

SHEPHERD'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sunday ABF – June 1

“The Knowledge of the Holy”

by A.W. Tozer

CHAPTER 20

The Love of God

“For Your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in Your truth” (Psalm 26:3).

“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).

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7).

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10 NASB).

1) Have you ever worried that God would stop loving you? What Scriptures remind us that God’s love for us, as His children, is eternal and irreversible?

2a) 1 John 4:8 boldly proclaims that “God is love.” Augustine saw this as an essential trinitarian statement. **How so?**

2b) **How has the world, and the larger portion of the church, distorted this truth (God is love) in their understanding of our Lord?**

2c) **How does the world’s definition of love differ from the biblical view of love?**

3a) **What do you think of the five statements below?**

“Some Different Ways the Bible Speaks of the Love of God”
D.A. Carson *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*

- The peculiar love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father
- God’s providential love over all that He has made
- God’s salvific stance toward His fallen world
- God’s particular, effective, selecting love toward His elect
- Finally, God’s love is sometimes said to be directed toward His own people in a provisional or conditional way—conditioned, that is, on obedience.

3b) **Within this framework, how would you respond to the following popular statements of God’s love:**

“God’s love is unconditional.”

“God loves everyone exactly the same.”

4) **If someone asked you to describe the love of God what would you tell them? How would you describe what Tozer refers to as “an incomprehensibly vast, bottomless, shoreless sea?”** Consider how you might share your understanding of God’s love with at least one person in the coming week.

5) Pastor Tozer writes, “We do not know, and we may never know, what love is, but we can know how it manifests itself, and that is enough for us here.” **Do you agree? What about 1 Corinthians 13?**

6a) 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” **Does this mean a person who is a Believer will never experience fear?**

Consider Tozer’s statement of the problem: “The world is full of enemies, and as long as we are subject to the possibility of harm from these enemies, fear is inevitable.”

...and now his solution: “To know that love is of God and to enter into the secret place leaning upon the arm of the Beloved—this and only this can cast out fear.”

6b) **In light of these statements how do we as Believers deal with our fears?**

7) **Please feel free to present your own analogy**, but my understanding of true love for God reminds me of how our dog Nika used to approach me as her master. Frequently, especially if she had not seen me in several hours, she might be cautious or slow in her approach. There was almost a sense of “fear and trembling” in her initial contact, but as soon as I reassured her of my love for her she quickly became more animated and eager to respond in love, playing with a sense of joy. Tozer puts it this way: “We do God more honor by believing what He has said about Himself and having the courage to come boldly to the throne of grace than by hiding in self-conscious humility among the trees of the garden.”

8a) Tozer writes: “Self-sufficient as [God] is, He wants our love and *will not be satisfied* till He gets it.”
How can this statement become the seed of dangerous thinking?

8b) Many authors of popular “Christian” books, such as Captivating (John & Stasi Eldridge), characterize God as not only wanting, but *needing our love*:

"Not only does God long for us, but he longs to be loved by us. Oh, how we've missed this. How many of you see God as longing to be loved by you? We see him as strong and powerful, but not needing us, vulnerable to us, yearning to be desired. God wants to be loved. He wants to be a priority to someone. From cover to cover, from beginning to end, the cry of God's heart is, 'Why won't you choose Me?'"

What is your response?

9) As intimated in D. A. Carson’s discussion of the love of God (question 3), God takes great pleasure in His Creation. **What motivates God to delight in all the things He has created, especially His saints?**
(Please read Psalm 104:31.)

10) **In light of the glory of God, can you think of a more loving or comforting message than this: “He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing” (Zephaniah3:17b)?**

11) Scripture clearly states: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:13). **How can we demonstrate this truth in our lives?**

“So it must be where love is; love must ever give to its own, whatever the cost. The apostles rebuked the young churches sharply because a few of their members had forgotten this and had allowed their love to spend itself in personal enjoyment while their brethren were in need.”

A. W. Tozer

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