

God Is Love

- *Psalm 103:*

- If I were to ask you this morning to describe for me what God was like, some of the adjectives you would use would be strong, powerful, creator, all-knowing, just, long-suffering ... but one that you would quickly include as well would be love. God is love.
- There are numerous verses that talk about the love of God & specifically the exact term, "God is love".
 - No other description is more endearing, more personal or inclusive than God is love.
 - It is by His great love that we were even created in the first place.
 - By His love, He has sustained us, kept us, provided for us, dwelt with us, led us, walked with us and has never left our side.
 - His love has healed us, miraculously saved us & even kept Him from consuming us.
 - His great love led Him to send His Only Son to a manger; but His most significant journey would take Him to an old rugged cross where the love of Christ was put on display for the whole world to see.
- It is my great pleasure this morning to walk you through this amazing love of God & the importance that His love has for me & you today.

1. The description of God's love (vv. 8, 11, 13, 17)

- How do you describe a breath-taking sunrise to a blind person?
- How do you describe the refreshing sound of crashing waves to a deaf person?
- And how do you describe the impeccable, infinite love of God to impure, finite humans?
- In our passage, the Psalmist used great effort in recording the nature of God's love.
 - He stated that he was "the LORD is merciful and gracious," (Psalm 103:8),
 - "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." (Psalm 103:11),
 - "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm 103:13), and
 - "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him," (Psalm 103:17).
- These verse give us a taste of the greatness of God's wonderful love. But before we can truly appreciate this love, we must quickly define God's love.

2. The definition of God's love (v. 2)

- The point is not simply that God "loves," but that He is love itself. Love is not merely one of his attributes, but it is who He is; it's His very nature.
 - I John 4:16 says, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."
- To say that God is love, is not to imply that love is God or of God. These are 2 completely different things. God is love means that God wants the very best for you. God has your best interest in mind. He wants to give you good gifts and provide you with "all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).
- What are some of these benefits?

3. The benefits of God's love (v. 2)

a. Spiritually (v. 3, 12)

- i. Spiritually God's love removes the barrier that separates us from Him by canceling the debt of our sin so that we can enjoy a loving relationship with Him.
- ii. God's love removes our sins as though they never existed.

b. Emotionally (v. 3)

- i. Much of our physical and emotional illness is due to moral failure. In removing the sin and guilt from our lives God's love brings healing to our emotional life.

c. Eternally (v. 4)

- i. God's love rescues us, fallen humanity, from our own bent on destruction, and grants us eternal life.

d. Authoritatively (v. 4)

- i. God's love places a crown of royal glory and authority on us.
- ii. God's love ". . . made us kings and priests unto God and his Father " (Rev. 1:6). We have been crowned with His love and given a new citizenship on this earth and in heaven.

e. Physically (v. 5)

- i. Like a father, He desires to give us good gifts of strength and endurance. Jesus, the living example to us of God's love came enjoying life, and He wants His children to do the same.

f. Judicially (v. 6)

- i. Here we find a major difference between divine love and what so often passes for love among people.
- ii. Often, love is expressed as that virtue that accepts any & everything. But, God's love always makes judgment calls. Divine love hates what is wrong and embraces what is right.
- o Well, that's some of the benefits of God's love according to this chapter, but what does this mean to me today? What can I know about God's love that I can carry with me today & when I leave this morning it will change my life?

4. The Knowledge of God's Love

a. God's love is all consuming

- i. God's love touches every part of our life. Nothing - no calling or circumstance, no adversity or advancement, no pain or promotion, no situation or sin - escapes the depths or the stretch of God's love. God's love bleeds into every fabric and fiber of our lives.
- ii. His love touches every area of our lives. There is nowhere we can go to escape his love. There is no problem that we will encounter that is not touched by his love. There is no advancement that we will make where God is not already there. Even when our world falls apart, we can say, "God, I don't know why this is happening. I don't understand it, but I'm sure glad to know you love me."
- iii. David spoke of this same love in Psalm 139:5-10 – "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."
- iv. Let me tell you church, when you have Someone who loves holding you, it doesn't matter anymore what everyone else does or what the circumstances are or what the future holds. When you are in the arms of a loving God, when you have been consumed with His love, you share in His benefits. It's all right.

b. God's love is personal

- i. As a personal being God is capable of loving and being loved. And as a personal being He loves each one of us intensely personally.

- ii. Far too many times, we only see or think of the love of God as it relates to the world, and that IS important.
 - iii. But don't you ever forget today that God is a personal God, who loves you personally & is concerned with you personally & what is involved in your life, Amen?
 - iv. Look at Psalm 103 & count the number of times the personal pronouns "me" and "my" are used and you will see real quick that we serve a very personal God.
 - 1. When Karl Barth, the famed German theologian, visited the United States, a student at a seminary supposedly asked, "Dr. Barth, what is the single most important truth you have learned as a theologian?"
 - 2. Barth replied, "The most important thing I have learned is this: 'Jesus loves me.'"
 - v. When God says I love you, he is saying that you matter to him. You are a person of worth. You are valuable to him. Regardless of what others think, in his eyes you are wonderful.
- c. God's love is beyond comprehension (vv. 13-14)**
- i. Allow this to really sink in this morning & let me know if you can explain it. God knows me and still loves me. God knows that I am a sinner, yet he forgives; I am diseased, yet he heals; I am in a pit, yet he pulls me out; I am ungrateful for his good gifts, yet he gives them anyway; and I deserve justice, yet he grants mercy.
- d. God's Love Is Everlasting**
- i. Do you know this morning that God has loved you for an incredibly long time. How long you may ask?
 - 1. Eph. 1:4-6 tells us that He set His heart upon adopting you into His family before the world began: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."
 - 2. 1 John 4:19 tells us the straight of it: "We love Him because He first loved us."
 - 3. Romans 5:5, "God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
 - ii. It's a wonderful thing to be reminded that God has always loved us, but what about the future? What about when we fail Him? What about when we are tempted, or when we go through pain? What about when we choose evil instead of good?
 - 1. Romans 8:35-39 - "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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."
- e. God's Love Brought Salvation**
- i. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. " (John 15:13).
 - ii. If you want a visible definition of love, look at what God did for us in Christ. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8).

- iii.** If you really want to understand love, don't listen to love songs, or people who throw the term love around. If you want to get to the depths of what it means to love and be loved, look to the cross of Christ, because there God's love came to mankind. The cross is the ultimate expression of God's incomprehensible love to mankind.
- iv.** If you ever wonder if God loves you look to the cross. The cross is God's way of saying, "I love you this much," with his arms outstretched. God's final words to us are etched on a Roman cross. They are blood red. They scream to be heard. They say, "I love you."