

Systematic Theology





Last Time

➤ Holiness

Personal- Love

- Love is one of the most personal attributes.

Scriptural Basis for Love

- God's nature is loving.
- God's love is unconditional.
- God's love is immutable.

God's Nature is Loving

- God is, by His very essence, loving.
- His love sent His Son.
- His love allows us to love one another.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

1 John 4:7-21

ESV

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 4:7-21

ESV

God's Love Is Unconditional

- He does not love us because of anything special about us.
- There is nothing about us to inspire God's love.
- God's mercy and loving kindness.

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 7:7-8

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But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

Ephesians 2:4-5

ESV

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:3-5

ESV

God's Love Is Immutable

- Immutable, Unchangeable, Undying.
- God is as loving as He is holy.
- *Agape*- unconditional love.
- Freely given without condition.
- Cannot merit it or earn it.

the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

Jeremiah 31:3

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A Great Paradox

- God hates our sin because of His holiness.
- God loves the sinner, and He loves sinner as intensely as He hates his sin.
- We are not a poor, lost victim of sin but rather a hateful rebel.
- An enemy of God.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

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God

- God's Will or God's Nature
- The Euthyphro Dilemma

Euthyphro Dilemma

- Plato
- Objection given when we claim God is the ultimate source and locus of moral value.

Euthyphro Dilemma

- “Do the gods love something because it is good or is it good because the gods love it?”

Euthyphro Dilemma

- If something is good because God wills it, then that makes good and evil arbitrary.
- If God will something because it is good, then there is a higher standard than God.

Euthyphro Dilemma

- Because of this dilemma, non-theists will argue that moral values cannot be grounded in God.

Euthyphro Dilemma- Solved

- False dilemma
- Real answer is that God's very nature is the Good.
- The moral commands of God are no arbitrary but rather are necessary reflections of God's very nature.

Euthyphro Dilemma- Solved

- God could not have willed a different morality because it would have been contrary to his very nature.
- So not A or B, but rather C.

Euthyphro Dilemma- Implication

- Since God does not issue commands to himself, he doesn't have any moral duties.
- He does not have to obey his own commands.
- He is simply acting within his own nature.
- He is not under any law.

Application of God's Holiness

- God is the locus and source of all moral value and standards.
- He is the plumb line that determines good and evil.
- God's nature is essentially love, kind, impartial, fair, compassionate, etc.
- God's nature issues necessarily in divine commandment to us as finite moral agents.

Application

1. We should strive for personal holiness in our lives.
2. We therefore need to live lives without blemish.
3. Holiness is the secret to happiness.
4. In Christ, God's holiness becomes the source of our justification.

We should strive for personal holiness in our lives.

- We should be as repulsed by our sin as God is.
- We cannot trivialize sin.
- God does not hate people, he hates sin.

Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has power over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God; and the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia.

Revelation 14:18-20

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“These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.” Here God is saying, “You thought I was like you, and that is why you thought I was silent – because you thought I would just overlook these things as unimportant or trivial.” He says, “No! I now rebuke you – I lay the charge before you.”

Psalm 50:21

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I think we ignore the concept of the wrath of God at our own cost. Indeed, I would argue for the radical proposition that our only hope as human beings is the wrath of God. (It is also true, of course, that our only hope is the grace of God, but that is another matter). The wrath of God shows that we do not live, as so many today suppose that we do, in a random and morally neutral universe. God's wrath shows us that right and wrong are objectively real, they are to be discovered, not created. The wrath of God is our only hope because it teaches us the moral significance of our deeds and shows us how life is to be lived.

Stephen Davis

We therefore need to live lives without blemish.

- Live a holy life = bringing honor to God.
- Someone who loves God would want to keep his commandments and walk the way that Christ did.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'.

1 Peter 1:14-16

ESV

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 John 1:5-10

ESV

And by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He who says “I know him” but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

1 John 2:3-6

ESV

Holiness is the secret to happiness.

- A great lesson to learn sooner than later.
- Do not seek a happy life, rather a holy life.
- Happiness is a byproduct of holiness.

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and
all these things shall be yours as well.

Matthew 6:33

ESV

In Christ, God's holiness becomes the source of our justification.

- God's holiness is expressed to those outside of Christ as the wrath of God.
- God's holiness is expressed to those in Christ as the very source of our justification.

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed though faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live."

Romans 1:16-17

ESV

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26

ESV

Next time

➤ Read:

➤ Defenders 2-3- 20: Doctrine of God, pg. 144-149
Personal- God's Love

Questions?

