

## THE MEASURE OF GOD'S LOVE

### 1 John 3:1; Ephesians 3:17-19

**Introduction:** The story is told of a poor crippled girl who underwent an operation that might enable her to walk again. A blood transfusion was needed and her older brother volunteered. He watched the blood go from his arm into the arm of his sister, he thought he was giving his life and he looked up at the doctor and asked how long he had to live. This brother was convinced that he was dying slowly, drop by drop for his sister to be able to live.

There is no greater love than for one to give his/her life for another, however this is usually the exception more often than the rule. But it is not so with God.

What human being can measure the love of God? Can one measure the content of the ocean with an eye dropper? It would be like trying to see how tall God is but using a tape measure.

Complete knowledge of God's love is beyond anybody's understanding, therefore let us consider God's love.

### I. FIRST, CONSIDER THE BREADTH OF GOD'S LOVE (*John 3:16*)

1. God tried to reveal the breadth of His love before Jesus came but His people (Israel) were more interested in the fact that they were His chosen people than the fact of God's love for all people.
2. The Book of Jonah reveals the general attitude of God's people. God called Jonah to go preach to the people of Nineveh but Jonah refused for he didn't like them and he couldn't conceive of God liking them either. God had to shake Jonah hard enough that he finally got the message.
3. The most difficult preaching Jesus ever did was to God's people, Israel. They were "chosen," they assumed that God had given them the best and had favored them above all others. They loved themselves and hated everyone else. How could God love the Gentiles whom they frequently referred to as "dogs."
4. Jesus came to say that God is not protector of the preferred, but redeemer to the deferred. Not simply Father of the called, but of the rest of the world as well.
5. Jesus silenced the shouting, mocking crowd by reminding them of the shepherd that leaves his 99 sheep to go find that one lost sheep.
6. We are the same today. We have walls of prejudice built from our differences and think that God is just like us in our likes and dislikes.
7. If parents have two children and one of them is handicapped, are not both children loved deeply and concern for the handicapped child is expressed? If human love is expressed in such a manner could God's love for all people be less?

## **II. NEXT CONSIDER THE DEPTH OF GOD'S LOVE**

1. Often God is referred to as a "benevolent grandfather" who smiles and winks at our sinfulness. He is often called "the man upstairs" or "somebody up there watching over me.." People take God so lightly.
2. Those who "defend" sin, insist that since we are all sinners and God made us, it is God, not us, who is actually responsible for our sins. Anybody who is really sorry for his/her sins is sick, a neurotic, fit to be under some counselor's care. Their advise is to "grow up, get rid of that guilt complex."
3. Can anyone really believe that God dismisses sin so easily? Can God wink at that which constantly destroys His Children? Can God be content with casual reference to the sinfulness of those who nailed His Son to the cross? If anyone thinks so, it is because they have not begun to measure the depth of God's love.
4. Remember Hosea? An Old Testament preacher who married a faithless wife. Yet he longed for the world to be righteous while his wife longed for the wickedness of the world. Two of the children born to his wife were not even his own, yet he did not divorce her although she ran away from him, her home and her children. Finally she was being sold as a prostitute and Hosea bought her back and restored her to his home. What did all that cost him? So was the cost of our sin and the forgiveness of God.
5. Any parent whose love for their children runs deeply can never make light of their children's waywardness. Disobedient children break the hearts of parents. God's love for us is like that.
6. A god who is unconcerned about the sins of His children is no god at all. To love is to care and to love deeply is to care deeply.
7. Looking again at the crucifixion scene, at least two things stand out - God's war against sin and God's love for the sinner. God's revelation of sin's horror and God's revelation of love's redemptive power.

## **III. LASTLY, THE LENGTH OF GOD'S LOVE**

1. The character of God is love and that love is as eternal as God. People love God, but also turn from Him. (Remember Judas?) Human love often lets us down. No man ever went so far down but the arms of God were sufficient to lift him up. God never gives up.
2. The story is told of a priest who announced that next Sunday he was going to preach on the love of God. That next Sunday, his congregation sat anxiously waiting to hear his sermon. Instead of going to the pulpit, he went over to the candle stand, picked up a candle, walked over to the crucifix beside the pulpit and without saying a single word, held the candle to the wounds in the feet of the Christ, then to the wounds in the hands and then to the side. Climbing up higher he held the candle to the thorn-crowned brow. The sermon was finished, not a word had been said.

3. "For God so loved the whole, wide world...."

**CONCLUSION:**

1. What more can be added? The love of God is immeasurable. It is endless. It is timeless.
2. There is perhaps someone here who does not know our Lord. You have never experienced the love of God. Will you confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior today?
3. Christian has your life been like that of Hosea's wife? Have you left the one who has loved you so? Won't you come back right now?