

GOD IS LOVE

Int.

1. Aim: To describe the characteristic of God that is the most outstanding trait.
2. 1 John 4:7-8 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."
3. God is an infinite being! He is described by the Bible writers in 3 ways: ¹
 - a. **God is Spirit**
 - i. Jn. 4:24 "God is a spirit..."
 - ii. God is wholly immaterial. Nothing material or tangible about God
 - b. **God is Light**
 - i. 1 John 1:5 "...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."
 - ii. God is the source of physical light and of spiritual light that is the source of all moral and spiritual intelligence.
 - c. **God is Love**
 - i. 1 John 4:8 "For God is love"
 - ii. This deals with the emotional nature of God
 - iii. God expresses infinite love toward his creatures.
4. There are many characteristics of God given in the Bible - Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Immutability, Justice, Eternal nature, but....
5. God's love is the central fact and theme of the Bible.
 - a. No other religious system teaches this. The Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, and Pagans do not have any such teaching. But God's nature is that He is love. That's what He is!
 - b. But there is more to God's nature than love, He is not Love Only.
6. But we do need to understand that God is Love !

Discussion

I. GOD IS LOVE ?

A. What does this say about God?

1. God is concerned about us He is concerned for the well-being and happiness of His creatures.
2. He cares whether we are truly happy and doing well.
3. This element of unselfish concern is what lies at the very heart of the idea of agape. God is concerned about us simply because we are His creatures.
4. He did not make us only to ignore us or treat us with indifference.

B. God's love is a Giving love

1. Another aspect of God's love is His desire to give whatever is necessary to achieve His creatures' happiness.
2. God created the world to be the perfect home for the creatures He made in His own image.
3. Everything was given for our benefit.
4. Quote from Robert Milligan "God's favor to man is further manifested in the fact, that for his special benefit the whole earth, with all its rich treasures of mineral, vegetable, and animal wealth, was provided. For him, all the matter of the Earth was created in the beginning. For him, all the gold, and the silver, and copper, and iron, and granite, and marble, and coal, and salt, and other precious minerals and fossils were treasured up... for him the light and the atmosphere were produced. For him, the world was clothed with grass, and fruits, and flowers. For him, the sun rose and set in the firmament, and the stars performed their apparent daily and yearly revolutions. For him, the sea and the land were filed with living creatures, and the air was made vocal with sweet voices of birds. All these things were provided for the good and happiness of man; and then he was himself created to enjoy them." ²

5. God gives for our pleasure
 - a. Acts 14:17 NKJV "Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:17 NKJV "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."
6. The ultimate act of giving and the ultimate act of love, was God's giving of Himself in the person of His only begotten Son as a propitiation for our sins.

C. **God's Love is an Active Love**

1. God's love is more than a concern for His creatures' well-being and a desire to give in order to secure that well-being.
2. He acts on behalf of those whom He loves.
3. His love is an active love.
4. 'It is a love that stops for nothing, that is resolutely devoted to the other, however far away and hostile that other may be; it is a love which is unmotivated and for which no sacrifice is too great to enrich people who did not ask for it or who even oppose it..' ³
5. God said through Jeremiah: Jeremiah 31:3 "... Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."
 - a. His people's idolatry and rebellion against Him had not diminished His love for them.
 - b. In spite of their sin. God is still love and desired to bring about a new covenant (Jer. 31:31f).

- c. After all Judah had done, we would expect God to abhor and reject them, but we read about how He still loves them with an everlasting love.
 - d. Even though He sent them into captivity for punishment and chastisement, He brought them back to their own land and actively blessed them.
6. God's great love for us was expressed so clearly that it is difficult to find mention of God's love for us in a passage that does not also include the cross.
- a. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
 - b. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
 - c. 1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

D. God is love.

- 1. Nothing we can do to change that.
- 2. His love is a giving active love...

II. WHAT IS GOD'S LOVE LIKE ?

A. He loves without reason

- 1. God doesn't have or need a reason to love.
 - a. The very nature, essence of God is love, 1 Jn 4:8
 - b. Because He is God, He loves...because He is Love, He is God.
- 2. He doesn't need a reason to love.
 - a. It does not make Him more powerful, important, sovereign, wiser.
 - b. He doesn't love because He can't do without you, Ps 139:1-4

- c. He doesn't love because we are lovable, Rom 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- d. He doesn't love because of your greatness,
- (1) **Deut 7:7-8** "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 "but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."
- (2) II Tim 1:9 "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"
3. God has no reason to love, except He is God and God is love.

B. **God's Love Is Eternal**

1. The world greatly abuses the word "love"
 - a. "I love you with all my heart" today
 - b. Tomorrow "I want a divorce. I hate you!" "Please release me, let me go, I don't love you anymore". Real love is not here today, gone tomorrow.
2. We often expect God's love to be the same (loves me when I'm good)
3. However, God's love is Eternal,
 - a. Jer 31:3 NKJV "The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

- b. How long God will love is taught by Jesus,
 - (1) Lk 17:3-4 - if brother trespass - rebuke, if repents then forgive
 - (2) Mt 18:21-35 - how oft shall my brother sin and I forgive him - 7 times, no
70 times 7 = lesson - God's love is eternal
- c. Note: Love does not negate His justice, sinners will still be lost.

C. **God's Love Is Infinite** = endless, immeasurable,

1. Not only will His love never end, but also there is no limitation.
2. Often people feel they have sinned too much for God to forgive.
 - a. There is nothing you can do to make God stop loving you.
 - b. Rom 8:37-39 - nothing can separate us from the love of God "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c. He loves even His enemies (that's us!), Rom 5:6-8
 - d. Prodigal Son illustrates God's love, Lk 15:11-32
 - e. Eph 2:4-5 NKJV "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)"

D. **God's Love Is Immutable**

1. "Immutable" means never changing or varying
2. This is one of the most stabilizing aspects of God's love, Heb 6:17-19
 - a. His limitless, eternal love will never change.
 - b. James 1:17 "...with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 - c. Heb 13:5-6,8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."
3. This is one of the greatest characteristics which separate God from man.
 - a. Today we love pizza, tomorrow hamburgers.
 - b. Peter's denial of Christ illustrates fickle love.
 - c. Today we love football, tomorrow basketball
 - d. God's love never changes. No highs and lows. Consistent.
 - e. His love is ...immutable... never changing.
4. "How can I but love Him?"

Conclusion

1. God is love.... that is a wonderful truth that we learn from God's Word !
 - a. Many of the ancient cultures feared their gods because they thought of them as gods of vengeance without love.
 - b. Our God -- the one true God -- is not a God of vengeance, but with a love that is eternally boundless.
 - c. Love forgives, blesses, strengthens.
 - d. Love also scourges and punishes when necessary, Heb 12:6 and 7.
 - e. Love always does what's best.

2. God wants us to love Him, but love cannot be forced or coerced. It must be freely chosen.
3. 1 John 4:19 - "We love him, because he first loved us."
 - a. Our knowledge of God's great love for us leads us to love Him !
 - b. We do not love him for financial gain, or earthly possessions
 - c. We love Him because He first loved us !!!
4. JOHN 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - a. God has commanded us to be baptized for the remission of our sins - Acts 2:38
 - b. Preceded by Faith, repentance and confession
5. As a Christian who Loves God then I will continue to keep his commandments
 - a. Add the Christian Graces - 2 Pet. 1:5-7 to live as directed
 - b. Worship as Commanded - to continue to prove my love for Him
6. 1 Jn. 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - a. Grievous = heavy - burdensome
 - b. Love for God makes his commandments light / easy to keep

Sources Consulted

- 1.A.L.C. Nov. 10, 1957 p. 247
 - 2.Robert Milligan, An Exposition and Defense of the Scheme of Redemption p. 36
 3. Hendrikus Berkhof, Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith. p. 119
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