

Sermon Outline 2023-03-12

Title: The Love of God

Theme: Our triune God serves because love is the foundational feature of His identity, and blessing flows when we receive His love and share it with others.

Text: John 13: 1-17

I. God so loved the world, but what about you, do you believe you are so loved?

**16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)**

- A. Maybe you feel God couldn't love you.
- B. Maybe you don't think you need God's love.
- C. Maybe you know God loves you, but you don't know what that should look like.
- D. Before we're done today, I hope you know God doesn't just love the world, He loves you no matter your darkness, rebellion, or disobedience. And I hope you know a little better what that love looks like.

II. Our Text - John 13: 1-17

1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."

11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. 12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for

that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

### III. Broad categories of love

- A. *The Four Loves*, C.S. Lewis - Great book, you should read it, but it's not what we're talking about today.
- B. Two categories of love we are talking about.
  - 1. There are things we love because they are valuable.
  - 2. There are things made valuable because we love them (Teddy Bears and Dogs).

### IV. Understanding God and the Christian Life starts with understanding that God is Love (1 John 4:16)

- A. We sometimes think of God's love as one of many characteristics of His nature.
- B. The danger in that is that we minimize how important love is to God's character and nature ...
  - 1. Maybe we end up following Christ because we feel we owe Him. Then the Christian life becomes just slogging through, doing my best to keep the rules.
  - 2. Or we can become transactional. If I follow Jesus and do my best, then He'll reward my efforts with what I need in life.
  - 3. But neither of those approaches is based on love and so when we get to heaven, does it really matter whether Jesus is there or not?

### V. Understanding trinity is how we understand the love of God

- A. What was God doing before anything in creation existed? Father was loving Son in the Spirit and Son was loving Father in the Spirit. Three united as One.
- B. Perfect unity. Unqualified, undiminished, absolute love.
- C. What does absolute love look like? What does God look like? It's the same question and the answer is Jesus.
- D. In John 12:45 it says when you look at me, you're seeing the Father. And in John 14:9 Jesus says, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."

**45 The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me.....when you look at me you're seeing the father. (John 12:45)**

**9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:9)**

- E. Jesus is the God you get to know who shows you exactly what the Father looks like.
- F. God creates out of an overflowing love so it's no wonder creation is infused with love.
- G. Adam, and we, have disfigured creation with sin, and love has become an echo of what it once was; twisted and turned upside down in many ways. But our sin hasn't changed the nature of God.
- H. The doctrine of trinity isn't un-understandable. It's not a mystery. It's a revelation.

VI. Christ serves because He is God and God is love

- A. It's the night before a God-forsaken execution, and Jesus stoops down to wash the feet of His disciples.

**3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13: 3-5)**

- B. Knowing He had come from the Father, knowing He was everlasting God, Prince of Heaven, Heir of the cosmos, THEREFORE, He stoops, He serves. He cleanses. He does the job of a slave.
- C. Jesus doesn't take a 33 year break from his divinity, He doesn't stoop and serve despite His God-ness, He serves because of His God-ness.
- D. Jesus doesn't go to the cross in spite of being God, He expresses His God-ness most fully when we see Him pouring out his love and His life for others.
- E. What would you do if you had all power and authority? Jesus serves the world, the unworthy.

VII. What kind of God do most atheists *NOT* believe in?

- A. The grandfather in the sky, distributing gifts or tossing thunderbolts.

- B. That's not a God most of us believe in either.
- C. Jesus says, we'll see His glory when He's lifted up. What's that glory look like? It looks like a bleeding sacrifice on a cross.

**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the son of Man must be lifted up. (John 3:14)**

**So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. (John 8:28)**

**And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. (John 12:32)**

- D. What about Jesus? The God who loves you so much He gives His life for your life. Is that a God you can believe in?

VIII. What would you have said when Jesus came to wash your feet?

**6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." (John 13:6-8)**

- A. Simon Peter says, "No, You shall never wash my feet." That's probably what I would have said.
- B. Would you be nervous, knowing your dirty, being afraid Jesus would see you for who you are?
- C. Or would you have been worried about Jesus humiliating Himself by stooping to wash your feet?
- D. Why does He do it?

**8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." (John 13:8)**

IX. John 13: 1-17 is a parable of what Jesus has come to do.

- A. The Master of the table, gets up from His place, He kneels, He cleanses, and then He rises to sit at the head of the table.
- B. The Son leaves His place with the Father, He descends, He serves, He suffers. He washes us because we are dirtier than we can admit even to ourselves. And then He rises to sit at the right hand of the Father.
- C. The two kinds of people who don't think they need Jesus.

1. Those who don't realize they're dirty at all.
  2. Those who think they're too dirty.
- C. But even as Christians we can forget how spiritually unclean we are.
- D. But Jesus purifies us from all sin.

**7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)**

X. Application

- A. How do you respond to Jesus wanting to get hold of you?
- B. If you reject Jesus, you are choosing Hell. If Jesus is the source of light, and life and love; then to be disconnected from Him is to be lost in darkness, and death, and fear.
- C. How would you finish verse 14? Would you be inclined to think Jesus would say, I've done for you, now you do for me?

**12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet you also should wash one another's feet. (John 13: 12-14)**

- D. Jesus says, now I've washed your feet, you should go wash one another's feet.
- E. Alice Thomas Ellis, the English writer in the last century.  
"The world's tragedy is that men love women, women love children, and children love hamsters, it's quite hopeless." (*Alice Thomas Ellis*)
- F. Alice Thomas Ellis was only partly right. Love flows from God to us to others, but far from being hopeless, it's the most hopeful thing we can imagine.
- G. No matter how unworthy you feel, the fact of God's love means in His eyes we are each the most valuable, worthy, best thing in the world because He sees us as He sees Jesus.

- H. The way to realize the blessed life is to receive God's love, then pass it on.

**17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (John 13:17)**

- I. And what's the cursed life look like? Nurse hardness, built bitterness, hold grudges, shrink your world into an ever smaller sphere of misery.

- J. If you've accepted Jesus, then when the Father looks at you He sees you clothed in the goodness, and purity, and love of the Son. It means the Father and the Son love you as much as they love one another.
- K. And He loves you as He loves Christ even though He sees you down to the very core of your soul.

## Communion

## Benediction

(May) Christ dwell in your hearts through faith - that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (*Ephesians 3:17-19*)