

The Love of God – Part 5

John 3:1-21; Coast Community Church Pastor's Class; Earl Miles; 9-3-17

God's Love for Mankind – Continued

Part 1 – Common Grace (Matthew 5:43-48)

Part 2 – Cross as the Basis for Common Grace and the Free Offer of the Gospel (John 3:1-21)

What do we tell people about the cross in relation to them?

Has God loved all people in some way through the cross?

How do we determine what 'world' it is that is being 'loved' by God through the cross of Christ?

1. We need to consider the immediate context of John 3:16.

2. We need to consider the use of 'world' by John in the gospel of John.

- World as all creation/mankind in general (20 times; 26%): John 1:10; 6:14; 7:4; 10:36; 11:27; 12:25; 9:39; 16:21; 16:28; 17:5; 17:11; 17:13; 17:15; 17:24; 18:20; 18:36; 21:25
- World as hyperbole (1 time; 1%): John 12:19
- World Jesus is a Savior for (10 times; 13%): John 1:29; 3:16; 3:17; 4:42; 6:33; 6:51; 8:26; 11:9
- World of 'mankind as fallen and hostile to God' (45 times; 59%): John 1:9; 1:10; 3:19; 7:7; 8:12; 8:23; 9:5; 12:31; 12:46; 12:47; 13:1; 14:17; 14:19; 14:22; 14:27; 14:30; 14:31; 15:18; 15:19; 16:8; 16:11; 16:20; 16:33; 17:6; 17:9; 17:14; 17:16; 17:18; 17:21; 17:23; 17:25; 18:37
- World of Believers in Jesus/Elect Only (0; 0%)

3. It is helpful to consider what the first Calvinist, John Calvin, said.

For God so loved the world. Christ opens up the first cause, and, as it were, the source of our salvation, and he does so, that no doubt may remain; for our minds cannot find calm repose, until we arrive at the unmerited love of God. As the whole matter of our salvation must not be sought any where else than in Christ, so we must see whence Christ came to us, and why he was offered to be our Savior. Both points are distinctly stated to us: namely, that faith in Christ brings life to all, and that Christ brought life, because the Heavenly Father loves the human race, and wishes that they should not perish. ... *That whosoever believeth on him may not perish.* It is a remarkable commendation of faith, that it frees us from everlasting destruction. For he intended expressly to state that, though we appear to have been born to death, undoubted deliverance is offered to us by the faith of Christ; and, therefore, that we ought not to fear death, which otherwise hangs over us. And he has employed the **universal term whosoever**, both to invite all

indiscriminately to partake of life, and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. **Such is also the import of the term World, which he formerly used;** for though nothing will be found in the world that is worthy of the favor of God, yet he shows himself to be reconciled to the whole world, when he invites all men without exception to the faith of Christ, which is nothing else than an entrance into life. (John Calvin on John 3:16)

4. It is helpful to see what the original ‘TULIP’ formulators said about the cross.

Synod of Dordt (1618-19)

The Infinite Value of Christ's Death

This death of God's Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.

Reasons for This Infinite Value

This death is of such great value and worth for the reason that the person who suffered it is--as was necessary to be our Savior--not only a true and perfectly holy man, but also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Another reason is that this death was accompanied by the experience of God's anger and curse, which we by our sins had fully deserved.

5. It is helpful to think about what other Reformed pastors and theologians have said, past and present.

Charles Spurgeon

Both are true; no two truths can be inconsistent with each other; and what you have to do is to believe them both. With the first one, the saint has most to do. Let him praise the free and sovereign grace of God, and bless his name. With the second, the sinner has the most to do. O sinner, humble thyself under the mighty hand of God, when thou thinkest of how often he hath shown his love to thee, by bidding thee come to himself, and yet how often thou hast spurned his Word and refused his mercy, and turned a deaf ear to every invitation, and hast gone thy way to rebel against a God of love, and violate the commands of him that loved thee. (Charles Spurgeon in a sermon, *Sovereign Grace and Man's Responsibility*)

D.A. Carson

“I argue, then, that both Arminians and Calvinists should rightly affirm that Christ died for all, in the sense that Christ's death was sufficient for all and that Scripture portrays God as inviting, commanding, and desiring the salvation of all, out of love . . . Further, all Christians ought also to confess that, in a slightly different sense, Christ Jesus, in the intent of God, died effectually for the elect alone, in line with the way the Bible speaks of God's special selecting love for the elect . . . “ —D. A. Carson in *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2000, pp. 73-79).