

LOVE

Enjoy, Share, Love, Message, God, Everyone—part 3

January 19, 2020

We exist to enjoy and share the love and message of God with everyone.

DAY 1: The love of God, undeserved.

Jeremiah 31:3 I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with loving kindness

1. Virtually everybody who believes in the God of the bible *knows* the love of God for him or her.
2. But many people have cut themselves off from experiencing the love of God for them.
 - a. If God is only a force, a force has no love.
 - b. If someone has relegated God to the role of EMT, they will rarely experience the love of God.
 - c. If God is only a spirit, not personal, there is no chance of experiencing the love of God.
 - d. And, if someone doesn't even believe God exists, how can they experience the love of God for them?
3. There are times in life where someone may resist or reject your love for them. It is a painful experience, and until the person softens their heart, and humbles himself or herself, they have cut themselves off from your love.
4. If that has happened to you, then you may wonder this: How does God, who is rejected and minimized everyday by billions of people, continue to love those who refuse His love?
5. Here is where the love of God is seen as something divine and not human:

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love in this: that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
6. God's love is actually more amazing than that. It's not just that people slough Him off or minimize Him. The bible says that we are rebels. We know better and rebel anyway!
7. How does this persistent love of God for sinners strike you?

DAY 2: The love of God, at great sacrifice.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1. How much of a cost are you willing to pay so that someone you love may enjoy all there is to enjoy in this life and the next?

2. We may never have to make this choice.

3. Yet, there are parents of soldiers who have to let their sons or daughters “go” to fight for our freedom. Some of their sons or daughters never come home except in a body bag.

4. They have paid the ultimate price for us.

5. The parents of these dead soldiers have also paid a price—the price of loss.

6. God, the Father knows this loss. He chose to “let go” of His own Son and refused to intervene, to stand by when He could have rescued Jesus Christ from the cross. He didn’t.

7. Jesus was not just chosen by His Father for the task. He chose the task as well!

John 13:1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

8. The full extent of His love meant dying!

9. When circumstances don’t “go our way,” or when our prayers remain “unanswered” (as we see it) we begin to question God’s love for us.

10. What strikes you about the love of God for you?

DAY 3: The love of God, transforming us.

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following th\its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Him. By grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 2:6-7 And God raised us up with Christ and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

1. The love of God is not just a good feeling. Like any good parent that sees what their could be and does everything in its power to bring us to a place where we will love like God does, live like Christ, and live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. The raw material of our hearts make this a daunting task!

3. Some of the dynamics of our fallen heart are listed in verses 1-3. What strikes you about our fallen nature in those verses 1-3?

4. Verse 4 is the great turnaround: “But God...”

5. What is God’s prime motivation to get involved with the transformation process? (verse 4)

6. In verse 5, the process of transformation is both illustrated by the difference between death and life, and at the same time involves exactly that process! Re-read verse 1.

7. He doesn’t stop with our salvation. He also lavishes upon His children great riches! What strikes you about verses 6-7?

8. God’s love involves our transformation! What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: We enjoy His love, secure!

Isaiah 61:10 I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

1. It's easy for Christians to *know* the love God has for them in their "head." Knowledge is helpful, but so many times, God speaks in images that speak to our heart. This is one of those times.

2. Why does Isaiah "delight greatly in the Lord?"

3. What has God done for Isaiah?

4. God has given salvation and righteousness to Isaiah, but notice the imagery God uses with Isaiah. It is the imagery of a wedding!

5. On most wedding days, there is an elaborate and expensive cost to the wedding dress, bridesmaid dresses, and tuxes for both the groom and groomsmen. What do these garments intuitively mean to the bride and groom?

6. Isaiah realizes that God has done the same thing for him, and lavishes upon Isaiah the same care and significance as if Isaiah is a participant in his own wedding!

7. This is a stunning image of God's love and care for us.

8. If you are a woman reading this, can you imagine God helping you pick out your wedding dress for your special day? If you're a man, can you imagine God's delight in going with you to the tux shop to pick out your tux with you? Can you imagine His delight at the wedding when He sees you both in your wedding dress and tux?

9. What strikes you about the love of God that you can enjoy?!

DAY 5: We share the love of God, reflected to people

1. Though we certainly enjoy the love God lavishes on us, we learn more about how deep His love for people is when we are engaged with people who don't yet know and appreciate His love!

Matthew 22:37-39 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first and great commandment. A second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands hang all the law and the prophets.

1 Timothy 1:5 Whereas the aim of our charge is love, which issues from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith.

2. Paul tells Timothy some important lessons about love:

a. First, the primacy of love. The "aim".

--The "aim" means the final target, the point of our teaching is to teach people how to love like God loves people.

--The "charge" means the purpose, the goal, and the inducement of our teaching. \

b. The first of three components of this kind of love is a pure heart.

--the idea is that "self" has to be dealt with if love is to the real thing. Otherwise, our love is thinly disguised manipulation in order to win something back for ourselves.

c. The second component of his kind of love is a good conscience.

Acts 24:16 So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward man.

--A clear conscience doesn't mean we are leaving perfectly. A clear conscience just means that when we sin we confess our sin. When we sin against God we confess our sin to God. When we sin against a person we confess our sin to that person. That's what enables us to have a clear conscience.

d. The third component is sincere faith.

--To love people well involves a risk and initiative. You can't "wait around" for someone to love you. The love of God is always on the move to us. We reflect His love for us by being on the move toward people.

3. Our calling is to reflect the wonder of God's love to people.

4. What strikes you about this calling?