

I. Introduction

A. Love = patience, kindness, and honesty

1. Love has its origin in God.
2. This love is what connects us with God.

B. Limit of information

1. Gaining information is great but as human beings we tend to need experience along with information
 - a. College education + experience
 - b. Having instructions only vs having done it before
2. Because God is love He must communicate not only with words but also in action.

II. Love received

A. The struggle

1. We tend to think we know what other people think and we think we are right.
 - a. We do this with most (if not all) relationships.
 - b. We also tend to do this with God.

*"God must be so tired of me bringing the up again."

2. God's love is not about you.
 - a. I can't believe God could really love me.
 - b. I don't believe God could love me—I'm too bad for that.
 - c. Life is difficult. My heart is dark. I don't feel like God loves me.
 - d. I haven't done anything to deserve God's love. Maybe when I ... then I can rest in God's love.
 - e. I don't feel like I deserve to be loved.
3. Simplified: Our act was to sin. God's act was to love and to send.
 - a. While we are the object of God's love, we are not the reason for it.
 - b. God loves because it is His nature and God's nature will never change.

*We can think all kinds of things and give all kinds of reasons why God can't or doesn't love us. The problem with that thinking is that God's love is not dependent on us.

B. Vs 9-10

1. What God did

- a. We know love because God showed it when He sent His Son, Jesus, into the world.
- b. The quintessential example of love has been made visible on the cross.
 - 1) We cannot find this love if we begin at the human end.
 - 2) We find it in that God loved us and sent His Son to restore fellowship with us.
- c. We are sinners and the objects of God's wrath—it is righteous of Him to destroy sin and evil.

*Yet, even God's wrath is motivated by His love. He, at great cost to Himself, provides a way into fellowship.

2. How God loves us

- a. Patience: 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:5
(steadfastness = patient endurance)

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

“But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.” (1 Timothy 1:16)
“May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.”
(2 Thessalonians 3:5)

- b. Kindness: 1 Timothy 1:13-14; Romans 2:4; Luke 6:35; Ephesians 4:32

“though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 1:13-14)

“Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4)

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.”
(Luke 6:35)

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
(Ephesians 4:32)

- c. Honesty: Romans 3:10-12, 22b-26; 2 Corinthians 5:17,21; Romans 8:15

“as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’”
(Romans 3:10-12)

“... the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”
(Romans 3:22-26)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ... For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21)

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15)

- 3. Sending Jesus into the world was not prompted by man's love for God but God's love for man. (v 10)

- a. Two purposes for Christ's death

- 1) That we might live through Christ

- 2) That Jesus might be the propitiation for our sins

- a) This is the act of Jesus taking all the wrath of God upon Himself.

- b) This is something that God did flowing from love that makes it possible for us to be forgiven.

- b. The sending of Jesus was both the revelation of God's love and the very essence of love itself. It is not our love that is primary, but God's—free, uncaused and spontaneous. All our love is but a reflection of his and a response to it.

III. Receiving God's love (seminary students - 2 of 120)

A. You and I

- 1. Some of us have specific reasons we reject God's love and others have specific reasons we won't receive God's love
- 2. For some of us, God's love is just far away or just not practical

*Too good to be real but more real than the air we breathe

B. Accepting it

- 1. Trust who God says He is.
- 2. Believe who God says you are.
- 3. Allow God to love you.

C. Homework

- 1. Write out to God why you think He can't or doesn't love you.
- 2. Romans 8:37-39

"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 8:37-39)

- 3. Resurrection community



LOVE RECEIVED

1 JOHN 4:9-10

MAY 5, 2019 | PASTOR MATT WHITEFORD



GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

1 Some people love giving gifts and others love receiving gifts (think “love languages”). Which is more of your default when it comes to gift giving/receiving? What is a good example of this that demonstrates this to be true of you?

2 Fool’s gold is not real gold, although it looks like it at first glance. In your life, have you been able to feel the difference between receiving real love and a false show of love? How could you tell the difference? (I know, this question is similar to one from last week, but it’s a great question for this week too!)

Love is the language of God to His children because it is His very nature. But God did more than shout down from Heaven, “I love you!” to the people on Earth. He demonstrated His love by sending Jesus to die on the cross. That’s the nature of love—it’s more than mere emotion or sentiment. True love is intentional and action-oriented. When we understand more and more the depth of Jesus’ love for us, we will find ourselves freed to love each other in that same sacrificial and intentional kind of way. Jesus is the first cause of love, but we need to receive His love for it to take root in our lives.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY’S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY’S MESSAGE)

1 Someone read **1 John 4:9-10**

⁹In 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. ¹⁰In 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.

How is God’s wrath motivated by His love for us? What did God’s wrath cost Him so that we could have fellowship with Him?

Why is it important that we find the best demonstration or example of love in the cross, rather than somewhere else?

What is the danger in defining or quantifying God’s love based on your circumstances, rather than the cross?

Is there any situation in your life right now that is causing you to question the love of God? Based on these verses, how would you counter those doubts?

God has defined and proven His love for us not through our comfort, but through the suffering and death of His Son. Because of that, we are not only saved and sent to love others, we are ultimately satisfied by His love. When we encounter seasons of pain and difficulty, we can remind ourselves of God's love by looking again and again to the cross to see the answer to our questions.

2 Someone read **Ephesians 2:14**

For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

What were some of the “dividing walls of hostility” between Jews and Gentiles in Paul’s day?

Because of sin, we have walls of hostility and pride built up in our lives. What has caused you to have “walls of hostility” built up in your life that have kept you from receiving God’s love?

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

1 Accepting God’s love means that we trust who God says He is, we believe who God says we are, and we simply allow God to love us. Looking at these three aspects of accepting or receiving God’s love, which is the most difficult for you? Why is that difficult and how can this group help you to grow in that?

2 Matt gave us some homework on Sunday. We were asked to write down why we think God doesn’t or can’t love us AND we were to read Romans 8:37-39 every day this week. If you are willing, share with this group what you wrote down. The rest of the group: after each person shares, have one or two in the group speak words of life and hope in response.

CLOSING PRAYER

PAIR UP OR EVERYONE IN THE GROUP (if time allows): Take a few moments to pray for each other and ask God to break down our walls that keep us from fully receiving His love. Ask God to open us up fully to His love. Finally, ask for the courage to act out of that love by showing love to others in our life that need to experience God’s love.

NEXT WEEK’S MESSAGE SCRIPTURE

LOVE IS | 1 JOHN 1:11-12

Prepare for next week’s message and group discussion by reading through this passage a few times this week and write down any insights or questions you have before meeting with your home group.

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

COMMENTARY

1 JOHN 4:9-10

Verse 9. John has already stated that God is Spirit (John 4:24) and that God is light (1 John 1:5), and now he gives one more encompassing statement regarding the nature of God. In this context John is saying that to know the love of God is to manifest His love. Without this manifestation one could not possibly know, or ever have known, God or His love.

God's love is not an abstract concept but concrete action, as John will now explain. John states that believers are to love, first, because love is the very nature of the God (v. 8) to whom they belong and of whom they are partakers and, second (v. 9), because of the incredible manner in which God's love was displayed. The sentence structure accentuates the nature and uniqueness of Christ. God sent His Son. The corresponding noun is typically rendered "apostle" and indicates one who is sent on a mission with a purpose, as a representative of another. This purpose is that we might live through Him. Life through and in the Son is a subject that greatly interests John. He refers to it no fewer than six times in vv. 9-16. The perfect tense of "sent" emphasizes the permanent consequences of this act. The verb "live" implies that those to whom the Son was sent were in a condition of spiritual death, and His mission was to impart life to them. This life only occurs through Him since He is the true and only mediating agent between God and man (see 1 Tim. 2:5).

Verse 10. The purpose in sending the Son is not the incarnation but the atonement—God sent His Son to die. Further, God's love is primary, not ours. The death of Christ is extolled, not the birth. John, in concluding the verse with the phrase "our sin," is keenly aware of his own need as well as ours for this propitiatory act. Our act was to sin. God's was to love and send. Man in his natural condition does not love God nor His Son whom He sent. But clearly and amazingly, God loved us. And what incredible and unfathomable love it is: He sent His Son, and He sent Him to die for us. Love is always demonstrated by actions. It is not abstract; it is never complacent or static.

EPHESIANS 2:14

Hostility (antagonism) characterized the natural relationship between Jews and Gentiles. Paul taught that peace (cessation of hostility, harmonious friendship) summarizes the supernatural relationship between these groups, brought about because He (the Messiah) removed the barriers between them. Through His death, Jesus made both groups one. Where there had been two hostile parties—Jews and Gentiles—there was now a third possibility, the body of Christ.