

Eph 2.4—The Great Love of God

God is love

- I. 1Jn 4.7-8, God *is* love.
 - A. Love is not something God does, it's what God is. He wouldn't be love if He weren't God; and He wouldn't be God if He weren't love.
 - B. God cannot but love. God can only act in love.
 - C. God doesn't derive love from somewhere else; it is His own being. Neither is love an abstract quality that shapes God; it's who He is as God that shapes what love is.
 - D. We should guard against error here. While God is love, God hates and will judge sin. It's because His love is a holy love that He cannot abide sin, which is lawlessness.
- II. In order for God's love to be seen, it must be manifest.
 - A. He has manifest it wonderfully in creation and providence; but He manifests it preeminently in Jesus Christ.

God's love is preeminently manifested in Christ

- I. Jn 3.16, God's great love is manifested preeminently in the sending of His Son into the world to save sinners.
 - A. Christ did not come to procure the love of God or cause God to love sinners; rather Christ came because of God's love and to save those whom God already loved.
 - B. 1Jn 4.9-10, *In this the love of God was made manifest...*
 - C. In Jn 14.9 Jesus could just as easily have told Philip, "whoever has seen me has seen the love of God." He manifested the love of God in all that He did because He was the love of God made manifest.
 - D. Thus no man can know the saving love of God outside of a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- II. Rom 5.8, in sending the Son to the cross for sinners, God's love is demonstrated and put on display for all to see.
 - A. If any doubts the love of God for sinners, let him look at the accursed, bloody cross.
 - B. It was a death *for us* and in our place because His love was *for us*.

God's love undergirds all His dealings with His people

- I. Ezek 16.8-14 is an allegorical picture of God's free and sovereign love for Israel.
 - A. He proved the reality and depth of His love by marrying her and lavishing His blessings upon her.
 - B. He loved her with an everlasting love, Jer 31.3, Hos 2.19
 - C. This is meant to teach us how God relates to *all* believers. He loves them with a full love, a marital love.
 - D. Therefore His love necessarily undergirds all His dealings with them. He can do His Bride no wrong—because He loves her. He cannot but provide for her and beautify her and be faithful to her—because He loves her.
 - E. Once the love of God is set upon us in Christ, He cannot stop loving us, He cannot but love us, He can only love us, He can only behave towards us in a loving way.
 - F. He loves us with an everlasting love, a full and pregnant love, a love which overflows with blessings, a love which can neither increase nor decrease—forever.

How Should We Respond to Our God's Love?

- I. Admiration should fill our hearts. Nothing in all the universe is so amazing as the great love with which God loves us.
- II. Gratitude should fill our hearts. An ungrateful heart is ignorant of His love.
- III. Joy should fill our hearts. We should rejoice that we have a God whose happiness consists in doing us good. We should rejoice that the God who loves us is the God who lives, reigns, and rejoices over us with singing (Zeph 3.17)
- IV. Comfort should fill our hearts. That God freely and fully loves us is the foundation of all Christian comfort.
- V. Trust should be our unshakable resolve in all conditions. If God loves us, then whatever He does with us is motivated by love. Therefore trust His dispensations and interpret every dark providence in the light of His loving heart.