

The Supremacy of God's Love

I. LOVE IS THE GREATEST

- A. Love is the greatest virtue; it is also our greatest response to God. It is the core message, chief attitude, and the plumb line in which we understand and labor in all related to God's kingdom. For example, it defines how we understand and approach theology, justice, judgment, salvation, holiness, God's glory, leading worship, praying for revival, ministering in power (evangelism, healing, and prophetic), economic prosperity, the Great Commission, and eternal rewards, etc.
- ¹³Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)*
- B. Loving God is His first priority; it is the greatest way we can live as we worship and glorify God.
- ³⁷Jesus said [prophesied] to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart...
³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. (Mt. 22:37-38)*
- C. **First Commandment:** Loving God is God's first priority for us. Jesus did not call it the first *option*—it is a commandment. Jesus makes it clear that cultivating wholehearted love for God is the highest and greatest lifestyle. Loving God is a glorious end in itself. However, it never ends with loving God but overflows with loving ourselves and others (believers and unbelievers). God's 4-fold love: love *from* God, love *to* God, love that overflows *to ourselves*, then *to others*.
- D. **Great Commandment:** Loving God has the greatest impact of anything that we do. It is the only way to enter our greatest destiny, because it has the greatest reward. Loving God always has a great impact on God's heart, on our heart, and on others. It is a dynamic means to an end.
- E. ***Shema Israel:*** *Shema* is the Hebrew word for "hear." God called Israel to hear His heart. The exhortation that Jesus repeated most was, "He that has an ear, let him hear" (Mt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mk. 4:9, 23; 7:16; Lk. 8:8; 14:35; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9).
- ⁴Hear [shema], O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:4-5)*
- F. The "Shema" reveals the *why* behind the *what* of creation and redemption. The Father's purpose for creation was to provide a family for Himself and an eternal companion for Jesus, who would be equally yoked in love. The glory of His triune love will be shared with His people.
- ⁴Because of His great love with which He loved us...⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places...⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:4-7)*
- G. Jesus prayed that His eternal companion would love Him in the way the Father loves Him.
- ²⁴I desire that they whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory...²⁶I declared Your name...that the love with which You loved Me may be in them... (Jn. 17:24-26)*

II. GOD LOVES US IN THE SAME WAY THAT GOD LOVES GOD

- A. The foundational truth that equips us to love God is to know and feel His affection for us. God loves us in the way that God loves God. The Father feels the same intensity of love for us that He feels for Jesus. The Father has delighted in Jesus from all eternity. Do you know the way you move God's heart? We are His greatest prize and the apple of His eye (Ps. 17:7-8). When we know the King loves us, we are unmoved even when others overlook or mistreat us.

⁹As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (Jn. 15:9)

²³That the world may know that You have...loved them as You have loved Me... (Jn. 17:23)

- B. The measure of the Father's love (affection) for His Son Jesus is the measure of His love for all His sons and daughters. This is the ultimate revelation of our worth. This truth gives us the right to stand before God with confidence as one of *His favorites*. Our confession is: "Jesus, You love me like the Father loves You." This makes our life great and meaningful.

- C. We are called to behold God's love, to seek to understand and experience it.

¹Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us. (1 Jn. 3:1)

- D. God is love. Love desires to express love and to cause it to abound in others. This is God's nature and will be the nature of His Bride. The revelation of love give us confidence before God.

¹⁶God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God... ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment...¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear...¹⁹We love Him because He first loved us. (1 Jn. 4:16-19)

¹⁷That you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:17-19)

- E. The church of Ephesus was a great revival center (Acts 19-20). Yet, they did not sustain the freshness in their love for Jesus. They became workers for God more than lovers of God. Lovers will always outwork the workers. When we work without intimacy we work as slaves.

⁴I have this against you, that you have left your first love... (Rev. 2:4)

- F. One of the core issues of conflict will be in the definition of love. Do we love on God's terms or on the terms of a humanistic culture that has no reference to the Word of God?

- G. God is love. Love is filled with desire. Love finds pleasure in others. It is the *desire* to serve and relate to the one you love, to make them feel loved, to celebrate their dignity and value. God is filled with desire. The God who has everything wants, because He is love. It is desire to promote His glory that is rooted in love. The God who has everything still wants, not because He is needy, but because He is the fountain of overflowing desire. Desire implies want, but not lack. God wants the ones He loves, though He lacks nothing.

- H. ***Bernard of Clairvaux:*** Our divine spouse is not only loving but is love itself. God is love (1 Jn. 4:16). Love does not need any cause beyond itself. I love so that I may love. Love is the greatest thing. If it acts by its own principle and flows back to its source, it is continually drawing the power to flow forth. It is love alone—of all the emotions, perceptions, and affections—which motivates the creature to give himself/herself to the Creator in gratitude.
- I. God deeply enjoys love and so do His people. Why? We were created in God's image to be loved and to love. To love God is both our debt and our gift to God. It is His just requirement and it is for our great benefit. The reward for love is the ability to express and receive love.
- J. Our eternal rewards are His response of love to us for loving Him and desiring to be like Him and to be with Him where He is. We do not pay a hungry man to eat or a thirsty man to drink. The one who loves God asks no other reward than the ability to love and enjoy God. Our reward is that we are loved by such a great God. It is impossible to out-give or out-love God, but it is His nature to magnify what is like Him (God is love). He magnifies Himself and love itself by rewarding us with more love. Eternal rewards are evidences of His joy over our love for Him.
- K. He has no gift for us better than Himself and, since God is love, He gives prizes of love as rewards. Blessed are those who hunger for love, they will be satisfied with greater encounters of God's love and a greater capacity to feel His love and to love Him back. Our love is prepared and rewarded by experiencing His love. He rules the universe out of His love, by loving us and by being loved by those He loves. Only by loving can we understand; then, when we understand love, we hunger to love more. We cannot go deep in understanding the first commandment without the heart of one pursuing love as the first and greatest thing in their life.
- L. We need revelation of the supremacy of the first commandment. It is the ultimate expression of glorifying God and it is the standard of evaluation at the judgment seat of Christ. We must not get our ministry focus from the latest trend, but from God's Word. We are not left guessing as to what God delights in. Our primary goal or primary assignment in God's will is to grow in love. God measures life differently from how man measures life, because He has all the money, wisdom, fame, influence, and time. Are we learning to love?
- M. The highest reward of true love is found in possessing the love itself. The anointing to love God is our greatest reward. Those who are wealthy in love do not look at price tags. Anybody can quit except a person in love. When we are tempted to quit, the obstacle in our path is that we love God. God is raising up a people who will not quit. Paul spoke of this love that will pay any price.
⁸I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ...for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ... (Phil. 3:8)
- N. David declared that he would love God. The intention of our heart is important to God.
¹I will love You, O LORD, my strength. (Ps. 18:1)
²³Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints...²⁴He shall strengthen your heart... (Ps. 31:23-24)

- O. We are empowered to love God with all our heart by seeing that He loves us with all His heart.

⁹I pray that your love may abound still more and more... (Phil. 1:9)

¹⁹He delivered me [David] because He delighted in me. (Ps. 18:19)

- P. The Church as His Bride will be prepared in this age, before the second coming.

⁷For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)

III. IMPORTANCE AND ATTAINABILITY OF LOVE IN THE END TIMES (DEUT. 30)

¹When all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse...and you call them to mind among all the nations...²and you return to the LORD...³The LORD...will have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations...⁶The LORD your God will circumcise your heart...to love the LORD with all your heart...¹¹For this commandment...is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.¹²It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us...?"¹³Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us...?"¹⁴But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. (Deut. 30:1-14)

- A. Moses prophesied that in the end times Israel will love God with all their heart (Deut. 30:1-10). The context is clearly in the end times: when all Israel obeys and loves God (v. 2), when the Lord gathers them from the nations (v. 3-5), when they love God with all their heart (v. 6), and when He destroys their enemies (v. 7) and prospers Israel (v. 9-10).
- B. The commandment to love God seems mysterious to some (v. 11). They look for the secret steps to loving God. To some it seems too far out of reach or impractical (v. 11). Moses assures them that it is not in heaven, that we should wait for a heavenly visitation. Neither should we wait for a prophet to return from a heavenly visitation to lay hands on us so we can have a tenderized heart to love God (v. 12). Nor is it beyond the sea in a distant nation (v. 13). We do not need to travel anywhere to receive it from others.
- C. The word is very near to us already (v. 14). In other words, the way to grow in love for God is within the reach of every believer who will engage in dialogue with God through His Word. The simple whisper from our heart to God in an ongoing conversation will eventually result in our heart being transformed in love. It is so simple that everyone can do it. We need to come into greater agreement with the Spirit and have more dialogue with Him through His Word.
- D. When we think there is no chance for tenderness, Jesus will make us tender so we can love the Lord. We simply need to consistently open our heart to Jesus the living Word by praying the written word back to Him. The Word must get into our mouths in personal devotion, intercession, and corporate worship. We can sit in the room for ten hours and enjoy the music and do Bible study but never ever encounter the living Word at the heart level.