

Series: **God is...So What?**

Today's Title: **"God is Love"**

November 6, 2022 – *Select Passages* – Sermon 12 of 16

Objective: To help people know God is love – and His love changes our life and our eternity.

Accident pics

Opening Prayer

Our culture loves to love.

We are love obsessed.

I wouldn't be surprised if the majority of songs ever written were about love.

Poems, books, movies – even fashion has an eye toward love – enticing someone you love.

We use the word 'love' in a careless way.

Like sports announcers that speak of exciting plays or exciting players as being 'great'.

'Great' should be a term reserved for what is truly great.

If you use the word 'great' to describe something that is above average, then nothing will truly be 'great'.

Along the same line, the word 'love' loses its impact because we use the word 'love' to describe our feelings about:

- Cheeseburgers...
- Sunny 80-degree days...
- Our favorite dessert...
- We love certain items of clothing...
- Our dog...

- Our house...
- Our car...

Another way love is devalued is when we reduce love to a feeling.

Often, love is equated with positive emotional feelings - the melting of our heart – the nervousness we feel around another person we're attracted to.

We have reduced love to a feeling – when it's so much more than a feeling!

Feelings come and go – rise and fall. But love is / should be greater than feelings which can change based on how much sleep we had the night before.

Love is a verb.

Love is about what we do – or don't do for another person.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Feelings can certainly be part of romantic love.

If the basis of love is our feelings or emotions – then love will be short-lived and fickle.

Love can also be a noun – when we're discussing the love one person has for another.

Love is selfless – about the other person, and when we reduce love to a feeling, we make it all about us – what it does to / for us.

Let's consider what the Bible says about divine love.

God is eternally, in His nature, love.

It's not just that God loves us – which He does.

It's not just that God is loving – which He is.

It's that He is love.

His love never had a beginning – it is eternal.

God had no beginning – so His love had no beginning.

Since His love had no beginning – then it will have no end.

This is also because it's God's nature to love.

His love is not simply something He does – it is who He is.

Definition:

“God's love means that God eternally gives of Himself to others.” (Systematic Theology, by Wayne Grudem, p. 198)

You can see the action in this definition – God “*gives of Himself to others*” – to you – to me.

Intra-Trinitarian love.

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit – the Triune God – each member of the Trinity loves the other members.

God didn't need to create us to experience love. For all eternity He has experienced perfect, holy, infinite, righteous love within the Godhead.

John 3:35 (Also John 5:20)

“The Father loves the Son...”

John 14:31 (Jesus is speaking)

“...but I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father...”

John 17:23, 26 (Jesus praying to the Father)

“...so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as you loved Me.

...that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

Our understanding of love starts with God Himself – and we see the love between the 3 persons of the Godhead.

Each member of the Triune God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit, has an eternal, infinite, and perfect love for the others.

The active love of the Godhead gives us a great example for the love within the marriage relationship.

Perfect, serving, and sacrificing love, expressed through the different roles of the Father, Son, and Spirit, along with perfect submission and joy in the relationship.

Intra-Trinitarian love is where love exists in perfection and holiness.

But it doesn't stay there.

The love of the Godhead overflows and is expressed toward His creation...Specifically:

God's love for you.

God is sovereign and all-powerful – which means nobody – nothing – can make Him love you.

He loves you because He wants to.

He loves you because you bring Him delight and joy!

1 John 3:1a

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us...”

He loves you with a sovereign love.

Sovereign love is free – free of obligation – free of guilt – free of manipulation.

It's a love that is the purest form of love.

The proof of His love is in the sending of His son - Jesus – the incarnation of God into human flesh.

1 John 4:9

“In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world...”

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

It's important to know His love for you is not based on what you do - or don't do.

It's not based on the level of your obedience to His Word.

Romans 5:8

"...but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

He loves you – because you're you – and because He wants to love you – it's a matter of His will.

Ephesians 1:4-5

"...He (God) chose us in Him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him (God). In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will..."

It was God's will – His good pleasure – to send His Son to save us. God's love for us was the motivation behind the incarnation of Christ.

Galatians 2:20b

"And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

"God in giving Jesus to die for us, declared that our salvation was more dear to Him than the life of His only Son. In other words, God would never have put His Son through such torment and suffering unless He wished to display the greatness of His love toward His people.

Every humiliation, trial, heartache, and suffering that our Savior experienced was God showing His love toward us.”

(God Is, by Mark Jones, p. 131)

His love for you was not influenced by your goodness or badness.

He chose to love you – even though He knew everything about you before you ever existed. Before the world ever existed!

Let’s consider some of the things we’ve learned about the nature of God.

God is eternal – without beginning or end.

God is immutable – does not change. What He was He always will be.

God is truth – Everything He does and says is true – and He determines what is true by His nature.

These truths about God are not independent of each other. They are all working together – in perfect harmony - so when the Bible says that God loves you – that in His love He predestined you - before time even began – before creation itself – He predestined you to be His adopted son / daughter. Know that this will never change. (eternal & immutable) His love will never decrease – never increase.

You can never do something which will cause Him to love you less.

You can never do something which will cause Him to love you more.

God is infinite – without limits – which means His love for you is without limit.

Ephesians 2:4-5

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses...”

The Bible testifies that God is “...from everlasting to everlasting...” (Psalm 41:13; 90:2) which means He is without end, and He will always be what He has been.

This is why we can take great comfort and celebrate with Paul as he tells us,

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:35, 37-39

If you are a follower – a disciple of Jesus – if you have faith in Jesus – then you are forever His beloved child!

If you are not yet a follower of Jesus – know that He loves you – He has proved His love by sending His Son – and He is calling you to put your faith in His Son – Jesus Christ.

Apply it... So What?

Since God is love...and since God loves us...

1. You must love God.

When we realize how much God loves us – and what He has done to demonstrate / prove His love – our response must be to love Him as He has loved us.

1 John 4:19

“We love because He first loved us.

Matthew 22:37-38

And He (Jesus) said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”

How do you know if you love God?

The Bible is clear on this point.

There are a lot of people walking around – claiming that they love God – but they basically ignore God. They ignore what He has said – what He has commanded – they ignore the truth He has given us.

This is not love for God.

These people do not love God.

They may love the idea of God – but they don't love Him.

John 14:15 – *Jesus is speaking*

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

1 John 5:3

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

You love God by obeying Him – by keeping His commands.

You love God by doing the things He's told us to do.

You love God by having the same thoughts and attitudes He does about people – and things.

We can't love God and love the world – the things of the world.

There are certainly wonderful things in this life.

There are pleasures, joys, and experiences which are incredible blessings from God.

Our mistake is when we begin to love these things – in a greater way / equal way - than we love the One who blessed us with these things.

1 John 2:15

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

When we love God, we will obey Him – live as He has told us – which means there is another way the love of God impacts us and changes how we live.

2. You must love others.

Love for God is manifest by your obedience – and by your love for others.

Jesus made this very clear:

Matthew 22:39

“And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

If God loves you – and you are unworthy of His love – then you should love others – even though they might not be worthy of your love.

1 John 4:19-21

“We love because He first loved us.

If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

We tend to love those who are loveable.

It’s much easier to love those who are kind to us – encouraging to us – those who are most like us.

But God loved us – even though we were His enemies – even though we were sinners who didn’t care about Him – He still loved us.

His love for us - who are unworthy of His love and only worthy of His judgment and wrath – this is the example, and He calls us to put into practice this kind of love toward others – even those who are different than us – those who we consider our enemies.

1 John 4:11

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

It’s much easier to love those who are believers in Jesus – those who have the Holy Spirit in them as we have the Spirit.

But Jesus commands us to:

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:44-45

When we love others like God loves us – we are reflecting His image – His goodness – His character to the world – and we are satisfying the law of God.

Romans 13:8

“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

If you love others – then you are obeying all the laws of God that relate to how to treat one another.

You don’t have to remember all the laws – just remember and practice love!

Our love for each other is evidence of our faith in Christ.

John 13:34-35 (also: 15:12-14)

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Caution!!!!

If you are a Christian and you don't love others – if you despise or hate others – then something is very wrong.

You can't claim the name of Christ – yet live without love.

The greatest mark of a Christian is: LOVE!

1 John 4:7-9

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Something is drastically wrong if you have the Spirit of Christ in you – yet you refuse to love.

Our culture is polarized.

Politically – Morally – Religiously – Ethnicity – Philosophically.

Tuesday is election day – and the choices couldn't be clearer.

As a Christian – are you following the culture's lead on this – are you following a political party's lead on this – other family members or friends lead?

Do you hate those on the other side of the political aisle?

Or...are you living in the love of Christ?

Currently, in our culture, disdain and hate are commonplace and accepted attitudes and feelings toward those who think and believe differently.

This is where as Christ-followers – we must be different.

We have the truth of Christ – but truth is not a contrast to love – or in competition with love.

Our love must be a stark contrast to the 'un-love' we see around us.

Our love – informed and inspired by God's love – must be what we're known for.

Close in prayer