



Exploring God's Love Through the Bible: The Creation

Summer Preaching Series

June 5, 2016

Exhortation Concerning God's Love

- A couple of weeks ago, I said:

"May this summer be transformational for us. May our love-based obedience and joy in God, and our Christ-based, Gospel-centered love for one another EXPLODE. May we begin to bear Gospel-fruit to overflowing. May your families be blessed and strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And may the Pattern House God has called emerge; humble, obedient, loving, merciful, and joyful, regardless of what the world does."

- With all of the battles we have fought, and with many more to fight as the world worsens, I really feel like our church needs to hear, "God loves you" over and over again for awhile.
- Precious friends, we have SO MUCH good work to do (Eph 2:10). And although we have framed this work in the past as "marching on black gates" (and this IS true), let us not forget that this work is also beautiful. Consider...

- ✓ *The Beauty of Honoring the Lord's Day*
- ✓ *The Beauty of Discipling our Children*
- ✓ *The Beauty of being Accountable to a small group of saved sinners*
- ✓ *The Beauty of using resources for His Glory*
- ✓ *The Beauty of Reaching out to others with the Whole Gospel*
- ✓ *The Beauty of Serving one another and the Community*
- ✓ *The Beauty of becoming a true Family, enjoying times of fellowship and hospitality and love*
- ✓ *The Beauty of seeing God's Word as Sufficient for Life and Ministry Practice*
- ✓ *The Beauty of Walking through Scripture to behold the purity and Love of the Lord*
- ✓ *The Beauty of biblical Marriage and Singleness and Manhood and Womanhood*
- ✓ *The Beauty of forgiveness and mercy and walking with each other through difficulties*
- ✓ *The Beauty of Word-driven prayer and Scripture-regulated Worship and Preaching*

- Because of the warfare nature of reestablishing these beautiful elements, I really feel we need a season of refreshing...a time of reflection and strengthening and hospitality and grace. Hence, this series on the love of God.
- **I want you to see His great love through all of Scripture!**

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised

us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:4-7)

- My prayer is that while you are listening, God will continue to change and shift your heart towards holiness and the Gospel; helping us understand more and more that His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

Text: Genesis 1:1, 1:26-28, 2, 3:15, 3:20-24

Examining the Context

1. This is the true narrative of creation; true **history** (1:1). This is how the universe was formed and man was made.
 - The Text tells us that God made everything. “Heavens and earth” literally means the universe itself; not just our planet or our solar system.
 - The word for “God” is *Elohim*. It is a plural word, suggesting both the triune nature of God and His majesty.
2. He created everything out of **nothing!**
 - Or “ex nihilo” from the Latin “out of nothing.”
 - Everything simply “came to be” by the Word of His Power! God “calls into existence the things that do not exist!” (Ro 4:17)
3. He’s in control of everything!
 - This speaks to His sovereignty and omnipotence over His creation. Please know that God’s creation is not out of His control.
 - Hebrews 13:1 tells us that Christ “upholds the universe by the word of His power...”
4. By way of reminder, our position is that **God created everything out of nothing in six literal days.** The consistent testimony of Scripture read with basic hermeneutics says six literal days:
 - *Exo 20:8-11 ESV* "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. (11) For in **six days** the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
 - Every single reference from Christ about Genesis was taught as if it were literal not allegorical, including Adam and Even being made “from the beginning of creation” not billions of years later (Mark 10:6), and His references to their marriage Matt 19:3-6, Abel (Luke 11:50-51), Noah (Matt 24:38-39), Lot/Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-32, Matt 10:15).



5. Amazingly, man was made in God's image! (Gen 1:26-28, 2)

- You are made in the image of God. YOU ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD! We are all made in the image of our Independent, Immutable, Eternal, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Perfectly Holy, Loving, and yes, Wrathful God!
- Different from the rest of God's creation, only man has been given this distinction!
- Being made in His image means we were made to reflect parts of His character. For example (this is not an exhaustive list):
 1. Man is self-aware; he can think. "He knows our thoughts from afar" Scripture says (Ps 139:2).
 2. Man is rational and creative. Anytime you see a car, a work of art, a book, a medical procedure, etc., you are seeing a reflection of God's character.
 3. Man can choose. Eve made a choice. Adam made a choice. So do we. This in no way infringes upon God's sovereignty, and is one of the great mysteries of Scripture.
 4. Man can discern right from wrong; he has a conscience. This built-in understanding of morality was placed there by God Himself. Scripture tells us we are without excuse on judgment day because of this "God's-Image" characteristic. (Rom 1:18-32)
 5. Man can emote. We have the capacity to grieve, mourn, be compassionate, be angry, and love.
 6. Man can commune with God. We can worship Him! We can love Him! We can feel Him! We can, incredibly, know Him!

2 Pe 1:2-3 ESV "May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (3) His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."

Indeed, knowing God should be our greatest delight!

Php 3:8-10 ESV Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-- (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...

7. As one author wrote, "The image of God refers to the immaterial part of man. It sets man apart from the animal world, fits him for the dominion God intended him to have over the earth (*Genesis 1:28*), and enables him to commune with his Maker. It is a likeness mentally, morally, and socially.

Looking at God's Love in the Text

1. God created the heavens and the earth, at least in part, to be able to love **us**!
2. God literally created an entire world both for His own glory and over which man was to have dominion!
3. God created man with communicable attributes that He Himself might commune with us!
4. And even after man's rebellion and sin, God provides food and clothing, life and a family.
5. I love the way carm.org put it:

Quite simply, it seems that God desired to create us in order that He might be able to love us. I think this is evident in the way creation was begun. God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. We see that after their sin, it was the Lord who came looking for them (Gen. 3). They are the ones who hid themselves. God sought them out. He desired to be with them and love them. Therefore, He set up the sacrificial system by covering Adam and Eve with animal skins. Of course, this was a representation of the sacrifice of Christ to come whereby Christians would be covered and redeemed. God's desire to fellowship and love us is not a weakness in Him but a manifestation of His character of love.

Preaching Christ in the Text

1. We see Christ clearly in two places in our Text: as **Creator** and **Redeemer**.
2. In Gen 1:1, Jesus created:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (Joh 1:1-3 ESV)

3. In Gen 3:15, the Redeemer is prophesied; He would bruise the head of the serpent!
 - *1 Jn 3:8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*
 - *Col 2:13-15 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

Exhortation to the Church

1. From the beginning, God loved you. He formed you (Ps 139:13), knew you before you were born (Jer 1:5), and purposed your life for good works. (Eph 2:10)
2. Even in THE moment of catastrophic rebellion, a Savior was revealed! Oh how great is the matchless mercy of God in Christ Jesus!

3. Therefore, respond to God in love! Be willing to love Him as He loves us. Be willing to be uncomfortable, endure suffering, sacrifice, and even give your life for His glory.
4. Live for Him! Love Him! Obey Him! Tell everyone about Him! Why? Because the Creator of the Universe LOVES YOU! Amazing love!!!!

Closing Thoughts:

May we as a congregation, sense the great love of God for us. May that love bring us to our knees in prayer and repentance, cause us to extend our hands in worship, and fit our feet with the Gospel in service.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.