

NEWS AND VIEWS
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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Bonding is a popular word for our popular culture. As my grandchildren grow older, I often share the story of the day that each one “bonded” with their Papa. The oldest bonded in the rocking chair, the middle one bonded in a restaurant, and the youngest one bonded in the hospital room. Becoming attached to someone else is one sense of the word “bond.” Another understanding is to use it as an adjective. The construction industry uses different *bonding* agents to attach one material to another. And often it is used to attach two types of very different material together. Kind of like the nature of God and the nature of humanity. Two different natures... unless a human happened to be God. And One did. Consider the following scripture.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (Romans 8:35)

These rhetorical questions imply that it is possible to be bonded to the love of Christ... and these two natures become permanently bonded, *impossible* to separate. I believe much of the pain in a human being's life can be attributed to being separated from love. We are separated from the ones we love by death, trouble, persecution, violence, neglect, and sin. When we are torn away from that to which we have been bonded... it is exactly that... a tearing away. Something torn hurts along the jagged edges. Someone who has lived through a lot of these separations may resist ever bonding emotionally again. And those who have survived the tearing away of their love may find it hard to trust God with that love. They may think *What if His love is ripped away too?* Our word today is a word of encouragement. Paul's letter to the Romans shared God's promise in the midst of great pain and dangerous cultural experiences.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS GOD'S PERMANENT BONDING AGENT.

I. TRIALS AND TROUBLES CANNOT TEAR US AWAY FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Tribulation is more than petty inconveniences. Tribulation is a trial that wears us down so that we can be torn apart. Distress is more than just a little discomfort. Distress is life-threatening trouble.

II. CONDITIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES CANNOT CUT US OFF FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Persecution is more than a little bit of uncomfortable conditions. Persecution is a constant purging of principles. Famine and nakedness are more than adverse circumstances. Famine and nakedness are dire needs, basic to the support of life as we have come to know it.

III. DANGER AND DEATH CANNOT DIVIDE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Peril is more than living on the edge. Peril describes an imminent threat of loss of limb or life. Sword is more than a figure of speech. Swords can sever and separate. But not even the sharpest of swords can cut us away from the love of Christ.

IV. WE ARE BONDED TO GOD THROUGH THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Only the love of Christ survives the adverse experience of living in a fallen world. These are but temporary afflictions that assault our senses. Only love survives them all in the Kingdom of God. No tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword will be found there. The love of Christ, the word of God, the souls of men, and the heavenly host will unite in one voice and one accord to proclaim to the universe that God is love and worthy of all praise, glory and honor. It's time we really believe the love of God in Christ Jesus holds us all together, especially when we're falling apart.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam