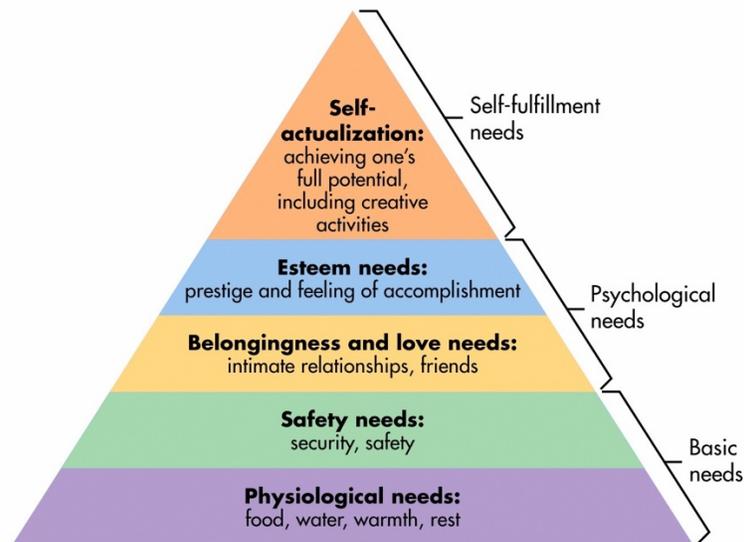


Shining Light on Authentic Faith

Does God Love Me? [1 John 3:1-3]



In 1943 Abraham Maslow penned a fascinating paper entitled, “A theory of human motivation.” Instead of studying neurotic behaviors in people, Maslow attempted to study exemplary people: Einstein, Jane Adams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass. The psychologist purposed to order the basic needs of every human: Physiological, safety, belonging/love, esteem, and self-actualization. I am not here to argue the merits and conclusions; although Maslow was not a professing Christian he reminds where Jesus meets our needs.

After food in your stomach and a roof over your head, a deep need of everyone in this room is the need to be loved and find belonging.

This morning I want you to know that EVERY need you have is satisfied in Jesus Christ. Food (bread of life), safety (he is our refuge and rest –Psalm 91), belonging (behold the GREAT love!)

Everyone has the need to be loved. When you understand that God loves you, it frees you up to have eternal life, a purposeful and fulfilled life.

Look

This morning-> Note the exclamatory first word of 1 John 3. God's word invites you in to get a first hand look! At the great love that the Lord has.

Today God's Word shines light on authentic faith as we ask this question: "Does/Can God love me?"

Are you willing to accept God's gift of love for you?

Are you ready to fully embrace the radical love that the Lord has towards you?

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2

Does God love (3:1)?

After giving a Rick Flair (Whooooo) Behold and SEE!

See what a **Great** love!

John turns our attention to the beautiful, abnormal, and supernatural different love from the Father. The Love of Jesus is a different kind of love and a different quality than we are used. Its from a **different** country, a different race or a different sort.

What manner of (ποταπήν).. Only here in John's writings. Originally it means *from what country or race*; then, *of what sort or quality*. It is used of the quality of both persons and things.

The love's greatness lies in its **quality**. Human fathers in the Greco-roman world were not always affectionate or even equitable. Children might be abused and were often unwanted. When they were born, a father was free to order them to be 'exposed' taken to an out of the way place and left to die (ECNT).

How wonderful to know that the Lord will never abuse you, leave you unwanted, or leave you exposed and left to die. Rather, He sent His only son to be abused, rejected, and exposed that you and I might now this great love!

Do you know this quality and kind of love?

It is of such great quality and greatness that this same word great/kind is often used to describe the magnificence of the massive stones of the Jerusalem temple.

God doesn't put up with you, tolerate, have a little love, or have mad love. He though Jesus Christ has MASSIVE love toward you!

God's love is a Great Quality and it is for you! It is the greatest quality and kind of

love you will ever know.

His Great Love is **Given**

The love's greatness lies in its effect: it makes people children of God (ECNT). This is the gift that it is given and **not hidden!** **If we don't see the given love of the Father it is because we can not or we refuse to see/accept it!**

- **δίδωμι:** to cause to happen, used particularly in relationship to physical events — *'to make, to cause, to give, to produce.*
 - The greatest physical demonstration of God's love is the gift of His son. The ultimate picture of paternal love toward us.
- Has been given - God does not withhold his love from us. It is already given. **Has been given not waiting to give.**
- Something given can not be un-given. What God gives, he does not take back. The clouds do not take the rain back that spill forth from the heavens. **Given not taken**
- Because love is given is cannot be **earned**. God does not pour out measures of love based upon my merit or worth. **Given not earned.**

God's love is not bargained. God does not give/show love based on the promises I make or keep. **Given not bargained.**
- **Given to all.** God's love is not given only to his children. But only those who are his children recognize the depth, heights, and breath of his love.
- Because love is given is must be **accepted**

Does God Love? Yes! His love is GREAT towards you and it has been given. Will you accept and embrace His love towards you today?

Does God love ME (3:1)?

Does God love me? Jesus answers this many ways but here are two clear pictures of how the Lord views you:

First, in Luke 15 we see a picture of the father's love. This father had two sons. The youngest took all he had traveled to a distant country and squandered his father's estate. When he came to his senses he purposed to go to his father and say "Father I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father while his son was still a long ways off ran and threw his arms around his neck. Does God love you?

Yes he is pursuing you—while you are squandering- he is eagerly waiting- and when you come home to say “I am not worthy” he is ready to put his arms around your neck and welcome you back into His home.

A second glimpse at the fathers love is found in the same chapter of Luke: what man does not leave the 99 sheep and go after the lost one. When he has found it he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and calls his friends and neighbors saying: rejoice with me!

Does God love me? **Romans 5:8** But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!

God’s love towards you brings results and change:

God’s Love results in a new family

To be called children of God is an immense privilege because it means that God himself has chosen us to be in his family (Kruse). See this calling into a new family is something that only begins from the heavens earthward not earth heavenward.

We are not merely **called** but **are**

In a world of broken families: God does not merely call us sons. It is an unmerited love, an unmerited adoption, a divine choice whereby we utterly become the Lord’s possession (NIV).

Our adoption means we are loved like Christ is loved. We are honored like he is honored—every one of us—no matter what.

Your circumstances cannot hinder or threaten that promise. In fact, your bad circumstances will only help you understand and even claim the beauty of that promise. The more you live out who you are in Christ, the more you become like him in actuality. –Tim Keller

I cannot be unloved or un-adopted

The Lord is not a heavenly Father that retracts his love at the first sign of our disobedience or unfaithfulness. God does not withdraw his great affection when we stumble.

God’s love is a love that causes a father to with and watch for the prodigal to come home. It is a love that hopes, sustains, watches, and carries confidence.

God will not un-love you! This is a love that persuaded the Biblical writers: **38** that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, **39** height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

My Response to the Gospel

When and where do I experience this love?

NOW!!

What we are now stands in contrast to what we will be later (Kruse).

Again and again John repeats that now we are God's children. It is an established fact that God's love controls (NIV).

39.2 percent of shoppers will purchase a department store gift card for friends and family, followed by 33.4 percent of shoppers opting for a restaurant gift card.

But according to estimates reported in the *Journal of State Taxation*, the typical American home has an average of \$300 in unused or "unredeemed" gift cards. These cards are often misplaced, accidentally thrown out, or only partially used.

Read 1 John 3:1 → Great- love – given – called –are

Do you have unused or unredeemed love today?

For those far from God: to accept his love

For those near God: to embrace and celebrate his love

If you confess → forgiveness and cleansing will find you today through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Notes

It is an odd but important fact that there is more discussion of love in this little sermon than in any other book in the NT (BW3).

1John 3:1 Look at how great a love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children. And we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know Him.

In the context of other biblical writers, John is preoccupied with divine love, if the usage of *agape* and *agapao* is any indication (ECNT).

Here the language of family is applied not to all human beings, but quite specifically to Christians, and even more specifically to those in the Johannine community (BW3)

Look

Note the exclamatory first word of 3:1 (look!)

What manner of (*ποταπήν*). The word is of infrequent occurrence in the New Testament, but is found in all the Synoptists and in 2 Peter 3:11. Only here in John's writings. Originally it means *from what country or race*; then, *of what sort or quality*. It is used of the quality of both persons and things.

The love's greatness also lies in its quality. Human fathers in the Greco-roman world were not always affectionate or even equitable. Children might be abused and were often unwanted. When they were born, a father was free to order them to be 'exposed' taken to an out of the way place and left to die (ECNT).

Great

Often used to describe the magnificence of the massive stones of the Jerusalem temple (ECNT)

The love's greatness lies in its effect: it makes people children of God (ECNT).

Hath bestowed (*δέδωκεν*). Emphasizing the *endowment of the receiver*. Compare *χαρίζομαι*, from *χάρις* *grace, favor*, which emphasizes the goodwill of the giver. See Galatians 3:18; Philippians 2:9; 1:29.

Children

This status is the result of God's proactive act- those who believe in Jesus are born. In broad terms all humans are children of God in that God is their maker (ECNT).

Christians are like a terra incognita in the world, unfamiliar territory, or like orphans without known paternity (BW3).

To be called children of God is an immense privilege because it means that God himself has chosen us to be in his family (Kruse).

We are not merely “called” children of God, that is what we are!

It is an unmerited love, an unmerited adoption, a divine choice whereby we utterly become the Lord’s possession (NIV).

We are God’s children and he will never “un-adopt us” (NIV).

2 Dear friends, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is.

The meaning of what ‘we know’ is in John’s estimation transformational (ECNT).

What we shall be (τί ἐσόμεθα). “This *what* suggests something unspeakable, contained in the likeness of God” (Bengel).

The author exhorts the audience to realize that they are works in progress (BW3)

The practical consequence of this theology is that in the meantime the believer must be striving to be ever more like Christ in life and behavior (BW3).

Now

What we are now stands in contrast to what we will be later (Kruse).

Again and again John repeats that now we are God’s children. It is an established fact that God’s love controls (NIV).

3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

A descriptive statement with a prescriptive force (ECNT).

Hope. John’s only reference to Christian hope. The phrase used here, *to have the hope upon one*, is unique in the New Testament. Compare ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν “on Him shall the Gentiles hope” (Romans 15:12): ἠλπίκαμεν ἐπὶ Θεῷ ζῶντι “we have hoped on the living God” (1 Timothy 4:10). On the force of ἔχων, see on John 16:22.

The hope of being like Christ in the future expresses itself in an effort to purify oneself to be like him in the present (Kruse).

Application

When John describes the essential meaning of living like God's children, two emphasis are placed in the forefront: assurance and righteousness (NIV).

"If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all." —JI Packer

Being completely conformed to the likeness of God's Son is something that we look forward to in the future, although the transformation is happening now gradually. Being adopted among many brothers is something that we have now. The minute you become a Christian, you have intimacy of relationship. You have an unconditional relationship. You become wealthy, because everything that Jesus Christ has accomplished is transferred to you. You become beautiful and spiritually rich in him.

Our adoption means we are loved like Christ is loved. We are honored like he is honored—every one of us—no matter what. Your circumstances cannot hinder or threaten that promise. In fact, your bad circumstances will only help you understand and even claim the beauty of that promise. The more you live out who you are in Christ, the more you become like him in actuality. Paul is not promising you better life circumstances; he is promising you a far better life. He's promising you a life of greatness. He is promising you a life of joy. He's promising you a life of humility. He's promising you a life of nobility. He's promising you a life that goes on forever. Tim Keller

Big Questions

What is my message about?

God's great love

Why is it important?

When you understand that God loves you, it frees you to live a purposeful, fulfilled life.

What do I want them to do?

For those far from God: to accept his love

For those near God: to embrace and celebrate his love

What is the single most persuasive idea?

See what GREAT love the Father has given us.