

Growing Strong By Beholding The Love Of God

***'Behold what manner of love the
Father has bestowed on us, that we
should be called children of God!'***

(1 John 3:1)

The Greek word for 'behold' is eido, meaning

to see, perceive, inspect, examine, be aware of

to consider, know, look at,

to turn the eyes, mind and attention to

- ✓ **The Bible encourages us to behold the love of God**
- ✓ **We need to be encouraged to do this as, usually, God is seen as full of anger towards us because of sin. *'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...'* (Rom.1:18)**
- ✓ **In the Scriptures we read of sinners fleeing from God and being warned to flee from the wrath to come**
- ✓ **We were once the children of wrath**

- ✓ **But that has all changed because of the gospel.** *'But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit'* **(Titus 3:4-5)**
- ✓ **God does not love us because Jesus died for us; Jesus died for us because God loved us**
- ✓ **Every reason for God to be angry with us has now been removed**
- ✓ **God is now revealed as *love* and that is how the apostles urged us to see Him**

The benefits of beholding the love of God

1) It is vital to our spiritual health and well-being

- ✓ Ignorance of God's love will hold us back from the full enjoyment of a relationship with God
- ✓ Failing to believe His unconditional love because of our sin is a greater sin than our sin
- ✓ Satan rejoices when he can get us to doubt God's love. His main tool in this is wrong teaching
- ✓ The goal of preaching and teaching is to present **this truth. John did:** *'In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins'* (1 Jn.4:9-10)

Jesus was going back to the Father. He assured the disciples whatever they asked the Father in His name He would hear them

But He anticipated they would have doubts whether the Father loved them

Jesus said, 'don't worry about that. I do not even have to pray that the Father would love you. He is the One who sent me to you.'

'In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God'

(Jn.16:26-27)

- ✓ **What does it mean that God loves us?**
- ✓ **It means that He only wants to do us good**
- ✓ **The Bible says that God *rests* in His love, lit. is silent because of His love. He will never complain, never say He is not satisfied in the object of His love**
- ✓ **He delights to make His home, His abode, there. He rejoices as one who is fully satisfied with His own**

- ✓ **Also, the Father sends the Spirit into our hearts so that we can experience His love, *'...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us'* (Rom.5:5)**
- ✓ **Everything God pours upon us is first poured on His Son (the oil on Aaron's head)**
- ✓ **The fulness was poured upon Christ, *'For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell'* (Col.1:19). *'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him'* (Col.2:9-10). *'And of His fullness we have all received'* (John 1:16)**

- ✓ **The fulness contains the Father's perfect, eternal and unconditional love. 'I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them' (Jn.17:26)**
- ✓ **'...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God' (Eph.3:16-19)**

2) It will empower us to love the unlovely

- ✓ **The melody of Christ**
- ✓ **Love is not found in the moral codes of nations**
- ✓ **In the OT we encounter love to a degree. *'Love your neighbour as yourself'* (Lev.19:18)**
- ✓ **But Jesus went further. He taught unconditional love; even to our enemies. *'But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful'* (Luke 6:35-36)**
- ✓ **Jesus always destroyed established beliefs about God. God is kind to the unthankful and evil**

Jesus not only taught this, He demonstrated it

'But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life'

(Rom.5:8-10)

And this love empowers us to love the unlovely

***The apostles continued to dance to this melody,
'By this we know love, because He laid down His
life for us. And we also ought to lay down our
lives for the brethren' (1 John 3:16)**

***God's love to us becomes our love to others,
even the most unlovely. Because every human
being was created in the image of God**

***In church history, some have danced to that
melody, others not**

***Tertullian, in the face of persecution, said, 'Our
religion commands us to love our enemies, and to
pray for those who persecute us... everyone loves
those who love them; it is peculiar to Christians
alone to love those who hate them...'**

3) It will enable us to forgive others

***It's easy to believe in grace for ourselves, but karma for others. We are concerned that if God gives grace to others they will never learn**

***Our forgiveness sometimes has limits, conditions, etc. It says 'I'll forgive you if you are really sorry...or if you don't do it again'. God says 'I forgive you immediately, always, unconditionally. Therefore, do the same...'**

***This does not negate the need for boundaries, but unforgiveness is not an option**

***The parable of the unforgiving servant**

The only thing that will help us forgive what others do to us is to know what God has done *for us

***Object lesson - the woman caught in adultery**

***Jesus doesn't just embrace the falsely accused, but also the guilty**

***The problem was not that she was not guilty, but that her accusers thought they were NOT guilty**

***There are only two other places where Jesus wrote with His finger**

***Jesus did not say 'Go and sin no more and then I won't condemn you'. That's religion. The gospel is: 'I do not condemn you; go and sin no more'**

***Sin and guilt do not transform the heart. Only grace and love do**