

Title: The Advent of Love in Christ - God Is Love, But What Am I?

Theme: God showed His love for us by sending His Son to sacrificially lay down His life for us, and we are to follow His example by laying down our lives for others.

Text: John 15:13; 1 John 4:7-12

I. Introduction

Katniss Everdeen, protagonist of “The Hunger Games”

A. Dystopian society found entertainment in The Hunger Games

1. Annual televised event
2. 24 children aged 12-18 in a fight to the death
3. The reaping: a ceremony of choosing 2 children from each of 12 districts

B. Katniss volunteered in place of her sister

1. Prim was 12 years old, Katniss 16 years old
2. Katniss thought of her sister instead of her self
3. Katniss volunteered although it meant her almost certain death

C. Jesus said the greatest love is to lay down one’s life for others (Jn. 15:13)

II. God Is Love - I Am the Recipient (John 15:13; 1John 4:9)

God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit show love through the sacrificial death of Jesus

A. God sent His Son

1. God sent Him as an act of love (1 John 4:9)
2. God sent Him for the church (1 John 4:9)
3. God sent Him for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-8)

B. Jesus laid down His life

1. Jesus laid down His life willingly (Matthew 20:28)
2. Jesus laid down His life for many (Matthew 20:28)
3. Jesus laid down His in humility (Philippians 2:5-8)
4. The Holy Spirit was involved (Hebrews 9:14)
 - a. Jesus offered His own blood
 - b. Jesus offered His blood through the eternal Holy Spirit

III. God Is Love - I Am a Channel (John 15:13; 1John 4:11-12)

Jesus' sacrificial love glorified the Father and gave people access to God. Our sacrificial love is actually Him loving others through us so that Jesus is glorified and unbelievers have access to God.

A. Love like Jesus (1 John 4:11-12)

1. God's love allowed us to see Him
2. It is God's love through us that allows others to see Jesus
3. God sent Him for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-8)

B. We are to love His church (1 John 4:7, 11)

1. God demonstrated His love for the church
2. The ability to love the church comes from God
3. The Holy Spirit was involved (Hebrews 9:14)

C. We are to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44; Romans 5:7-8)

1. Jesus taught that Christians should love their enemies (Matthew 5:43-44)
2. Jesus demonstrated this by dying for us while we were sinners (Romans 5:7-8)
3. God sent Him for the ungodly (Romans 5:6-8)

IV. God Is Love - I Am His Follower (John 15:13; 1John 4:10)

Followers of Jesus should have His heart and focus and lay down our lives for the benefit of others

A. We should understand Jesus' heart (1 John 4:10)

1. Jesus' heart is to love others
2. Jesus' love propelled Him to be the propitiation for our sins

Propitiation: “a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath toward us into favor.”
Grudem

a. His death appeased God’s wrath

b. His death was for the benefit of others at His own expense

3. Our heart should be propitiation

B. We are to die to self (Luke 9:23-24)

1. Dying to self is a sacrifice

2. Dying to self involves denying ourselves

3. Dying to self involves taking up our cross daily

4. Dying to self involves following Jesus

C. We are to be others-focused (Philippians 2:3-4)

1. We are to be humble

a. Do not be selfish

b. Do not be conceited

c. Count others more significant than ourself

2. We are to focus on others’ interests

3. Example of Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Pete Fleming, Ed McCully and Roger Youderian

- a. Missionaries to Auca tribe in Ecuador
- b. Aucas had killed any outsiders that had come into their territory
- c. Elliot, Saint, Fleming, McCully and Youderian laid down their lives in order to preach the gospel to the Aucas
- d. All five were martyred
- e. Their love led to many Aucas receiving Jesus afterwards

V. Applying the Word

A. Focus on spiritual health

- 1. Diet = feed on God's Word
 - a. Read
 - b. Study
 - c. Memorize
 - d. Meditate
- 2. Exercise
 - a. Cardio = Prayer (including prayer and fasting)
 - b. Muscular = Obey the Holy Spirit
- 3. Rest = Sabbath

B. Use a "love" checklist based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

1. Today am I

a. Patient

b. Kind

c. Rejoicing with the truth

d. Bearing with people

e. Believing in people

f. Hoping with people

g. Enduring with people

2. Today am I not

a. Envious

b. Boastful

c. Arrogant

d. Rude

e. Insisting on my way

f. Irritable or resentful

g. Rejoicing in wrongs