

GOD'S LOVE FOR US

JAMIE MCNAB

9.6.18

I have spent the last couple of weeks considering a very popular message ... from churches and TV evangelists.

That message is: GOD LOVES EVERYBODY. God's love is unconditional.

We're all God's children and once we learn to love each other ... we'll create new heavens and new earth.

Although this is a very popular message ... it is not really Biblical.

There are very few verses in the Bible that mention God's love for mankind. About 35 verses ... 1 in a 1,000 verses! Most books in the Bible don't have a single verse!

Yet ... that doesn't stop the churches out there preaching endlessly about the Love of God. "God loves you so very very much ... won't you please accept His love for you?"

In practice ... many people interpret this as "If God loves me so much anyway, I'll just live life as I see fit ... and He'll let me go to heaven".

Or ... another alternative ... "If there was such a God of such love ... He wouldn't allow such suffering in the world ... so ... there is no God".

We've seen a number of places where God hates sinners. He tells Israel in Hosea Chapter 9 that He no longer loves her.

The scripture makes it clear we're not all God's children. Jesus told the religious leaders in His day they were of their father ... the devil. He talked of the wheat and the tares ... with the tares being burned in the Lake of Fire and ultimately destroyed.

Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" to Him will enter the Kingdom of God ... but only those who do the Father's will ... who practice law-keeping.

The world's favourite scripture about how God loves everyone is John 3:16.

We've taken a closer look at that verse.

It is generally read as "God so very, very much loves everyone in the world that He gave His Son that people might have everlasting life".

More accurately would perhaps read: "God ... in this manner ... loved the world 2,000 years ago ... that He gave His Son to be lifted up like the bronze serpent in Moses' day ... that whoever chooses to believe in Him ... and continues to believe in Him ... will not perish. Those who don't believe are condemned. The wrath of God hovers over them ... and they will be destroyed."

The world seems to ignore the fact that John 3:16 talks of destruction for an entire category of persons!

As we saw last week ... it is almost certain that John 3:16 is the Apostle John's commentary ... not Jesus' actual words.

Also ... that John wrote his Gospel to encourage believers to continue to believe Jesus is the Son of God ... even at a time of much heresy (like Cerinthus). Not to unbelievers!

I've said a number of times the Bible mentions the Love of God for mankind very rarely! One verse in every thousand?

When it does mention it ... it's virtually always addressed to believers ... to God's own family. Not to the world ... who are unlikely to understand it fully ... so becomes "pearls before swine."

Let's have a look at some of these verses (and there aren't many anyway!)

John 15:5-13 (NKJV)

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

6 **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**

7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

9 ***“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; (not “Houto”)*** abide in My love.

10 ***If you keep My commandments,*** you will abide in My love, ***just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.***

11 “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

13 ***Greater love has no one than this,*** ***than to lay down one’s life for his friends.***

Jesus’ love was conditional on obedience.

John 17:20-23 (NKJV)

20 ***“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;***

21 ***that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us,*** that the world may believe that You sent Me.

22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, ***that they may be one just as We are one:***

23 ***I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.***

The Father loves us AS He loves Jesus.

That’s it for the Gospels! Zero in Matthew ... Mark and Luke. And only a couple of references in John’s Gospel (“The Apostle of Love”) ... plus John 3:16



Notice that this Love of God is for the disciples ... then ... and now!

I suspect it’s quite difficult for us to really understand the level of love that God has for us? Rather profound for our limited minds.

Let’s look at a letter from the Apostle Paul ... to His saints.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NKJV)

14 **For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

15 **from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**

16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 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; (human knowledge)** that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

“To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge” ... almost beyond our grasp. It needs a spiritual mind ... which is why you can't just “throw it at the world”.

Ephesians 1:15-21 (NKJV)

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

17 **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,**

18 **the eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 **and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe,** according to the working of His mighty power

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Paul prayed to the Father to give to us a spirit of wisdom ... a spirit of revelation ... the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened.

We live in an age of information. But it's revelation we need. Including a revelation of the Love of God and His Son toward us.

Ephesians 2:4-7 (NKJV)

4 **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),

6 and **raised us up together**, and **made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Because of God's great love for us ... He raised us up ... we are sitting together with Christ in the heavenly places. This isn't for the unconverted (yet).

Romans 5:1-2 (NKJV)

1 **Therefore, having been justified (redeemed) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

2 through whom also **we have access by faith into this grace** in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:6-11 (NKJV)

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

8 But **God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.**

11 And not only that, **but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

Christ died for us. We're reconciled through Him.

Clearly ... the Love of God is being explained to REDEEMED ... RECONCILED BELIEVERS.

Paul's letter is to the saints in Rome (Romans 1:7 [NKJV] "To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: ...")

Romans 8:28-39 (NKJV)

28 **And we (we saints) know that all things work together for good to those who love God, (this is the love of God that we keep His commandments) to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; **whom He called, these He also justified**; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? *(Us saints)*

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, **how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is he who condemns? **It is Christ who died**, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also makes intercession for us.**

35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (No one can separate us saints from the Love of Christ ... or God)** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who 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 created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (We could turn around ... and walk off)**

Great truths. We may not fully grasp. But it's addressed to the saints ... the believers.

And that's pretty much all Paul has to say in all of his writings about the Love of God (maybe 3 or 4 other scriptures).

So ... when Jesus barely mentions it ... Paul barely touches on it ... how come the world's churches make it the number one topic?

Most other references are in John's letters (actually only in the first letter ... not in the second or third!)

1 John 3:1-2 (NKJV)

1 ***Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*** Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now ***we are children of God***; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3:1 (NIV)

1 ***See what great love the Father has lavished on us,*** ...

God doesn't just have some ethereal "fluffy fondness" for us. He makes us His sons and daughters. In the God family ... for eternity. Which demonstrates His love for us.

All of the privileges of a God being ... including immortality. An endless future with the Father ... Jesus ... and all of the saints.

But now we only see darkly?

We probably won't be just floating around heaven ... playing our harps ... unless that's what the Father and Jesus do all day!!

Whilst in I John 3:

1 John 3:7-12 (NKJV)

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. ***He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.***

8 **He who sins is of the devil**, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10 **In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: (we are not all children of God ... with one Father. There are children of God and children of the devil) Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.**

11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

12 not as **Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil** and his brother's righteous.

We should practice righteousness as Children of God ... not be like Cain ... one of the children of the devil.

1 John 4:7-16 (NKJV)

7 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.**

9 **In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.** (See John 3:16)

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.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, **(the believers to whom he is writing)** we also ought to love one another.

12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

16 And **we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

And that's the Apostle John's contribution ... written to the saints!

The Love of God towards us as His sons and daughters is something we should ponder ... what does it mean "for me". But ... it takes revelation ... a spirit-mind ... not something you just throw at a God-hating world.

One last place to look:

Jude 1:20-21 (NKJV)

20 **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, (addressed to the saints ... believers)**

21 **keep yourselves in the love of God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

It looks like it takes some work? Something we will have to do? "Guard yourselves" in the Love of God.

It is easy to forget ... be distracted ... "out of sight, out of mind".

Build yourselves up on your most holy faith ... praying in the spirit — tools to help us. And not forgetting to spend a decent amount of time reading and reflecting on the Word itself (Faith comes by hearing ... and hearing ... the Word of God!)

So although many churches preach the Love of God to the world ... scriptures themselves only show the Love of God being discussed among God's family.

The topic doesn't appear very often at all ... but the 35 or so references are for the REDEEMED ... THE BEGOTTEN SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

But ... what message should then be preached to the world? If not God's love ... what exactly should we be preaching?

That is a separate topic ... but for the sake of completion ... let's look at what the message should be to the world.

Mark 1:14-15 (NKJV)

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent, and believe in the gospel." (*Your time's up from going your own way. Stop following your own ways*)

The Book of Acts records what the Apostles actually preached. Love?? There are zero mentions of the Love of God. What were the Apostles preaching?

Acts 2:36-41 (NKJV)

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel **know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.**"

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Then Peter said to them, "**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

The message was REPENT!

Acts 20:17-21 (NKJV)

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you,

19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;

20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

21 **testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, (this is what Paul preached to the world) repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Acts 26:19-20 (NKJV)

19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, **I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,**

20 but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. (LIVE RIGHT!)

The world is on the road to hell. Doing “what seemeth right to a man”.
Hurtling to a cliff edge. Their “house” is on fire!

They’re heading for judgment. They need to repent ... change. Or perish.

When they repent ... they are forgiven ... reconciled to God ... become His sons and daughters. Then they can fully understand His love for them ... as their heavenly and eternal Father.

But to just preach indiscriminately that God loves everybody ... and there is nothing you can do to make Him love you more or love you less ... is not a message you’ll find in the Bible.

The Love of God is understanding that is FOR US!