

Sunday Celebration (July 25, 2010)

Introducing ...God! (Pt. 5)

**"Meet the God who is Love"**

**INTRO ... Rescuing God's Character from the "Common" (vs. Qadosh)**

2 Agendas in the Structure of This Message (1) To Adjust Our Perspective ... so we can more fully see the Love of God; (2) To Observe the Love of God in the Life of King David

Why Our Perspective Needs Adjusting on This Topic:

- i. **It is Treated Definitively** ...As though all that God is can be understood under the label "love".

*"The apostle John, by the Spirit wrote, 'God is love,' and some have taken his words to be a definitive statement concerning the essential nature of God. This is a great error. ...If literally God is love, then literally love is God, and we are duty bound to worship love as the only God there is. ...we destroy the concept of personality in God and deny outright all His attributes save one, and that one we substitute for God. ...It expresses the way God is in His unitary being, as do the words holiness, justice, faithfulness, and truth. Because God is immutable He always acts like Himself, and because He is unity He never suspends one of His attributes in order to exercise another." A.W. Tozer, "The Knowledge of the Holy," p. 97, 98*

*"In an important book, Marsha Witten surveys what is being preached in the Protestant pulpit. ...her book abounds in lengthy quotations from these sermons, and they are immensely troubling. There is a powerful tendency 'to present God through characterizations of his inner states, with an emphasis on his emotions, which closely resemble those of human beings. ...God is more likely to 'feel' than to 'act', to 'think' than to 'say.' '...Many of the sermons depict a God whose behavior is regular, patterned, and predictable; he is portrayed in terms of the consistency of his behavior, or the conformity of his actions to the single rule of "love". With such sentimentalizing of God multiplying in Protestant churches, it does not take much to see how difficult maintaining a biblical doctrine of the love of God can be." D.A. Carson, "The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God", p. 12, 13*

**ii. It is Often a Narrowed and Limited View of God's Love**

*"If people believe in God at all today, the overwhelming majority hold that this God—however he, she, or it may be understood – is a loving being. But that is what makes the task of the Christian witness so daunting. For this widely disseminated belief in the love of God is set with increasing frequency in some matrix other than biblical theology. The result is that when informed Christians talk about the love of God, they mean something very different from what is meant in the surrounding culture. ...To put it another way, we live in a culture in which many other and complementary truths about God are widely disbelieved. I do not think that what the Bible says about the love of God can long survive at the forefront of our thinking if it is abstracted from the sovereignty of God, the holiness of God, the wrath of God, the providence of God, or the personhood of God—to mention only a few nonnegotiable elements of basic Christianity. ...The result, of course, is that the love of God in our culture has been purged of anything the culture finds uncomfortable. The love of God has been sanitized, democratized, and above all sentimentalized."*  
**D.A. Carson**, "The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God", p. 9-11

**iii. The Result is Actually a Diminished Experience of the Love of God in the Life of a Believer**

*"['God is love'] It is not an abstract definition which stands alone, but a summing up, from the believer's standpoint, of what the whole revelation set forth in Scripture tells us about its Author. This statement presupposes all the rest of the biblical witness to God. The God of whom John is speaking is the God who made the world, who judged it by the flood, who called Abraham and made of him a nation, who chastened his Old Testament people by conquest, captivity and exile, who sent his Son to save the world, who cast off unbelieving Israel and shortly before John wrote had destroyed Jerusalem, and who would one day judge the world in righteousness. It is this God, says John, who is love." **J.I. Packer**, "Knowing God", p. 120*

**Eph 3:14-19** "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

**2 Cor 5:14-15** "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."

## The God Who is Love... As Introduced by King David

*"...the psalmist David attempts to talk about the wonder and power of God's love. It is something he tried to do frequently throughout his life, yet we never get the sense that David felt he had succeeded. He piles superlative upon superlative. He pushes the limits of language. But David seems to know that the love he has experienced from God can never be fully communicated in words. All he can do is invite others to come and taste for themselves." David Powlison, "Seeing with New Eyes," p. 163*

### **How Would David introduce us to the God who is Love?**

(David's Descriptive Vocabulary):

- Undeserved & Unexpected & Unearned... but not Unconditional
- Favored & Fruitful ... but not Ease
- Corrective & Chastening ... but not Rejecting
- Steadfast & Covenant Keeping

## 2Sam 7:1-17

### ● Undeserved & Unexpected & Unearned

**v. 8** ... from Shepherd to Prince ... from least of the brothers to King – 1Sam  
16:1-13

#### Reminiscent of God's Love for Israel:

**Deut 7:7-8** It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

**Deut 10:14-15** Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. 15 Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.

#### ***God's Love Finds Its Motivation in God... It's NOT Dependent on Us! (v.21)***

This Setting of His Love on both David & Israel is quite surprising—given God's Knowledge of the Future

- ISRAEL would have a future of Wandering into Idolatry & Unfaithfulness
- DAVID would Commit Adultery ... MURDER a Man to Cover Up [4 chap's later]... Give Cause to the Enemies of God to Blaspheme ... Raise Children who Rape & Murder One Another

***God's Love is Qadosh Love...*** If we had known the future, would we have made these choices?

*"...whereas human passions—especially the painful ones, fear, grief, regret, despair – are in a sense passive and involuntary, being called forth and constrained by circumstances not under our control, the corresponding attitudes in God have the nature of deliberate, voluntary choices, and therefore are not of the same order as human passions at all. ...So the love of the God who is spirit is no fitful, fluctuating thing, as human love is, nor is it a mere impotent longing for things that may never be; it is, rather, a spontaneous determination of God's whole being in an attitude of benevolence and benefaction, an attitude freely chosen and firmly fixed. There are no inconstancies or vicissitudes in the love of the almighty God who is spirit. ...Nothing can separate from it those whom it has once embraced (Rom 8:35-39)."*  
J.I. Packer, "Knowing God", p. 121

1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us,  
that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

***God Set His Love on You - KNOWING Who You've Been  
AND Who You Would Be!!***

Can This Love Truly be "UNCONDITIONAL"? ...Does All That We Know of God Lead Us to believe that He is "Unconditional"?

*"The God of whom John is speaking is the God who made the world, who judged it by the flood, who called Abraham and made of him a nation, who chastened his Old Testament people by conquest, captivity and exile, who sent his Son to save the world, who cast off unbelieving Israel and shortly before John wrote had destroyed Jerusalem, and who would one day judge the world in righteousness. It is this God, says John, who is love." J.I. Packer, "Knowing God", p. 120*

*"Because God is immutable He always acts like Himself, and because He is unity He never suspends one of His attributes in order to exercise another."*  
A.W. Tozer, "The Knowledge of the Holy," p. 97, 98

**2Sam 11:1-5**

**2Sam 12:5-6**

**2Sam 12:7-9 ...13**

***Where Did God "Put Away" David's Sin?***

*"People sometimes ask whether God's love is 'unconditional'. In one sense, God's love is conditional, for God declares conditions that must be met by those who are seeking his blessings. Some don't meet those conditions and receive eternal punishment. But when God loves someone in Christ before the foundations of the world, God himself meets the conditions, so that that person will certainly be saved eternally. To those who belong to Christ, there are no further conditions. Nothing can separate us from his love. In that sense, God's saving love is utterly unconditional." John Frame, "The Doctrine of God", p. 423*

**Ps 25:6-7** Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. 7 Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!