KNOWING GOD

LESSON 16

Title: The Love of God

Text: 1 John 4:7-21

1. **Review:**
   1. Tozer wrote: “In God, mercy and grace are one; but as they reach us they are two, related but not identical.”
   2. Grace is the act of God in His own good pleasure, bestowing benefits upon the undeserving.
2. **“God is love” ––What the statement does not mean.**
   1. Many believe that John, in verses 8 and 16, is defining God.
      1. John is not making a definitive statement; he is simply stating a fact and declaring something that is true about God, expounding an attribute.
      2. Many think that because we have the statement “God is love”, that it also means “love is God.”
      3. It would mean that wherever there is love, there is God and that you must always equate God as love and love as God.
         1. However, in John 3:19, Jesus said, “Men loved the darkness rather than light…”
         2. In II Timothy 4:10 Paul said, “Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world…”
         3. While love is an essential attribute of God, it does not mean that He lovingly smiles regardless of the ways, actions, and thoughts of man.
   2. God also hates.
      1. Psalm 5:5 – “…thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”
      2. Proverbs 6:16 – “These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him.”
      3. Amos 5:21 – “I hate, I despise your feast days and I will not dwell in your solemn assemblies.”
      4. If I said, “God is hate,” what would you make of it? All you should make of it is this: that the righteous and Holy God abhors and hates iniquity. Yet, it does not mean that everywhere you find hate you find God behind it or in it.
   3. God is love! It is an essential attribute of God.
   4. Two other statements that shed light on our understanding of “God is love.”
      1. John 4:24 “God is Spirit.”
         1. What did Jesus mean?
         2. The woman said that the place of worship was in a mountain of Samaria and the Jews said He was to be worshiped in Jerusalem.
         3. Jesus was merely saying, “You cannot confine the Father to a certain location. He is not flesh; He is Spirit.”
      2. I John 1:5 “God is light.”
         1. Read I John 2 & 3 and you’ll see that God being light means God is holy and pure.
         2. To walk in the light means to walk in holiness and purity. To quote J. I. Packer: “So the God who is Love is first and foremost Light, and sentimental ideas of His love as an indulgent, benevolent softness, divorced from moral standards and concerns, must therefore be ruled out from the start. God’s love is holy love. The God whom Jesus makes known is not a God who is indifferent to moral distinctions, but a God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity…”
3. **God who is Love loves us personally and individually. (I John 4:10)**
   1. Notice John’s words; it is like he is standing in amazement at what he is considering. “Love? Now herein is real love. Not that we love God for He is altogether loveable. But that He loved us!”
   2. The love of God is an exercise of His goodness.
      1. We don’t deserve it!
      2. Does He love us because of His grace or does He bestow grace because of His love?
      3. “Yes” is the answer to both questions. You should never separate one attribute from another.
      4. In fact, His other attributes help us to understand more of His love.
         * + He is self-existent so His love has no beginning.
           + He is eternal so His love has no end.
           + He is infinite so His love has no limit.
           + He is immutable so His love never changes.
           + He is faithful so His love is always dependable.
           + He is merciful and the God of grace, so His love is bestowed undeservingly.
      5. Deuteronomy 7:6-8a is the only explanation we have for God loving us–– “because the Lord loved you.” It is merely an exercise of goodness from God who is love and who sovereignly chose to love sinners like you and me.
   3. How does God manifest His love to us? (I John 4:10)
      1. Love is an emotional identification.
         1. Who can deny that emotional involvement is a real part of love?
         2. God, by His own choice and as an exercise of His goodness, has chosen to emotionally identify with us.
         3. He has so identified with us that we may cause Him joy, or we may grieve Him and provoke Him to anger.
      2. Love demands action.
         1. “Herein is love…that He loved us and sent His Son…”
         2. God did not just write in His Word of His love, nor say it through another.
         3. God’s acts (actions) and ways manifest His love. (v. 4:10)
         4. John 3:16, Romans 5:8.
4. **Conclusion**: This lesson seems so weak and so feeble. How could we ever explain the love of God? How many lessons or sermons would be sufficient? As Tozer illustrated: A child may try to reach a star. Impossible? Yes, but the child may at least call attention to the star. Likewise, I cannot adequately teach the love of God nor fully explain the God of love, but I do hope we’ve drawn some attention to His great love.