



God's Crazy Love!

1 John 3:1, 4:7-19

This morning as we turn to Chapter 3, I want to approach a theme that John now introduces that blows me away!

1 John 3:1 (NIV) *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ..."*

Note the exclamation points? It expresses unbelief, surprise! It blew John away too! What did? God's LOVE, that's what. In this book John gives us an incredible description about the love of God. Today I want to talk to you about "God's love. God's Crazy Love!"

The very concept of love is one of the most permeating themes of the human race.

The Beatles sang about in the sixties. They said, "All You Need is Love," "Money Can't Buy Me Love." "She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah." "Love Me Tender." (Elvis?)

According to Amazon.com, there are at least 32,507 books currently in print with the word "love" in the title (over 145,000 that deal with the subject of love) and over 11,000 popular albums/CDs with "love" in the title.

If you were to do a google-search on the internet, you'd discover at least 2.1 billion web-sites that that use the word "love" as one of their key words. It is unmistakable, how important love is to our culture -- to people in general.

A group of four-through eight-year-olds were asked: "What does love mean?" Their answers vary from the amusing to the profound.

- Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.
- Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.

- When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.
- Love is when mommy sees daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Denzel Washington.
- Love is when your puppy licks your face, even after you left him alone all day.

But with all this information available, love has become a very confusing subject. When I watch TV, check the internet, or scan magazines in the checkout lines, it's clear that our society has a very poor understanding of love.

Recently, I heard about a single mother with two school age children. This mother had a busy social life -- too busy, in fact. Because the children got in the way of her fun, she loaded them up with cough medicine. With the kids drugged to sleep, she and the boyfriend of the day were free to do what they wanted.

Now, I venture to say that if the authorities were to intervene to rescue those children, this woman would protest, "I love my children!"

With humanity so confused about love, who is to say what love is?

The answer is, God! One of the simplest and yet most profound definitions of love is found in 1 John 4:7-8. Let me invite you to read this message with me...

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

If you want to learn what love is, and how to love, then get to know God, because **God is love** (then he says it again in v. 16).

If we are going to love others as John has told us to do, then we first have to know and receive the love God has for us.

So today, with 1 John as our guide, let's look at love, God's love, and what it is really like.

I. A PERSONAL LOVE

Let me draw your eyes back to **1 John 3:1 (NIV)** *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ..."*

The overriding thought here is that the love of God is personal. He loves us enough to make US his children.

I think that A.W. Tozer said it well: *"The love of God is one of the great realities of the universe, a pillar upon which the hope of the world rests. But it is a personal, intimate thing too. God does not love populations, He loves people. He loves not masses, but men (and women)."*

One of the most powerful messages that we can take to people today is that God loves them. Every individual person is important to God, and He loves each one. G.K. Chesterton understood this truth when he said, *"All people matter. You matter. I matter. It's the hardest thing in theology to believe."*

When teaching His disciples, Jesus said, *"Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. [7] Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows. [8] And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God"* (Luke 12:6-8). Isn't that amazing!? There is not a single bird that falls from the sky without God's notice; and how much more important are we than a few birds? So much more important that God even knows every hair on your head.

While some of us may have a few or less more hairs than others, the message remains the same: God loves you and He knows everything about you. God's love for us is *personal*.

God's love is universal, but it is also individual. The first characteristic of God's love is that it is personal. But also, God's love is...

II. A PROVEN LOVE

Now go to

1 John 3:16a *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us...*

1 John 4:9 *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.*

God's love is not just "words or feelings" it is shown by its actions. It is proven right actions.

I've said many times before, and will say again, that love is not about entirely about how we *feel*, but what we do. ***Love requires actions***; it is demonstrated through behavior, and the love of God is no exception.

Someone once wrote:

A traveler fell into a deep pit and couldn't get out. Several persons came along and saw him struggling in the pit.

- The *sensitive person* said, "I feel for you down there."
- The *reflective person* said, "It's logical that someone would fall into the pit."
- The *judgmental person* said, "Only bad people fall into the pit."
- The *curious person* said, "Tell me how you fell into the pit."
- The *perfectionist* said, "I believe you deserve your pit."
- The *evaluator* said, "Tell me, are you paying taxes on this pit."
- The *self-pitying person* said, "You should have seen my pit."
- The *specialist in meditation* said, "Just relax and don't think about the pit."
- The *optimist* said, "Cheer up! Things could be worse."
- The *pessimist* said, "Be prepared! Things will get worse."
- **The Lord Jesus**, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.

It doesn't do any good to talk about love and compassion without demonstrating it. God demonstrates His love. He's proven His love for us.

There is an true story about a man by the name of John Griffith, who in 1929 lost all he had in the stock market crash of the Great Depression.

He moved to Mississippi where he took a job as draw-bridge operator for a railroad trestle. In 1937 he was involved in a horrible accident.

One day his 8 year-old son, Greg, spent the day with his Dad at work. He poked around the office and asked a bunch of questions. Then a ship came down the Mississippi and John opened up the draw bridge.

After a moment or two he realized his son wasn't in the office and as he looked around, to his horror, he saw him climbing around on the gears of the draw bridge. He hurried outside to rescue his son but just then he heard what he knew was a fast approaching passenger train, the Memphis Express, filled with 400 people. He yelled to his son, but the noise of the ship and the oncoming train made it impossible for the boy to hear him.

And all of a sudden John Griffith realized his horrible dilemma. If he took the time to rescue his son the train would crash killing 400, but if he closed the bridge, he would sacrifice his son. He made the horrible decision, pulled the lever and closed the bridge. The son was crushed.

It is said, as the train went by he could see the faces of the passengers, some reading, some even waving, oblivious to the sacrifice that had just been made on their behalf.

As we consider God's love, we know that God was faced with a similar dilemma. **He could not spare us as sinners and spare Jesus.** God too had to allow the jaws of death to close in on His Son. And thousands still go by oblivious and indifferent, even though they know of that sacrifice.

But there is one tremendous difference between the two. Unlike the Memphis Express that caught John Griffith by surprise, the sending of Jesus was not an unfortunate accident; it wasn't a spontaneous decision. It was planned. Jesus' death was not the result of jealous Jews or hard hearted Romans. It was the result of a Loving God, who in His wisdom, said there was no other way.

First, God's love is A PERSONAL Love. Second, God's love is A PROVEN LOVE. Third, God's love is...

III. A CRAZY LOVE

"Crazy Love" is the highest level of love that exists (this is not a theological term).

Songs: "Crazy Love," Beyonce - "Crazy in Love", "Crazy little thing called love." That's NOT what I'm talking about.

Here's what I'm talking about...

1 John 4:10 *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

Romans 5:6-8 *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.*

God's love here differs from human love. God's love is a Crazy Love. By that I mean that God is "crazy in love" with us...who do not deserve it.

"Crazy Love," is love that is so strong that God was willing to do whatever it takes to win you and keep you.

Did you know that God is "crazy" in love with you?!

Who can explain why God loves us? We say we should love someone that also loves us. We look for someone that will be faithful to us. But guess what God says?

- *not that we loved God, but that he loved us*
- *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

EXAMPLE FROM HOSEA

Earlier Jose read from **Hosea** (hey that rhymes). Do you know what the theme of the book of Hosea is? "God's Crazy Love" (Go read it.)

Thumbnail. Hosea was a prophet of God. Sometimes God would give a prophet a message (most times), but sometimes he would have them act it out. In Hosea God wanted to demonstrate His relationship with Israel.

Do you know what God told Hosea to do? He told him to go and find the most sexually immoral prostitute he could find, to win her love and marry her. And then when she goes back to her harlotry, do not divorce her but continue to love her in spite of her betrayal.

[Hosea 1:2 NLT] *When the LORD first began speaking to Israel through Hosea, he said to him, "Go and marry a prostitute, so some of her children will be born to you from other men. This will illustrate the way my people have been untrue to me, openly committing adultery against the LORD by worshiping other gods."*

Imagine God asking you to do this! This is crazy! You know what's even more crazy? Hosea did it! He found a prostitute named Gomer, and sure enough, at first she acted like a good wife, but then she left Hosea and returned to being a [ho. Ho, ho, ho. (that's not the santa clause type of ho)]

In Chapter 3 (Jose read that too), God tells Hosea to go find his wife and love her again, even though she didn't deserve his love. She deserved anything but his love.

Why in the world would God ask someone to do this? Because it was a picture of how God loved Israel in spite of how Israel didn't love God. In spite of their unfaithfulness, their rejection of Him, time after time, he continued loved them - in spite of the fact that they could never deserve it.

And so, even though God had every right to reject them once and for all, because of his “crazy love” for them he wouldn’t do it. He leaves the door open for them to return in repentance, so he can be their God once again.

Friends, that is a picture (true) of all of us!

Steven Curtis Chapman said, *“In The Gospel, we discover we are far worse off than we thought, and far more loved than we ever dreamed.”*

The gospel tells us that we are “dead in our trespasses and sins”. We are sinners by nature and we are sinners by action and we deserve nothing less than God’s full condemnation and judgment.

You see, it’s not that we are “lovable” to God, like a little puppy is. “Oh look at that cute puppy.” No, the Bible tells us God is *“too holy to look upon sin”* so there is nothing cute and lovable in us.

Without a doubt, there is no attribute of God that is so widely believed as the love of God. At the same time, there is no attribute of God that has been so badly misunderstood as God’s love.

Many people have this false idea that when they get to the gates of heaven, God will smile and say, *“Oh, I realize you are not perfect, but you’ve been a pretty good person... come on in.” “How could I turn you away?”*

This is heresy - while this sounds attractive, it’s completely at odds with what the Bible teaches.

No, while God’s love does not negate his Holiness it does make Him willing to spare no expense make a way to satisfy his Holiness for us.

John 3:16 says, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

Only those who put their complete faith and trust in Christ will be saved.

I am so glad God is crazy in love with me.....

When we are ready to flee from the dangers of sin and Satan, our God and Father will be right

there, ready to save us from death and give the gift of eternal salvation.

CONCLUSION:

“God is love.” And, although love itself cannot define God for He is infinite in all His attributes, God does define love. Love is a part of God’s very nature, and His love is perfect. It is:

Personal: it is a love for individuals -- you are important to God!

Proven: it is a love has been demonstrated, it takes action.

Crazy and Irrational: It is for people who don’t deserve it - and know they don’t deserve it.

But just like those people on the train who were oblivious that such a great sacrifice was made, so are most who don’t realize how crazy in love with them God is. (Maybe you didn’t realize...?)

God wants all people to be saved. And He, through His love, has made that possible.

Invitation:

1. Do you know God’s love, or do you only know about God love?

2. Knowing that H₂O is water doesn’t quench my thirst.

3. If you know that God loves you, but you don’t know His Love, it’s like someone who studies water without drinking it.

He is crazy in love with you, will you return that love? Will you accept him into your heart, he wants to forgive you and begin a relationship with you right now.

PRAYER

If you are a Christian but have wandered away from righteousness, God still loves you and invites you home with open arms. So wherever you are in life, God’s love is available to you.

If you are ready to commit your life to Jesus Christ, please come forward now, as we stand and sing...