

John031617-112711  
Bridge of Hope  
November 27, 2011

“Radical Love: God Our Source”

Introduction: Good morning! We are glad that you have joined us for worship today as we begin the Advent season culminating in celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

Today we are going to do something a little different from other messages we have shared. We are going to ask some questions for you to share your thoughts about as we hold a conversation of sorts. Yeah, I have some questions for us to think about and hope to hear some thoughts you may have about them. To make things a little easier for us I would ask you to raise your hand so that I can recognize you to share. I can't promise to get to everyone but will do my best to give different people an opportunity to be a part of our dialogue. Are you ready to get started?

Here is our first question for today.

**WHY IS LOVE SO IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE?**

The Bible reveals this about love from the perspective of God. We read in . . .

**John 3:16-17** (NIV) *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

It seems to indicate from our text that love originates in God or that God is our source of love. If this is the case then . . .

**WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT GOD'S LOVE FROM THE LOVE MOST PEOPLE SHARE?**

The apostle Paul gives us a great definition of what it means to love the way that God loves. We read in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** (NIV) *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.*

Wow! What a definition that describes what love really looks like. God's love that never fails us is the love with which we are commissioned to live out our lives. We love because He loves. We love in the way that He loves. This is what Christmas should remind us of every year.

God initiated love as He sent Jesus as the first missionary to a people in need of redemption and restoration. Knowing this brings me to our next question for today.

**GOD SO LOVED THAT HE . . .**

- **INITIATED LOVE WITH US – WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE REALIZE GOD IS THE INITIATOR OF LOVE?**
  1. We need to understand this because God is love which makes Him the source of love.
    - As the source of love He is where love begins and originates in.
    - As the source He is the place where love arises from or comes from.

- As the source of love He is the One through whom love is obtained.
  - 2. The Bible says in . . . .
    - **1 John 4:7-8** (NIV) Dear friends, let us love one another, for love **comes from God**. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.
    - **1 John 4:10-11, 19** (NIV) *This is love: not that we loved God, but that **he loved us** and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. . . . We love because **he first loved us**.*
  - 3. Therefore, God is the initiator of love because you cannot give something that you do not have to give.
    - We can't initiate because we do not have His love without Him being involved.
    - Once He is involved we then are able to dispense His love to others around us.
    - God had to initiate love because we didn't have such love working in our lives.
    - We couldn't initiate because we didn't have anything to initiate with.
    - We needed His love.
  - 4. Actually, the entire Bible is the story of God's love as He pursues a people upon whom He can pour out all His love.
    - We need to read the scriptures with this understanding in the background of every verse and story in the Bible.
    - Did you catch what we are saying? God wants to pour out His love in your life.
    - He wants all of His children to experience all of His love that He holds for them.
    - As good as this is, it isn't all there is to know about God's initiating love with people.
  - 5. God has revealed His love through Jesus Christ, and He has revealed Himself through His love for our lives.
    - **John 14:21** (NIV) *Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and **show myself to him.***"
    - We discover God as we walk in His love and allow His love to be expressed through our lives.
    - Thus, we have another reason why He must initiate love: His love shows us who He is.
    - God shows Himself or reveals Himself through His love working in our lives.
  - 6. It is God's desire for you to walk in His love.
    - God took the initiative to love us first and the only natural response to that is to love Him back.
    - We respond to His love by loving Him back.
    - There is nothing better we can do than to be imitators of God's love.
  - 7. Whether you know it or not, God loves you, and He has initiated a love relationship with you. It is real. It is personal. And it is only experienced through faith.
- **LAVISHED LOVE UPON US – HOW MUCH LOVE DOES GOD HAVE TO GIVE?**
    1. This is not the story of a reserved love that is given out in small portions.
      - People seem to have limits on love; at least it appears that way sometimes.
      - We talk like we don't, and we even have some really great examples of what appears to be sacrificial love.
      - But in general, people tend to have some kind of limits to how far they will love, especially when we move beyond the boundaries of family or best friends in life.
    2. The Bible gives us this picture of how much love there is, we read in . . .

- **1 John 3:1** (NIV) *How great is the love **the Father has lavished on us**, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*
- To lavish is to give in great amounts without limit; it is to provide an endless supply.
- God has lavished His love on us.
- In essence, God has poured out His love in fullness and without measure.
- 3. God has not loved you partially, as in loving the good parts while rejecting the bad parts; He loves you completely and receives you as you are.
- 4. God has so loved us that His love comes to our lives and removes all fear. We read in . . .
  - **1 John 4:18** (NIV) *There is no fear in love. But **perfect love drives out fear**, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*
  - When love is genuine and real it removes the presence of fear.
  - In fact, in an authentic loving atmosphere fear has nowhere to take root in our lives.
  - Fear cannot take root, nor can it continue to grow, where God's love abides.
  - Perfect love, God's agape love, removes fear as it is proved out in the actions of life.
- 5. When God loves, He loves fully which also means that He cares about your life and how you live your life.
  - What this means is that He loves you enough to discipline you where needed so that you can live in His blessing.
  - The Bible says in **Revelation 3:19-20** (NIV) *Those whom I love I **rebuke and discipline**. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*
  - It isn't always pleasant to be loved so much because real love also corrects when necessary.
  - Jesus doesn't ignore our bad behavior or overlook the improper intent of our heart; rather He rebukes us when we are wrong and disciplines when we do not follow Him.
  - Why? Because He loves us!
- 6. Love includes the willingness to speak the truth about our lives even when that truth reveals an imperfection or shortcoming as well as a strength or area of giftedness.
  - Real love provides words of correction and actions of discipline so that we might be the person we have set out to be and live in the blessing God intended for us to live in.
  - Real love gives words of encouragement to strengthen us as we live out the blessing of God in our lives.
- 7. This is not a normal or natural love found in this world; it is a supernatural love that has been bought with a price of Christ's life.
  - It is not a love that the world around us understands even though it longs for this kind of love.
  - His love is received and experienced in our lives as it works in us through our faith in Jesus Christ.
- 8. The Bible says that God has lavished His love on us so that we can be called the children of God. He both initiated and lavished His love on us.

Conclusion: John 3:16 says, "For God so loved." Why? Because . . . God is love. He is the source of true love. And we must receive His love so that we can, in turn, give His love to others around us. We love because He loved. We love because He is the source of love and empowers us to love like Him. As the source of love He offers a limitless supply as He initiates love through the coming of the Messiah. This is really what our Christmas celebration is about.

Christmas is not about family (as good as family can be to spend time with). It is not about the gifts we give (as fun as they are to exchange). And as much joy as it is to watch the kids at Christmas time, it is not about the kids either.

This is about the fact that God has chosen to initiate love with people because He wants to lavish His love on us. He wants a people who live in His love and share that love with one another.

We need to come to grips with the truth that says, for God so loved. Why? Because it is in embracing this truth that we set the way for all that follows. Everything else that this verse of scripture says is based upon this important reality that God is the source of love. He both initiates love with us and then lavishes His love on our lives when we, by faith, place our trust in Him.