Foundations - A loving Father and King

Bible Study: God's Love for Us – as seen in the Old Testament, New Testament, and Jesus' Teachings

Introduction: God's love is the central theme throughout the Bible, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, culminating in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. His love is steadfast, sacrificial, and unconditional, shaping the way we are to live and respond to Him. This study will explore how God's love is expressed across Scripture and provide practical ways to engage and experience that love in our daily lives. Salvation and eternal life is more than just the forgiveness of sins. We are being invited into a restored relationship with God himself and this happens through Jesus.

1. God's Love in the Old Testament

- **Exodus 34:6-7**
  - God reveals Himself to Moses as abounding in love and compassion. The Old Testament consistently portrays God's love as part of His very character—steadfast and faithful even when humanity falters.
  - Love is in His name - (What does your name mean?)
- **Deuteronomy 7:9**
  - God's love is expressed through His covenant relationship with Israel. His love is both protective and nurturing, ensuring that His promises stand firm.
  - God's love in the Old Testament is like a father's care for his children. Though Israel repeatedly strayed, God's love remained constant, guiding and protecting His people despite their failings.

2. God's Love in the New Testament

- **Romans 5:8**
  - The New Testament brings God's love into even sharper focus. In Christ's sacrificial death, God's love is made manifest in its ultimate form. This love is not based on merit but freely given, even while we were still in sin.
- **1 John 4:9-10**
  - God's love is proactive—He initiates the relationship by sending Jesus to atone for our sins. The New Testament emphasizes that God's love is foundational to the new life we have in Christ.
  - God's love through Christ is like a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to seek and save the one that is lost (Luke 15:4). He relentlessly pursues us out of love, bringing us back into His fold.

3. God's Love in the Teachings of Jesus

- J**ohn 15:12-13**
  - Jesus' teachings reveal a love that is both sacrificial and selfless. He not only commands love but demonstrates it through His life and ultimately His death. Jesus' love sets the standard for how we are to love one another.
- **Matthew 22:37-39**
  - Jesus taught that love for God and love for others is the essence of all the commandments. These two commandments summarize the entire will of God and should shape our lives.
  - Living in Jesus love **(John 15:1-8)**. As we stay connected to Him, we experience His love flowing through us, allowing us to bear fruit that reflects His character.

4. Practical Ways to Engage and Experience God's Love:

- Reflect on Scripture Daily:
  - Engage with verses that remind you of God's love, such as Psalm 136:1 or Romans 8:38-39
  - Meditating on God's Word helps us internalize His love and keeps it at the forefront of our hearts.
- Embrace the Sacrificial Nature of God's Love:
  - Look for ways to love sacrificially, as Jesus did. Whether through acts of service, forgiveness, or giving, modeling Christ's love in action helps us understand His heart.
  - Practice Loving Others:
  - Love those around you actively, even when it is difficult. Engage in acts of kindness and compassion, knowing that God's love for you empowers you to love others unconditionally.
- Spend Time in Prayer:
  - Communicate with God regularly, asking Him to reveal more of His love to you. Use passages like Ephesians 3:14-19 to pray for a deeper understanding of God's immense love.
- Seek God in Worship:
  - Experience God's love through worship—both corporate and personal. Whether singing, meditating, or giving thanks, worship connects us to God's loving presence in a special way.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does God's love in the Bible line up with your current understanding and/ or experience of God's loving nature?
2. In what ways has the sacrificial love of Jesus personally impacted your life?
3. What are some practical steps you can take to experience more of God's love in your daily walk?
4. How can we better demonstrate God's love to those around us?

Conclusion: God's love is the foundation of our relationship with Him, spanning both the Old and New Testaments and expressed most fully in Jesus Christ. His love is sacrificial, steadfast, and transformative. As we experience His love through Scripture, prayer, and daily acts of kindness, we are called to love others in return, reflecting God's character to the world. May we be a people who not only understand God's love but live it out in every aspect of our lives.