

LOVING THE LOST

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INTRODUCTION:

1. What a blessing it is for one to know he is loved.
 - A. If one knows he is loved, it adds purpose and a sense of worth to his life.
 - B. Studies have proven that little babies who are shown love have better health and mature at a much better rate.
 - C. In fact babies who are loved have a better survival rate.
 - D. One's need for love does not stop as he matures.
 - E. Love matters!
2. God is love.
 - A. John states; "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8).
 - B. One does not have to convince God to love him.
 - C. God already loves him.
 - D. Even though God is love and loves mankind, this does not mean God approves of all of man's actions (cf. murder, lying, etc.).
3. One of the most known passages in all of God's Word is John 3:16.
 - A. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).
 - B. The little adverb "so," in this context, is a very big word!
 - C. God not only "loved" the world, He "so" loved the world that He gave His only begotten son...
 - D. Consequently, God's love is not limited to the so-called "unconditional elect" per the false doctrine of Calvinism, but is extended to every person.
4. A child of God, being directed by God's Word, must love what God loves and hate what God hates.
5. In this lesson, attention is given to "loving the lost."

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY WE SHOULD LOVE THE LOST:

- A. We should love the lost because they are made in the image of God.
 1. After God had created most of the world, He then created man vastly different from the rest of His creation.
 2. In speaking to the other two persons in the Godhead, God said; "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26).

3. When one sees a fellow human being, he is seeing one who is made in the image of God.

4. The person who is living in sin may not appreciate the fact he is made in the image of God, but he is a person of worth, due to the fact God created him in His own image.

B. We should love the lost because they have souls that exist forever.

1. Being created in God's image, mankind's souls survive the death of the body and continue to exist forever.

2. Man's soul is of great value.

3. If the soul does not survive the death of the body, then many people who stood and died for truth, died in vain (i.e. John the Baptist – Mat. 14).

4. Jesus knows the true value of a person's soul.

5. He stated; "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26).

6. Jesus placed the value of one's soul above the value of the whole world – a tremendous worth!

C. We should love the lost because of what it means to be lost.

1. Sadly many precious souls are lost and if they continue in their present conditions, will be eternally lost.

2. Jesus instructs; "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat. 7:13-14).

3. He also stated; "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mat. 25:46).

4. The word translated "punishment" comes from the word "kolasis" and means, "penal infliction, punishment, torment" (Thayer).

5. "Torment" implies consciousness with the ability to experience feelings of pain or discomfort.

6. Jesus describes the eternal abode of lost souls as "hell."

7. The word translated "hell" (geena) is found twelve times in the New Testament.

8. Jesus uses "hell" eleven of the twelve times and James one time.

a. "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Mat. 5:22).

b. "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Mat. 5:29).

c. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Mat. 5:30).

d. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mat. 10:28).

e. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Mat. 18:9)

f. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Mat. 23:15).

g. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell" (Mat. 23:33).

h. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43).

i. "And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:45).

j. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Mark 9:47).

k. "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:5).

l. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6).

9. Additionally, from the account described in Luke 16, Jesus lifts the curtains from the Hadean world and shows us what it is like to be lost.

a. The Rich man died outside of God's fellowship.

b. He was in great "torment" (odunao - different word from "punishment" in Matthew 25:46, yet was "in this flame," Luke 16:24).

10. Unless those in a lost condition come to Christ for salvation, they too will be in "torment."

D. We should love the lost because of what it means to be saved.

1. The Bible not only depicts the condition of the lost, but it also tells us the blessings of being saved.

2. To be "in Christ" is to be saved from past sins (Mark 16:16), and have all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3 - including reconciliation to God, the privilege of prayer, fellowship, peace, etc.).

3. Those in Christ also have the wonderful hope of heaven for their eternal home.

a. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

b. Jesus stated to His apostles; "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many

mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

c. Those in Christ will go into "life eternal" (Mat. 25:46).

4. Jesus invites all to come unto Him - "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Mat. 11:28-30).

E. We should love the lost because God loves the lost.

1. As previously noted, God's love for the lost does not imply He endorses or condones their sinful actions.

2. However, God loves the lost in spite of their sinful conduct and lost condition.

3. God commended His love to us while we were sinners.

4. Paul writes; "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8).

5. Christians have no reason to be lifted up in self-righteousness, for the plain truth is, none of us would be saved without God's love for the lost.

F. We should love the lost because of what God has done for the lost.

1. God, more than anyone, knows the sad condition of the lost.

2. God has done more than anyone to save the lost.

3. Due to the condition of the lost, God was moved with pity to save the lost.

4. Even from the dawn of time, God has desired man's good and his salvation (Gen. 1-4).

5. In the fullness of time God sent forth His son, born of a woman born under the law (Cf. Gal. 4:4).

6. Jesus received criticism by the religious leaders of His day because He taught and ate with the publicans and the sinners (cf. Luke 15:1-2).

7. Jesus came from heaven with a purpose - "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

8. Jesus Christ not only taught us, he died for our redemption - "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

9. If we should ever ponder, "how much does God love the lost," we should just look at the cross.

II. HOW DO WE DEMONSTRATE WE LOVE THE LOST?

A. We demonstrate our love for the lost by remaining faithful to God.

1. It would be difficult to convince the lost they need to be saved, if

we ourselves are not faithful.

2. Wives with unbelieving husbands are admonished to remain faithful so that their unbelieving husbands might be converted.

a. "Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:1-4).

b. The wife, by her faithfulness, may win her unbelieving husband.

3. Jesus tells His disciples to be "salt" and "light" in this world.

a. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 5:13-16).

b. It is interesting that Jesus began both "to do" and "teach" (cf. Acts 1:1).

B. We demonstrate our love for the lost by personally reaching out to the lost.

1. It is to our shame if we have been Christians for many years and have not personally reached out in an attempt to save the lost.

2. How can we personally reach out to the lost?

a. By personally inviting someone to worship and Bible study.

b. By personally giving someone a tract, bulletin article, etc.

c. By personally conducting an organized Bible study with someone.

d. If we genuinely love lost souls we will learn how to reach out to them.

e. Let us get focused and remain focused on our mission.

C. We demonstrate our love for the lost by supporting good mission works.

1. There are over seven billion souls in the world today.

2. Jesus has commissioned you and me to take his Gospel to each one of these precious souls (Mark 16:15, Mat. 28:18-20).

3. We need to be active in our divinely given mission.

4. We need churches seeking to support good works.

D. We demonstrate our love for the lost by praying for the lost.

1. Let us pray for open doors (cf. 1 Cor. 16:8-9, Rev. 3:8).
2. We sometimes pray, "May something be said or done that the lost may be saved."
3. Let us make sure we say or do something after saying such a prayer (cf. Mat. 6:7).

CONCLUSION:

1. Imagine – Judgment day is here.
2. God calls each of us into account.
 - A. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:9-11).
 - B. How would we fare?
3. The church needs to awaken to its God given task.
4. The lost need to respond to God's offer of salvation
5. "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:37-38).

WORKS CITED

Strong, Augustus H. *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Accordance electronic ed., version 2.5. Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1999.