

The Love Of God

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The love of God is the highest, most exalted thought ever to enter the human mind. Of all the perfect attributes of the eternal, infinite Being revealed to mankind what is more wonderful than God's love? What greater privilege than to receive it? What fuller joy than to experience it?

The love of God amazed the prophets and thrilled the apostles. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and David all speak of God's love in glorious terms. Peter, John and Paul describe divine love in the finest language. All testify of its transcendent nature and unequalled blessedness. To know, to taste the love of God is to possess the fulness of divine grace and the promise of heavenly glory, for the love of God is the companion of all spiritual gifts.

The scriptures speak of God's love in the most emphatic terms. It is great love. It is everlasting love. Love so characteristic of the very nature of God that John declares, 'God is love'. As God is unchangeable so His love is unchangeable. Those loved by God are loved eternally and God's eternal love is the source and vehicle of all spiritual blessings bestowed upon those loved before time.

It is distinguishing love. God's love is individual and personal as all true love must be. General love or universal love is neither Biblical nor meaningful. God's elective purpose and sovereign grace is grounded in His particular love.

He declares to His chosen people, 'Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine ... Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life' (Isaiah 43:1, 4).

Furthermore, the love of God is unconditional. God does not love based on man's goodness, faith, or obedience. His love was settled upon His people before ever they drew breath. He declares, 'I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion'. He acts towards His people in love, bestowing blessing upon blessing because He loved us.

And God's love is effectual love. God loved His people with great love and desired they be with Him in holy union. He binds us to Himself with bands of effectual love. He settled a covenant of peace, determined a plan of salvation, performed every condition necessary to secure the redemption from sin of His dearly beloved bride. It is God's effectual love we see demonstrated in the coming and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says, 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). John says, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us' (1 John 3:16). And continues, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:10).

In the sacrifice and death of the Lord Jesus we see the highest demonstration of God's love. It is in Christ God's love is seen, received and experienced. Outside of Christ there is no love of God, nor any grace, or blessing from God. Our Saviour's atoning sacrifice declares and enables God's love to poor fallen sinners.

Do not the people of God find this love inspiring? It is not law, duty, or obligation motivates God's people to worship but love. We are constrained by the love of Christ. We love Him because He first loved us. We love one another as Christ has loved us.

There is a lovely little phrase at the end of Jude's powerful epistle. He says, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God'. These words do not imply God's love can be lost. It cannot. But our enjoyment of God's love ebbs and flows. God's love does not change but His people are fickle and may lose sight of it by taking their eyes from their Saviour.

We keep ourselves in the love of God by looking unto Jesus, by attending to the gospel of peace, and by continuing in Christ's word by which His people receive 'the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life'.

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