

# The love of God

**Text:** 1 John 4:7-14

## Introduction

1. I am not a great (or even good) theologian but in my humble opinion the two greatest themes of the Bible are these:  
(1) The love of God, and (2) The blood of Christ.
  - a. There are other great themes, I know, important and not to be neglected but...
  - b. It wasn't for God's love, then mankind would only have had God's justice to look forward to.
  - c. In all of eternity when we've seen the Lord and appreciate His holiness and righteousness, we may never understand why it is that He, a holy God, saved wretches like us.
  - d. The simple answer is and always will be, **because God loved sinners**. "For God so loved the world that He gave is one and only Son..." (Jn 3:16).
2. However, God's love, on it's own was not enough. His love on it's own could not save us. An atonement for sin was necessary. A precious sacrifice providing the perfect purification from sin – this was the Jesus, the Lamb of God – and it is His blood that cleanses the guilty sinner.
  - a. *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins* (Mt 26:28)
  - b. *All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness* (Heb 9:22)
  - c. So, there would have been no sacrifice if God didn't love us, and without the blood there could have been no forgiveness in spite of great love.

Far from exhausting the subject I want to remind you of a few aspects of God's great love.

## God is love

1. For various reasons we develop ideas about God which though they may not be incorrect, are inbalanced or isolated and so hinder our relationship with God – our getting to know the real God!
  - a. Isn't this true in our human relationships? We sometimes form opinions about people and develop attitudes towards them without really knowing them. We think it would be impossible to be friends with them;
  - b. And then something happens and we suddenly find ourselves together with them and discover that everything we thought and every attitude we had was wrong;
  - c. And the barrier to building a relationship is removed.
2. John tells us that **God is love** (1 Jn 4:8). There are a hundred, or 1000 (or more) messages in those 3 words but what we need to learn is not that God has the **capacity** to love.
  - a. When you have the capacity to love you have the capacity to love some more than others;
  - b. When you have the capacity to love it is more likely to be reciprocal. I love you because you have given me a reason to love you.
  - c. We didn't give God a reason. He loves us because **GOD IS LOVE**. **Water is wet** – you can't separate the wetness from the water. If you come into contact with water expect to get wet.
  - d. Of course, you can put on a wet suit and jump in the water and not get wet – but then you really haven't come into contact with the water.
  - e. Some people come to God dressed in wet suits.

## God loves me

1. As already mentioned, the Bible tells us that God loves the world but we need to personalise it and be able to say, I know God loves ME.
  - a. The Song of Solomon describes the love between and man and a woman and the kind of relationship it describes is very personal.
  - b. However, it is an allegory describing a relationship with the Lord – in a sense, the relationship that I develop with the Lord – my personal relationship with Him (YOUR personal relationship with Him);
  - c. It is personal, it is intimate – the woman in SofSol says, "My beloved is mine and I am His!"

2. God is love and so we ought to *experience* His love in our lives.
  - a. There is always an element of faith in knowing God's love where we say, "I know God loves me," even if our experience seems to contradict what we know;
  - b. Ann Platt, who wrote *Whispers from heaven* tells how when her husband died, she struggled in her relationship with God because, in her intense grief, she felt as if God was unable to sympathise with her or help her;
  - c. She described her experience as if she were in a deep pit with sides that were impossible to scale but...
    - i. even though she did not feel like God were treating her as someone He loved,
    - ii. She knew God loved her – she had experienced His love and knew of His love from the Word
    - iii. So Anne Platt got into the habit of declaring every day, "God loves me. I know God loves me, and if He loves me, He knows what He is doing, and because He loves me, He will lift me up."
  - d. She goes on to describe how through the darkest days of her life slowly but surely, God, in His time, began to shine into her darkness until she began to experience God beyond anything she'd every known.
3. Sin in our lives, wrong attitudes, incorrect belief – can cause us to miss out on experiencing God's love:
  - a. But, like Anne Platt, we need to develop a strong conviction that God is love – that God loves me – that God loves me personally – that God loves me intensely.
  - b. How do I know this? Because, God gave so much to demonstrate how much He loves you. *Not that we loved God but that He loved us and gave His Son.*
  - c. It is impossible to describe the cost to God nor do we have time tonight to look into it, but we should know that it God gave of the most precious He had – it cost Him and He paid because He loved.
  - d. How can we believe that we are not precious to God? How can we treat as a light things God's love for us? How can we not love God in return and learn to love Him greatly?

## **Conclusion**

1. Knowing God loves you and knowing how much He loves you and knowing what He has done to demonstrate His love for you, how will you respond to the greatest love?