

DECONSTRUCTING DECONSTRUCTION

Sermon Points

Week 4 - 9.4.22 | Tyler Wilson

Title: What is Love?

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-11

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Main Point: As our culture conforms God to their current-day definition of love, we must do the opposite, recognizing the robust goodness demonstrated and utterly defined by the God who is love.

[1Jo 4:8 ESV] (8) Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

- God is love.

The world's belief is that:

Agreeing = Loving

Disagreeing = Hating

Underlying Belief #1 - No moral boundaries or judgments can be placed on love

Underlying Belief #1 - No moral boundaries or judgments can be placed on love

Underlying Belief #2 - Love means unconditional acceptance and no judgment

In regards to a person who identified as "non-binary" being on her show, Ellen Degeneres said: *"I think it's just about letting people be who they are and love who they want to love, and if you're not hurting anybody then there's nothing wrong with it."*

"In short I am a progressive Christian because of Love. Love has been the driving force behind every progressive shift in my spirituality".

"1 - The shift in my understanding of the bible - where the bible supports love, I follow it. Where it conflicts with love, as I understand it, I reject it. We don't have to accept that God kills people because "he" is angry over sin. We don't have to accept that women should not be in spiritual authority over men but instead recognize that someone like Paul was prejudiced against women."

"2 - The shift from exclusive to inclusive salvation - I'm not really concerned with who is or isn't "saved" as much as how we can better love our neighbors. The Dividing line between eternal blessing and damnation increasingly felt unloving. I now believe Jesus doesn't save you, but God's love does. I follow Jesus because this is the truth as I've experienced it"

"3 - The shift in my view of sexuality and gender - God's design is love. Since I believe the greatest commandment is love, I read every other situation or possible moral conundrum as it

relates to love - LGBTQ identities in themselves are not only therefore not bad, but they are good. Their love is really love, which liberated me from my blinding theology."

"4 - Emphasis on practice over Doctrine - What most interests me is not what to think about God but how to experience and live out the love of God. If muslims and Buddhists can help me in my journey of love then they are my allies. Love is not explicitly Christian. Love, if it is love, is love."

- **Matthew Boswell**

- **The very 1st sin in the garden - trying to redefine what is good.**
- **If I really care about someone, then I'll care about what they're doing and believing will lead to.**
- **The mistake - Rather than conforming my definition of love to God, I'm conforming God to my definition of love.**

What happens if you eliminate anything from the Bible that offends your sensibility and crosses your will? If you pick and choose what you want to believe and reject the rest, how will you ever have a God who can contradict you? You won't! You'll have a Stepford God! A God, essentially, of your own making, and not a God with whom you can have a relationship and genuine interaction.

- **Tim Keller**, *The Reason for God*

"I loved the idea of a loving Jesus, and I kept changing, kept ignoring bible verses and underlying different verses and kept bending things around so I could end up with a god who I could truly love. The problem is that once you're done making all those adjustments, I realized the god I believed in was a god of my own invention. That's what people do - you can make god whoever you want to be. I came up with a god that was awesome. I loved that guy. He was just like me...."

"At this point I had to stop pretending and call it what it is. It's not Christianity."

- **Bart Campolo**, former Christian who deconstructed through Progressive Christianity and into Atheism

[1Jo 4:7-11 ESV] (7) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (8) **Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.** (9) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (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. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

- **God must define your idea of love or your idea of love will define God.**

God's Love is:

1. Compassionate - a heart posture of selfless service and caring affection (Phil. 2:3-5, John 13:1, John 11:36, Matt. 9:36, 1 John 3:1, Luke 10:29-37)

2. Costly - a need-meeting, self-sacrificing action (Rom. 5:8, John 3:16, 1 John 3:18, 1 John 4:7-11, 16-18, Rev. 1:5)

3. Corrective - a redirecting truth, discipline, protection, and help for the sake of healthy change and long-term joy (Heb. 12:6, Prov. 3:12, Rev. 3:19, Mark 10:21-22, 1 Cor. 13:6, 2 Cor. 5:10-21, 2 Thess. 2:16, Deut. 8:16)

4. Committed - a steadfast and unchanging faithfulness to your good (Rom. 8:38, Luke 15, Jonah, Hosea, Jer. 31:31-34, Psalm 136, Lam. 3:22, Ex. 34:6-8)

LOVE IS - a compassionate and self-sacrificing commitment to someone's ultimate good

LOVE IS NOT - an indiscriminate support of someone's choices, stances, thinking, and feelings

The World's Love	God's Love
affirms all you think and do	affirms only what is for your good
speaks what you want to hear	speaks the truth
equates acceptance of person to agreement with choices	distinguishes acceptance of person from agreement with choices
after short-sighted good feelings	after your long-term joy
sees disagreement as hateful	sees discipline as gracious rescue
avoids confrontation regardless of path	willing to intervene to protect from harm
labels all fear as harmful	recognizes holy and healthy fears save your life
ignores our sinful condition with self-seeking tolerance and peacekeeping	atones for our sinful condition with self-sacrificing mercy and peacemaking
applauds your self-rule & independence	sets you free from the slavery of self-rule
turns your eyes inward	liberates your gaze upward
meets you where you're at / leaves you there	meets you where you're at / changes you