

The Love of God in 3-D – Part 4

Matthew 5:43-48; Coast Community Church Pastor's Class; Earl Miles; 8-27-17

The Need for Clear Thinking on the Love of God

- God loves Mankind: All those created in His image enjoy the Creator's love in one way or another.

What does Matthew 5:43-48 teach us?

1. It seems right to love some but not all. (43)
2. But we are to desire and pursue the good of all. (44)
3. Because this is what God does. (45)
4. Because evil people love only some. (46-47)
5. Because God loves completely and so should we. (48)

The Need for Distinctions in God's Love

- God's Love for His Son
- God's Love for His Creation
- God's Love for Mankind
- God's Love for His People

Luke 6:27-36

Three primary arguments against telling people God loves them:

- Most of the time it is put this way: God loves everyone unconditionally. The addition of the adverb, unconditionally, says more than what ought to be said to unbelievers.
- It is not true to say that God loves everyone. God only loves the elect and only hates the non-elect. He can't love and hate someone at the same time.
- It may be true in some sense. But to tell people that God loves them is misleading and many will walk away with the wrong idea.

Just because someone might misunderstand some truth does not mean we should not proclaim it. (2 Peter 3:16; Romans 3:8; 6:1-2; Luke 18:9-14)

How does God love all mankind? Two ways:

- Common grace. (Matthew 5)
- Cross. (John 3)

John MacArthur

*As a follow up to **this post**, today we are asking the question: **Does God love only the elect and hate the non-elect?*** The fact that some sinners are not elected to salvation is no proof that God's attitude toward them is utterly devoid of sincere love. We know from Scripture that God is compassionate, kind, generous, and good even to the most stubborn sinners. Who can deny that these mercies flow out of God's boundless love? Yet it is evident that they are showered even on unrepentant sinners. It must be acknowledged, however, that explaining God's love toward the reprobate is not as simple as most modern evangelicals want to make it. Clearly there is a sense in which the psalmist's expression, "I hate the assembly of evildoers" (Ps. 26:5) is a reflection of the mind of God. "Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against Thee? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies" (Ps. 139:21-22). Such hatred as the psalmist expressed is a virtue, and we have every reason to conclude that it is a hatred God Himself shares. After all, He did say, "I have hated Esau" (Mal. 1:3; Rom. 9:13). The context reveals God was speaking of a whole race of wicked people. So there is a true and real sense in which Scripture teaches that God hates the wicked. So an important distinction must be made. God loves believers with a particular love. It is a family love, the ultimate love of an eternal Father for His children. It is the consummate love of a Bridegroom for His bride. It is an eternal love that guarantees their salvation from sin and its ghastly penalty. That special love is reserved for believers alone. However, limiting this saving, everlasting love to His chosen ones does not render God's compassion, mercy, goodness, and love for the rest of mankind insincere or meaningless. When God invites sinners to repent and receive forgiveness (Isa. 1:18; Matt. 11:28-30), His pleading is from a sincere heart of genuine love. "'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezek. 33:11). Clearly God does love even those who spurn His tender mercy, but it is a different quality of love, and different in degree from His love for His own. (John MacArthur in *The God Who Loves*, pp. 14, 16).

John Owen

"That God is good to all men, and bountiful, being a wise, powerful, liberal provider for the works of his hands, and in innumerable dispensations and various communications of his goodness to them, and may in that regard be said to have a universal love for them all is granted..." ... "Love to all mankind in general we acknowledge to be required of us, and we are debtors in the fruits of it to the whole creation of God: for he hath not only implanted the principles of it in nature whereof we are in common partakers with the whole race and kind, whereunto all hatred and its effects were originally foreign, and introduced by the devil, nor only given us his command for it, enlarging on its grounds and reasons in the gospel; but in his design of recovering us out of our lapsed condition unto a conformity with himself, proposeth in a special manner the example of his own love and goodness, which are extended unto all, for our imitation, Matthew 5:44-45." (John Owen, *Works*, Volume 15, Banner of Truth, Carlisle, PA: 1966. Page 70, and *Works*, Volume 12, Banner of Truth, Carlisle, PA: 1966. Page 552.)