

Trust the Love Part 3

He Loves Me ... He Loves Me Not

John 3:9-21; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 6/13/21

1. The love of God gives us joy in God. (John 17)
2. The love of God is the heart of the good news. (1 John 4)
3. ***The love of God moves us to trust in Christ. (John 3)***
4. The love of God moves us to love like Christ. (Ephesians 3)
5. The love of God does not always look and feel like love. (Romans 8)

The Problem of Logic and Biblical Ignorance

There are two things that keep us from believing what the Bible says. We don't know what it says. And we can't imagine how what it does say can be true and fit together.

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" (9) We find it hard to believe things that we can't understand or see the logical connection for. ***Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? (10)*** We also find it hard to believe things that are in the Bible but we have not seen right there in the text. (Mark 12:18-27; Deuteronomy 10:18-19; Hosea 3:1; Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36) ***Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. (11)*** Israel and the leaders of Israel, for the most part, rejected Jesus and his testimony to the truth. ***If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (12)*** God's work on earth is great and his manifestation of his glory in heaven is even greater. Why do we think we should be able to fully understand what God does, whether in heaven or on earth? ***No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. (13)*** We should reject the stories of those who say they've gone to heaven and have information we need to hear. Jesus claims that right as exclusively his own!

The Old Testament Paradigm of Loving Sinners

*A tortured man on a cross is as attractive and appealing as a snake on a pole.
But in the hands of a loving God, it is a beauty to behold!*

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; (14) This is a reference to the story in the Old Testament in Numbers 21:4-9. The whole nation of Israel is provided a means of being healed if snake bitten, whether they trust God's Word and look or not! ***so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. (15)*** The provision of a means of healing was in place but only those who believed God's promise and looked would be healed. Both divine provision and human response (faith) were necessary to healing.

The Provision of an Able and Willing Savior

The provision of a feast for your neighbor is love. The persuasion used to move your neighbor to partake is love. But if your neighbor refuses to come to the feast provided, it does not negate the act of love in that which was offered.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (16) As the Lord Jesus himself made the connection in verse 14, here it is spelled out more clearly. The Lord Jesus on the cross is prefigured by the serpent on a standard. Both are provided for healing. The serpent on a standard for physical healing. The Lord Jesus on a cross for spiritual healing. ***For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. (17)*** The ‘world’ (Greek *cosmos*) is the evil world of unredeemed humanity in general. God sent his Son to provide a Savior who is willing and able to save the whole world! The ‘world’ (Greek *cosmos*) is not used in John or the rest of the New Testament to refer to the ‘elect’ or redeemed humanity. It is used in reference to the evil world or unredeemed humanity. We are to love the world as God does, in desiring its redemption, but not in desiring to be like it in its love of evil. (1 John 2:15-17; Luke 14:16-24)

The Reality of Love Received and Love Spurned

To love someone and that love to be returned is a wonderful thing. But all love is not returned. And the fact that a particular love is not returned does not negate the love shown. Nor does it negate the consequences of such love spurned.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (18) The necessity of faith in Jesus is here emphasized. The provision of a means of salvation that is available to all, each and every person, does not mean that all will be saved. Faith is required. ***This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (19-20)*** The reason why people reject and spurn God’s love in Jesus is because they love sin more than they love God. (1 Chronicles 17:13; Hosea 9:15; Ezekiel 33:11; Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 19:41-44; Hebrews 10:26-31; Mark 10:17-27; Matthew 22:1-14) ***But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God. (21)*** But those who do believe receive God’s love in Jesus because of the gracious work of God in their heart. Saving faith is the work of the Spirit in those who are a part of the evil world so that they turn from darkness and love the Light. Again, faith is required. Where that faith comes from is explained in John 3:1-8.

Love as the Draw

Today, we’ve looked at John 3:9-21 in order to see the love of God in relation to the salvation of sinners. Some important application:

1. We need to realize that the doctrine of the love of God is complex in the Bible.
2. We need to see that God’s heart toward all men is important for us to love all men as we should.
3. We need to see that the love of God for all sinners is crucial to the proper proclamation of the gospel.

What makes the lovely unattractive? A lack of love. And what makes the unlovely attractive? Love. God is both lovely and loving and it is his love which attracts sinners to him.