

Understanding God's Love

Joke: Speaker and the mortician

Intro: In 1937, a Missouri man named John Griffith was the controller of a great railroad drawbridge across the Mississippi River. One summer day he took his son along. John put the bridge up about 11 am and he and his 8 yr old son sat on the observation deck to eat lunch. Time went quickly and he was startled by the whistle of the Memphis express due to pass the tracks at 1:07pm. He leaped up to the control room and quickly glanced down to see if there were any ships under the bridge before he let it down. He eye caught a horrifying sight. His boy had fallen off the observation deck and had his left leg caught in the massive gears of the bridge. John's mind raced to find a solution but each one he thought of would take too much time. Time was running out and John knew what he had to do. He buried his head in his arm and pulled the lever to lower the bridge. Within seconds the train roared across the river carrying over 400 people. John looked at the train through his tears. Women were sipping tea, businessmen were reading the paper and children were slipping their spoons into ice cream. John screamed at the train, "I sacrificed my son for you people! Don't you care?" Nobody heard his words.

Nobody could question this father's love for his fellow man. In the epistle of I John, the beloved apostle had to correct the lack of love Christians had for one another in the Gnostic churches.

Explain: material is bad. Sin in the body but sinless in the spirit.

1JO 4:7,8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

They first had to learn about God's love.

I. God is infinite love

A. Love is his nature
Perfect in love –

1. God is perfect

Matt. 5: 48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Isa. 46:9,10 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

Explain: God has to be infinite in all of his qualities

2. God cannot change

Mal. 3: 6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

B. This is comforting to us

1. He can never become evil

2. He can never lie to us

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. NKJV

TS-If He is love why does He allow evil?

II. God must Love

A. Love must give of itself to another

This is also a risk

If God destroys evil He must destroy our wills

B. One must be able to choose to have a loving relationship

American Heritage Dictionary defines Love: an intense affectionate concern for another person.

TS- What good can come out of this?

III. God's love produces good even from evil.

A. Higher virtues

1. You cannot learn patience without an irritant

2. You cannot be courageous without something to fear

God is more interested with your Character that with your comfort!

B. Defect of evil

1. He defeated evil on the cross and changes us

2. Love is the best way to the best of all possible worlds but it has it's risks

Conclusion:

Story of the USS Pueblo. January 23, 1968

It was captured by the North Koreans with 82 surviving members thrown into brutal captivity. In one instance, 13 men were required to sit in a rigid manner around a table for hours. After many hours a North Korean guard would beat the man in the first chair with the butt of his rifle. The next day the same. And the next day the same. Knowing the man in the first chair would not survive, another young sailor took his place. The guard beat the new victim senseless. For weeks, each day a new man stepped forward to sit in that horrible chair, knowing what would happen. At last the guards gave up in exasperation. They could not beat that kind of sacrificial love.

That's the kind of love our Lord Jesus has for us.

Understanding God's love helps us to cope with this world and to love one another.