

God Is Love

by David Daniel

God's love is perfect, absolute, and unconditional, and it is demonstrated in the Godhead, in Christ's actions and teachings, and in the fruit of the Spirit.

Duration: 36:26

Scripture: Luke 4:18

Topics: "Love Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to meditate on the concept that 'God is love.' He urges them to reflect on the various ways in which God has demonstrated His love, such as through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The speaker references Romans 15:16 and 15:30, where Paul speaks of ministering to the Gentiles and requesting prayers for himself. The speaker also addresses the belief in the Trinity and emphasizes the importance of understanding God's holiness and righteousness in relation to His love.

Transcript

Good to have you all here. It's good to have some guests back here with us this morning. Good to have you with us, God bless you.

February, all thoughts turn to love, okay? Love. Okay, Shelly shared something with me this week that she had seen on TV and I got a kick out of it. It was a florist's commercial and in the commercial it was promoting the high quality of the flowers that they could deliver to you to give to your loved one.

And then it proceeded to say that it would exceed the quality of those that are purchased from the grocery store because they store their flowers in the produce department and when you give them to her they smell like onions. I'm going to have to check that out. Well, as you think about that, I think it would be legitimate for us to think about love in a little higher note and quality than that.

I recently finished a book and the book was entitled Love or Die. Not live or die, love or die. The author was particularly pointing to the situation that's described in Revelation chapter 2 in which the church at Ephesus was highly commended for their quality of doctrine, for the work that they were doing, for the fact that they did not allow false teaching.

But the Lord said I have just one thing against you and that one thing is you've left your first love. That got me to thinking and so I'm going to begin this morning a series on love. And as we talk about the subject of love going forward, and I'm not sure how many messages that this might end up being, much of what is passed off as love these days would probably be better defined as lust.

As lust. Furthermore, as we think in terms of what is going on in this world, much of what is passed off as love, instead of being other-minded, is all selfishness and really, bottom line, what's in it for me? What's in it for me? And also, we recognize that these days, true love that lasts, that endures, is rather rare. And unfortunately, much of that that's passed off as love, when you get up close to it and personal with it, it's more like silk or plastic flowers.

There's no life in it. So when we begin to examine the word of God and we begin to examine about what is love from God's perspective, we can open our eyes to some new and very, very valuable truths that we need to wrap our minds and hearts around. As I've been working on this message this week, and in doing so, just kind of seeing where else I might be going on down the line, the thing that particularly struck me was this.

That is, if you say God is love, and we find that in the scripture that was read in our hearing this morning, try to meditate upon God as love without adding what God has done, is doing, or will do. Focus on the reality of the character of God as defined in genuine, perfect love. As I've been doing that this week, it's been a real challenge to me.

Because we are so oriented to think about love from others as related to what have they done for me? What good can they do to me? What benefit can I derive from them? What is in it for me? When we look at the pureness of God's love, we are going to be indeed challenged, and I'm going to share more about that as we go along. As we think about God is love, as you look at the outline in your bulletin, I want to begin with God is. In Hebrews 11, 6 speaks very powerfully.

Without faith, it's impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him. God is.

A reality is what we are looking at as we look at God. In the beginning, God, Genesis 1, 1. As we go back to the beginning, as we begin to nail down this subject of God is love, we go to the beginning. And as we go to the beginning, God is very much revealed as unique and genuine.

Deuteronomy 6, 4, which is called the Great Shema. This is that which the Jews, Orthodox Jews to this day, continue to repeat. Deuteronomy 6, 4 says, Here, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.

Let me reread that and present it in a slightly different way. Here, O Israel, Yahweh, Jehovah, our Elohim is Echad Yahweh. He is one.

Echad is a very unique word. It has application in this regard, as we think about love and as we think about marriage. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become, what? One, Echad.

They're two, but they're one. One that has now been united together in a covenant relationship with God. When we look at the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the testimony that we have is that God as a unit is Echad.

He is one. And in that oneness, there's great truth to be wrapped around in our minds and hearts to apply to our life. 1 Corinthians 8, 6, But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.

And one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. And notice in that reference, it says, and we in him. The way that we are in him is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He is the revealer. He is the one who inspires. He is the one that draws us and implements God's power in our life.

God is. God is one God in three persons. Genesis 1, 26.

God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And then it proceeds to say, And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. One God in three persons.

In Matthew chapter 28, verse 19, a part of what we call the Great Commission. The message is given, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Three in one.

Romans chapter 15. Romans 15 is winding down Paul's letter to the Roman church. And he says in verse 16, That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Then in verse 30, he says, Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. Let me pause and say something. There are some cults that do not believe that God is three in one.

There are some cults that reject the deity of Jesus Christ. There are some cults that simply say that God is somewhat of an essence, but that he is not really genuine. They reject the revelation of God as he is given.

In 2 Corinthians 13, 14. Again, winding toward the end of his second letter to the church at Corinth. Listen to Paul's words.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen. Ephesians 2.18 For through him, and the him here is Jesus Christ, we both, and both are the Jews and Gentiles, have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Paul, in that second chapter in his letter to the Ephesians, is showing how God uniquely brought together Jew and Gentile, and he made them one. And that one is the church. And that oneness that is represented there is also a reflection of the uniqueness of the deity of the Trinity as the Godhead.

1 John 5, verse 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. Now, why is this significant? The reason that this is significant is we talk about God is love, we want to recognize that God in his very reality is love, is demonstrated throughout all aspects of his personality, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It's interesting that as we think about God is love, in the passage that was read in verse 8 and also in verse 16, it uses that statement, God is love. Divine love, God's love, is perfect. Many of you have heard

me use this illustration before.

Ivory Soap, at one point, advertised themselves as what? 99 and 99, 100 percent pure. And what they were saying? We're impure. Right? They're impure.

There's some kind of impurity in their soap. I don't know what it was, but they admitted that it was there. When we think about God and his reality, God is divine, and he is absolutely 100 percent perfect.

Now, listen to what the Scripture says, and what the Scripture tells us in 1 John 4 and verse 12, No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. If God's love is not perfect, his love cannot be perfected in us.

How many agree with me on that principle this morning? God's love is perfect. As we get on in our study on down the road, we're going to see how God's desire and God's action is working in us as believers, that we might be perfected in our love. Perfected in our love toward him, and perfected in our love toward one another, and in the result, reflecting truly the reality of God to this world.

God's love is perfect. Secondly, God's love, divine love, is absolute. Absolute.

Turn with me, if you would, in your Bibles to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 6, verse 1. In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims.

Each one had six wings. With twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of lords. As Isaiah had this vision of seeing the glory of the Lord, he saw divine proclamation going on. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The Lord of all the hosts of heaven. All angelic beings. All the hosts of the starry host.

He is Lord of all of that, but his nature is he is holy, holy, holy. Revelation chapter 4 verse 8 says, And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day or night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come. The Old Testament revelation, the New Testament revelation reveals the same thing.

Holy, holy, holy, absolute holiness is the nature of God. As he is thrice holy, friends listen to me, he is thrice loved. As he is thrice holy and thrice loved, he is also thrice righteous.

He is also thrice omniscient, omnipotent. His nature is absolute perfection, and it is absolutely absolute. You know what? In our society today, we have a world that has a lot of trouble with absolutes, do we not? Okay? But as we study and examine God and find his revelation of himself, it can begin, I believe, to touch and move in our hearts for good.

The Godhead has perfect love within itself. That's a hard way to say that sentence. I'm not sure maybe you have a better way of saying it, but they love one another.

There's perfect and divine love reflected among the Godhead as they are together in one. Illustration of that, Matthew chapter 3 and verse 17. Christ is at the River Jordan.

John the Baptist is there baptizing. And as Christ is baptized to fulfill all righteousness, it says, And lo, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And at the very moment that that voice was being proclaimed in the midst of those people, the scripture says the Holy Spirit, as in the form of a dove, descended upon him.

The Godhead is present right there. And in that Godhead is the full revelation and declaration of love and relationship between them. In Luke chapter 4, verse 18 and 19, we read about Christ as he had gone to his hometown of Nazareth and he went into the synagogue.

And as he went into the synagogue, he was given permission to be a reader that day. And he took the scroll and he opened it up and he went to Isaiah chapter 61 and he began reading with verse 1 and read partway through verse 2. And so I quote Luke 4, verse 18 and 19. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he had anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captive and recovery of sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised. As Christ is speaking that day, he read that, then he closed the scroll. And you remember what he said? Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Can I paraphrase something about that phrase? What he is in actuality declaring is God the Father has declared through now the mouth of the Son by the power of the Spirit that his ministry is going to impact society with love, divine love. The actions that Christ fulfilled were fulfillment of that. They were the demonstration of God's love.

But there were something else. And that was the authentication that he was indeed the Messiah. That he was indeed who he represented himself to be.

John chapter 3 and verse 35. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand. John 5, verse 20.

First part of that verse. For the Father loveth the Son. John 14, verse 31.

But that the world may know that I love the Father. And as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

That the world may know that I love the Father. Let me ask you a question. How did Christ display his love for the Father? Absolute, total obedience.

John chapter 15, verse 9. As the Father hath loved me, Jesus says, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

We'll get to it later on, but on in chapter 14, verse 21 and 23. Jesus said, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. John chapter 17.

Christ's high priestly prayer. Verse 24 and then verse 26. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.

How long had the love relationship between Father and Son existed? From before the foundation of the world. And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them. That passage in John 17 is Christ's prayer.

We call it his high priestly prayer. Some have said that is more accurately the Lord's prayer than the one that we often pray from Matthew chapter 6. Here in the Lord's prayer, Christ is praying that us as believers might have the privilege, might have the blessing, might have the honor that we would be with him where he was before he came. That we might know the glory of the Father, which he knew with the Father before he came.

That all that he knew in his divinity might become ours in reality when we're there in the presence with him. That's an awesome prayer. And something to get excited about.

In Galatians chapter 5 and verse 22 we have the beginning of the listing of what we call the fruit of the Spirit. And speaking here about the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit and the first of the nine that is listed there is love, is love. Let me share something with you.

If someone says that they are spiritual, filled with the Spirit, but they have not love, there's a problem. Because the fruit of the Spirit is beginning with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, kindness, temperance against such there is no law. But it is first and foremost a manifestation of love.

Now what we've done is to introduce God as he is and God is love and the Godhead has perfect love amongst themselves. And while God's love is perfect and has been from the foundation before the foundation of the world because of our fallen condition we do not have perfect love. We do not have absent love.

I ask you that you would turn with me to a very heavy passage of Scripture and it's found in the book of Romans. Romans chapter 3 beginning with verse 10. Friends, listen to me.

Would you all look up here at me for just one second. This is God's Word. That I'm reading to you.

This is God's description of me and God's description of you and of humanity. So as we read this, this is God talking. Okay.

Look at verse 10. As it is written, there is none righteous. No, not one.

There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way.

They are together become uncomfortable. There is none that doeth good. No, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulcher. With their tongues they have used deceit. The poison of Asp is under their lips.

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways.

And the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now I want you to look with me to the application of that scripture for just a second.

God is love. Perfect love. Absolute love.

This is a description of fallen humanity. How can a holy God of love have a relationship with that kind of an individual? And let me ask another question. Why would a perfect God of love want to have a relationship with those kind of people? Friends, part of the mystery, amazing mystery of God's love as I've meditated on it this week, God is love, is to try to wrap my head around that perfect love that he has.

Now listen to me. Otherwise you're going to miss a very, very important point. Because of his perfect love and because of his perfect holiness and righteousness, God is so holy he cannot look upon sin with approval.

How many of you see a dilemma? That they are too holy to look upon sin. God, if you were to number our iniquity, who could stand the psalmist rights? So as we think about God's love, what immediately should begin to come into our minds is a description of what do I look like? And when it comes to the subject of love, perfect, absolute love that God reflects, how far am I from that? I want to give us all a challenge. I got a head start.

I've been doing it all week. And here's the challenge I want to give us. I want you this afternoon and this week to carve out some time and just meditate on God is love.

I believe that what you will begin to do right away is you're going to begin to enumerate the ways which God has demonstrated love. Herein is manifest the love of God that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for our sin. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

That's where you're going to tend to go. But pull yourself back. If you could look into the presence of the reality of a God who is love, what would that look like? I give us a scripture.

It's kind of a trigger point, if you please. It says, James 1, 17, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. It cometh down from the father of lights in which there is no variable, nor shadow of turning.

Here it is describing him who is the father of lights. But I suggest he's the father of love. Every good gift that God gives is a love gift.

Every perfect gift that God gives is a love gift. And with God, there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. I want to ask you a question.

How many of you in your interpersonal relationships would admit that sometimes you're a little fickle? If you don't lift up your hand, I know you're a liar. OK? We're fickle. We're fickle.

You know, our love is conditional. God's love is unconditional. There was a man, if we're having a sweetheart supper next week, there was a man who was very difficult to live with.

This is not me. This is not a confession. Somebody like me.

OK? There was a man, and in the morning when his wife prepared his breakfast, he was never satisfied. The egg was always too hard, or it was always too soft, or the bacon was cooked too long, or the toast was a little burned, or on and on and on. Nothing was satisfying for him.

And finally, she just had had it and had it and had it, and she purposely, I want to, I'm going to, I'm going to make that man happy. I'm going to satisfy if it kills me. So she went in to him and said, Dear, what would you like for breakfast this morning? And he says, I want coffee, orange juice, two eggs.

One sunny side up, one over easy. I want bacon. I want toast.

And I want butter on my toast with strawberry jam. Yes, dear. She went in, prepared the meal.

Every item that was on his list was present. She brought it in to serve him even in bed and presented it to him. And he looked at it, and he just flipped it off on the floor.

She broke down in tears. What's the matter? What happened? What's wrong? He said, you fried the wrong egg, sunny side up. I hope that you're not that fickle.

But you know what? We are fickle people, are we not? And it's almost a daily occurrence in our life. We love somebody if, we love somebody when, OK? We study love. God is love.

And we are called from the reading of this chapter to have God's love perfected in us. How many of you think there's a little room for remodeling in our love chapters? Would you pray with me? Father, it is so very difficult for us to understand and wrap our mind and spirit around a God who is absolutely, totally, perfectly love and that everything that he does is wrapped in that love. Even his judgment of sin.

And so, Father, as we meditate on this subject of love this week and this month and this whatever amount of time it takes, Lord, I ask that you would work in me and that you would work in us, that we would more and more and more begin to reflect the love that you are. And, Father, that this fellowship of believers would not be like the Ephesian church that has one thing against it, and that is that they've left their first love. The call that was given to that church was to repent, to remember, and to return back to what they once were.

So, Father, I bring us before you this morning and ask that you, Lord, that you would be moved by your Holy Spirit, who brings about love. His fruit in us will include love, joy, peace, the very character of God. Lord, do a work in me and do a work in us.

Lord, you even have a passage that says, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another. Is that what the world is saying about us? So, Lord, convict and convince as you work in our lives, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you turn to hymn number 286, let's stand and sing together.

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