

**SERIES - MISSION 2022
SERMON - UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LOVE
1-2-21**

OPENER:

It's easy to use the word "love" and not really know what it means. We use the word "love" to refer to fuzzy feelings that we have toward someone or something. We use it very broadly toward something we have feelings about. I love chocolate cake, I love that series, I love this person that person, I love this job. We speak of the word very casually because it speaks of our motive toward a person place or thing.

1 John 4:16 (NLT) God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

So when we talk about love we are talking about the attributes of God, the perfections of God, the things that make him who He is.

**SO ANY DISCUSSION ABOUT LOVE HAS TO START WITH GOD BECAUSE THAT
IS WHO HE IS.
IT'S NOT JUST WHAT HE DOES - IT IS THE DEFINITION OF HIM.**

ILLUSTRATION:

It's like someone saying, I am white, I am African American, I am Hispanic. I'm Asian. They are clarifying their identity. It is defining who they are. It is something that is unchangeable.

So, when God says he is love he is defining who he is. If we really want to understand love then it is best to talk to someone who is defined by the word.

GOD IS LOVE.

> THE TRINITARIAN LOVE:

Let's search out what that means.....let's go deep.....

ILLUSTRATION:

God is an eternal being. If He is love then he has been love forever. He didn't become love, He didn't start love, He is identified with the word. This has been his self definition as long as he has been around. That means love didn't start with you. And love didn't start with me. Because God was love before there was you or me. God was love before there was time or space. So if he is love then he has been love before there was anything else outside of himself to love.

So, if God is eternal and he is love, then who did God love when there was nobody to love? God loved himself. Now, that sounds a little self-serving and

selfish. We can say, “So God you are going to love yourself? Don’t you tell us not to be selfish? So, how do you love you?”

God exists in three persons. God has never been by himself. The doctrine of Trinity is that God exists in three persons. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All distinct in personalities. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit. But all three make up the one God. So, God has always had somebody to love. Because in him were three persons. And they could love each other.

**WHEN THE BIBLE SAYS GOD IS LOVE, HE IS OPERATING
IN THE CONTEXT OF LOVE WITHIN HIMSELF.
SO GOD IS LOVE WITHIN HIMSELF.**

John 5:19-23 (NLT) So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.”²¹ For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.”²² In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge,”²³ so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

(Explain scripture)

From reading this we can see there is something going on within the trinity. The Son says, “Whatever Daddy does is what I do. I don’t do anything I do until Daddy gives me permission to do it.” Whatever the Father wants the Son does so the Son can bring glory back to the Father. The Father wants to make a big deal about the Son because he loves the Son and the Son wants to make a big deal about the father by bringing the glory back to the Father because the Son loves the Father. The Father comes up with ways to make the Son look good.

That is glory. Glory means to publicize, advertise, look good.

So Jesus says, “My daddy loves me so much that he creates things to make me look good. So when you see me do things in front of you it’s because the Father told me to do it. And I do it to show you how great He is by giving me permission to do what you just saw. So Daddy is investing in me because Daddy loves me. And I love the Father because everything I do I give Him glory for it and point you back to him.”

In...John 3:35 He says, The father loves the son.

....John 10:17 “ “

....John:15:9. “ “

....John 17:23,24. “ “

Jesus says, “The Father loves me so much that when he moves I can’t help but twitch. I connect with him so tight that we live in love, because God is love. This is how it is. When you come into our environment you encounter love. Because this is who we are.” And the Holy Spirit jumps in here and says I have only come to glorify the Son. It’s a love celebration. It’s a love

> BECAUSE GOD LOVES THE SON SO MUCH HE COMES UP WITH AN IDEA

Ephesians 1:3-7 (NIV) ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship ⁿ through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

The Father comes up with an idea and says, “Son, I love you so much that I am going to create a race, and this group called humanity is going to sing your praises and give you glory. That is their one job.”

Jesus says, “If you do that for me, then I am going to tell them to sing your praises. I am going to tell them to pray ‘Our father who are in heaven. Hallowed be your name.’” I’m going to get the Spirit to be in them so they can bring glory to you so we can keep this love fest going.”

ILLUSTRATION:

So, God created humanity so he could create a group of people who would celebrate his love for his son. It’s like a birthday party that you invite a whole bunch of guests to celebrate the honored guest. God loved his son so much that he created humanity to celebrate the glory of his son.

But there is a problem - sin entered the picture. Satan comes in and gets men to sin against God. Satan has come in, uninvited and entered the party to remove us from our creative purpose. To stop us from celebrating Jesus and to bring glory to God by our relationship with the Son and he interferes with this love affair. And men rebel against the living God.

> SO WE HAVE A PROBLEM, GOD SAYS WE HAVE TO FIX IT. BUT FIRST WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THEIR SIN.

1 John 4:9 (NLT) God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

God sent Christ to fix the problem. God says, I created them for you, but they messed up. So I am going to send you to die for those who hurt you. So God sent the person who the party was for for the people who messed up the party.

If we are going to understand love we have to understand God's love and the first thing we see is

1. **LOVE IS SHOWN**

LOVE IS NOT JUST SAID.

LOVE IS NOT JUST FELT.

LOVE DOES NOT JUST SAY IT LOVES YOU. LOVE SHOWS YOU IT LOVES YOU.

LOVE TAKES ACTION - LOVE IS SEEN - LOVES DOES.

REAL LOVE - GOD'S LOVE IS PROACTIVE.

2. **LOVE IS GIVEN EVEN WHEN IT IS UNDESERVED**

Romans 5:8 (NLT) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

God did not wait till we got right. He loved us when we were wrong. He didn't wait for us to make it right. He says, "I love you so much that I will sacrifice my Son to get you back. And I love my Son so much that I will reconcile your relationship with him by sacrificing him to get you back, because He loves you so much and wants you. I have to fix this even it means killing my own Son. Even if it means breaking up my own unity so he can have back what I made for him that has gotten broken. I have to fix this because I am love!"

LOVE IS GIVEN EVEN WHEN IT IS UNDESERVED.

LOVE IS GIVEN EVEN WHEN SOMEONE IS WRONG.

REAL LOVE IS SHOWN EVEN SOMEONE IS STILL

CAUGHT UP IN WRONG.

John 13:31 (NLT) The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. ³² And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once.

So, God says I am going to fix this in a way that the Son gets even more glory when this thing is over.

WHAT I AM TRYING TO TELL YOU IS THAT YOU ARE CAUGHT UP IN SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF.

YOU ARE CAUGHT UP IN A TRINITARIAN LOVE FEST.

Jesus prayed this.....

John 17:20-23 (NLT) I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

22 "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

So what's the point of what Jesus is praying?.....

3. TO KNOW GOD IS TO KNOW LOVE

**TO BE WITH GOD AND HAVE GOD WITH YOU IS TO BE IN THE ENVIRONMENT
OF LOVE - BECAUSE GOD IS LOVE.**

**AND YOU CAN'T KNOW GOD WITHOUT KNOWING LOVE BECAUSE THAT IS
WHO HE IS.**

1 John 4:7-8 (NLT) Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸ But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

4. TO KNOW GOD IS TO LOVE LIKE GOD

1 John 4:11-12 ¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

Love is: seeking the best for another

How do you get wrapped up, caught up in it and experience this love of God?.....

ILLUSTRATION:

If you hang out in a flower shop you will start smelling like flowers. If you hang out in a perfume shop you are going to start smelling like perfume. That smell is going to rub off on you.

Your environment effects how you look or smell. God says if you are not loving, then your are not hanging out in my shop. God says I am love. My store is called love. And if you are hanging out in my store then love is rubbing off on you. So, if you are a loveless Christian then you are shopping at the wrong store.

**GOD WILL DETERMINE HOW HE DEALS WITH YOU BY HOW YOU DEAL WITH
OTHERS.**

1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

**GOD SAYS YOU CANNOT HAVE AN INTIMATE EXPERIENCE WITH ME IF OTHERS
CANNOT HAVE AN INTIMATE**

EXPERIENCE WITH YOU.

**GOD SAYS IF YOU REFUSE TO LOVE YOU WON'T
HAVE MY LOVE.**

**GOD RESTRICTS THE EXPERIENCE OF HIMSELF TO BELIEVERS WHO ARE
FUNCTIONING IN HIS LOVE - WHO ARE
LIVING IN HIS LOVE.**

**I AM IN YOU AND YOU ARE IN ME.
THEN YOU WILL LOVE LIKE I DO BECAUSE YOU WILL BE LIVING IN ME, IF YOU
ARE NOT ABIDING IN LOVE THEN YOU ARE NOT ABIDING OR HANGING OUT
WITH ME.**

Let me ask you some questions.....

- > Is it only about you and how you are going to receive a blessing?**
- >Or is it about how you are going to be a blessing?**
- >Are you only concerned about how things are going for you?**
- >Or are you concerned about how things are going for others?**

God says.....

**If it is only about you, then you are not with me! Because I don't just make it
about me. I make it about my Son and my Son makes it about me. So, if you are
going to hang out with us you have to roll like we roll!**

**One of the reasons that many Christians aren't experiencing God is because they
are loveless Christians.**

We need to be asking the question....

How can I love today?

Who can I love today?

What can I do for someone today?

CLOSING:

THREE THINGS WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT GOD'S LOVE:

1.LOVE IS A DECISION

**To love means it is the decision to love. Like is a feeling. We don't say I love
chocolate . We should say I like chocolate cake. Agape love is a decision
regardless of an emotion. An emotion loves something it likes, But agape loves
something it doesn't like. In other words, you don't feel good about it but you
made a decision about it. You made a decision to eat vegetables. You may not
like it, but you made a decision to be healthy,**

**So love is the decision to compassionately, righteously, and responsible seek the
well being of another, To love God is to passionately seek his glory, So the more**

glory of God you seek to give Him, the more you love people and the more glory you give God.

2. LOVE IS A COMMAND

1 John 3:23-24 (NLT) And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.

²⁴ Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us.

**YOU CAN COME TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY,
BUT IF GOD DOESN'T SEE LOVE FORGET
YOUR PRAYER MEETING.**

**YOU CAN SING SONGS TILL YOU ARE BLUE IN THE FACE, BUT IF YOU ARE NOT
LOVING THEN FORGET YOUR PRAISE SERVICE.**

1 John 4:17 (NLT) And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

**WHO IS GOD? LOVE.
SO WHEN YOU ARE BEING LIKE HIM IN THIS WORLD - LIKE HE IS IN HEAVEN,
THEN YOU HAVE HIS UNDIVIDED ATTENTION.**

3. LOVE IS THE NUMBER ONE THING

I truly believe that the reason more churches aren't seeing the transformation of the Spirit is because they are loveless places no matter how good the preaching is.

**YOU CAN'T PREACH YOUR WAY INTO THIS.
YOU CAN'T SING YOUR WAY INTO THIS.
YOU CAN'T SHOUT YOUR WAY INTO THIS.**

**THE NUMBER ONE THING THAT SHOULD BE SAID ABOUT YOU AND SAID
ABOUT OUR CHURCH SHOULD NOT BE THE PREACHING, THE SERMON, THE
BAND, THE WORSHIP.**

**THE ONE THING THAT SHOULD OVERRIDE EVERYTHING ELSE IS "WOW, LOOK
AT HOW THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER!"**

John 13:35 (NLT) Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

**JESUS SAYS THIS IS HOW THE WORLD WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY
DISCIPLES NOT BY THE PREACHING, NOT BY THE SINGING, BUT BY THE
LOVING.**

**UNLESS THERE IS GOD'S LOVE IN THIS HOUSE WE WILL NOT SEE MIRACLES
FROM HEAVEN.**

**UNLESS THERE IS LOVE IN YOUR HOUSE AND YOU WILL NOT SEE MIRACLES
FROM HEAVEN.**

**YOU CAN LOOK THE PART BUT HAVE NO LIFE.
IF THE LIFE THAT COMES FROM LOVE IS MISSING THEN YOU ARE NOT A PART
OF GOD.**