

## Three Degrees of Love for 2018

Proposition: **Before we can love the way Christ commands, we must first grasp how greatly we are loved.**

### Three degrees of love

1. Personal - God's love for us
2. Communal - Our love for one another
3. Missional - God's love through us to others

### God's personal love is:

#### 1. Predestined -

- a. **Ephesians 1:4-5 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup> *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love* <sup>5</sup> *he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*
- b. we usually think of this in terms of our position relative to God's grace, of the choice God makes to save from sin
- c. Also indicates God's position relative to His own glory
  - i. By predestining anyone to salvation God commits Himself in advance to love
    - (1) God chooses love before justice
    - (2) God loves before insult
  - ii. Predestination is an expression of God's unconditional love for those He saves

#### 2. Precious

- a. The blood of Christ - **1 Peter 1:18-19 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,* <sup>19</sup> *but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*
  - i. Precious
    - (1) = "dear," "valued," "beloved"
    - (2) **Matthew 3:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> *and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*
  - ii. The blood of Jesus is precious not only because of what His blood accomplishes for us, but more so because of the relationship of love the Father has with His Son
- b. That the precious blood of Jesus is spilled on the cross on our behalf
  - i. So that we might have forgiveness of sin
  - ii. And so that might enter into and enjoy a new relationship of love with the Father
  - iii. Allows us to experience the love that makes Christ precious to God

#### 3. Personal

- a. **1 John 4:8 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*
  - i. Cynics - Since God is love, he has no choice but to love us?
  - ii. Misses the point - Rather: since God is love God brings all that He is to every relationship in which He loves
- b. God is personally, infinitely, graciously, majestically, powerfully, gloriously, enthusiastically, wisely involved in every relationship of love
  - i. Means God's love is not assigned but shared
  - ii. Means God's love is not academic but actual
  - iii. Means God's love is not delegated but hand delivered

## God's personal love is personified in Jesus Christ

### 1. What does not necessarily indicate God's love for us

- a. Circumstances
  - i. Job and his friends
    - (1) If things are going well, one is sinless and God loves Him
    - (2) If we gather lots of stuff, we have God's blessing, but if we suffer loss, we need God's blessing
  - ii. Makes the relationship with God not a love relationship but a business relationship
- b. Conventional wisdom -
  - i. good things indicate God's love, bad things indicate His displeasure
  - ii. But, God can and does bring difficult things into our lives as an act of love that deepens our reliance on Him and experience of His grace and power and sovereignty and joy
  - iii. Truth about Troubles
    - (1) **Hebrews 12:7 (ESV) <sup>7</sup> *It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?***
    - (2) **Hebrews 12:10 (ESV) <sup>10</sup> *For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.***
  - iv. Neither circumstances nor conventional wisdom of the world necessarily prove the greatness of God's love for us.

### 2. Jesus is the living proof of the greatness of God's love

- a. Paul
  - i. **Romans 5:8 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***
  - ii. **Romans 8:32 (ESV) <sup>32</sup> *He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?***
    - (1) God did not spare His own Son
      - (a) The Son rightly asked for the cup to pass (because it is right for man to love God and desire above all no separation from God)
      - (b) The Father rightly declined
        - (i) Abraham was allowed to spare his son
        - (ii) The substitute was a ram not a lamb
        - (iii) Because God had already determined He would not spare His own Son
    - (2) God did not spare His Son, not because Father did not love the Son, but because the Father and the Son loves us.
  - iii. **Jesus is the living proof of the greatness of God's love for you!**
- b. Put your trust in Christ today
  - i. Know the He is God's exclamation point of love
  - ii. Look at His life as you follow Him and learn to experience the love God has for you.