



❖ Introduction

Continuing in our study of the character of God, we come this morning to one of the most cherished of all God's attributes. The Love of God.

We love to talk about the love of God. Not only us believers, but the whole world loves to talk about the love of God.

We sing songs with words like, "when he was on the cross, I was on His mind." And, "You took the fall and thought of me above all."

We love to hear words like "If you were the only person on earth, Jesus would have come and died for you."

We love to hear how precious we are to God.

We love the love of God.

But do we really understand it?

❖ What is the love of God?

Agape:

agapao: verb form, appears frequently in ancient Greek Literature.

agape: noun form, appears only once outside the Bible and appears to be of late Greek construction (Kittel, 1:36-8)

The true understanding of agape love is found in how it is used in secular and historical literature and in the scriptures. This usage strongly emphasizes the fact that agape love involves **ACTION**.

Definition:

Genuine, sacrificial giving for the good and well-being of another to the **GLORY** of God. Love is giving sacrificially for others who don't deserve it and can't pay it back.

God's love is His benevolent pursuit of good for His creation, the giving and sharing of **HIMSELF**.

❖ Who does God love?

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

- God demonstrated His love for us in the sacrifice of Christ for us when we were still **SINNERS**.

Romans 5:6-8

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- God sacrificially acts for the welfare of those who have nothing to offer Him but rebellion, rejection, and sin: **SINNERS**
- God made His glory known and accessible to sinners. He did this by sending Christ to die for us as a graphic display of the nature of His love and as a means for us entering into relationship with Him to worship His **GLORY**.
 - The Cross is a graphic display of the nature of God.
 - The Cross showcases the glory of God.
 - The Cross provides access to God.
 - The Cross transforms us to be a demonstration of God's glory.
 - The Cross transforms us to be worshipers of God's glory.

❖ How does God love?

- What was the ultimate goal of this love? The same as the ultimate goal of all of God's acts. The same as the ultimate goal of all history. The same as the ultimate goal of all existence.
 - The demonstration and worship of the **GLORY** of God!
 - To redeem a people to **WORSHIP** Him alone.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to **purify for Himself** a people **for His own possession**, zealous for good deeds.

- A proper understanding of the love of God:
 1. Love sacrificially acts for the highest **GOOD** of another.
 2. The highest good is the **GLORY** of God & the worship of that glory.
 3. God's love for man means God acts to bring man to the place of understanding and worshiping His **GLORY**.
 4. God loves us by leading us to experience and delight in the greatest glory and the greatest good, **HIMSELF**.
 5. The greatest thing God could do for man is to give man the **PLEASURE** of knowing Him, enjoying Him, delighting in Him, worshiping Him . . . above all else . . . at the exclusion of all else.
 6. God must pursue our Christlikeness, even through severe discipline or He would not be **LOVING** us.
 7. Love cannot ignore **SIN**. Love seeks the ultimate good of the object loved. The ultimate good is the glory of God, the exaltation of His character.

❖ *How do WE love?*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

1. We love God by joining Him in the pursuit of the demonstration and proclamation of His **GLORY**.
 - We love God by living our lives as a complete sacrifice of our desires and self promotion to **DELIGHT** in God alone and the promotion of His desires and glory.
2. We love others by pursuing the demonstration and proclamation of God's glory in our relationships and interactions with **OTHERS**.

John 15:12

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

- Christ's love for us in giving His life as a sacrifice for sinners is the **MODEL** for how we are to love others.

1 John 4:7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 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, 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 is perfected in us.

- Genuine, sacrificial love for the glory of God is a distinguishing mark of a genuine **BELIEVER**. v. 7-8
- A genuine believer will be a **LOVING** person. If a person is not a loving person, they don't know God. v. 8
- Godly love is marked by sacrificial giving to lead others to life in **CHRIST**. v. 9
- The fullest, purest demonstration of genuine, godly love is demonstrated in sacrificial giving to those who offer no **LOVE**.
- God is not physically present in the world anymore. The only physical presence He has is as He lives in His **PEOPLE**. It is through believers that God chooses to physically demonstrate, and complete the demonstration of His love in the world.

Romans 12:9

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

- Love must be a genuine choice for the **GOOD** of another to the **GLORY** of God. It is not fake, or for self-interest.
- Love is the pursuit of good and the removal of **EVIL**.

Philippians 1:9-11

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God.

- Here's what I'm praying for you: That you will overflow with more and more love. This love must be guided by knowledge and discernment so that you can examine & recognize what is of the highest value. Then, when you do what is of the highest value as an act of love, you will be seen by everyone who examines you to be the genuine article and not cause anyone to sin by your way of life until Christ comes. In the meantime you are continually made to flourish in producing fruit. This fruit actually comes from the righteousness given you in Christ. And so, it all leads to God being glorified. (Paraphrase of Phil. 1:9-12)
- God's **PURPOSE** in His love must be our purpose in living in and responding to His love.

For us to love someone is to lead them to freedom from sin and themselves so that they can enjoy and worship God. This is the greatest act of love and **anything that moves man in another direction is not an act in keeping with the love of God. Either it moves man closer to knowing and worshiping God or it is not biblical, godly love.**

Love God . . . Love Others

By demonstrating, pursuing, and promoting
the **PRAISE** of His **GLORY** in all things, at all times, with all people.