

## God is Love (8)

KSBC June 21, 2009

### Staying Connected – God’s Love is Accessible

Romans 5:5

**Intro.** Our mission for the past 7 weeks has been to grow in our appreciation and understanding of God’s love. We began with the experiment of turning to one another and directly saying or acknowledging that ‘God really loves me!’ Our mission is described in the words of John in his first epistle chapter 4 verse 16 where he writes ‘so we know and rely on the love God has for us.’ As we approach the conclusion of this series of studies we turn our attention to the issue of being connected to God’s love.

How do you know in practical terms that God loves you? Is his love accessible like a friend’s hug, an affectionate touch or the audible ‘I love you’ from that special person? Is it fair biblically to expect to feel loved by God – to sense or be aware of his love with the similar sense of security, safety and assurance that a well-loved child must feel?

We have learned there are two ways we know God’s love and can experience it. We know God loves his children, those made right with him by faith in Jesus Christ, by looking at his word and at the cross.

First, God’s love is known by us as a fact. There is an intellectual recognition of his love. He has revealed himself to us in his word as a God of love and as a God who loves.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Exodus 34:6-7

For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. Psalm 57:10-11

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1John 4:7-8

Second, God’s love is known by us as an action. There has been an incredible demonstration of his love. He has shown us his love by sending his Son Jesus to die in our place and on our behalf.

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1John 4:9-10

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8

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

There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> way the Bible teaches that God’s love is accessible to the child of God connected to these first two ways. God’s love is known by us as a feeling. There is an inner certainty of his love. God assures us and reminds us of his love in our hearts by the ministry of his Holy Spirit.

That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes raising us but a little above a state of indifference.

Jonathan Edwards – Concerning Religious Affections

**Read/survey Romans 5:1-11 with emphasis on 5:5 in context**

Note that the text (v.5) says . . .

- God's love has been distributed/poured into our hearts in the past and is now present there.
- This love is conveyed to our senses/sensations by the Holy Spirit who lives in every believer.

**Three lessons from this text to help us understand and appreciate this God provided feeling of inner certainty that he in fact loves you.**

**1. You need help with hope.**

**5:2**

A result of being made right with God through faith is a joyful confidence in the prospect of sharing God's glory, being restored completely to the life with God that was lost because of sin. Your conversion to Christ is only the beginning in some ways of what God will ultimately accomplish in your life. Our joyful hope, confidence, assurance and certainty that God is actually in control, is capable and is loving often grows weak and disappears with the circumstances of life.

God's promise: You will not be let down or put to shame by hoping in God and his glory.

Our problem: Suffering distracts and wears us down. Does God love, care, or know?

God's help: The Holy Spirit.

Illustration – Isaiah 44:1-5

**2. God gives you help in your heart or inner person. 5:5**

The help that God sends to assure us in times of low hope is sent to our hearts. There are obvious dangers if our senses or feelings were absolutely in charge. Such is not the case for the child of God. Our hearts, our inner person have been changed as a result of justification through faith in Jesus.

Your heart has been made new. 2Cor. 5:17; Jeremiah 31:33-34

God has given you his Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. Titus 3:6

The presence and control of God's Spirit produces Godward affections and sensations.

Eph. 5:19-20; 1Peter 1:8-9; Romans 15:13; Eph.3:19 (surpasses knowledge)

Illustration – veil removed of 2Cor. 3:12-18

### 3. The Holy Spirit is the key agent to connect you to God's love. 5:5

Your confidence that God loves you and will deliver you all the way to glory is not based only on your intellectual recognition or his incredible demonstration of his love. There is an inner, subjective awareness of certainty produced by the Holy Spirit in our spirit that God loves you.

God's love is 'poured out' into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

'Pouring out' is an abundant, extravagant effusion. Titus 3:6; Acts 2:17,18,33

This pictures more than God's love being given, placed in, taught to or received.

The Spirit's power/help is required to help us experience the love of God. Eph. 3:16-19

Illustration – Romans 8:15ff – The Spirit of sonship/adoption makes us/our spirit aware that we are adopted as sons with all rights and privileges. The inner dimension of assurance in our spirit that does not come from rational consideration nor from external testimony alone. The Spirit causes our spirit to feel and intensely experience the truth of God's incredible, assuring and certain love in the midst of our crying out.

#### Conclusion

While we plan to teach more next Sunday regarding the application of these truths . . . how to access God's love by his Spirit - we will see that the Spirit arouses our appreciation and affections for God's love as we pray, praise, suffer, serve and repent. Today please respond in these ways . . .

1. Repent and seek forgiveness for the weak, dull, and joyless response to God's love for you in Christ.
2. Ask God to give you power by his Spirit to understand the multiple dimensions of God's love in your life.
3. Thank God for the assurance and certainty of his love for you in strange and dry times.
4. Ask God to give you a new heart by placing your trust in Jesus Christ alone.

#### Study Questions

1. What questions, concerns or observations do you have from today's study?
2. How do you know in practical terms that God loves you? Is his love accessible like a friend's hug, an affectionate touch or the audible 'I love you' from that special person? Is it fair biblically to expect to feel loved by God – to sense or be aware of his love with the similar sense of security, safety and assurance that a well-loved child must feel?
3. What do you think of the Edwards quote "That religion(godliness) which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes raising us but a little above a state of indifference." Do you think your Christianity is dull and lifeless at times? Why?
4. Review the 3 ways God makes his love known. How are they connected? Why should they be looked at together rather than separately?
5. Describe some times in your life where you need hope or assurance that God loves you. Does remembering the fact and demonstration of his love always give you hope?
6. Name some people in your life or church that seem to always abound in hope and keep their spiritual fervor up consistently (Rom. 12:11; 15:13; 1Peter 1:8-9). What does that look like?
7. When your heart/inner person is 'well-watered' what different types of behavior or speech is noticeable on the outside? How do you stir up the Spirit to assure you of God's love?