What Love Is This? - Part 5

by Dave Hunt

The sermon challenges the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and argues that God's love and mercy are universal, not limited to a select few.

Duration: 9:49
Scripture: Psalm 86:15, Micah 6:8, Luke 13:24, Romans 11:32, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 1 John 2:6
Topics: "Predestination Debate", "Gods Mercy"

Description

This sermon delves into the historical context of divisions within Christianity, focusing on the Council of Nicaea and the controversies surrounding believers who renounced Christ under persecution. It contrasts the views of Augustine and Adonitus on the purity of the church, highlighting the extreme measures taken by figures like John Calvin in Geneva. The core theological debate centers on the concept of God's love for all versus the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and limited atonement, questioning the nature of God's mercy and kindness.

Transcript

These Christians are divided, they don't get along with one another. And so he called the Council of Nicaea to straighten out certain things, and he imposed, finally, you will agree or else. And that's what Augustine did, the controversy with Adonitus.

You remember Adonitus, they were a little bit upset because some of the bishops and ordinary believers as well had renounced Christ under the persecution of Diocletian and others. To save getting killed, they had renounced Christ. And now when Constantine comes in power and he's giving freedom to the church, they said, well, we didn't really mean it.

We really were Christians the whole time. And they were embraced back in the church, as well as people, I mean, Augustine, I could quote Augustine, he says, you go to church today, you'll see sorcerers, astronomers, astrologers, clients of these people. You'll see people wearing amulets.

I mean, the same pagans that go to the pagan festivals are in the church. Augustine thought that was fine. Everyone must be in the church.

Adonitus said, no, the church should be believers, only true believers. And these people who renounced Christ under persecution, they're going to have to repent of this, and they're going to have to get saved

again and be baptized. And Augustine was not happy.

They wanted a pure church. Augustine, well, he says he didn't really want to kill them. But if you had to, if you had to kill people to force them back into the faith, then Augustine was in favor of that.

Okay, so now you would understand a little bit, and I don't know, the Calvinists get upset with me by going to Geneva, pointing out what happened in Geneva. John Calvin would flog you, torture you. They tortured people.

They burned more than 60 people at the stake in Geneva under John Calvin. Talk about thought police. They knock on your door, you've got too many dishes on the table.

A lady that had her hair bouffant a little bit too high in jail, and so forth. The death penalty for many crimes, a child that bad-mouthed his parents had his head cut off. So John Calvin, because he believes in a God who forces people into heaven with irresistible grace, it's called, and a God who doesn't care that millions, probably billions, go to hell.

In fact, he has predestined them to go there, and has made it out so that they can't even understand the gospel. He will not give them the grace they need to understand and to believe. Well, I think maybe that would flavor your actions, wouldn't it? And I have Calvinists who try to defend John Calvin, and they say, well yeah, but you know, everybody did it in those days.

The popes were doing it, and so forth, and wait a minute. First John chapter two, John says, he that says he abides in him, that is in Christ, ought himself so to walk as he walked. It doesn't matter what society you live in, what time in history you live in, is not my life supposed to reflect Christ living in me? But I don't think you would find that in John Calvin.

Oh, he was very kind, he prayed a lot, he wore himself out preaching sermons, he also tortured those who disagreed, he also banished them, flogged them, and so forth. Well, that comes from Augustine, who's been called the father of the inquisition. Well, that goes to the heart of the issue.

What love is this? God is love. And you can get in lengthy discussions with Calvinists, and you can go round and round on the finer points of the doctrine. Let me just point this out.

The bottom line, what all of their arguments are aimed at, is to prove to you that God does not love everyone. That God does not want everyone in heaven. That Christ did not die for everyone.

But that in fact, God is pleased to damn millions, and you would have to say billions, to hell. Now, when I say to the Calvinists, I talk about a relatively few elect, the Calvinist says, no, no, we don't mean few elect, I mean, there's a great multitude in heaven, that's what the Bible says of every tribe and time. Well, yes, but I say, look, don't jump on me for saying that.

Jesus said it, didn't he? Didn't they ask him, Lord, are there few that be saved? Jesus said, strive to enter at the straight gate. Straight is the gate, narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many there be that go in there at.

Now you've got two choices, either the broad road filled with people on their way to hell, is because they have made a choice of their own free will, and they have rejected a gospel that they could have believed if they wanted to, or God predestined them to go to hell, and the vast majority of mankind, this broad road is

because God predestined them from eternity past, and that's what Calvinism teaches. And John Calvin said, it is to the glory of God. It is his good pleasure that he damns so many.

So, we have to decide, and this is the issue in essence. Does God love everyone? God is love, the Bible says. It tells us his tender mercies are over all his works.

Psalm 86 15, but thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion and gracious, long-suffering, plenteous in mercy and truth. And he requires us to be the same, does he not? Didn't Jesus say, be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful? But if my heavenly Father is only merciful to certain ones, then I can be only merciful to certain ones, right? If I'm to be merciful as my heavenly Father is merciful. But Micah 6 8 says that I am to love mercy, and Micah 7 18 says that God delighteth in mercy.

Ephesians 2 4 says he is rich in mercy, and I quoted already Psalm 145 9, his tender mercies are over all his works. And Romans 11 32 tells us that God has pronounced both Jew and Gentile, quote, all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all. I believe that the Bible teaches that God loves everyone.

He's not willing that any should perish. The Calvinist says no, that means he's not willing that any of the elect should perish. First Corinthians 13 4 says, you know it well, love is kind.

Love is kind. How can you interpret predestining multitudes to eternal torment as being kind? That's not a matter of God's sovereignty, understand. God has the right to send anybody to hell that he wants to, right? We would agree with that.

He's sovereign. I can't argue. In fact, we all deserve to go to hell, right? That's not the issue.

The issue is, is God kind? Is he loving? I don't think it's loving to send people to hell, predestined them to go to hell. They can't even believe the gospel. They don't have a chance.

Well, we'll get more into that. I think it's a misrepresentation of God. Listen to J.I. Packer.

Quote, God loves all in some ways. Everyone whom he creates receives many undeserved good gifts.

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