

## He is!

*An Expository Exploration of the Attributes of God*

**Sermon 10:** He is Affectionate (Loving)

1 John 4:7-21

March 8, 2020

**Scripture Reading:** 1 John 4:7-21

**Opening Illustration:** Preaching is challenging in many ways. One way preaching is really challenging is when I hope to introduce you to things you have never considered. These things seem strange to you and I must do what I can to help you see their beauty. Another way, though, that preaching is challenging is when we come to things that you have heard a thousand times. The challenge here is to help you see the wonder and beauty of things that seem common and obvious. With this in mind, I would ask you to pray with me.

Imagine waking up one morning without your sense of smell. ILL: The smell of leather in a leather store or the smell of coffee in your clothes after you have been to Starbucks. You have smelled it for so long, that you just don't smell it anymore. Isn't that sad?

Jesus loves me, this I know? We have heard it so many times that it may not rock us the way it should. After all, OF COURSE Jesus loves me. Love is the one attribute of God that seems almost universally allowed...even in our ever-increasingly hostile and secular culture. Most people seem to think, "IF there is a God, obviously He loves me." We need to rekindle, in our lives and in our witness to the world, that the fact that God loves them is a most amazing and intriguing thing.

Some verses to consider:

**Malachi 1:2** "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob..."

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

### I. Introduction/Review

#### A. We want to be careful to avoid one of these two common extremes.

1. Sometimes we limit the love of God in order to preserve His other attributes.
  - a) It is easy to overreact to the overemphasis on God's love that we often find in our churches.
  - b) If we are not careful, though, we may begin to paint God only in wrathful or condemning colors. That would be unfortunate, because God is love.
2. Sometimes we limit the other attributes of God in order to preserve His love.
  - a) God's love does not negate His justice.
  - b) God's love does not remove His wisdom.
  - c) God's love does not nullify His wrath.

#### B. God is Affectionate (loving)

1. What does this mean?
  - a) Be aware that I am using anthropomorphic [actually, anthropopathic] language here.
    - (1) Example: Does God have a "heart"?
  - b) However, it means that when God looks at us, His heart is stirred with positive affection.

**ILL:** Have you ever just looked at your spouse or your kids [or whatever you love] and have been simply but deeply moved with affection? That is how God feels about us. There is a stirring in His heart when He considers us. He is genuinely and deeply affected in His love toward us.

c) **Transition into the next point**

### II. The Nature of God's Love

#### A. It is a Disposition of Delight.

1. Love is more than simply doing good things.
2. Love, of necessity, involves affection.

a) 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

**B. It is extended in varying degrees.**

1. God doesn't love everyone the same.

a) See Malachi 1:2-3

b) **John 5:20** For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

**ILL:** Don't you love your kids (or grandkids) more than you love other people's kids? We don't (we can't...we shouldn't) love absolutely everyone the same.

2. God does love everybody

a) **John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

**C. It is surprisingly difficult.**

1. What? How is God's love difficult?

a) God's love doesn't always make sense in times of tragedy. We can't help but to wonder sometimes how God can be loving while allowing some of the things that He does.

b) God's love doesn't always seem righteous to us. How could He love me, when my heart is so desperately wicked? How can God delight in such a sinner as I am?

2. How can we resolve some of these difficulties?

a) By reminding ourselves that God is mysterious.

(1) **Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

**III. The Implications of God's Love (1 John 4:7-21)**

**A. Love is our highest command.**

1. Notice that love is commanded in our text.

a) See v. 7 and v. 21

b) It is commanded that our love be a response to His love.

2. Notice that love obeys the 2 greatest commands.

a) See mark 12:28-31

3. Notice that this command stems from the nature of God Himself.

a) We are commanded to love because He is love.

b) We are commanded to love because He loves us.

**B. Love is God's greatest provision.**

1. Notice that love comes from God.

a) **Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

2. Notice that love is God's essential description.

a) See v. 8 and v. 16

3. Recognize that it was God's love that motivated Him to send His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

a) See vv. 9-10

b) **Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

c) **Ephesians 2:4-6** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

**C. Love is our deepest assurance.**

a) In love, we reassure our hearts that we are genuinely converted.

(1) **1 John 3:18-19** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.<sup>19</sup> We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him.

(2) Not only does our love reassure our hearts that we are genuinely saved. It also serves as a clear testimony to the world that there is something different about us.

(a) **John 13:35** "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

b) In light of God's love, we can overcome any doubt or fear.

(1) Love itself casts out fear. What does this mean?

**Point:** Again, here we see the effects of becoming desensitized to God's love for us. There are countless unbelievers out there who do not fear God because they don't think they have any real need to fear God. When we are reconciled to God, our greatest fear is resolved...the fear of facing His wrath.

(2) **Matthew 10:28** Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

(3) **Psalms 56:10-11** In God, *whose* word I praise, In the LORD, *whose* word I praise,<sup>11</sup> In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

(4) **Romans 8:31-32** What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?<sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

(5)

#### IV. Conclusions—What does this call us to?

##### A. Let the love of God inspire you to love others.

1. Indeed, let it compel you. Let the love of God stir you to love Him and to love others.
2. Don't let the fact that you have heard about God's love for as long as you can remember dull you to its wonder and magnificence!
3. Don't just sit back and let your heart think: "I don't love so-and-so and I never will." Take your lack of love to the source of love for a provision of love. He will hear you and He will provide.

##### B. Let the love of God humble you in light of your unworthiness.

1. He loves you. He loves you!

##### C. Let the love of God break the chains of your resistance. [Invitation]

1. Because of His great love, He sent His Son for you.
2. Because of His great love, He offers redemption to you.
3. Because of His great love, your rebellion is not just hurting you. It is also a slight against the one who loves you the most. It is a sin against the love of God. Repent! Turn! Be broken! Be healed, restored and saved.