

## Love II

ODCC 22/11/09 (x.pages)

**Text:** Ephesians 3:14-21 & 5:1-2

### Introduction

1. This is my last message from Ephesians and the second part on a message on love.
  - a. Last week we looked at God's love for us and saw that love is an essential part of God's character just as light is an essential character of the sun.
  - b. Love is not the only characteristic of God just as light is not the only characteristic of the sun. The sun also puts out heat and so God is just and will finally bring judgement.
  - c. But this is the time of God's favour (2 Cor 6:2) where His love, like a dam wall, is holding back His judgement.
2. No-one who acknowledges their sinfulness and who puts their trust in Christ Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing of sin will ever face the judgement of God for sin.
  - a. Christians will be judged but we will be judged as athletes and not as sinner.
  - b. We will be judged on how we have trained and how we have run, etc. And a few months back I used an illustration of a marathon runner.
  - c. Thank God for His love – it gives us an opportunity to grasp His mercy. If it wasn't for His love, His justice would have swept us away like the water of the great flood swept everything away except those found in the ark.

### Love amazing

1. There are three things I want to say about God's love –
  - i. It was **giving** and not self-seeking: *"For God so loved the world that He GAVE His only Son..."*.
  - ii. It was **costly**. A rich man can love say, poor orphans in India and give lots of money to rescue them but God gave His Son: *"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly"* (Rom 5:6).
  - iii. It was to the **undeserving**. *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: 'While we were still sinners, Christ died for us'"* (Rom 5:8).
2. A rat is not vile to a rat nor a cockroach to a cockroach. We may not consider ourselves vile sinners to each other but to a holy God we deserve death.
  - a. So let's not be under any illusion that there is any good thing in us that attracted God to us, or an ounce of worth that made Him decide to rescue us.
  - b. It is love that surpasses knowledge. It is beyond understanding and it is beyond reason why God loved us and sent His son as a sacrifice for our sin.
3. It is God's love that the gospel message is all about. Sometimes a preacher may preach on the fire and brimstone of hell and scare people into heaven but if you never comprehend something of the love of God your motivation will never be a correct one.
  - a. I remember once hearing a doctor telling how much he hated his work. When asked why he became a doctor he had a one word answer, "Money". Is it any wonder he hated his work?
  - b. If we don't appreciate God's love for us what will motivate us to please God? What will be the foundation of a relationship (love is the foundation of any meaningful relationship).
  - c. Jesus said to His disciples, *"If you love me, you will obey what I command"* (Jn 14:15, 21, 23).

### Love's response

1. Now, having become a son and a daughter of God, our Father wants us to be like Him in love.
  - a. On the last day of His life, knowing that He would die on the cross, Jesus gives His disciples some final encouragement but also some final instructions. This is of utmost importance!
  - b. He says to them in Jon 15:12: *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."* And then in v 17 He says, *"This is my command: 'Love each other.'"*
2. I think in Christianity we have missed something very important and we have majored on the minors.
  - a. We have become something like the Pharisees who were more concerned about following the letter of the law rather than loving God.

- b. As I grew up I was more concerned about what I did or didn't do to please God. I attributed good behaviour as an indication of service.
  - c. I wished someone had emphasises God's love and I wished I had appreciated how much God loved me when I was just a boy.
  - d. It would have saved a lot of **frustration**, a lot of **disappointment**, a lot **self-condemnation**, and a lot of **guilt**.
3. Jesus did not elaborate on the 10 commandments on His last night. He spoke of loving Him and loving one another. These are the most important things a Christian can develop in their life:
    - a. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment,"* said Jesus. *"And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"* (Mat 22:37-39).
    - b. The Lord Jesus Christ did not say that it would be a good thing to do. It would be helpful when building a church. It would set an example. He said, "I command you..."
    - c. At home get out a good concordance and look up the scriptures that speak about you and me loving as God loved. You will discover that it is one of the major themes of the New Testament.

## Love's example

1. How do we love? I quoted Jesus earlier and He said, *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."* There are two important things here:
  - a. **FIRSTLY:** love each other in exactly the same way that I loved you.
  - b. Remember the beginning: i. Love is giving, not self-seeking; ii. Love is costly. iii. Love is to the undeserving.
  - c. **SECONDLY:** The Gk word for "love" is (in most cases) *agapao* which is the highest form of love. It actually is the kind of love God had for Jesus and the kind of love He has for us.
2. My love for you must not be because you are a nice person and easy to love. I must love you because God loves you and me the same.
  - a. My love for you must not be based on feelings. If it was • how could I show the love of God to the utterly sinful? • Who would go to the dregs of society? • Who would give up their comfortable western lives to go and live among the most primitive societies of the world and endure extreme hardships to share the gospel? • How would I be able to love my enemies and bless those who persecute me? • How could I have a non-judgemental heart to share the gospel with those whom God loved enough to send His Son to die for?
  - b. **Illustration:** A missionary who had been a very wealthy business man and who gave it all away to become a missionary in Bolivia, South America. One day he was called to visit a sick man in a mountainous region - this man had been asking for him. He went on foot with a guide. The climb was extremely difficult in steaming heat, crossing rivers, and enduring thick undergrowth and insects, etc. When the missionary arrived after nearly 6 hours of trekking, the man he came to see had gone away.
 

There was a small shop near the village (most things had to be brought in by donkey) and they sold Coca-Cola. He bought a drink for himself and his guide but the shopkeeper was very rude and abusive and did not like white men and especially did not like Christians.

The missionary sat down under the shade of a tree and said that in his heart he despised the shopkeeper. He thought to himself, "What a silly little shop you have. What a tiny little business. You couldn't even begin to imagine how much money I used to make, or the beautiful mansion I used to live in, or the expensive car I used to drive. And why did I leave it all behind for the likes of you?"

Then God spoke to this missionary and said, "What you were and what you had is unimportant. You are here because I love that shopkeeper and my Son died for that man. You are hear to tell him how much I love him."

## Conclusion

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.