

God's Character Is Love & Mercy

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Our previous messages informed us that the Bible teaching on the specific subject 'God is Love', emphasized that His is genuine divine love for us (far greater than any human show of love), and it should be considered as the most interesting and profitable subject of the entire Bible, since it has good benefits for us in this life, as well as eternal Heavenly results. Also, that each person will need and require the help of the Holy Spirit (along with His grace and promised wisdom), if we are to receive the benefits that we should from such an important lesson on a particular subject, which is that 'GOD is LOVE'!

We were reminded that we have been carried away from God's divine Love via the efforts of a 'life of self', since we have not known our Heavenly Father via human nature. In reality, we really have not known anything about Him. Also, that a person in their human nature, could not give an accurate description nor account of what God is like, His true character, how and what He would be under various circumstances. Their account as given, would have to be completely turned around to be anywhere near the truth about what God's true character really is. [The Truth about this subject can only come from reading and hearing God's Word to learn of His true character of love and what He is really like.]

The vitally important thing in the Christian's life is to come to know God, because not only do our blessings here depend upon it; also, our prayer life, our faith, and everything else. To the extent that we know God, will it be easy for us to have faith in Him.

When we come to know God as He really is, all our 'unbelief' would have to disappear; because we would know that He is a 'God of Love'. With our true knowledge of God, evil things would disappear from our life, as we would desire to imitate His Love.

Instead of us discussing our troubles and trials and becoming filled with doubt and despair; our one good look at God will fill us with quietness, confidence, and God's peace past understanding. So, our view should be looking toward God continually, as is written for us (Isaiah 45:22), "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else." And (Psalm 121: 1) "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." (vs.7-8) "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." [Those verses should inspire us with confidence that we need to sustain our belief on God and His Love for us.]

We can notice as we read through the Psalms, it is always God Who is talked about, and Who is held up high for us to recognize and be inspired to believe that God in His Love wants our life to be a happy and victorious life.

The message reminded us that we can see the contrast to this in the Book of Job, where we first read all about what he did, and about what he was, namely, the big capital letter 'I', which brought him to the 'ash heap full of sores'.

When Job got his eyes off himself and on to the Lord, he began to grasp who God really is. He answered and said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Therefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5). Job had to pray only once after that, and then, not for himself, but for his friends. That one good look at God turned Job's whole captivity around, and he possessed twice as much after that as he did before.

When we begin our Christian life, we often see nothing but ourselves, what conditions we must meet, and then we go along in Christian life in a half-hearted way; but thank God, there can come a time in our Christian life when we can be developed by God's Spirit. Our whole horizon is filled with God, we forget the 'I' altogether, and we constantly keep the great God before ourselves.

That is the goal the Holy Spirit is seeking to lead all of us to, where we see God Himself as the grandest, most glorious Being, and just one look at Him will fill us with happiness, victory, and Heaven itself. [Which must also include that vital 'forgiving humble spirit' in our heart, which will

fill us with a 'heavenly calm' which we 'would not part with for the world'. That will be the inevitable result of 'getting our eyes upon God and His Christ, (Instead of us allowing ourselves to focus on the 'works of Satan, and our temptations and trials which seem to magnify, become burdensome, and sometimes overwhelm us.) But, as was said, 'one good look at God will fill us with quietness and confidence'.

Hebrews 11 (the faith chapter) describes how true Bible Christians had had that 'good look at God', and how that inspired confidence in Him led them to receive amazing victories in their life. The apostle spoke in the very next two verses (Hebr.12:1-2), about the Christian race taking place in our own life,

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience" (that means with endurance) "the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." (Jesus is our pattern, so we are to keep our eyes upon Him and so know Him and God the Father. (John 17:3) *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

(John 17:25-26) *"O righteous Father! The world has not known You,"* (That is the reason for the terrible spiritual condition of the world, which is, 'no knowledge of God'!) (Jesus continued) *"but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your Name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."* (And that is one of the most important truths in the entire Bible).

The late Pastor recalled the story of a man who had two nephews with him. One day they were standing in front of a moving picture theater, a very elaborate one, painted and decorated, and, the little fellow asked his older brother, "What are these places for?" That question brought forth some remarkable words of wisdom from God, as he answered, it is "To make people forget God."

We all need to realize, that the whole object of Satan in those vain made-up movie shows and the worldly dazzling things of daily

life, is to keep people from finding out anything about God. If Satan can keep them occupied with human affairs and worldly attractions, keep them occupied with duties and with other interests just enough to take up all their time, then he will succeed in keeping them from learning about and understanding the true character of God, and from coming to know that He is a 'God of Love'!

It doesn't make any difference what our duties are, we cannot afford to allow them to take up the time that we should spend in getting that knowledge of God; we cannot afford to allow our household duties, however important they may be, nor any pastime activity, to occupy enough of our time to shut out our opportunities of acquiring that desperately much-needed 'knowledge of God'. We all will have to meet God someday, 'face to face', either at the Great White Throne Judgment, or, in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, so we need to know Him. And if we do know Him, it will mean eternal life as well as His blessing in this Life.

The sole object of Satan is to get our eyes off of God and on to other people. Thankfully (the late Pastor said), often-times people came to realize that, and have said— "The cause of my trouble was when I began to get my eyes on other people, looked at the inconsistency of professed Christians; looked at what they said and did toward me, "and I began to go downhill (spiritually)." The truth is that every time we look at the mean things said and done toward us, and then talk about them, we 'lose ground spiritually'.

These things can be changed however, if we will look to God and become well acquainted with Him, which comes through knowing His Word, which will expose the self-nature in our heart. So, we must ask God to remove that evil nature so we can be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which can become a reality for us, through our learning from God's Word, and coming to a knowledge of God's true character of divine Love, just what He is, and all that He will do for us.

The best part of God's character, the real essence is LOVE! (which we also all need to have.) The love of God is the most beautiful part of His Divine character; in fact, love is the most

beautiful attribute of any character (human or divine), and it always does the very best it can for people and their loved ones. Divine Love contains mercy!

No doubt, we have seen that loving attribute in human situations. We can see it in parents with their children; in husbands and wives; and have watched it in children when they loved an animal or a toy, and we have always noticed one thing; that they will do their very best for that loved one. Love will give its greatest power, its richest gifts; in fact, it may seem that there is nothing which is too good and too wonderful to bestow upon the loved one. (It can seem at times, as if the human heart must have something to love-supremely, no matter what that something is) and is always trying to manifest that love. However, one's love in most cases is tainted with selfishness, it is marred by sin and can be a corrupt love (if we may express it that way).

As we get back to God's Love, it is always unselfish in any thought of Himself, it is pure, unadulterated, and untainted; God's love is just as pure as Himself. So, let us imagine what such a love as that would be like, for we are told that the real character of God expresses LOVE. (1st John 4:8 simply says) for "God is love."

God's whole character, His whole being, His whole nature, if we were to express it in one word, would be LOVE. We cannot add one word to make it more forcible than just love, pure love. It is the very essence of God. He cannot help loving any more than the sun can keep from shining, nor water from running downhill. God's Love is pure untainted love, without a flaw in it. So, what a love that must be, and what a wonderful thing to have such a love waiting to care for us and knowing from His Word that it carries every blessing with it.

From the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, we can read what that love does. It is written (or worded) "charity", but the original word is "love". "Love suffereth long, and it is kind."

That is the remarkable thing about it. When you really love someone, and if you really do have the love of God, which is untainted and pure (nothing temperamental about it, no possibility of change), what an influence that nature of love would have upon other people. "Long

suffering" means that it suffers long and hard and suffers cheerfully, and it is always kind; never gets angry (or cranky); never says 'you are wrong' and 'I am right'. Love suffers long, and is kind" the Bible teaches, For true love is divine love. "Love never fails, and envies not."

It makes no difference how much a person possesses, or what kind of a home they have. Love never envies the prosperity of others, as it could not be so; it is delighted to do for others, and to see them prosper. Divine love could not be otherwise.

"Love does not vaunt itself." It never spends its time telling others about itself; never uses the big 'I', nor elevates it, and never boasts about what it has accomplished; it makes no difference what position it holds, it does not get puffed up with 'pride', and it is not puffed up. "Not heady nor high-minded." Never thinks itself better than anyone else. When we really acquire the love of God, we will see everybody on the same level.

One of the grandest of evidence of real divine love is to not be a respecter of persons in our heart. We would be surprised to know and to see how many people are influenced by money, honor, prestige; (and even by color), and it can make a difference in the treatment that is given to others.

We should be so glad we have a God with whom neither money nor fame, prestige, color, or creed, makes any difference. There is one thing about God, He is no respecter of persons, and when we have the love of God within ourselves, no thought of respect of persons enters our mind. That is one of the grandest of evidence of Christianity, to treat everybody alike, whether rich or poor.

LOVE "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own." It does not always drive the best bargain and does not try to get ahead of the other person. Real, divine love desires for the loved one to get the best end of the deal. How many parents we have known who have done without food that their children might have it; have denied themselves in order to give it to their children. LOVE "Is not easily provoked."

The original translation expresses it better—"Does not get angry at what is said or done; it suffers long and is kind. Thinks no evil."

What a valuable part of true love that is. It has a wonderful meaning; it never looks on the bad side of anybody (and that is speaking of Christians whom the devil fights with wrong thoughts of envy or coveting.) (That does not mean that we are unable to see the real Truth, nor that we cannot understand evil times and un-Christlike conditions and situations. Satan always talks about real Christians and always pictures to us the hardest side of people.

Suppose (as an illustration) you were walking on the street, and a fellow Christian was on the other side, but they were preoccupied and did not happen to see you. Satan will try to tell you they did that deliberately to hurt you; or that they had something against you, and then he will add, that you also have something against them. If we do not resist those thoughts soon there will be a separation of Christian fellowship and love, because of that 'trick of Satan'.

The word 'devil' in our language means "separator". Real love, however, will always give the loved one the benefit of the doubt; it always tries to find a good side of the person; it does not impugn the motives of its fellowman. Satan tries to get us to see bad motives and that someone is doing things deliberately. But love always tries to make excuses for things of that kind.

LOVE "Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; Bears all things, believeth all things, hopes all things, endureth all things, LOVE never fails"; (1st Cor.13:6-8).

That 13th. chapter of 1 Corinthians, describes the kind of love that God has. We can, by God's grace, receive and have that love in our heart, and learn how to apply it in life. Weymouth's translation describes it and brings it out very clearly, in saying, "Love knows how to be silent. (What a valuable asset for God's children to know how to be silent), as nothing defeats the devil in the home troubles, than to stop arguing and be silent. Such an attitude as that, kills Satan and his works, 'nips it right in the bud'; for it takes someone to answer back in order to keep a quarrel going.

Divine love not only knows how to be silent, but it is delighted to be silent, it has no problem to be silent. Without that divine Love we find it very difficult to hold our tongue; but divine love finds great pleasure in doing so; it chooses to be

silent. That is the beauty of divine love, and that is the kind of love God has for us. In order for us to receive it, we just have to make a final decision to put aside those attitudes of 'self' (not give in to the temptation to argue back) and so, keep a quarrel ongoing with another person. That is a most valuable part of the divine love that God wants to instill within the heart of each person who will surrender 'self', to leave room for God to enter in to guide us in Love in this life, and with 'eternal results' "on the horizon!"



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