

1 John 3 – Let us Love One Another (Part 5)

The extraordinary love of God towards mankind, and the effects of it. (1-3)

The Command to Love

(1) Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us (given to us), that we should be called children of God (and so we are! Therefore, the world does not know us, (and the reason is) because it did not know Him.

(1a) what manner of love (the Father has bestowed on us),

Behold what manner of love,.... see, take notice, consider, look by faith, with wonder and astonishment, and observe how great a favor, what an instance of matchless love, what a wonderful blessing of grace ... that the Father has bestowed on us.

We can no more 'behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us' than we can look with undimmed eyes right into the middle of the sun. However, we are called upon to come with our little vessels to measure the contents of this great ocean, to contemplate with our short lives this infinite abyss, and further to estimate the quality of our Father's love, which, in all respects, surpasses all our means of comparison and conception.

Properly speaking, we can neither fathom **the quantity** nor **the quality** of His love for us, for we have no line long enough to sound its depths, and no experience which will give us a standard with which to compare its quality. All that we can do is what John would have us do--that is, **look and ever look at the working of that love** till we form some not wholly inadequate idea of it.

We can see what it does, and so can, in some degree, understand it, and feel that after all we have a measure for **the Immeasurable**, a comparison for **the Incomparable**, and can thus 'behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us.'

If we would turn to the work of Christ, and especially to His death, then we would have an estimate of the love of God. According to John's constant teaching, that is the great proof that God loves us. The most wonderful revelation to every heart of man of the depths of that Divine heart lies in the gift of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle bids to us turn to the Cross and ... 'behold what manner of love.'

- See a love which **shrinks from no sacrifice**, but gives 'Him up to death for us all.'
- See a love which is **evoked by no lovableness on our part**, but comes from the depth of His own Infinite Being, who loves because He must, and who must because He is God.
- See manifested a love which **sighs for recognition**, which desires nothing of us but the repayment of our poor affection, and longs to see its own likeness in us.
- See a love that will not be put away by sinfulness, and shortcomings, and evil, but **pours its treasures on the unworthy**.
- See a love that is **stronger than death and sin**
- See a love armed with all power and yet **gentler than the fall of the dew**
- See a love that is **boundless and endless** -the love of God to us in Jesus Christ.

In like manner we have to think, if we would estimate the 'manner of this love,' that through the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ there comes to us ... the gift of a divine life like His own.

There are two great measures of God's love to us--the gift of Christ, and that which is the sequel and outcome thereof, the gift of the Spirit which is breathed into Christian spirits. These two gifts, which

are one gift, embrace all that the world needs. Both **Christ for us** and **Christ in us** must be taken into account if we would estimate the manner of the love that God has bestowed upon us.

We may gain **another measure of the greatness of this love** if we put an emphasis--which we dare say the writer did not intend--on one word of this text, and think of the love bestowed upon 'us,' such creatures as we are. Out of the depths we cry to Him. Not only by the voice of our supplications, but even when we raise no call of entreaty, our misery pleads with His merciful heart, and from the heights there comes upon our wretchedness and sin the rush of this great love, like a cataract, which sweeps away all our sins, and floods us with its own blessedness and joy. The more we know ourselves, the more wonderingly and thankfully shall we bow down our hearts before Him, as we measure His mercy by our unworthiness.

Definition of Love in the Bible

LOVE – is the unselfish, loyal, and benevolent intention and commitment toward another. The concept of the love of God is deeply rooted in the Bible.

CHESED – Hebrew word refers to the covenant love. Jehovah is the God who remembers and keeps His covenants in spite of the treachery of people. His faithfulness in keeping His promises prove His love for Israel and all humanity.

AHAVAH – is used of human love towards oneself, another person of the opposite sex, or another person in general. It is used of God's love towards Jeremiah in 31:3. What does it say?

Jer 31:3

Other types of love that we are familiar come from the Greek-speaking world: Eros (sexual love); Phileo (tender affection): and Agape (special unconditional love of God)

What does Paul say about Love?

Paul speaks of this type of love (agape) in 1 Cor 13:1-3 ... when he says that even if he has rhetorical Ability, preaching, knowledge, mountain-moving faith, charity towards the poor, or even martyrdom... they are nothing without love. Then he proceeds to list the characteristics of love.

We will continue our study next week on what Paul says about love.

Prayer

God of Goodness, I come into Your presence so aware of my human frailty and yet overwhelmed by Your love for me. I thank you that where is no human experience that I might encounter where Your love can not reach me. If I climb the highest mountain ... You are there. If I find myself in the darkest valley of my life ... You are there. Teach me today to love You more. Help me to rest in that love that asks nothing more of me than to have the simple trusting heart of a child. AMEN.

Holloman Illustrated Bible Dictionary

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/gods-love>

CONSIDER: What did you learn about today's lesson? What made an impression on you? I hesitate to share my thoughts for fear of influencing yours so I will put them on the next page.

Please take a moment to reflect on this lesson and how great a love God has for you and if you're open to sharing => click on the web link. I long to hear from you! ([Don't forget to go to the next page](#)).

What impacted me about today's lesson? If we could be meeting in person and having a "round-table" discussion ... I'm sure there would be a lot that we would be sharing. We might even bring up a point that impacted us from previous lessons or share a story. So ...

When we were studying the word BEHOLD ... there are so many scriptures where BEHOLD is mentioned. I'm sure we will all take special note when we see it in the future in reading and studying the Bible. The Christmas season ... which is almost upon us ... "BEHOLD, I bring you good tidings" comes immediately to mind.

Now we will be studying the word LOVE ... I don't know how long but at least another week but here are some of my thoughts I'd like to share today:

1. In preparing this lesson ... I saw lots of other references in John about love ...not just chapter 3. That surprised me. It just shows me (again) how much more there is to learn about God's Word.
2. One of the biggest notes for me was the 7 points on the first page under "Turn to the Cross" and especially point # 3 ... "a love which sighs for recognition". Don't we all crave that? A love that is reciprocated? But think on how God feels ... *He sighs for recognition!*
3. The measure of God's love has two parts ... and one becomes the sequel of the first. The first being - the gift of Christ, and the second is the result of the first - the gift of the Spirit. I know this is a subtle and obvious point but I like how it is articulated and emphasized here.
4. And take noticed of this ... These two gifts embrace *all that the world needs*. Both **Christ for us** and **Christ in us**. How profound is this? OK ... I know you are all thinking on that song ... "What the world needs now" ...

What the World Needs Now Is Love

[Jackie DeShannon](#)

What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,
No not just for some but for everyone.

Lord, we don't need another mountain,
There are mountains and hillsides enough to climb
There are oceans and rivers enough to cross,
Enough to last till the end of time.

What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,
No, not just for some but for everyone.

Lord, we don't need another meadow
There are cornfields and wheat fields enough to grow
There are sunbeams and moonbeams enough to shine
Oh listen, lord, if you want to know.

What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love,
No, not just for some but for everyone.

No, not just for some, oh, but just for everyone.