fulfil these responsibilities through human strength alone. God actively works within His people through the Holy Spirit, creating both the desire and the ability to live according to His will. This is why Christian living cannot be sustained by self-discipline alone, but requires continual dependence on divine help. As Jesus teaches in John 15:5, “Without me ye can do nothing,” reminding believers that spiritual fruitfulness is inseparable from abiding in Him.

Believers are therefore never abandoned to their own weakness or left to struggle without provision. God not only commands obedience, but empowers it by transforming the inner life and strengthening His people daily. This truth is beautifully reinforced in Ezekiel 36:26–27, where God promises, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you... and cause you to walk in my statutes.” In the same way, Hebrews 13:20–21 assures believers that God is able to make them “perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight.” Unlike earthly systems that place demands without support, God lovingly provides every spiritual resource necessary for faithful living. Through the Holy Spirit, believers do not operate by mere human ability, but by divine strength that enables them to obey beyond their natural limitations.

Scripture: “Whoever serves Me must follow Me.” (John 12:26); 2 Corinthians 12:9 “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” God’s commands are not meant to expose believers to failure, but to lead them into dependence on His sufficient grace.

Digging Deep/Life Application: Many believers become discouraged when they focus on God’s commands without remembering God’s provision. The Christian life was never designed to be lived through human strength alone. When God calls us to love difficult people, forgive deeply, endure hardship, serve faithfully, or walk in holiness, He also supplies the grace, desire, and spiritual strength necessary to obey. This means we do not have to rely solely on our emotions, willpower, or natural ability, but can depend daily on the enabling work of the Holy Spirit. As Philippians 2:13 reminds us, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Ask yourself: Am I trying to obey God in my own strength, or am I depending on His power to sustain me? True spiritual maturity is not found in self-sufficiency, but in recognising our need for God and allowing Him to work through us daily. What God commands, He also empowers.

(8) CONCLUDING REMARKS: PROMISES OF GOD FROM THE MESSAGE

Authentic Christian living is not sustained by pressure, religious performance, or mere outward duty, but by genuine love for Christ and continual dependence on the Holy Spirit. Human love is limited, conditional, and easily exhausted by disappointment, hurt, betrayal, or sacrifice; however, the love of God flowing through believers provides an endless spiritual reservoir that enables them to love beyond natural capacity. This divine love transforms the entire Christian experience: obedience becomes joyful rather than burdensome, service becomes natural rather than forced, fellowship becomes sweeter, and sacrifice becomes meaningful rather than draining. A heart truly filled with God’s love values reconciliation over pride, forgiveness over bitterness, and restored relationships over the need to be right. As believers delight in God’s presence and remain surrendered to Him, love begins to flow more freely into every area of life.

Therefore, whenever loving others or serving God begins to feel like a heavy burden, it is often a signal to return to the true source. We are never alone in obedience, sacrifice, or suffering. God will never abandon His

people. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5). Believers must guard their hearts from the poisons of offence, bitterness, unresolved pain, and spiritual fatigue, allowing God to renew and refill them daily with His love. The goal of the Christian life is not merely behavioural compliance, but hearts fully devoted to Christ and transformed from within. When believers truly encounter and abide in the love of God, worship becomes alive, forgiveness becomes possible, endurance grows stronger, and relationships become healthier and more Christlike. As 1 John 4:11 reminds us, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." May our lives continually reflect the love we have first received from Him. Amen.

(9) PRAYERS: PRAYER POINTS OF GOD FROM THE MESSAGE

1. Prayer for a Heart Filled with God's Love

Lord, fill my heart with Your love through the Holy Spirit. Let Your love flow through me beyond my natural limitations, so that I may love others sincerely, selflessly, and consistently.

Scripture Focus: Romans 5:5

2. Prayer for Dependence on the Holy Spirit

Father, teach me not to rely on my own strength, emotions, or abilities. Help me to depend fully on the Holy Spirit, knowing that apart from You I can do nothing.

Scripture Focus: John 15:5; Philippians 2:13

3. Prayer for Grace to Obey God Joyfully

Lord, let my obedience flow from love and not mere duty or religious performance. Create in me both the desire and the power to do what pleases You.

Scripture Focus: Philippians 2:13

4. Prayer for a Guarded and Pure Heart

Father, help me guard my heart diligently against offence, bitterness, jealousy, pride, gossip, and every form of spiritual pollution that weakens love and fellowship.

Scripture Focus: Proverbs 4:23; 1 Peter 1:22

5. Prayer for a Forgiving and Reconciled Heart

Lord, remove pride, resentment, and stubbornness from my heart. Give me humility to apologise quickly, forgive freely, and pursue reconciliation wherever relationships have been damaged.

Scripture Focus: Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13–14

6. Prayer for Strength to Endure Hardship

Father, strengthen my heart to remain faithful in seasons of hardship, disappointment, and sacrifice. Help me to see every challenge through the lens of love and say with conviction, "Christ is worth it."

Scripture Focus: Acts 20:24; 2 Corinthians 12:9

7. Prayer for Spiritual Renewal

Lord, wherever my love has grown cold or service has become burdensome, restore my passion for You. Renew my delight in Your presence and revive my heart again.

Scripture Focus: Psalm 51:10–12; Revelation 2:4–5

8. Prayer for Unity in Relationships

Father, let Your love produce unity in my relationships, family, church, and community. Help me value peace, fellowship, and restoration above my own pride or personal rights.

Scripture Focus: 1 John 4:11; Colossians 3:14

9. Prayer for a Life Fully Devoted to Christ

Lord Jesus, let the ultimate goal of my life not be outward performance, but a heart fully surrendered and devoted to You. May my life continually reflect the love I have first received

from You.

Scripture Focus: John 21:15–17; Romans 12:1

Closing Prayer: Lord, teach me to live from the endless supply of Your love and grace. Let my worship be alive, my service joyful, my heart pure, and my relationships healthy and Christlike. In Jesus' name, Amen.

What did you hear?

What point in this message was most impactful for you?

What do you think?

How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?

What will you do?

How will you put into practice what you have learned today?

Please note that the Bible is not a discussion book but a decision book. God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions. This is the most important part of tonight's meeting The Holy Spirit awaits your decisions.

From this day forth:

(1) I will....

(2) I can.....

(3) I must.....

General Prayer points:

- ✚ Prayer regarding Lessons learnt today
- ✚ Pray for special needs of LightHouse Care Group Members
- ✚ Pray for your Pastors, Leaders and Workers in God's vineyard
- ✚ Pray for increase and the ability to reach your neighbours and winning of new converts to Christ through the Lighthouse Fellowship

Seven things we must seek whenever we come to the presence of God - Lighthouse Meeting:

- (1) The knowledge of God, Jesus Christ & the Holy Spirit through the Word.
- (2) Is there any sin, transgression or iniquity (habit/attitude/ mind-set or behaviour) that needs to be repented of, confessed and forsaken?
- (3) Is there any promise to be claimed, any inheritance to be possessed?
- (4) Is there any instruction to be obeyed, direction to be received, and guidance to be followed?
- (5) Is there any example to be followed/emulated or any example to be weary of and discontinued?
- (6) Is there any battle against the enemy to be fought and won?
- (7) Is there any relationship that needs to be healed & restored, or any that needs to be terminated and separated from?

For further information please contact the admin office or visit (admin@rccg-iccuk.org / 07514 011221)