

IMPORTANT WORDS – PART 1 – LOVE

July 1, 2018

Point #1 – God is a God of Love

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Mat 5:43-48)

Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and **make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!** Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I **have no pleasure in the death of anyone,** declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live." (Eze 18:31-32)

Point #2 – God is also a God of “Steadfast” Love

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. (Psa 100:5)

Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. (Psa 136:2)

Point #3 – In some cases, it appears that there is selective application of God’s love

And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love **with those who love him and keep his commandments,** (Neh 1:5)

and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to **your servants who walk before you with all their heart,** (2Ch 6:14)

for the Father himself loves you, **because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.** (Joh 16:27)

Listen, my beloved brothers, has not **God chosen those who are poor in the world** to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has **promised to those who love him?** (Jas 2:5)

Blessed is **the man who remains steadfast under trial,** for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which **God has promised to those who love him.** (Jas 1:12)

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who **loved me and gave himself for me.** (Gal 2:20)

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ **loved the church and gave himself up for her,** (Eph 5:25)

And walk in love, as **Christ loved us and gave himself up for us**, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:2)

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us**. (Rom 5:8)

Greater love has no one than this, that someone **lay down his life for his friends**. (Joh 15:13)

Point #4 – In some cases, it even appears that God responds with love to some and with something other than love to others.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers** on the children to the third and the fourth generation of **those who hate me, but showing steadfast love** to thousands of **those who love me and keep my commandments**. (Exo 20:5-6)

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who **keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments**, to a thousand generations, and **repays** to their face those who hate him, **by destroying them**. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. (Deu 7:9-10)

"I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have **loved** Jacob but Esau I have **hated**. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert." (Mal 1:2-3)

Point # 4b – This response from God seems to be consistent from Testament to Testament

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish** but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but **whoever does not believe is condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And **this is the judgment**: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." (Joh 3:16-21)

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- since indeed God considers it just **to repay with affliction those who afflict you**, and to **grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us**, **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. (2Th 1:5-10)

If anyone has no love for the Lord, **let him be accursed**. Our Lord, come! (1Co 16:22)

Point # 4b – This “other than love” response seems a whole lot like hate – of the person, not the sin

if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, **I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.** I will make my arrows **drunk with blood**, and **my sword shall devour flesh**-- with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.' (Deu 32:41-42)

For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful **shall not stand** before your eyes; **you hate all evildoers.** You **destroy** those who speak lies; the LORD **abhors** the bloodthirsty and deceitful **man.** But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you. (Psa 5:4-7)

The LORD tests the righteous, but **his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.** Let him **rain coals** on the wicked; **fire and sulfur** and a **scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.** For the LORD is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face. (Psa 11:5-7)

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, **gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh** of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. **These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.** And **the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.** (Rev 19:17-21)

Point # 5 – The problem: Lack of understanding as to the definition of love

God is Love

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and **whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.** **Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (1Jn 4:7-12)

1. Whoever loves has been born of God **and knows God**
2. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (Joh 17:3)
3. Those without eternal life do not know God, and therefore do not love in the way that Scripture describes **this type of love.**
4. So, this form of love is in no way applicable to the unbeliever.

How is this love defined? Obedience

And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. (2Jn 1:6)

"If you **love me**, you will **keep my commandments**. (Joh 14:15)

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (Joh 14:21)

Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, **but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.** By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1Jn 2:4-6)

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: **whoever loves God must also love his brother.** (1Jn 4:20-21)

By this we know that we love the children of God, **when we love God and obey his commandments.** For **this is the love of God**, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1Jn 5:2-3)

Point # 6 – A right understanding of the love of God will assist in a right understanding concerning the Doctrines of Grace

We love because he first loved us. (1Jn 4:19)

Total Depravity: In his natural state, man does not have the love of God.

Unconditional Election: God chose a people, before the foundation of the world, to possess the love of God

Limited Atonement: Christ loved us (the church, the elect, his people, his friends) and gave himself for us – securing for us the love of God.

Irresistible Grace: I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them." (Joh 17:26)

Perseverance of the Saints: Through the power of God unto salvation, we are kept in the love of God.