

John 3:14-16

Advent 2017: Love

I. Introduction

- A. **I don't intend to preach the "canned sermon" concerning love...Love is more than an emotion...it is a choice, etc, etc...**
- B. Let's pray God takes us to that next step this morning. A place where we understand something new and fresh about the subject...
- C. **Harvard study — two essential ingredients are proven to correlate with a happy existence: "One is love. The other is finding a way of coping with life that does not push love away."**
- D. **Psychology Today recently came up with a list of seven ways you can know that you love someone:** You're addicted to this person...You really want your friends or family to like this person...You celebrate this person's triumphs (even when you yourself fail)...You definitely *like* this person, and this person likes you...You really miss this person when you're apart...Your sense of self has grown through knowing this person...You get jealous—but not suspicious
- E. **Love** — The dictionary defines it as an intense feeling of deep affection or to feel a deep romantic or sexual attachment to someone.

F. This is the way our culture defines love. It is associated with feelings, emotions and desire. As such being loved is about being lovable.

G. If this is a true definition can we ever be lovable enough for God to take notice of us?

I. Are You Lovable?

A. What is lovable about you? Why would God love you? Are you good enough? Nice enough? Good looking enough? Made enough money? Funny enough? Likable enough?

B. What would make God look at you and say, “I love that guy!” “I love that girl!” Anything come to mind?

C. What about you is unloveable? Could God come up with reasons not to love you? The answer to that question is of course a resounding yes! It is quite easy for God to come up with reasons not to love us should He choose to do so...we are all sinners

D. Sin is any thought, word or deed contrary to God’s will for our life. That is the sanitized definition of it. But Scripture has a much more graphic and ugly definition of it...

- E. We try to cover up the ugliness of our sin...make it look like a mistake, mis-step or stumble...but in reality it is much, much darker...
- F. **The Bible presents God's attitude toward sin with strong feelings of hostility, disgust, and utter dislike.** For example, sin is described as putrefying sores ([Isaiah 1:6, NKJV](#)), a heavy burden ([Psalm 38:4](#)), defiling filth ([Titus 1:15](#); [2 Corinthians 7:1](#)), a binding debt ([Matthew 6:12-15](#)), darkness ([1 John 1:6](#)) and a scarlet stain ([Isaiah 1:18](#)).
- G. **D A Carson** — Sin is portrayed in Genesis 3 as rebellion...Sin is portrayed as doubting God's Word — “Has God said?” ([Genesis 3:1](#)) — Sin is mocking God, standing in a position where we can criticize God. God knows that if you eat this fruit, you will be like him and he doesn't want you to be like him. He is jealous and narrow-minded and rather bigoted ([Genesis 3:4-5](#)). Sin is, first and foremost, rebellion against God and what he has disclosed of himself in words.
- H. **And it brought death.** We know about death don't we. We have stood over the casket of people we love and cried tears. We have watched people we love suffer terrible sickness and disease as they walked to their own death. We have heard the horror stories of those who died tragically.

- I. Scripture is clear in Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” We have all done it...we are all guilty...all of us sin and are an affront to God because of it.**
- J. All of us has rebelled and mocked God. All of us have considered His ways bigoted, narrow minded and not in our best interest.**
- K. This was our nature when we were born and it was who we were when Jesus spoke this scripture. And the power of sin still wars against us even now after we are saved.
- L. Like Paul in Romans 7 we do things we don’t want to do and don’t do things we want to do...Our mind and heart are redeemed...We don’t want to sin but there is a power at work upon us and temptations about us...and sometimes we rebel and sin...we repent...seek God and His power not to do it again...but on this side of heaven the battle rages on and our failures are many.**
- M. So tell me again...what is lovable about you? What is unlovable about you. Is there any reason at all that God would utter these words about you? Yet...He did.**

I. *So* Loved

- A. God didn't just love us...He *so* loved us
- B. **So** — **“In this way.”** It is a reference to what is to come next in the sentence. So what the scripture is really saying is that God loved us “in this way” ...He gave His son.
- C. **God not only loved us but *so* loved us with an intensity which far surpasses our ability to comprehend. He “so” loved us that He gave Jesus for us.**
- D. **A man purchased a white mouse to use as food for his pet snake. He dropped the unsuspecting mouse into the snake's glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a bed of sawdust. The tiny mouse had a serious problem on his hands. At any moment he could be swallowed alive. Obviously, the mouse needed to come up with a brilliant plan. What did the terrified creature do? He quickly set up work covering the snake with sawdust chips until it was completely buried. With that, the mouse apparently thought he had solved his problem. The solution, however, came from outside. The man took pity on the silly little mouse and removed him from the cage. No matter how hard we try to cover or deny our sinful nature, it's fool's work. Sin will eventually awake from sleep and shake off its cover. Were it not for the saving grace of the Master's hand, sin would eat us alive.**

- E. He gave His Son to be lifted up on the cross as a curse and payment for our sins so that we might be saved...so that we might become free of sin's consequences and power.
- F. **God's motivation to love us this way is far outside of the box as far as our culture traditionally finds motivation or reason for love...**
- G. **It wasn't a sense of emotional attachment that caused God to love us. There was no romantic infatuation. He wasn't addicted to us. He wasn't interested in what others thought about us. In fact, we have already established there was a great deal not to like about us at all.**
- H. **Why did God do this? What *was* His motivation?**
- I. **The simple answer...He wanted to**
- J. **There was nothing in us that compelled Him to do so.** There was nothing in us that motivated Him. He simply chose to make us a part of His life and the revelation of Himself.
- K. **Ephesians 1:4-6 — "God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace."**

L. The answer...He chose to love and save us because He is kind and it was His will to do so... He wanted us to be a part of His life and evidence of His glory and grace

I. Conclusion

A. Do you think it is possible for you to let go of the idea that God found something in you worth saving? Do you think you can let go of the idea that you could ever make yourself worthy of His love, sacrifice and salvation?

B. Could you ever let go of the idea that you are worthy of the manger? You and I are loved...On our good days we're loved... on our bad days we're loved...on our blah days, loved. Before we were saved, loved...after our moment of salvation, loved. We were loved before we were born, after we were born and for eternity hereafter, loved...even those in hell God loves.

C. When Henry Norris Russell, the Princeton astronomer, had concluded a lecture on the Milky Way, a woman came to him and asked, "If our world is so little, and the universe is so great, can we believe God really pays any attention to us?"

Dr. Russell replied, "That depends, madam, entirely on how big a God you believe in."

D. How big is your God? Have you been projecting on Him your love limitations? He is perfect in *His* capacity to love. There are no limits and it is YOU that He has chosen to love.

E. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us all because God chose to love the unlovable and make us a part of His life; to make us a demonstration of His grace, power and character.

F. An American tourist in Paris, who purchased an inexpensive amber necklace in a trinket shop, was shocked when he had to pay quite a high duty on it to clear customs in New York. This aroused his curiosity, so he had it appraised. After looking at the object under a magnifying glass, the jeweler said, "I'll give you \$25,000 for it." Greatly surprised, the man decided to have another expert examine it. When he did, he was offered \$10,000 more. "What do you see that's so valuable about this old necklace?" asked the astonished man. "Look through this glass," replied the jeweler. There before his eyes was an inscription: "From Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine." The value of the necklace came from its identification with a famous person.

G. It is in our identification with Christ that we find our value. It is in His act of choosing of us that we become priceless and

worth saving. It is His kindness toward us and purpose for us that makes us invaluable

H. Can you look at the manger and see God's kindness and choice to love you? Can you realize it didn't have a thing in the world to do with us? It was always all about Him...His kindness, goodness, grace, His choice to love.

I. Know it...believe it...trust it...have faith...God loves you and the manger is evidence that it is so...