

**Sunday Sermon 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

We are taking time to study about the love of God, looking at different words that describe this love. It is Creative yet Relational, it is Inclusive yet Personal, it is Lovingly Loyal. It is Unconditional, it is not based upon our performance; amen to that!

These are all great, they are super descriptors, but here's a question you may be asking, or may have asked yourself at some time in past. Is this love, that we have been learning about in the sermons, is this for today, is this for me, or is it just for those that we read about in Word? Is that love everlasting? Is this love the same now as it was then?

I want to start reminding you couple verses used last week.

***Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;***

***John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.***

Jesus is the express image of the Father, and Jesus can only do what He sees the Father doing. Therefore we can look to Jesus to see what the Father does or will do. If we see Jesus doing something in the Gospels, God will do it. If we see Jesus not doing something (putting sickness on someone for example), we know God will not do that either.

Knowing this then, let's look at the verse that will be our central text for today.

***Hebrews 13 v 8 – Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever***

The character of Jesus, (who is the express image of the Father), has been and will always be the same. The nature of Jesus and therefore of the Father has always and will always be the same.

His character and nature are not like that of men. I spoke little bit about human love already, in last week's sermon. I said we need be careful and not see the way we are, way we love, as way God does. We are fickle, we change, and we remove our love depending upon performance. That is not the way God works. We are not the same yesterday, and today and forever.

There are aspects about God, about Jesus, about the Trinity that our brains are not powerful enough to comprehend. We are limited in time and space in this life, and so are our brains and therefore our perceptions about some of the things of God.

Take this verse and its implications for example.

***Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.***

This is Jesus talking, we know that as verse seven talks about Him being pierced. This is also great section explaining about Jesus being God as well as Son of God, as in verse four we see the same terms used to describe God the Father.

This is saying Jesus was and is and is to come; that Jesus always has been. He is eternal in time both in the past and in the future. Now I agree that concept is hard to get your head around. But don't think this is an impossible concept, it is simply a concept that our limited brains cannot process easily.

You may now be thinking, no Vic, it is impossible to be eternal in both the past and the future. Well, we have got to remember that God is out of our concept of time, out of time in our physical realm and current reality.

Also, if you want to get into seemingly 'impossible' concepts start studying quantum entanglement, quantum spin and some concepts that physics is now generating about time and space and gravity. Science is pushing us to believe in what look like impossible concepts, surely, we can do that out of faith when thinking about God? Especially when this is what I think we see written in the Word, and when He is out of our time and our space and our current physical reality.

Jesus always has been, always is and always will be.

And so are His characteristics and nature; these are the same yesterday, today and forever. Attributes like His compassion and his mercy, and yes, His love.

His love is Eternal, and His love is Continuous; we can see that from Revelations 1 v 8.

And His love is Constant; we can see that from Hebrews 13 v 8.

Eternal, Continuous and Constant; three more words we can use to describe the love of God.

So, His love is for now, and it is the same as we see in the Word. So, this love is for me, it is for you, and it is of the nature that we see in the Word. I have already taught this His love is Personal and Inclusive, so that includes you and me.

I believe that the verses we looked at today confirm this truth, reinforce this truth. His love is the same now as it was then, and it is for me, and it is for you.

We see Jesus' mercy and compassion and love for the woman taken in adultery (John 8). He extends that same grace to us today if we are struggling with some kind of sin. Jesus offered His love before the woman 'performed'. Today He is saying to all of us, neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.

We saw Jesus' unconditional love for Zacchaeus, inviting him down from the tree to enter intimate relationship with Him, irrespective of his performance. Today He is saying to us, come down, I want relationship with you. All we have to do is joyfully receive Him.

We see Jesus having to go through Samaria to relate to the woman at the well, He wanted relationship with her, even in her current state. She was a human being, struggling with life, seen as the lowest of low in her society. Jesus out of His love for her, going against culture and society, came to her to show her His love. Jesus is doing same for us today; He has come to where we are for relationship with us.

Why does Jesus want to do the same today? Because of His eternal, continuous and constant love for us.

We use 1 John chapter 4 a lot in this church, it is what I call the “love chapter”. One verse though took on a deeper meaning for me yesterday morning.

**1 John 4:19 *We love him, because he first loved us.***

I have always liked this verse, telling me His love was not dependent upon my love for Him. He loved me just because He loved me, because He wanted to love me, it was and is unconditional love.

I have also heard myself saying that He loved me before I was born, before I came into existence. This understanding took on a new and deeper meaning as I was preparing for this sermon.

He has always loved me.

If His love is eternal in time, and eternal both ways, He has always loved me.

I have always been on His mind.

I had stop when that thought that came; can I believe really that I asked myself. Can I ever truly understand that? I Didn't get answers to that yet; this idea, this concept is one I need to get to the beach and meditate upon (I do my best thinking at the beach).

But folks the wonderful thing is that the same is true for you.

You have always been loved by Him. In a sense the idea of you, the concept of you has always been as you have always been on His mind. That makes my mind hurt thinking about it.

I've always had this question, from as long as I can remember; what was before time? As I grew up it used to be framed in different way as I only came to faith as an adult; what was before the Big Bang? There must have been something, time could not just start out of nothing, you cannot get something out of nothing.

I think I have finally got an answer to that lifelong question; what was before time?

His love.

His love was before anything, His love was what everything came out of, His love was why everything was brought into being.

He is Love, God is Love.

Praise God! I think I may even be getting an answer to the question that started this series, what does 'God is Love' mean?

His love was and is and forever will be.

God is Love because God is.

Why does this universe not fall apart? Thermodynamics says it should be, indeed says it is. But it is not. Why? Because of His love, because of His love for us.

I don't think I'm explaining myself well, I am just formulating my thoughts on this. All this came pouring out during my time of preparation at my desk as thinking about His love being eternal, continuous, and constant.

This is a bit deep I know, but His love is deep, amen?

To be honest I turned into a wee bit of a blubbering wreck when the enormity of my thoughts hit me.

God is Love because God is, and the focus of His love was and is and forever will be me.

Please don't think what I am saying or going to say is arrogant, but I got this revelation for me. And I've told you many times that you need to personalise scriptures, personalise what He has done for you. I am just desperately trying to share this in way I can explain you can understand and maybe get for yourself. You see, this true for you too.

He has always loved us and wanted the best for us, we have always been on his mind, but I'm going to keep this personal for me.

So, this what came to me next.

This earth is perfectly placed in terms of the location with respect to the sun and moon, and it is tilted at the perfect angle, which makes it perfect for carbon-based life forms. God placed the stars and planets and galaxies in the best formation for life, and that was for me.

Photosynthesis, for me the most wonderful and amazing of biochemical processes, was created to produce the oxygen that I need to breath and respire and live; it was designed and created for me.

These eyes and the rest of my body parts for vision were created, a marvel engineering and data processing, so that I could see; see the beach, mountains, birds, created so I could marvel at creation. He created vision for me.

I was on His mind before creation; I was the focus of His love before creation, so creation was for me, and it came out of His love for me.

Have you ever thought in that way?

You were seen by Him before creation, you were on His mind before creation, so this universe and world was all created to allow you to live here and now; and this is out of His love because of his love for you.

You are a marvel of creation; you are the pinnacle of His creation. You are special.

This sermon has gone in a different direction than I had planned, but I think it has been one of the most thought-provoking sermons I have ever delivered. It has been for me at least during my preparation and while writing up this essay after the sermon. It has turned into a testimony in a sense, a testimony of the way my thoughts have gone in the last few memorable days.

I now see His love in a new light, nowhere near to a full understanding of it yet, but deeper for me. I See is love for me in a new light, a love that is eternal, continuous and constant. A love that has

never changed and will never change. A love that is eternal from both ends of time. And that I think will change me, and change you if you get a deeper revelation of His love, especially for you.

We love him, because He loved us first.

I think it is important to get a deeper revelation of his love for us, as that enables us to love Him back more, and that is what He deserves. It enables us to be more thankful, more grateful, enables us to live a life of love.

Nunsy said this in an online meeting this week, that the key is knowledge, the key is understanding. An understanding of His love is important, but an understanding of His love to us personally is even more important. And I think that is missing for many believers.

Does God truly love me? I know what I'm like, what done, what doing?

Do we say that to ourselves sometimes?

I hope that the recent series of sermons let you see that His love for you is not based upon our performance. It is not based upon what you've done, what you are doing, what you've not done, what you are not doing.

His love for you is based upon the fact that God is Love.

His love is eternal, continuous, and constant and you benefit because He is love, because He is.

AMEN