

Ugly, Thankless Love

Presentation Handout

Confusion on God's Love

- Some people really can't experience or understand God's love because they view Him as distant, angry-controlling, or selfish.
- Some struggle because they compare God's love to our fickle or flimsy, Hollywood love.

God's Love Defined

- **Divine & Unmotivated** {1 John 4:8, 10a, 16, 19}
 - Essence of God's character. All He does—actions, thoughts, even judgment—is based on love—"God is love."
 - Not human generated—no human being can love like this without God's help!
 - It's "unmotivated" (unconditional)—it loves without being loved first and/or despite the recipient it loves.

Take-Away: *Since God's love is divine—it's the essence of God's character."*

It will not make human-sense! And because it's "unmotivated" (unconditional)—it loves without being loved first or in return.

- **Heart Obedient** {1 John 2:15; 3:18; 5:3-4}
 - Continual message of our culture today is: love = condoning, excusing, and/or embracing whatever someone personally wants to do, implying: if someone else doesn't agree, except, or condone it; then that individual is unloving.
 - God's love does accept and forgive; however, it doesn't condone or excuse sin. Instead, divine love sets boundaries because it cares about others that they would not destroy or hurt others or themselves.
 - God's love empowers and motivates to heart obedience {Deuteronomy 30:6, 8; John 14:15, 21, 23-24}. Someone whose heart has been captured by God's love wants to obey out of love for God! Then obedience becomes a joy and delight!"

Take-Away: *God loves and forgives though not condoning or excusing sin because His love empowers obedience—creating a heart desire to do His will out of love for Him.*

- **Suffering** {1 John 3:16a; 4:9-10}
 - "Talk is cheap" because "actions speak louder than words!" God's love is active in its response to others—God actively loves the unlovable.
 - God's suffering love actively draws the hearts of sinful human beings to Himself in salvation because it reveals His selfless love that no human love can compare to.
 - God doesn't "score" a great bargain in loving us, like someone finding a treasure at a garage sale or an antique mall. No He only gets our sin-polluted heart in return for His love and salvation to us.

Take-Away: *God does not have an ulterior motive for loving us—"scoring" a great "find" in the scrapheap of humanity.*

God's Ugly, Thankless, Suffering Love

- The Godhead/Trinity ultimately reveals Their ugly, thankless, suffering love on the Cross!
 - Jesus' words: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? {*Matthew 27:46* -> *Psalm 22:1*} reveal the depth of the Godhead's suffering love for humanity.
 - The Godhead's perfect eternal unity was rent or "torn asunder" as they suffered the cost for humanity's, our sin—eternal death and separation!
 - This "rending," "tearing asunder" began back in the beginning {*Revelation 13:8*} before Adam & Eve ever abandoned the God by unbelief in the Garden of Eden through the prompting of Satan {*Genesis 3*}.

God's Eternal, Identifying Trait

- The Godhead ultimately wins the hearts of the saved by eternally suffering through Their ugly, thankless love, not power & might!!
- The Godhead's eternal identifying trait is: ugly, thankless love for sinful humanity who do not deserve it {*Revelation 5:6, 9*}!!
- Suffering, ugly, thankless love is the Godhead's "claim to fame!" It is who They are!!! It is what eternally marks them as the only true God!!
 - 6 "...Behold..., a Lamb as though it had been slain....
 - 9 "...They sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood....'" {*Revelation 5:6, 9*}

Take-Away: A suffering, ugly, thankless love is the Godhead's "claim to fame!" It's who They are!!! It's what eternally marks them as the only true God!!

Can Humans Actually Experience or Live Out God's Love?!

- God calls us to love others like He does {*1 John 3:11, 23; 4:11, 21; 5:1*}
 - Those who love with God's love...
 - abide in God's light {*1 John 2:10*}
 - will lay down their lives for others {*1 John 3:16b*}
 - will help those in need as appropriate {*1 John 3:17-18*}
 - are born of God and know God {*1 John 4:7*}
 - have God abiding in them with His love perfected in them {*1 John 4:12*}
 - Those who do not love with God's love
 - abide in death {*1 John 3:14b*}
 - are murders {*1 John 3:15a*}
 - do not know God {*1 John 4:8*}
 - are liars {*1 John 4:20*}
- Biblical examples of human beings loving others with God's love
 - Moses asked God to blot out his name from God's Book of Life if God could not forgive the rebellious children of Israel {*Exodus 32:30-(32)*}.
 - Paul was willing to be "accursed"—forever lost—so his fellow Jews could be saved {*Romans 9:1-(3)*}.

REFLECTION: How does it make you feel to know God loves you, despite who you are?
Has His love captured your heart/life?