

GOD'S GREAT LOVE

Int.

1. Aim: To show exactly how God loves.
2. I John 4:8 "... God is love."
3. The love of God is a characteristic God that is often misunderstood.
 - a. Many think of God's love in terms like the love man has for fellow man (indulgent, changeable, sentimental, emotional, self-seeking)
 - b. Many reason "God will not send a person to Hell. Because He is a God of Love"
 - c. Or "How could a God of Love allow such tragedies?"
4. There is no doubt that our God loves
 - a. Jn 3:16 NKJV "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. I Jn 4:7-10
5. How much does God love us? How can love be measured? In pounds? In yards? In gallons? In hours?
6. In this lesson we will explore what God's love is like. When we learn how God loves us we can open up our heart and let His great love flow into our heart through the gospel, and then into the hearts of others.
7. How do we measure God's Love? Eph. 3:18-19 NKJV "may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the **width** and **length** and **depth** and **height**-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Discussion

I. WIDTH

A. His great love is wide

1. It can take in all of us
2. Paul prayed that we would understand the width of God's love

B. God's love is wide enough to take in all of the human race in **material needs**

1. Matt. 5:45 ... "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
2. God is good to all men, even his enemies - Acts 17:25 "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;"
3. Though men have gone into sin... "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17

C. The Love of God is wide enough to provide for all men **spiritually**

1. Acts 10:34 "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:"
2. II Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
3. It is His will to "...have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2:4

D. God loves all the world

1. Not just the rich, the educated, the popular, the white man, or Americans.
2. Not just the Jews but the Gentiles also
3. His love takes in all people.

E. Here is how wide God's love is...

1. His love was without class barriers: He dined with Zacchaeus, the despised Publican (Luke 19:5).
2. His love was without race barriers: He responded to the plea of the Syrophonecian woman (Mark 7:26).
3. His love was without national barriers: He honored the Roman centurion (Matthew 8:10).
4. His love was without popularity barriers: He befriended sinners and social outcasts (Matthew 11:19).
5. His love was without financial barriers: He praised the widow who gave two mites (Mark 12:42).
6. His love was without pride barriers: He washed the disciples feet (John 13:14)

F. We need God's great love

1. The whole world lieth in wickedness - 1 Jn. 4:19 "We love him, because he first loved us."
2. Rom. 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"
3. Christ is the propitiation [atonement- sacrifice] for our sins; 1 John 2:2
4. John 3:17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

- G. The width of God's great love is seen in the great commission
1. He provides salvation for all men through the gospel
 2. All nations are to be taught until the end of the world
 3. The width of God's love encompasses the globe
 4. The Love of God is as broad as the earth - it embraces all people of all nations

II. LENGTH

- A. The length of God's great love is explained in...
1. Jn. 3:16 NKJV "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."
 2. "So" is an adverb of degree
 3. Tell's how far God's love reached toward us
- B. His love went to such great length that He gave his son to die for us
1. The son dreaded the shame and suffering of death and prayed for the bitter cup to pass Matt. 26:39 "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt]."
 2. He was praying so earnestly that his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling upon the ground - Luke 22:44
 3. Mark 14:33-34 he said his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death
 4. His father, God, heard his prayer, saw his tears and heard him crying.
 5. But He still "So loved the world" that He let him die that we might be saved !

C. Heart of God was touched

1. Christ must have touched the heart of God when he cried out "my God, My god, why hast thou forsaken me." Mk. 15:34
2. God loved us to such great length that he still gave His Son, whom He dearly loved, to die for our sins.
3. This is the love that passes our knowledge and understanding !
4. Jeremiah declared, "God loves you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3)

III. DEPTH

A. Depth of His love

1. His love reaches down into the pitfalls of sin to save the vilest sinners
2. Paul said he was "chief" of sinners and that Christ came to save him- I Tim. 1:15
3. The love of Christ reached down to the sinful woman caught in the act of sin and condemned by men and he said to her "go and sin no more." Jn. 8:3-11
4. Often people feel they have sinned too much for God to forgive. There is nothing you can do to make God stop loving you. Rom 8:37-39

B. His depth of love holds a hope and better way of life for the worst of sinners

1. His love reaches to the lowest fallen man
2. The worst sinner can receive the love of God
3. We can't get below the love of God

C. There is power in the gospel

1. Rom. 1:16
2. Gospel is powerful because of the depth of God's great love

D. God loves you; not because you are lovable but because he is love, not because he needs to receive but because he delights to give.

E. Demonstration of the depth of God's great love

1. Lk. 23:34 - Jesus prayed for those who were killing him - "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
2. Peter told the people how they had crucified and slain Christ - Acts 2 - but he did not say you are too mean or too deep in sin to be saved.

F. God's love reaches down to those in danger of perishing in sin !

IV. HEIGHT

A. The height of God's love

1. Jn. 17:24 "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 lovedst me before the foundation of the world."
2. Song "Love lifted me."
3. God's love tugs at our hearts and draws us like a magnet through the gospel to get us out of the mire of sin
4. Jesus said "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me."
Jn. 12:32
5. His love draws all who will respond to it and draw them till their feet are upon the solid rock of ages.

- B. The love of God has lifted men to great heights
 - 1. Lift up from shame and disgrace into the church of the living God
 - 2. Puts a song into their heart and praise on their lips

Conclusion

1. Many of the ancient cultures feared their gods because they thought of them as gods of vengeance without love.
 - a. Our God -- the one true God -- is not a God of vengeance, but with a love that is eternally boundless.
 - b. Love forgives, blesses, strengthens.
2. 1 John 3:1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."
3. If man rejects the love of God, then God's wrath will be passed upon them
 - a. We read of the "goodness and severity of God." Rm. 11:22
 - b. II Cor. 5:11 "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
4. God Loves You Personally
 - a. He loves you in spite of your feelings of unimportance.
 - b. God does not love the world generally, but you specifically: you, one person out of two billion inhabitants on earth

5. God's Great love is measured by the...
 - a. Width = all men - everywhere
 - b. Length = Christ died in our place
 - c. Depth = all types of men, vilest sinner
 - d. Height = love lifts us up and makes us better
 6. The Greatest joy that man can have is to love God and keep his commandments !
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