

Introduction:

- *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* (1 John 4:11, ESV)
- The love of God for us is the root of our love for each other.
- Love literally becomes the way that I show others God's love for them.
 - He values them!
 - We must value them with the same kind of love. I.e. It is a love that costs.
- Paul focused on God's love in a big way...and we can pray the following for ourselves and our church.
 - *"And it is my prayer that your love may abound (over-abundant excess) *more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,*" (Philippians 1:9, ESV)*
 - *"and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you," (1 Thessalonians 3:12, ESV)*
 - *"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love," (Ephesians 3:17, ESV)*
- To Paul, love affects everything Kingdom...evangelism, pastoral care, missions, marriage, work place relationship and relationships with people you often share conflict with. Wherever you encounter people, people are to encounter the love of God in you. That's why...
- Jesus gave us two commands:
 - Love God and love each other.
 - Do those two commands well and you will have fulfilled all the scriptures! That tells me love is the sum of everything. I.E. Bob Jones standing in line in heave is asked by angel: "Bob, Did you learn to love?"
- God's love is immense! It is powerful! It is moving! And we want more of it!
- I want to start with a definition of love as we move deeper into this series on the love of God. Lord help us understand what we are talking about.

I. In Defining Love Where Do You Start?

- A. You have to start with a definition so people know what we are talking about. The word, love, can be used in many different ways.
- B. Realize there is confusion concerning the definition of love.
 1. To define it we almost have to ask other questions to understand the context in which we are using the word love.
 2. We get confused with love because of all the many different nuances that are associated with the word - love.
 - a) I love ice cream! You thought I was going to say bacon!
 - b) I love Kelly.
 - c) I love this wrench.
 - d) I love Florida sunsets.

3. The majority of the uses of the word love has to do with us receiving pleasure from...someone or something.
 - a) I am eating breakfast and there is plenty of bacon on my plate I am pleased..
 - b) I get to use my favorite wrench and I feel pleased.
 - c) I look at a beautiful sunset and I feel pleased.
 - d) We say we 'love' them because they are pleasing to us or bring us pleasure.
- C. What is love?
1. As believers we start with God because God is love. We therefore start with the Word.
 2. Four words in the NT translated love in the English.
 - a) *Eros* - is a kind of romantic love where the lovers are 'hot' after each other. They want each other. We get the english word erotic from eros.
 - b) *Philos* - friendship love. Philadelphia - city of brotherly love. Two people who are agreed and walking together.
 - c) *Storge*, affection that one might have for things like an old sweat shirt or slippers, an old dog that you like having around.
 - d) *Agape*, divine love. characterized by sacrifice in the pursuit of another person's good. God is love (God is Agape). He pursued us as He looked to do good to us and for us.
 - (1) Agape love is love that is characterized by making sacrifices in the pursuit of another's good.
 - (2) This is the love we will going deep in over the next few weeks.
 - (3) So we have defined His love (God is love.) Let's now examine how deep that love goes.

II. Examining the Depth Of His Love (Agape) John Piper.

- A. What does that mean: God is love?
 1. In order for us to love others well we have know how great this love is or at least some insights of how great, magnificent, and wonderful this love is.
 2. We must look into God's agape love!
- B. Four insights. We hear them often but forget what they really mean. We get familiar with them and they lose their wonder. Four things reveal the depth of God's goodness toward us:
 1. We do not deserve God's love. *"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:6-8, ESV)
 - a) One might show their love by dying for a friend; but God shows his love by dying for all the 'unlovable.'

- b) This love is different from all He does that shows His love...this is what His love is: "while we were sinners Christ died for us."
 - c) How big/awesome is God's love? It is a love given to us the undeserving! We don't deserve it. That is why it is great!
 - d) Agape love is that love that pursues another's good, even when they do not deserve it!
 - e) It is paramount that we understand this. When we do it bring us into a place of wonder and gratitude!
2. God paid a great price to love us.
- a) God - *"For God love so much that He gave His One and only Son..."*
 - b) Jesus - *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13, ESV) It cost God as He loved us.
 - c) *"Yet, **Christ paid the full price to set us free from the curse** of the law. He absorbed it completely as he became a curse in our place. For it is written: **"Everyone who is hung upon a tree is doubly cursed."**"* (Galatians 3:13, TPT)
 - d) This agape love is great because He loved us when we did not deserve it.
 - e) But not only that...It is great because **God willingly gave** His one and only Son to die for us. Can you begin to see the price of your salvation?
 - f) Agape is that love that pursues another's good with its own self sacrifice.
 - (1) Our condition: we are sinners, we are lost in eternal darkness, we are enemies of God, we are mockers, God haters, we are vile, we are evil, we are perverted, etc. Ie. The Roman soldiers who mocked Him; Pilate who would not save him; the people who mocked and spit upon Him, you and I who have abused Him.
 - (2) Jesus pursued the highest good for us all! God laid down the highest price for us: the pure sinless spotless Lamb of God, His Son!
3. God was really really good to us as the persons who would receive His love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16, ESV) The magnitude of God's goodness is seen in what He gives us...eternal life! Life for ever with Him; without pain, without sorrow.
- a) It cost Him, we don't deserve it and yet in the magnitude of His goodness we receive from God is 'eternal life!' Forever life.
 - b) And John 17:3 says that eternal life is to know God and to know His Son Jesus. *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* (John 17:3, ESV)
 - c) Love gives the greatest gift...Himself and an eternity with Him.
 - d) Agape is that love that pursues another's good. And what we get is so incredible.

4. No one can really know the greatness or depth of God's desire for us, for our good, as the one who receives all He offers in His love.
 - a) God did not have second thoughts about what He would do for us. He joyfully and willingly laid down His life all for us to have the greater good!
 - b) The picture is that of Luke 15, the parable of the prodigal son. The Father gave him: hugs, kisses, ring, robe, shoes, fatted calf and huge party.
 - c) **Agape is that love that pursues another's good.**

Conclusion:

- God is Love!
- "So the most beautiful love in the world is this divine love that pays the highest price, the life of the Son of God, for completely undeserving enemies, to give us the longest and greatest happiness in his presence. And he loves doing it." John Piper.