"O How He Loves You and Me!"

Selected Scriptures
4/24/99

God is Love

The Bible specifically identifies three aspects of the nature of God:

1) "God is Spirit" (Jn. 4:24)
2) "God is Light" (I Jn. 1:5)
3) "God is Love" (I Jn. 4:8, 16)

This means that God is not merely one (among many) who loves, but that God is Love itself.

When we say that "God is Love" today, people have the wrong idea of what love is.
God's love is not a passionate desire to have (a lust).
God's love is not a compromise on truth and justice.
God's love is not a "sickly sentiment, patterned after human emotion." (Arthur Pink)

God's love is His voluntary decision to do what is best for anyone irregardless of their worthiness.

4 basic aspects of God's love:

		Answers the question:
1)	The motive of God's love	*("Why does God love?"*
2)	The manifestation of God's love	*("How does God love?")*
3)	The measure of God's love	*("How much does God love?")*
4)	The duration of God's love	*("How long will God love?")*

a. THE MOTIVE OF HIS LOVE

What would cause God to love a people who do not deserve His love, perhaps do not want His love, but desperately need His love?

God's love is unconditional
(It is not based on what you do)

1) God unconditionally chose Abraham, Isaac & Jacob to be the patriarchs of the Jewish nation. (Deut.10:15; 4:37; Rom.9:13-15)

Deut. 10:15
Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Deut. 4:37
And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

2) God unconditionally chose Israel to be the vehicle through which He would bless the world (Deut.7:7-8) (Through Israel God gave His Word [Rom.3:2] and Messiah [Rom.9:5])

3) God unconditionally sent His Son into the world (John 3:16) to die for the sin of mankind, even though mankind was at enmity with God (Romans 5:8)

b. THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE (Text: I John 4:9-10)
(God's Love is Sacrificial)

"How did God love us?"

Verse 9 - "Manifested" = to open to sight, to make visible, to show.

While love is an unseen virtue, love that is unseen is not love (the unseen virtue of love will always make itself seen).

1) GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE WAS COSTLY (V. 9a)

The price tag on God's love was His Son.

Agape love gives - Jn. 3:16; Rm. 5:8

You can sacrifice without loving (I Cor. 13:3), but you cannot love without sacrificing.

God sacrificed what was dearest to Him.

The phrase "only begotten" (monogenas - meaning "one of a kind") points to the uniqueness of Jesus and His closeness to the Father.

ILLUS: How hard it would be to give up one of my daughters to ransom someone else that is not even related to me.

2) GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE WAS GRACIOUS (v. 9b)

The purpose of God giving His Son was so that we might live by means of Jesus.

Agape love is selfless.

Our best interest was in His mind.

God did not send Jesus into the world just to show us that He loved us, but to do something for us! Give us life.

Love accomplishes things for others.

3) GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE WAS UNDESERVED (v. 10a)

God loved us when we did not love Him.

Nothing in us attracted us to God or made Him love us. We were sinful, depraved, corrupt, with "no good thing" in us (Rom. 3)

SEE Rom. 5:8ff.

The nature of true "sacrifice" is to voluntarily give that which you are under no obligation to give.

EX: In a sense, as Christians, nothing we give to God is a sacrifice. We are merely doing our duty, paying a debt of love, and rendering a "reasonable" service (Rom. 12:1).

4) GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE WAS DESPERATELY NEEDED (v. 10b)

Jesus became the "satisfaction for our sins"

Agape love meets needs.

We had a problem that we could not solve, nor could all the angels in Heaven -- only God's Son could solve it.

We needed propitiation. We needed to have our sins paid for (covered or atoned for).

5) GOD'S SACRIFICIAL LOVE WAS RIGHTEOUS (V. 10b)

Jesus became "the satisfaction for our sins."

It is said of God "He loveth righteousness and judgment" (Ps. 33:5)

God in showing His love did not violate any of His just demands.

God's love did not overlook sin or forgive it without His righteousness being satisfied (cp. Rm. 3:24-26).
Rather, His love found a way to justly pay for it.

God's love never condones sin, compromises with sin, or withholds punishment in the name of sentiment or emotion.
(God cannot save anyone on the basis that He feels sorry for them; but on the basis of the payment that has been made for them).

c. THE MEASURE OF HIS LOVE
(God's Love is incomprehensible - by finite minds)

We will now answer the question:

"How much does God love us?"

Basic Answer: The love of God is as rich as Christ is. (SEE Rom. 8:39b; Eph. 1:3-8)

While God limited the manifestation of His love to the world (jn. 3:16) to one means (the gift of His Son - "For God in this way loved the world..." - Jn. 3:16), He pours out His love without limit to those who are in His Son.

1) GOD'S LOVE FOR US IS INTIMATE

a) The Father loves us with the same love He has for His Son (John 17:23)

Because we are one (united) with Christ, both the quality of love and the quantity (degree) of love that the Father has for the Son, He has for us.

b) The Father loves us so much, we are called "sons of God" (I John 3:1)

2) GOD'S LOVE FOR US IS INFINITE

Everything about God is infinite (EX: His knowledge, wisdom, and power; So is His love).

a) His love is great (Ephesians 2:3)

While the holiness of God necessitated Calvary, the love of God provided Calvary.

The love of God:

planned our salvation
provided our salvation
protects our salvation

The Psalmist said: "Thy loving kindness is better than life!" (Ps. 63:3)

b) His love is <u>boundless</u> (Ephesians 3:17-19)

(God's love for us is broad, long, deep, and high)

Paul's prayer is that the believers who have been firmly rooted into God's love, and have been solidly placed upon God's love (v. 17) might come to grasp how much He really loves us (v. 18, 19). Why does Paul pray for this?

Because by ourselves we cannot fathom how much God loves us, unless He teaches us (READ II Thess. 3:5).

"There is a depth to it which none can fathom; there is a height to it which none can scale; there is a length and breadth to it which defies measurement by any creature-standard." (Pink, p. 80).

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9)

"The Love of God"

"Could we with ink the oceans fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade,

To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

d. THE DURATION OF HIS LOVE
(God's Love is Eternal)

What we will study today will answer the question:

"How long will God's love for us last?"

Because God's love toward those "in Christ" is eternal, we have three assuring promises:

1) NOTHING CAN CHANGE HIS LOVE FOR US (Ja. 1:17-18)
(Nothing can diminish/alter His love for us)

James 1:17-18
Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. [18] Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

God cannot love us any more or any less than He already does.

God does not love me any less than He loved the Apostle Paul, the virgin Mary, Charles Hadden Spurgeon, or D.L. Moody. Nor does He love me any more.

Our love for Him may fluctuate.

We are to grow in our love for Him.

But because He loves us with a perfect love, it does not need improvement.

Nothing about God ever changes.

Mal. 3:6 - "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

His love, like His nature is immutable.

"Many waters cannot quench love." (Song of Sol. 8:6-7)

When you sin, God does not love you any less (though He may be displeased)
When you do good, God does not love you any more. (ex. Our love for our children)

It is said of Jesus about his disciples, who would deny Him and forsake Him when He died, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (Jn. 13:1)

2) NOTHING CAN END HIS LOVE TOWARD US (Jer. 31:3; II Thes. 2:16)
(Nothing can stop His love for us)

Jeremiah 31:3
The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

2 Thes. 2:16
Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

Because God is eternal (He has no beginning or end), His love is also eternal.

God didn't begin to love us when we got saved, He loved us beforehand.
Mark 10:21
Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

The Bible teaches that "in love" God had determined beforehand that we would be adopted children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (Eph. 1:5).

Because His love is eternal, it is without beginning or end.

"I am with you always . . ."

"I will never leave you nor forsake you."

His love for us began unconditionally and will continue unconditionally. Nothing can end God's love for His children, because nothing can end our relationship to Him.

3) NOTHING CAN SEPARATE HIS LOVE FROM US (Rom. 8:31-39)
(Nothing can come between us and God's love)

"Separate" - to part or remove us away from.

ILLUS: How things or other people often come in between one person's love for another.

A common phrase in marriages today: "I don't love him/her anymore." Praise God, Christ's love never ends! (real love never does!).

v. 35
Things can come in between us and our love for God (such as "worldliness" - I Jn. 2:15), but nothing can come in between us and His love for us.

"Us" is emphatic in the Greek. Lit. "Who us will separate from the love of Christ?" (cp. v. 39).

"Love" (agapa) - a supernatural love that is exclusive to God.

Such love is unconditional (Rom. 5:8).

The following list of difficulties is given because although God loves us, it is important to note that His love does not necessarily shelter us from the difficulties of life.

On the contrary, we need them for spiritual growth (Rom. 5:3-5). In fact, they are working for us , not against us (cp. Wiersbe, p. 542).

. . . Nothing can separate us from His love:

A. Trials cannot! (v. 35a) ("tribulation...distress...persecution)

"Tribulation" = pressures of life; afflictions

"Distress" = torturing confinement (cp. Ro. 2:9); a feeling of being trapped in a tight seemingly inescapable situation.

"Persecution" = to hunt. Persecution is proof that someone does not love us -- that someone is Satan, not God!

There is a tendency to doubt God's wondrous love when trials come our way.

Yet God's love has not diminished at all (EX: the trials of Job, Joseph, David, Daniel, Paul).

B. Tragedy cannot! (v. 35b) (famine...nakedness)

"Famine" (Hunger) = a lack of food

"Nakedness" = a lack of clothing

C. Opposition cannot (v. 35b - 37) (peril...sword)

"Peril = danger

"Sword" = a slaughter weapon, implying martyrdoms (cp. v. 36).

V. 36

No doubt every day, someone around the world dies for his faith (for the sake of Jesus Christ).
In the Tribulation, for example, the world will consider Christians as being nothing more than "lit. sheep of slaughter."

V. 37

"More than conquerors" = super victorious ones; over-conquering ones. We are over and above a mere conqueror. We are "conquerors to the max!"

"Through Him (Christ) that loves us" = We are not conquerors independently. We only can be considered conquerors by means of Jesus. He made me a conqueror; I did not make myself one.

D. Death cannot (v. 36 - 38) ("Sword...death")

In verses 38 and 39, Paul gives a list of contrasts (EX: "Death nor life" . . . "Height nor depth") to reveal how Christ's love spans the widest of extremes.

v. 38

"I am persuaded" - perfect tense; implying: "I have been persuaded in the past and nothing has changed my mine up to the present."

Christ's changeless love was a certainty to Paul!

"Death" = when people die, it is human nature to forget them eventually. However, God never forgets His own!

E. Spirit powers cannot! (v. 38b) ("Angels...principalities...powers)

"Angels" = can be good or evil (fallen spirit beings).

Evidently evil angels are being described.

Neither the most powerful demon of hell, nor Satan Himself, can block or sever Christ's love from His own!!

"Principalities" = rulers

Paul no doubt contrasts the rulers of the Spirit realm ("angels") with now-human rulers of the world.

"Powers" = potentates - no power can out-power God's love from reaching His own.

F. Time cannot! (v. 38c) ("things present...things to come")

"Things present" = the way things stand at present, here and now.

"Things to come" = the future Tribulation; life hereafter.

God's love doe snot fade or change with time.

G. Distance cannot (v. 39a) ("Height nor depth")

Psalm 139:7-10

H. The whole universe cannot! (v. 39b) ("any other creature" [thing in creation])

Nothing in creation is able (lit. powerful enough) to separate us from the agapa love of God!

CONCLUSION:

During times of trouble, Satan will tempt you to question God's love for you. He might say: "How could a God of love allow this to happen to you?" Or, "God loves others, but not you; look at what He thinks of you!"

Romans 8:39

"No circumstance" ("circumstances" - are those things that "stand around us" - Thomas, p. 231) - divides His love from us!

Why is it that nothing can separate us from God's love? Nothing will ever separate God's love from His Son, and we are "in Christ."

We are beloved because we are "in the beloved." (Eph. 1:6).

Important note: God's love is only found in one place - "In Christ Jesus."

The sole source and wellspring of God's love is Christ! To be outside of Christ is to be outside of the love of God. Just as God offers no grace outside of Christ (Eph. 2:7) and no blessings outside of Christ (Eph. 1:3), God offers no love for you to be a recipient of ("partakers of") outside of christ!

God's demonstration of love is the giving of His Son (Jn. 3:16). To reject God's Son is to reject God's love!

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF GOD'S LOVE

HOW CAN I LOVE GOD?

SEE I John 4:19

If it is true that we "love Him because He first loved us", it is imperative that we really know how much He loved and loves us so that we will love Him more.

God's love for us was unconditional (the verse does not say, "He loved us because we first loved Him.").
Our love for God, however, is conditional. It is conditioned by our knowing His love for us.

No one loves God (in the true sense) who has not first experienced His love. The times we love God are the times when we see clearly His love for us.

In order for us to truly love God, we must know (be assured of) His love for us.

Why do some Christians leave "their first love"? (Rev. 2:4)
ANSWER: They lose sight of God's gracious love for them.

1. We lose sight of the cross (when first saved, this is all we thought about)
2. We forget what wretched sinners we were when God's unconditional love found us.
3. We doubt His wondrous love for us now that we are saved and yet still sin.

"How little real love there is for God. One chief reason for this is because our hearts are so little occupied with His wondrous love for His people. The better we are acquainted with His love--its character, fullness, blessedness--the more will our hearts be drawn out in love to Him (Pink, Attributes, p. 77)

**In order for us to truly love God, we must know (be assured of) His sacrificial love for us.

HOW SHOULD I LOVE OTHERS?

1. A Spiritual love (A love that comes from God - I John 4:7)
2. An Unconditional love (Rom.5:8; Mt.5:44)
3. A Volitional love ("Love" is a choice; a decision; an act of the will)
4. A Continual love
5. A Christ-like love (Eph. 5:25)
6. A Sacrificial love (John 3:16; Eph.5:25)
7. A Similar love (As you do yourself - Eph.5:28,29; Mt.22:39)
8. A Giving love (John 3:16)
9. A Forgiving love (I Pet. 4:8)

"O How He Loves You and Me!"

Selected Scriptures
4/24/99

God is Love

I. THE MOTIVE OF HIS LOVE

II. THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE (Text: I John 4:9-10)

1) God's Sacrificial Love Was Costly (V. 9a)

2) God's Sacrificial Love Was Gracious (V. 9b)

3) God's Sacrificial Love Was Undeserved (V. 10a)

4) God's Sacrificial Love Was Desperately Needed (V. 10b)

5) God's Sacrificial Love Was Righteous (V. 10b)

III. THE MEASURE OF HIS LOVE
(God's Love is incomprehensible - by finite minds)

1) God's Love For Us Is Intimate

2) God's Love For Us Is Infinite
   a) His love is great (Ephesians 2:3)
   b) His love is boundless (Ephesians 3:17-19)

IV. THE DURATION OF HIS LOVE
(God's Love is Eternal)

1) Nothing Can Change His Love For Us (Ja. 1:17-18)
   (Nothing can diminish/alter His love for us)
2) Nothing Can End His Love Toward Us (Jer. 31:3; II Thes. 2:16)
   (Nothing can stop His love for us)
3) Nothing Can Separate His Love From Us (Rom. 8:31-39)
   (Nothing can come between us and God's love)
   . . . Nothing can separate us from His love:

a. Trials cannot! (v. 35a) ("tribulation...distress...persecution)
b. Tragedy cannot! (v. 35b) (famine...nakedness)
c. Opposition cannot (v. 35b - 37) (peril...sword)
d. Death cannot (v. 36 - 38) ("Sword...death")
e. Spirit powers cannot! (v. 38b) ("Angels...principalities...powers)
f. Time cannot! (v. 38c) ("things present...things to come")
g. Distance cannot (v. 39a) ("Height nor depth")
h. The whole universe cannot! (v. 39b) ("any other creature" [thing in creation])